



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

---

Volume L

FIRST SESSION

Number 19

---

HANSARD

*Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA*

Thursday

June 17, 2021

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

**Statements by Members**

**SPEAKER:** Today we will hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Labrador West, Ferryland, St. John's Centre, Torngat Mountains, Conception Bay South and Windsor Lake with leave.

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to acknowledge Raeann Brown. Originally from Postville and now living in Labrador West, Raeann is an Indigenous artist, author and small business owner and operator of Inuky Glass Art. Raeann's culture and traditions can be seen through her art and writing, which helps to bring awareness of Indigenous issues and show the beauty of her culture.

Raeann started her home-based business 10 years ago, selling her art and glass etchings online. The business recently expanded last year into a full retail location. Seeing a small business flourish in Labrador West is exciting, and to expand during a pandemic is encouraging to see for any small business.

Raeann is also an author; her first book was a 30-page adult colouring book called *Inuky Art: The Colors of Our Culture*, full of original drawings, Inuit knowledge and stories. Raeann's second book, not yet released, is a children's book called *Bedtime in Nunatsiavut*, which was chosen for the 2021 CBC Short Story Prize.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Raeann Brown on her success and for sharing her beautiful work with us all.

Thank you.

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

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to wish a happy birthday to Ms. Marie Sullivan, the oldest resident of Calvert, who is celebrating her 100th birthday today.

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** She was born and raised in Calvert where she still resides in her own home, caring for herself. She was the eldest of nine children. Ms. Sullivan left school at a young age to care for her eight siblings when her mother became sick.

Ms. Sullivan has eight children of her own, 20 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren. When her kids were young, she sewed most of her children's clothes and was the local seamstress for many residents in the area. She also enjoys knitting as a hobby. Ms. Sullivan can put her hand to almost anything around the house, inside and out.

She has a great memory and tells many stories of days growing up. She has travelled to various parts of Canada and the US, and at the age of 95 she travelled to Ireland. She has a great interest in politics and keeps up to date on what's happening in the province. Ms. Sullivan is still in excellent health.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members of this House to join me in wishing Ms. Sullivan a happy 100th birthday.

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

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

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

BGC St. John's, formerly the Boys and Girls Clubs of St. John's, offers programs and services to 750 children and youth annually, ages five to 18, from two locations: Buckmaster's Circle and Mundy Pond.

Food insecurity is a serious issue in our communities and the dedicated four permanent and 10 part-time staff work hard to address it. Project Backpack sends children home each

weekend with snacks and easy meals for families.

One of the most needed and valued initiative is Warm Bellies: a supper program, providing some 50 to 60 hot meals weekly to children and youth who need them. Staff cook and serve the meals at the centre. This program started when staff noticed that children were not going home during the supper hour and, instead, were waiting outside their doors until they reopened, without having food.

COVID-19 increased the need for the Warm Bellies program, Project Backpack and many other programs offered by BGC St. John's. The pandemic also decreased fundraising opportunities. Now, more than ever, BGC needs our help to carry on its essential service to the children, youth and families in our communities.

I ask Members to recognize and support the valuable work of BGC St. John's.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

**L. EVANS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I pay tribute to late Bryan Rich of Natuashish for a lifetime of dedicated service to his people. Bryan left this world too early, a couple of weeks ago, at the age of 27. The primary caregiver to four small children, his heart was great and everyone loved and respected him.

Although Bryan was battling PTSD, many turned to him for support and encouragement. He is remembered as the caring one, big smile on his face, always saying something that made people feel better.

Firefighter, deputy fire chief of Natuashish, in the last two days of his life, he responded to 22 call-outs – the highest number of debris fires that Natuashish has seen.

He was a racer, with a warrior heart. Partnered with his uncle Gregory Rich, he took Cain's Quest by storm. He raced in honour of his late

cousin, Bernice, stopping only after a serious accident broke his ribs and bruised his lungs, ending his race by being medevaced to St. John's. He recovered ready to race again.

I will end my tribute by quoting what he said from his hospital bed almost two years ago: Thanks, everyone. I will return for 2022. I got unfinished business to take care of. I wanna fight like how the women fight for their lives. I wanna bring awareness across Canada and Labrador about missing and murdered Indigenous women. Hopefully, next race, I'll get sponsored. I spent a lot of money on this race that I'll never regret. Respect the women.

Please join me in applauding the life of Bryan Rich.

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

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

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

I rise today to speak of the many Lions Clubs throughout the province. Mr. Speaker, 2020 represented 100 years of service in Canada. Canadian Lions Clubs are being encouraged to complete centennial projects to celebrate this milestone.

With the co-operation and assistance of the NL Forest Ecosystem Management department, the 51 Lions Clubs of District N4, which is from Gander to Pouch Cove, will be planting 10,000 trees in June. Clubs have partnered with their municipalities, Scouts, cadets, schools and many other community groups for this project. Trees will be planted in parks, sports fields, cutting areas and fire-damaged areas. Lions Clubs are proud to partake in this program which helps our environment.

CBS Lions Club will also be participating by planting trees around the community and the new Community Garden. CBS Lions Club also made a \$5,000 donation to the CBS Community Garden project in Kelligrews to help install a ramp around the area to make it wheelchair accessible. This annual project will stand as a living legacy to the Lions motto, "We Serve," for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating not only the CBS Lions Club, but all participating Lions Clubs from Gander to Pouch Cove.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Windsor Lake, with leave.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Leave.

**SPEAKER:** Leave granted.

**J. HOGAN:** Thank you to my colleagues in the House for granting leave.

Today marks the passing of a dear family friend and resident of Windsor Lake, Helen Lawlor. Some hon. Members will know of Helen and her life's work in health care. She was a dedicated nurse, a graduate of St. Clare's. Helen exemplified a life dedicated to caring and service to the people of the Northern Peninsula, the West Coast and her beloved southern shore.

Helen played an important role in the Department of Health in the development of public health and hospital services. She never forgot that policies were meant to provide the best possible supports to individuals and her voice was a constant reminder of kindness, generosity of spirit and services.

My condolences to Helen's brother, Loyola and her family and friends.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** Statements by Ministers.

#### Statements by Ministers

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Premier.

**PREMIER A. FUREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In 2020, our government recognized the need to find an appropriate name for the annual

government holiday observed in June, which happens to fall on June 21 this year. It is important to find a name that is in line with moving forward and honouring the process of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

We've been collaborating with Indigenous leaders to consider possible alternatives. Recognizing that this is a significant teaching moment and learning opportunity, we are talking about ways to engage the young people of our province in this process.

There's no better time to have these conversations, as coincidentally, the observance of the June Holiday this year falls on National Indigenous Peoples Day. Accordingly, I encourage everyone to take the time to celebrate and educate themselves on the diversity and history of Indigenous communities in our province and take part in activities that are being organized by groups such as the Labrador Friendship Centre, First Light St. John's Friendship Centre and People of the Dawn Indigenous Friendship Centre.

Mr. Speaker, we all can and must do our part to foster deeper understanding and cultural awareness of the unique perspectives of Indigenous communities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I look forward to providing more information on the renaming of the June Holiday in the near future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**D. BRAZIL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Premier for an advance copy of his statement. Mr. Speaker, I join with the Premier in recognizing the upcoming Indigenous Peoples Day and acknowledge the need to address the name of the provincial holiday which occurs in June.

Working in collaboration with Indigenous groups, we must acknowledge that First Peoples

inhabited our province well before European contact. In the spirit of reconciliation, let's nurture a better cultural understanding and awareness of our First Peoples.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Premier for the advance copy of his statement. It was an honour last year to raise this issue of the June Holiday in the House of Assembly. The renaming of this day, in consultation with Indigenous partners, is important; a small step down the road to reconciliation. To that effect, I'm calling on all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to use this public holiday to educate ourselves and get deeper acquainted with our history.

Like most of you in this House, my school curriculum barely even mentioned Indigenous people, let alone featured their perspectives. As a result of undergoing – of the past has completely distorted and whitewashed our history. Without a balanced and informative account of our past, we fail to understand the perspectives of Indigenous people in this province. Rectifying this imbalance is a necessary precondition to embarking down the path of reconciliation.

Thank you all.

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

**SPEAKER:** Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation.

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

Following along on the same theme, I would like to bring to the attention of this hon. House that Monday, June 21 is National Indigenous Peoples Day.

This is a day to acknowledge the diverse and unique cultures and achievements of Indigenous peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador and across Canada.

We are also called upon to take a sombre moment and reflect on the 215 children from the Kamloops residential school who did not get an opportunity to grow up and follow their dreams.

I would like to repeat that mantra which evokes in all of us a responsibility to do better – that is – 'Every Child Matters.'

As we emerge from the pandemic, some Indigenous organizations are planning in-person activities; others are staging virtual events on Monday. These are an opportunity for all of us to learn about Indigenous traditions and history.

Our government has resolved to strengthen relationships with Indigenous governments and organizations. Through mutual respect, listening and learning, we are making progress. The weekly meeting that the Premier and I have with Indigenous leaders is one example.

As part of our efforts to learn from the past and make amends, we continue on our journey of reconciliation. On National Indigenous Peoples Day, we encourage everyone to find out how they can increase their knowledge about Indigenous history, values and teachings.

As we join with Indigenous peoples throughout our vast land, we hear and support their advocacy to make things better, and we share their hopes for a brighter future.

Thank you, Nakkumek, Tshinashkumitan, Wela'liq.

Happy National Indigenous Peoples Day.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

**L. EVANS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. As Canadians, we will stand on June 21 to recognize the cultures and contributions of

First Nations, Inuit and Metis Indigenous peoples of our great country.

While we will celebrate as a country, we must also reflect and mourn as a country. We must give pause and recognize both the harm and intergenerational trauma inflicted on our Indigenous peoples by governments in colonialization. Until true reconciliation is accomplished, June 21 will be a day for Indigenous peoples to grieve past harms. Canada's history books are now filling up with past harms finally documented.

Today, we will live in a Canadian society that's filled with phrases and acronyms summarizing this dark history: intergenerational trauma, trauma that is passed down through generations in families; MMIWG inquiry, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls; and TRC, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which created a historical record of the residential school system and facilitated reconciliation among former Indigenous students, their families, their communities and all Canadians, concluding with 94 calls to action.

Residential schools – another phrase. The school system was created to remove Indigenous children from the influence of their own culture and assimilate them into the dominant Canadian culture. I quote: To kill the Indian in the child. Another phrase: cultural genocide. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission labelled the residential school system as a case of cultural genocide.

Now, as dark as this history is to Canada, it is encouraging to see the effort towards true reconciliation. As Indigenous peoples and their communities heal, we will begin to truly begin to celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement. As a proud husband of an Inuk woman and the father of Inuit daughters, I join the minister in recognizing and celebrating of National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21. This story – all days really – is an important opportunity to celebrate the cultures and stories and the lives of Indigenous people in our province and country. It's also an opportunity to acknowledge the harms caused to these people by colonialism and continued systemic racism.

On behalf of the Third Party caucus, I would like to repeat the important words: every child matters. We all have a part to play in reconciliation and it starts with learning the history of our country, taking a critical look at the whitewashed history we are all taught in school and respect, education and meaningful action are true paths towards reconciliation.

On June 21, my wife, daughters and all Indigenous people have a lot to be proud of: their culture, their heritage and their community. On June 21, our government has a lot to acknowledge and we look forward to working with government on actions towards truth and reconciliation.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** Further statements by ministers?

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

**D. BRAGG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I recently had the pleasure of joining our dedicated and professional team of wildlife experts from the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture while conducting a caribou population survey of the Grey Islands, located off the Great Northern Peninsula. During this survey work, I was given the opportunity to learn more the about the department's caribou relocation program in this region, and the well-being of 12 caribou (three male and nine female) brought to the islands in 2019. Since the 1960s, relocation programs have

been carried out on the Islands to sustainably manage caribou populations.

During the early 1990s, the Grey Islands herd reached a peak of 578 animals, but had fallen to single digits when surveyed in 2016. This prompted the development of a management plan.

The re-establishment of an offshore caribou herd on the Grey Islands is significant, as it offers a means to safeguard the long-term existence of caribou populations in the event of a catastrophic occurrence impacting insular Island herds. It is hoped this initiative will also provide new hunting opportunities as the herd grows.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that during the survey conducted a few weeks ago, 10 of the 12 caribou, nine females and one male were identified as healthy and in great shape. The other good news is that most of the females were spotted with calves: all but one female had a calf, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, these are excellent survival rates and encouraging news for the success of the relocation program, and the future growth and success of the Grey Islands herd.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**P. FORSEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

Mr. Speaker, the caribou population all across the Island and in Labrador is troublesome. It is great to see government investing in a program that allows the province to learn more about managing and sustaining our caribou population.

Mr. Speaker, it is great news to see excellent survival rates for the Grey Islands caribou relocation program, but we must do more as a government to combat illegal hunting of caribou, especially the illegal poaching of caribou by Quebec hunters in Labrador.

With that being said, it is important for government to invest further in scientific work, including the caribou relocation program, so that in a couple of years' time we can all come together in this House to celebrate the population growth of caribou all across our great province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement and congratulate him on this news.

The re-establishment of the caribou herd on Grey Islands is much welcomed indeed, and I'm sure the minister, though, will agree with me, there is still much more work to be done to ensure the vitality of our official animal.

Specifically, we need to embark on further research to ensure that herds do not fall victim to the effects of climate change. We also desperately need enhanced protection for the Mealy Mountain and Red Wine herds, which are in dire crisis.

That is why the Third Party is calling today for more provincial studies on our caribou herds to contribute toward an updated action plan for their protection. We also ask that government enhance its wildlife staff so that plan enactment and rule enforcement are carried out effectively.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** Are there any further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

**D. BRAZIL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We in the PC Official Opposition note today as a momentous day for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and the workers who have been waiting these many months to get back to work. We thank Suncor and their partners for finding common ground and allowing our skilled trades workers another chance to work on this project.

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**D. BRAZIL:** I ask the Premier: What are the next steps needed to get work started on this project?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Premier.

**PREMIER A. FUREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**PREMIER A. FUREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I certainly acknowledge the kind statements from the Member opposite and the response, and, frankly, for the fulsome debate that occurred here in the House. I think everyone recognizes that everybody wanted what was best for the province. There were differing opinions at times and it got heated at times. This was the right outcome for the hard-working women and men who work in this industry and on that platform in particular, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**D. BRAZIL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We recognize the amount of work that takes places behind the scenes in these difficult situations and wish to applaud department officials and those on the other side of the House for their efforts to make today's announcement possible.

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

**D. BRAZIL:** There are still some hurdles left to cross, but congratulations to everyone involved in supporting the workers and families who rely on the Terra Nova Project.

I ask the Premier: How much of the Terra Nova refit will be done in this province to ensure jobs for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Premier.

**PREMIER A. FUREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, the memorandum of understanding that has been signed with Suncor as the project operator certainly emphasizes the importance of work here in the province. We all recognize, as does the union for that matter, that not all the work can be done here in the province. Certainly, the money that we are putting in will be going towards work to be done here in the province to support, again, the hard-working women and men who work on this platform, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**D. BRAZIL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Bull Arm was home to the Hibernia and Hebron platforms, both of which employed residents from all corners of this province and generated prosperity for many communities. Bull Arm has the potential to be a world-class asset and to attract oil industry players from around the globe. Our workforce is ready to go to work at Bull Arm.

How will the Premier ensure that Bull Arm is used to support the Terra Nova refit?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Premier.

**PREMIER A. FUREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We all recognize the incredible value in Bull Arm and the fact that it has produced some



incredible projects, and hopefully, it will continue to produce more into the future.

We recognize, as a government, the value of that asset, the value of Bull Arm and, more importantly, the value of the women and men who work at that site, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to invest and look at the value of this asset in our current portfolio to ensure that it is delivering the value to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

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

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

**P. FORSEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The spruce budworm is once again showing up in our province, flying in on the wind from Quebec, according to CBC.

When insecticide is being used in other parts of the province, it is not being employed in Gros Morne National Park.

I ask the minister: Why is Gros Morne not being protected from the spruce budworm outbreak?

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

**D. BRAGG:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

A great question to ask in this House. A decision that's been made by the representatives of Gros Morne park that's not really understood or agreed to by us. The Gros Morne park will now be a breeding ground for this infestation. We're going to spray all around it; we're going to do our part, but we have no control over what happens in Gros Morne park.

If anyone who has any authority or has any contact would like to reach out and express their concern to the officials responsible for the park, by all means do it, because it doesn't have my support that they don't spray for this infestation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**P. FORSEY:** Parks Canada may not be worried about their decision that will affect the rest of the Island, but we are. A spruce budworm outbreak could affect our forest industry and our tourist industry. Should our beautiful parks lose these trees as a result?

I ask the minister: What will you do?

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

**D. BRAGG:** Again, Mr. Speaker, another great question.

I can guarantee you we're going to do everything we possibly can do. We've actually enhanced our spraying program this summer. We have a dedicated team and staff members that track the way the spruce budworm actually gets into the province. It's up in the clouds believe it or not; it drifts here and gets down. The West Coast is always where it lands first – understandably so – once it crosses the Strait.

We are doing our part, Mr. Speaker. We are monitoring this and we are going to spray for this. This happened years ago and we're prepared to handle it again now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**P. FORSEY:** Central Newfoundland has been known as the fibre basket, yet local contractors are being denied extra allowable cuts.

Can the minister explain why this is happening?

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

**D. BRAGG:** Absolutely untrue, Mr. Speaker – absolutely untrue.

I challenge the Member to show me someone's permit who got less wood this year. By all accounts – and from what I've been understanding – people have an increase in their

cut this year. So if the Member has someone that has less than what they had last year, please bring it forward to me.

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

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

**P. FORSEY:** Mr. Speaker, with the unlocking of 280,000 cubic metres of Abitibi permits, can the minister explain what happened to the extra timber allocations?

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

**D. BRAGG:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and another great question.

As the hon. Member would know, we have a forestry management plan in this province in which we plan to stick to. We're reviewing that. It's a working document; it's not something that dust lies on. I assure you, Mr. Speaker, we have a competent crew who will tell us what our allocations should be and where we're going.

Actually, right now, we have taken a senior forester to work with our five major producers in this province to look at the sustainability and viability for those organizations and their wood allotments for years to come. We are doing our part, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**P. FORSEY:** Mr. Speaker, in the recent election the Liberal candidate announced that the 24-hour emergency room service in Botwood would reopen.

I ask the minister: Does he intend to reopen the 24-hour emergency room in Botwood, or did the Liberal candidate mislead the people in the Exploits District?

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

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

The undertaking was, and always has been, that once the staffing was completed for the new wing, the new \$20-million 19-bed PCU in Botwood, we would be in a position to assess the need and assess the staffing. The unit has been handed over, the keys. Construction is finished and I congratulate the contractors for the quality of their work.

We will be staffing up and we will be moving patients in over the coming week and months, Mr. Speaker. By then, we will have the data and the information we need to make any decisions.

Thank you very much.

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

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

**P. FORSEY:** Mr. Speaker, the \$6.1-million project is complete, yes.

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

**P. FORSEY:** Mr. Speaker, the promise was not \$20 million, as the minister says; the promise was – in three promises – that the 24-hour emergency services would reopen, not to match needs to services.

Can the minister tell us when the reopening of the 24-hour emergency services will be?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Health and Community Services.

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

The Member opposite has it wrong, unfortunately. If he were to go back and retrace the comments made by myself and the premiers of the day, he will find it is as I have stated: That when the unit is staffed and fully occupied, there would be an assessment of the need for 24-hour emergency services and the staffing available to provide that, and a decision would be taken at that time. I have said that and I stand by it, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

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

A briefing note prepared in February reveals an increase in breeding between farmed salmon on the South Coast of Newfoundland and wild salmon. The briefing note cites Dr. Ian Bradbury, a DFO scientist, whose research suggests the increase is due to escaped farmed salmon.

I ask the minister: When did you become aware of this situation?

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

**D. BRAGG:** Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the situation would be that the Member is talking about. I am aware of a briefing note, but that doesn't substantially mean or actually mean that there is actual proof of this. There is speculation. People – as you know and I know – would make the accusation that this happens, but right now, I don't have any concrete evidence that actually exists.

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

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

**C. PARDY:** The briefing note suggested, Mr. Speaker, that there was a significant amount of European DNA found in our fish, in our wild stock, on the South Coast. That was in the briefing note.

The research suggests there's a chance that some operators in the aquaculture industry may have brought European fish into the province without regulatory approval, which could result in licence cancellation.

I ask the minister: Has this been investigated?

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

**D. BRAGG:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I assure the Member opposite we have some of the most stringent regulations in this country when it comes to aquaculture and the aquaculture industry. What the Member is referring to may have happened 20 years ago. It's not happening today. We have regulatory means to ensure every fish that comes in this province meets the standard that it should to get here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**C. PARDY:** Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House are very proud of the aquaculture industry.

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

**C. PARDY:** We want it to be world class, which means the world-class regulations that protect residents, environment and the industry.

What actions have the department taken to prevent salmon escapes and protect the environment?

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

**D. BRAGG:** Great question, Mr. Speaker.

In the offshore – because we did, as the Member may allude to, have an escape in an inshore pen in a landlocked pond earlier this week. It's registered on the site. There was approximately, I think, 8,000 fish escaped in a pond. DFO is dealing with that. It's being recaptured.

In our saltwater pens, we have increased the depth of the pens. We have increased the structure of the pens and the integrity of the pens. Mr. Speaker, we have gone above and beyond what most other parts of the world are doing.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow morning I'm actually meeting with all the Atlantic premiers – not premiers; I'm sorry, fisheries ministers – who are going to talk about aquaculture and the

*Aquaculture Act*. We are on top of this. We are leaders when it comes to Atlantic Canada; we are the leaders in this industry.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**C. PARDY:** Just to share the briefing note of the sampling data that the minister's department had received: 17 per cent of North American farmed salmon had significant DNA attributable to interbreeding with European salmon with some samples showing between 20 to 40 per cent European ancestry.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, we have seen instances of alleged animal cruelty and abuse towards household pets. The last time changes to animal protection laws were made was almost 10 years.

I ask the minister: Is his department reviewing the *Animal Health and Protection Act* to ensure it is effective and up to date?

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

**D. BRAGG:** Well, Mr. Speaker if the hon. Member had listened to an interview I did some time ago on CBC Radio, he would know I am an animal lover. I have people that are very competent. We are reviewing that act as we speak. We're bringing that up to date.

I do not condone anyone who abuses a family pet in any way or any animal in any way. We will make sure that legislation is in place to protect the animals, and of our pets, in the future.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**C. PARDY:** We are animal lovers on this side of the House as well, Mr. Speaker.

Animal welfare advocates in our province have called for restrictions on how long an animal may be tethered or tied up outdoors.

I ask the minister: Will his department review regulations to ensure that they are effective and, again, up to date?

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

**D. BRAGG:** I think the question pretty well answers itself: Of course we will, Mr. Speaker.

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

**D. BRAGG:** We will take it all: cages, pens and the length of time an animal is barred in anyway, we're going to review everything, Mr. Speaker. We're going to make sure that the integrity and the safety and the well-being of anybody's pet is well looked after.

If not, Mr. Speaker, I will be one of the volunteers to remove a pet from somebody if they were abusing it. That's my past history.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to talk about that today.

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

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

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last year, the budget for fire equipment including fire trucks was \$3 million. This year, the line item is \$2.7 million. In Estimates, the department could not tell us how many trucks will be purchased with agreements from municipalities.

I ask the minister: How many trucks will be purchased for this year?

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

**J. HOGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question.

Just to correct the numbers. Last year, the base budget was \$1.88 million. It's \$1.88 million again this year. There was a one-time increase in that budget last year of \$1.12 million, and there's an additional increased one-time payment this year of almost another million dollars. The base number has not changed over the last several years.

Any decision on fire trucks, obviously – the budget was approved here yesterday and we will be making those in the near future.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We also learned in Estimates that there were 62 fire truck applications from municipalities, valued at \$18 million that came in last year.

How many of these 62 municipalities will be left without new equipment that they desperately require?

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

**J. HOGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member for the question.

He's correct. There are lots of applications. When we do make the decisions on where the fire trucks and equipment will go, Mr. Speaker, we will take into account all kinds of things, such as service level that's going to be provided, training levels, water supplies in certain area, regional service delivery, existing fleets, vehicles in the fleet, distance to mutual aid support, isolation factor and risk in municipalities. We will take all of those into consideration when we make those decisions and make sure Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have the fire protection that they need.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There are many rural communities in our province operating with vehicles which are over 20 years old and they need to be replaced. To quote one departmental official: There is a great need, no doubt, all across our province.

I ask the minister: Will you publicly release the analysis and the rankings which support the awarding of fire trucks and equipment from this year's budget?

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

**J. HOGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you for the question.

I can only assume that any municipality or town that is making an application has a need for these fire trucks and equipment. So everybody does have those needs. But like I said, there are all kinds of various factors that go into those assessments, and we'll consider all those factors when we make our decision.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, according to a recent meeting with senior RCMP officials, RCMP are facing over a \$14 million shortfall in the province. This will have a direct impact on detachments, staffing levels and response times.

What can the minister tell this House about how the cuts will impact police services?

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

**J. HOGAN:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member for the question.

We passed the budget yesterday and there were no cuts to the budget for the RCMP.

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

**J. HOGAN:** I can advise the Member opposite and Members of this House that I have met with the RCMP since I became the Minister of Justice and they ensure me that they work within the budgets to provide the services throughout this province. They are doing things to modernize the policing in this province, the same way that this government is modernizing core services to provide efficient services at a good cost for the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Mr. Speaker, there may not be any cuts, but it is our understanding that funding spending limits by the provincial government have been frozen for 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, over \$14 million – that's a significant amount of money. We hear daily from communities who lack police presence or must wait hours for a response. We do also understand Trepassey and Grand Bank detachments closed last year.

What other detachments are in jeopardy, and should residents in areas like Bonavista and Conception Bay North be worried?

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

**J. HOGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member for the question.

Just to note again, the budget was passed yesterday and the RCMP will make operational decisions about what detachments are necessary for policing in this province. It's not a decision

of the Department of Justice, so I can't answer that question.

I will note that while provincial base funding has not increased lately, the province has responded to several one-time funding requests, as need, over the last several years. So if there are needs of the RCMP and we can meet them, we will provide them with that additional funding, if necessary.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Geoffrey Fowlow has expressed his intent to retire after his many years of service to our local communities. This has many in the Arnold's Cove area concerned with their access to medical care.

I ask the minister: What is being done to recruit a doctor or a nurse practitioner for the people of the Arnold's Cove area?

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

**J. HAGGIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the question.

I'd like to thank Dr. Fowlow for his years of service to the people of Arnold's Cove and the surrounding area.

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

**J. HAGGIE:** In terms of recruitment of health care providers, in general, the regional health authorities have taken up that cause. At one time a fee-for-service physician was a solo business and when they close, they close and it was up to them to find their replacement. That is no longer acceptable; it is no longer primary care as we would like to see it. We will, of course, be informed going forward by the Health Accord, but essentially there will be efforts to recruit a primary care practitioner to suit the needs of that district.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It has been years and at least three ministers that the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor has been advocating for the historic Grand Falls House to be transferred to the town, yet nothing has been done.

I ask the minister: Why is this historic piece in Central Newfoundland history being allowed to decay while we have an interested party willing to take it over?

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

**E. LOVELESS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member for the question.

To date, I can say that it is a priority of the town and we're working with the town to resolve it.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

**T. WAKEHAM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure for an update on the grant application for the maintenance and repair for the road to Blue Beach.

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

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

I know the Member has been in contact with my staff on this. There is a condition around that, and once that condition is met I'll be looking at that very favourably for those hard-working fishermen that use that road to obtain their employment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Black Brook Bridge is located near Deep Bight on the Trans-Canada and it's in serious disrepair. Over the last several years, there have been several accidents, several near misses and, unfortunately, a fatality. Local first responders all attribute this to the condition of the bridge, a bridge – I'll add – that is on our Trans-Canada.

When will the minister commit to having this bridge fixed correctly?

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

**E. LOVELESS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member for the question.

I don't have the specifics on that. I've reviewed, I guess, roadwork, bridges and culverts, I work closely with the staff and I get the engineering reports. When it comes to bridges I recognize that there are many bridges in this province. I don't have the up-to-date details on that, but I will get it for the Member, no problem.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

The restoration of the Colonial Building has cost well over \$20 million. At Estimates, the Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation Minister referred to Transportation and Infrastructure for an update on the project. Unfortunately, during the Transportation and Infrastructure Estimates the minister was unaware, despite giving out a \$1.3-million contract for further work earlier this year.

I ask the minister: What is the latest on this project?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation.

**S. CROCKER:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I am happy to answer the question because I think that it is a very important part of our history. Being the 50th General Assembly, I think it is something that is going to be really good to see. The work at the Colonial Building is ongoing and we anticipate work to be completed in 2022.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, there has been many questions asked in the House over the years about the five-year roads program, but we're getting some mixed messages from the minister.

My question is: Is the five-year roads program still a reality or are we expecting a newer version? Because right now, there appears to be a lot of roadwork outstanding.

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

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

I think I made it clear to the Member, even in Estimates, about the five-year Roads Plan. I'm not rolling out a five-year Roads Plan; there will be a plan coming out in 2022 that will clearly define a multi-year Roads Plan.

Right now, there is a lot of work being done. At the end of May, there was over \$100 million worth of roadwork going on and many contracts. There is many being looked at right now. There are also bids and tenders going on. So there is lots of work going on. I have met with the Heavy Civil Association and they're pleased with what's happening.

Overall, work is continuing and I'll continue to monitor it. I'll tell you one thing I'll make clear to the Member: I will live within my financial means.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I asked the minister – because this is something that was heralded under the five-year Roads Plan – for this year is the politics out of the paving, or are we just going back to evidence-based paving, or is this going to be done by the choice of the minister and his officials?

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

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

I've been in the department since the middle of April and taking a very close look at ranking systems and roads and whatever. I will say to the Member: Whatever I say or do, you're going to accuse me of playing politics. You ask me who played politics. Ask your leader who played politics when he was on Bennett's Road stood in front of a pothole, up with a vehicle with his picture on it; that's playing politics with potholes.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, last night CBC's *Here and Now* reported on an egregious example of poaching on a river on the West Coast of the Island. One poacher pleaded guilty and was fined \$2,200 and prohibited from owning a salmon licence for two years; the other had charges dismissed.

John McCarthy of SPAWN believes that illegal netting and poaching has the biggest negative effect on our rivers and is larger than the



numbers caught by retention and catch-and-release anglers combined.

I ask the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture: What extra enforcement measures and resources will he deploy to help stamp out poaching, which threatens our wild Atlantic salmon population and takes away from the honest angler?

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

**D. BRAGG:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

A great question. Given the season, angling is open for salmon. People are on the rivers. The best resources we have are the anglers themselves. The more that these people can report any illegal activity that can be seen, it is better to protect our resource. We are actively, at all times, recruiting for our members of our enforcement division. We cover the province. Obviously, we can't be everywhere.

I cannot speak on the DFO charges because that is DFO. Nor do I condone anybody who does any illegal activity on our rivers, with our wildlife, anything in this province. We are committed to catch them where we can. We have a poachers' number, a 1-800 number that you call and report poachers. You can do it online. You can do it anonymously, Mr. Speaker.

I encourage everybody do their part –

**SPEAKER:** Your time is expired.

**D. BRAGG:** Thank you.

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

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

**J. DINN:** He didn't catch a breath, Mr. Speaker

–

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

**J. DINN:** – or a salmon.

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

**J. DINN:** Mr. Speaker, 1-800 numbers are fine, but we still need the resources there to stamp out this practice.

Mr. Speaker, with the FPSO announcement yesterday, workers and the communities who depend on them heaved a collective sigh of relief.

Meanwhile, Mr. Speaker, in Nova Scotia, companies such as CarbonCure Technologies are using carbon capture technology to manufacture stronger concrete, reduce its carbon footprint and create jobs. In fact, the company recently won a \$7.5-million US prize for its work in tackling climate change.

I ask the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology: What more can his department, government, do to attract innovative companies like CarbonCure to set up shop in Newfoundland and Labrador and help transition us to a green economy?

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

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

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

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**A. PARSONS:** Thank you.

I want to thank the Member for what I think is a really good question.

I'll begin by saying that I think last night was a sigh of relief for a lot of workers in this province, a lot people, a lot of families. I think we all feel the same that it's a step in the right direction for these people and for our province.

But as it relates to moving forward, what I can tell you is that we are absolutely interested in working with companies, both in province and out of province, as it relates to carbon capture, as it relates to green tech, as it relates to innovation.

We've got a number of different angles including an Investment Attraction Fund, as well as the Venture Newfoundland and Labrador II fund that will hopefully be coming in the near future, where we're able to have an independent board that invests in innovative companies that are doing a wide array of work. That's one thing that we've certainly been doing, encouraged by the Premier, is trying to bring new tech here, investing in green energy, including in our current industries such as mining and the offshore.

Thank you.

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

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

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The entire Terra Nova deal is still conditional, and the FPSO still has to sail to Spain for a lengthy rebuild.

I ask the Premier: Why isn't the government demanding that work that can be done will be done in this province?

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

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

I appreciate the question from the Member opposite.

It gives us an opportunity to speak about the last 24 hours and how important it's been for this province. And the fact that this province took a stand, this government took a stand and we stood by that and we got the best deal possible.

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

**A. PARSONS:** But the Member is right. The reality is there is still work left to do and the asset life extension has to happen. What I can tell the Member opposite – what's very important – we've always been concerned with scope of work and work. Every single dollar that we have committed to the partnership group will be spent on Newfoundland and Labrador

workers and on work happening in Newfoundland and Labrador, and not a dollar of our money will be going outside of this province.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Labrador West for a quick question, no preamble, please.

**J. BROWN:** Mr. Speaker, the Terra Nova partnership, they have taken our money, our offer; they are wealthy oil companies.

I ask the Premier: At any point of the discussion did we impose that all work that could be done will be done before a cent is transferred?

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

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

I would say that, yes, we did impose conditions on the companies and on the partnership to ensure that certain criteria were met. One of them is that we were absolutely not going to risk the Treasury here. We're not going to risk the future of this province. The other thing is when it comes to the asset life extension, no money of the \$175 million will go towards that if it is not sanctioned, if that project does not happen. That is absolutely important and ensures the future of the field.

But the big thing I would say to the Member opposite is that, yes, not one dollar of the money that is going from the federal fund – not one dollar – will go to work outside of this province. It will be based on Newfoundland and Labrador jobs. It will be based on people working in offices here, doing coordination, doing planning, you name it. That was one of the conditions, we stuck by it and we got it.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

### Notices of Motion

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

**S. CROCKER:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I give notice that I will on tomorrow move, in accordance with Standing Order 11(1), that this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 22, 2021.

**SPEAKER:** Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I give notice that on tomorrow I will move the following motion:

That notwithstanding Standing Order 63, this House shall not proceed with Private Members' Day on Wednesday, June 23, 2021, but shall instead meet at 2 p.m. on that day for Routine Proceedings and to conduct government business; and

That any private Member's motion by the Official Opposition scheduled for that day shall be deferred, and shall be debated on the next occurring Private Members' Day.

**SPEAKER:** Any further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### Petitions

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

**C. PARDY:** The current act respecting the health and protection of animals utilizes the chief veterinary officer, along with staff veterinarians and/or a member of the RNC or the RCMP. They also allow municipal enforcement officers to be trained.

It is the contention of the undersigned that since the act was assented on June 24, 2010, far too few animals have been rescued or assisted in a timely manner, due to the overwhelming demands on those parties listed above for which the act, section 68, lists as inspectors, and no follow-up education initiatives exist with the enforcement efforts currently in place.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to work with the provincial SPCA to develop an appropriate and adequate system of enforcement and education measures to assist animals in need of care. This would include inspector training for individuals within the SPCA organization and development of a coordinated enforcement program similar to other provinces in Canada. These measures would elevate the welfare of animal rights and greatly enhance appropriate and timely enforcement, while reducing the strain on organizations such as RNC and RCMP.

When signatures were requested for this petition, Mr. Speaker, it broke a record in the District of Bonavista, as the signatures were coming fast and furious. I know on the one in front of me the first four names would be: Lora Swyers, Roxanne Templeman, Jacqueline Pearce and Sherry Lee Ford. There were hundreds of names that came forth, all appealing to make sure that when we revisit this regulation and this legislation that we have, that we get it right.

We changed it sometime ago and gave the mandate to the RNC and RCMP and we know they're heavily taxed. Even without the animal welfare, they are heavily taxed. We just said that they haven't had an increase in 10 years, while the demands on their services, conceivably and arguably, have grown. It certainly has – that we have given the animal welfare and protection of these domestic animals.

I would hope that the minister rightfully has opened up the act for review. I would hope that

he'll give this good consideration and relieve the RCMP and RNC of this task and put it in some appropriate authorities to do the job right.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture for a response.

**D. BRAGG:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It is a great petition –

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

**D. BRAGG:** Yeah, it's a full day's work for me today. Get my stamps, as they would say home.

Mr. Speaker, we are actively working on that new act. We realize where the pets are from, where they were 50 years ago, 20 years ago, one time you could go around any community in this province and you'd see dogs roaming. Rarely would you see a dog roaming now. People pay thousands of dollars for these pets right now. Not saying they wouldn't abuse them.

Society has changed, Mr. Speaker. We will make sure that our act reflects where society is today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

**L. EVANS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I present a petition on climate emergency declaration, a petition to the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We, the undersigned residents of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador –

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**L. EVANS:** – bring attention to the House of Assembly to the following:

WHEREAS according to the document *The Way Forward on Climate Change* the province is already experiencing the effects of climate change; Newfoundland and Labrador joined the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change* in 2016, but is not on track to meet its 2020 targets; financial costs resulting from climate change will unequally impact municipalities due to the responsibilities set out in the *Municipalities Act, 1999*.

THEREFORE our petitioners call upon the House of Assembly to urge the government to: declare a climate emergency, establish a task force on decreasing the effects of climate crisis while building community resilience and consider climate in all policy and decision-making.

Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to take a couple of minutes that I have left to speak on this petition. I remember back in the day I was doing a research paper when I was in university. It was on the impacts of global warming and the effects for our province. I was really surprised when I started researching that as the Earth warmed and we have global warming, in actual fact Newfoundland and Labrador would experience a local regional cooling.

As the glaciers melted and went into the ocean and came south with the Labrador Current, in actual fact our waters would cool. With the Gulf Stream coming up and meeting the Labrador Current, we would actually have more rain, more fog, more cool weather, unpredictable weather and a lot of different types of storms. Right now, we experience storms every so often, but in actual fact, this can be very detrimental to our quality of life in our province and also to our economy.

The importance of petitions like this is to make sure that we're doing all we can to stop, slow and reverse global warming. If not, Newfoundland and Labrador will be greatly impacted, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

I thank the hon. Member for Torngat Mountains for bringing forward the petition again. I think it's really important that we all talk about climate change and its effects everywhere we can, as often as we can, and as much as we can for as long as we can.

In that vein, I'm going to try to continue to fill my time with some of the interesting things that we are doing. I know there are significantly more things we will be doing. Stay tuned over the next coming years. You're going to see federal investment increase as well as provincial investment co-operatively increased to try to address some of these concerns. Not only is it we have to for our well-being, but we should be doing it anyway for the people of our province and for the future generations.

We've taken action on some 43 of the 45 items that were in our Climate Change Action Plan. I'd like to thank the staff in the department for working so hard on that. Those will see reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, stimulate clean innovation and growth and rebuild resiliency in the municipalities, which is one of the concerns that were highlighted in the petition.

We have committed to the net-zero emissions by 2050, which is a federal government initiative. We're going to talk about some initiatives later on this afternoon, I hope, with respect to carbon taxation. We've also announced six programs just this past month that are dealing with fuel switching. By 2030, those efficiencies and those changes are going to deliver some 830,000 tons of reductions in greenhouse gases.

We've done things, little things, within the Government of Newfoundland –

**SPEAKER:** The minister's time has expired.

**B. DAVIS:** Perfect. Thank you.

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

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

I'm presenting a petition here. We, the undersigned residents of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, bring attention of the House of Assembly to the following:

WHEREAS according to the document *The Way Forward on Climate Change* the province has already experienced the effects of climate change; NL joined the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change* in 2016, but it's not on track to meet its 2020 targets; financial costs resulted from climate change will unequally impact municipalities due to responsibilities set out in the *Municipalities Act, 1999*.

THEREFORE your petitioners call upon the House of Assembly to urge the government to: declare a climate emergency; establish a task force on decreasing the effects of climate crisis while building community resilience; and consider climate in all policy and decision-making.

Mr. Speaker, we're seeing a theme here. Of course, there are a number of us here in the House who were approached, I guess, to present these petitions. I'm certainly glad to do so. I'm definitely not a denier of climate change for sure. I don't think any of us are. But, Mr. Speaker, I think we also recognize where things are going. Obviously, we welcome the announcement, and I want to certainly join my colleagues in congratulating the minister for his part in getting this deal on Terra Nova.

But I think we all realize, even oil companies themselves realize, that there is a global move afoot to move away from fossil fuels. I believe they've indicated that they're expecting, come the 2030s, the next decade, they're going to see the world demand for fossil fuels start to drop. They are starting to transition.

We have an opportunity here in Newfoundland and Labrador with all of our resources, hydro resources and so on, opportunities for wind energy, tidal energy and so on, we can be world leaders here. I'm glad to see that government is starting to go down that road. I certainly encourage them to start moving as fast as they

can so that we can be leaders in this regard. We can create a clean, green economy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I won't take too long. I just want to say thank you to the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands. I'm going to pre-thank the Member for Lab West who has a similar petition coming forward. I won't address both of them, but I will say that we're going to have a great discussion, hopefully, today on carbon tax and I'll bring a lot of the issues forward in there.

I'm not, not speaking to your petition, I will speak to it this afternoon, just not in this forum right here.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**J. BROWN:** First of all, I thank the Minister for Environment and Climate Change for pre-emptively doing that. I appreciate him answering all these petitions, because it's nice to see that we're taking this very seriously here in the House of Assembly today.

We, the undersigned residents of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, bring the attention of the House of Assembly to the following:

WHEREAS according to the document, *The Way Forward on Climate Change*, the province is already experiencing the effects of climate change; NL joined the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change* in 2016, but is not on track to meet the 2020 targets; financial costs resulting from climate change will unequally impact municipalities due to the responsibilities set out in the *Municipalities Act, 1999*.

THEREFORE your petitioners call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to: declare a climate emergency; establish a task force on decreasing the effects of climate change

while building community resilience; and consider climate change in all policy and decision-making.

It is important. Like I said yesterday, we feel climate change and we're feeling it twice as much as the Canadian average in Labrador. We had significant work done by Dr. Robert Way on that, on his work that he does with Queen's University. I've seen it even this past winter.

I enjoy winter. Winter is the thing I look forward to the most all year-round. That's being a Labradorian, I guess. We didn't have proper ice conditions even on the interior of Labrador. We had little snow. We had rain. We actually had a lot of rain. We never have rain in the wintertime on the Labrador interior. We had rain on Christmas Day – actually, torrential rain on Christmas Day. This is not normal. This is not what historic climate models show.

We are experiencing it and it's causing so much disruption and everything in our communities. I can only imagine people who live on the coasts of this province and how much damage and stuff is being done by storm surges and done by the changes in climate. We need to take action, not only just with this but above and beyond.

It's encouraging remarks to hear the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology talk about they're looking at investments and stuff in companies that are doing work to reduce our carbon outputs and stuff. It can't come fast enough. If there's any possible way we can speed this up, move this along faster and get to the point of addressing these issues, let's do it. Let's band together, work together to address these serious concerns in our population.

Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

**SPEAKER:** Orders of the Day.

### Orders of the Day

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

**S. CROCKER:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I call Order 9, second reading of Bill 19.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality, that Bill 19, An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009 No. 2, be read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, “An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009 No. 2.” (Bill 19)

**SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 19, entitled, An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009 No. 2, do now be read a second time.

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

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

I am very excited to bring this bill to the House today. For those of you who don’t know, part of Digital Government and Service NL is Vital Statistics. Some people joke that it covers everyone from when they’re born to when they pass away. We are responsible for birth certificates, death certificates and marriage certificates. We make records and do certificates for still births and adoptions. We keep track of all the name changes. We also administer the regulations around clergy and civil authorities and how they perform marriage ceremonies. It is a very important part of our province and our provincial government and a very important part of our administrative record-keeping as a province, Mr. Speaker.

In 2017, our department put forward changes to allow an individual, born in Newfoundland and Labrador, to have their birth certificate recorded as a non-binary status, which was a huge win, Mr. Speaker, for our province and for people in our province impacted by having their gender or their sex when they’re born listed on their birth certificate.

Mr. Speaker, no one should have to worry about being judged because of their gender identification.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Hear, hear!

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you.

Since I have been minister of this department, many individuals have reached out to me and they have been very concerned because not everyone, up until this point, has been able to change their sex designation on their government documents. We have a gap at the moment which we are attempting to fill, Mr. Speaker.

If you are born in Newfoundland and Labrador or if your birth is registered in Newfoundland and Labrador you can apply today to have your sex designation changed on your Government of Newfoundland and Labrador documents. If you are born in another Canadian province, you can apply to that province to have your documents changed. If you are born in another country but you have received permanent resident status with the federal government in Canada, you can apply through that process to have your sex designation changed.

There is a significant gap, Mr. Speaker, in those who are not born in Canada, who have not achieved permanent resident status, who currently are unable to change their sex designation on their Canadian and Government of Newfoundland and Labrador documents. That is the gap we are attempting to close here today, which I look forward to explaining to the House.

The change we are proposing allows new and temporary residents – and indeed anyone whose birth is not registered in Newfoundland and Labrador – to change their sex designation via a certificate of change and this change would apply to Government of Newfoundland and Labrador documents and would allow the individual to use that change certificate to update records in other jurisdictions if they so chose, Mr. Speaker.

This is a significant win for the people who have reached out to me since I have been in this role and I am very pleased that we’re able to bring forward a change to the legislation to help those individuals.

The certificate of change is available, as I mentioned, to anyone whose birth is not

registered in Newfoundland and Labrador but they're living in Newfoundland and Labrador for three months. That's the criterion that aligns with other jurisdictions. Once they're here for three months, they can then apply for that certificate of change.

We have a specific process we're proposing for those who are under 16 years of age. They can still make this application. There is a few other documentation that's required that's listed in the act – which I'd be happy to answer questions on in greater detail in Committee stage, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to thank and welcome my friend and advocate Gemma Hickey who couldn't be here in the Chamber with us today but they are in the caucus room. Gemma filed a Supreme Court application in June 2017 that challenged the Vital Statistics Act under the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Mr. Speaker, Gemma has been a significant advocate for change in this province. I thank Gemma for all of their efforts.

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

**S. STOODLEY:** I'd also like to thank the numerous individuals who've reached out to me, who've been advocating for this change. I hope that this provides some relief and remedy to the challenges that they've been facing.

I look forward to hearing my fellow Members' comments on this very important issue. I thank the Chamber and the House Leader for bringing this legislation forward today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, I'd like to say it's an honour again to speak in the House. To represent the scenic District of Ferryland, it's certainly a pleasure.

To start off, I'd like to thank your staff for the briefing this morning. It was greatly done and thank you very much. Also at this time, I'd like to say that we're going to be support of this for sure.

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Currently a person's whose birth certificate is not registered in the province cannot change their sex designation in this province; a person born in another province can apply in their home province; and a person with permanent residency status can apply to change their designation through the federal government. But there is no way for an international student or an international worker to change their designation.

This legislation will allow residents of the province who have been here for at least three months to apply for this change to the designation of sex. Our legislation will mirror Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and PEI. It's a great initiative. I don't have many other points. When we get to Committee, we'll probably have a couple of questions.

It will cost an individual \$25 for the certificate of change, the document. If the person was born in another province, it can also be sent to this province to update the person's records.

Thank you very much.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Office of Women and Gender Equality.

**P. PARSONS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I certainly am very proud and happy to speak to this bill. Bill 19, for those of us watching at home, An Act to Amend the Vital Statistics Act, 2009 No. 2. Responsible departments, of course. I commend my colleague, the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

I also commend all advocates, Mr. Speaker, of course, for doing their part and making their voices heard. It's great to see when these important initiatives come to the floor of our proud Legislature here in Newfoundland and



Labrador. Of course, I'm very supportive of the bill and I look forward to all Members hopefully supporting this bill.

As Minister Responsible for the Office of Women and Gender Equality I'm very pleased to stand here and support this bill: Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Vital Statistics Act, 2009 No. 2.

Bill 19 seeks to amend the *Vital Statistics Act, 2009* to allow residents of Newfoundland and Labrador whose births are not registered in this province but who have been residing in the province for at least three months to change their sex designation.

As we saw with the important changes made in 2016 to allow for individuals of the province to apply for a change in sex designation as long as their birth is registered in Newfoundland and Labrador without a requirement of surgery, it's important that we understand the same need to change one's sex designation should not be limited to only those who were born in our beautiful province.

Our government is one that looks at the intersectional needs of our diversifying province and will adjust barriers in legislation accordingly, Mr. Speaker. Many trans persons consider the sex they were assigned at birth to be inaccurate and it is important that they are able to live their life with the appropriate documentation.

For some, this change may mean a life with a greater degree of safety and freedom from discrimination by holding identification documents that match the gender in which one identifies. Trans persons face widespread discrimination and high rates of violence. Having an accurate gender specified on one's identification documents eliminates one of these few mechanisms one may have to protect themselves from transphobia.

The legislative change is only one small step to further equity for gender-diverse individuals in our province. As Minister Responsible for the Office of Women and Gender Equality, I will continue to collaborate with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community to ensure Newfoundland and Labrador is a safe, accessible

and inclusive place for people of all gender identities and sexual orientations. Particularly as we mark Pride Month, our government is doing the necessary work to move us toward a more equal society.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's wonderful to see this progressive legislation. I want to commend our Premier, who is very progressive and very supportive. Again, just with the name change and the title for the Office of Women and Gender Equality, it certainly is a formal commitment to that. On that note, I also want to say how proud I am of our prime minister to take these leads as well across our great country.

I won't belabour this debate because it's a happy day, it's great legislation and I'm proud to be in the Chamber for moments like these, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to the vote on this one.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It is a very important topic and it couldn't have come in a better month with Pride Month being here, and I thank Gemma as well for all of their efforts put forth up to today.

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

**C. TIBBS:** It's a great piece of legislation to the government there. I commend the minister as well and echo the words of the last speaker.

What we're talking about here, Mr. Speaker, is inclusion. We've come a long, long way and there's still a long ways to go, but right now we are moving in the right step of inclusion. That's what it's about, making everybody feel comfortable, making everybody feel like themselves and not be afraid to be themselves. Through that we have different identity processes, like your driver's licence, your identity cards, this is what we're talking about today with Bill 19. We need to ensure that these people have control over their own lives and

what they wish to be and not live in fear and, once again, to be included.

The changing of the times, it is happening, a lot of people don't understand and I think that's where a lot of the gap comes in as well. We need to bridge gap to the people who do not understand what certain people may be talking about or what certain people may be feeling. I think it's incumbent on us to educate the people that want to be educated about where these people are coming from and how the times are changing. I couldn't be happier about it. I know we're putting a lot of work into it and so we should. Not one person should ever feel uncomfortable or left behind and that's what we're after here today, so I'm happy to be a part of it.

To stay relevant to the bill, Mr. Speaker, Immigration, Population Growth and Skills is my portfolio and in order to do that we need to attract people here. What better way to do it by going on board with the rest of the Atlantic provinces here and letting people know that this can happen in Newfoundland and Labrador, we are inclusive and this is the place to go. I mean, Canada is the greatest country on the planet when it comes to inclusion. Again, there's lots of work to go, but do you know what, I am so proud of my country, I'm very proud of my province, the people of my province and what they've done so far.

If we're looking to grow the population, if we're looking for immigration to be successful here, we need to ensure a safe place for people to go to where they're going to feel comfortable. I think this is definitely a step in the right direction. I know we all here in the Opposition, in the PC Party, definitely support this bill. Again, we're looking forward to doing much more work down the road.

When I talk about educating people, those people out there, there are a lot of people that just don't get it. You don't want to insult anybody, by no means, but start changing with the times, because we're changing in the right direction and do you know what? There's lots of room on the wagon here. It's the way we're going; it's the way we're headed and it is the right way to go.

Gemma, once again, is a great person to talk to. If anybody would like to talk to Gemma, I'm sure they can and get informed a little bit more. There are lots of other people around the province the same way.

I'm not going to take too much time, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say that there are a lot of dark places in this world, a lot of dark places where people are intolerant, where people are hateful. Not here in Canada. In Newfoundland and Labrador, we need to ensure that we are open for people to feel themselves and be who they want to be.

Do you know what? It might not seem like a big deal to somebody sat at home, because they haven't gone through the struggles that a lot of these great people, fine people go through, but just trust me, it's a step in the right direction. To have something as what they may feel as though is as simple as a change on an identity card could mean the absolute world to somebody who's transgender. It's a step in the right direction.

We support the bill. I want everybody out there who may be watching across Canada, across the world: We are the light here in Newfoundland and Labrador for any transgender people and we will continue to be so. I'm happy to support the bill, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to the other speakers.

Thank you.

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

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

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's actually a great privilege to speak to this bill. This is a very, very important piece of legislation. It may seem like a small change but this is a giant leap forward for our province. Following the other amendments we've made in the past about sexual designation and stuff on Vital Statistics documents, this is a huge step forward for people of this province. We should be very proud of ourselves for doing this, because this is very important. And of all months to do it, too, is during Pride Month.

I'll echo my colleague from Grand Falls there, his statements. We are very lucky to be where we live. I grew up in a community that in the '90s became a very inclusive community. We all have to go back to talk about the documentary that was done, *The Death of Ray Condon*. He's originally from Ferryland, but he came to Lab West and opened our world to inclusion. We were very blessed to have him as a teacher in Labrador West in the '90s.

Inclusion is important, and even having that simple thing of having your correct gender identification on your driver's licence makes a world of difference. That is inclusion; that is true inclusion to know that even your vital statistics match how you feel, who you are as a person.

Obviously, I am supporting this, my colleague is supporting this. This is very, very important. We should continue to find things like this to make sure that these people don't feel excluded from our community and don't feel excluded even by our own government. We are supposed to represent the people. This is representing every single person by doing things like this.

Just because you weren't born here doesn't mean you should be excluded by how you feel as a person. When you show that driver's licence it will show who you are and how you feel. This is beyond important in our society.

Do you know what? Any person like that, any other thing – someone from the general population or anything like that who wants to talk about or has an issue or something like that or finds a roadblock like this, they should let us know. They should let us know that there is something out there that has blocked them from feeling who they are or has blocked them from stuff like this. Taking steps like this is important.

At the time when we did the original inclusion for residents of the province, this seems more like a stumbling block or something that was missed. Now, we're bringing it back, we're saying, oh, we'll fix this. We're going to bring this back and fix the inclusion in there and make sure that any person in this community – and after everything that happened, especially in Mount Pearl and Paradise where we saw clear acts of exclusion, it came back twice as much. You just look at everything that the community

has done. We came back twice as much to show people that they are a part of this province. We love them for who they are. We're including them for who they are, and that should never change.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I thank you and, absolutely, this has 100 per cent of our support.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

**L. EVANS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to briefly talk a little bit on this bill as well. I don't have a lot of notes. But I just wanted to speak to the importance of inclusion because we talk a lot about inclusive communities, we talk a lot about tolerance, we talk a lot about equality and we talk a lot about legal rights, but one of the things that comes up often when we're talking about transgender persons is there's a gap there. There's a lack of understanding. A lot of people say they can't get their heads around somebody who's transgender.

It's important to talk about that, because, for example, myself now, I had a real good friend while I was growing up. We were in different communities but we hung out a lot. We both identified as gay or lesbian or whatever else anyone called us in the community. The words changed, the labels change, the hostile, negative labels also changed. What was very important for me was I didn't know she was transgender – see, even me, I'm supposed to be a member of the community, I'm supposed to have a good understand, I'm supposed to know all the right words to say, I'm supposed to educate everybody on my friend, but I did not know she was transgender. So growing up it was a struggle, it was a struggle for all of us. I can't imagine the struggle he had.

Like the Member from Ferryland, I would never refer to the Member, a man, as she. If I did, he would think I was teasing him or I was making fun of him or I was harassing him. With my friend, he grew up being called she. The struggles that they must have had were difficult.

A few years ago, when we were both working at Voisey's, he actually started to transition, and I didn't know about it. I have to tell you, I didn't know, I was shocked. I was shocked that he was transgender because I always thought of him as a female.

It is important for us when we talk about inclusion – do you know what I tell myself, and I say this to anyone that asks me about it: I don't need to understand but I have to accept and I have to treat as equal.

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

**L. EVANS:** If you can do that, that will be the greatest thing you can ever do for inclusion. That is so important.

I want to talk about the courage that my friend must have had to do that, to start a transition at a workplace – at a mine. We started to find out about it when all of a sudden there was a new locker room with a locker in there. He had to go from using the female lockers to another locker until he transitioned. It is so important for us to understand that.

It's another thing to accept, but what everybody here, all 40 of us have to get our heads around, we as hon. Members, we bring forward legislation, is that transgender people are usually silent because they are afraid for their lives. Transgender people, even in 2021, are not safe because even though many of us now accept, include, support and encourage them to be free, there are people out there that will harm them. That is very, very scary. In 2021 in Canada, a person can feel that they're threatened, that their life is in danger. That is a fact.

Even what people think of as small incidents, like the stealing of pride flags from schoolyards and burning pride flags, for us in the community there is that underlying fear of not being safe, having bodily harm or that we could actually die. That still exists in 2021.

We have to make sure that it's not tolerated and it's not accepted. We need to make sure there are things there for people to feel safe. Including it in our legislation so that somebody could have their proper gender on their driver's licence – with me, I open up my driver's licence and one

thing I'm really proud of is I have a motorcycle classification. I love looking at that.

I used to drive a lot – no, I can't say that because I don't know if I'll get in trouble. Sometimes people drive without the right qualifications, not that I would ever do that. It's important for your identity to have your identity recognized by the government as correct.

I'm going to end there, Mr. Speaker. I just want to thank everybody who made this possible, who brought it forward and for people supporting it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I'll say from the onset that I will certainly be supporting the bill as well. I thank the minister for bringing it forward.

Mr. Speaker, as has been said, this is really all about inclusion. For me, it's about an inclusive society and treating everybody in our communities and in our province with equality. I think that's a laudable goal and I think it's something that we should be striving for in everything we do. It's a struggle and it's going to be up to people like ourselves, community leaders and municipal leaders, to be continuing to drive that message home of equality and inclusion.

It's going to be, I think, important that equality and inclusion is something that's taught in our schools at a very young age. As time goes by, I think we're going to see more and more of it, particularly with the younger generations, if they're taught right in the very beginning. I know for myself growing up – and I'm not alone, because there are a lot of people in this House of Assembly who are probably my vintage or thereabouts. A lot of you are a lot older than me, but a lot of you are within my vintage, I would suggest. When you talk about inclusion and acceptance, when you talk about those things, there are a lot of good people here

in this province, a lot of good-hearted people. I believe most people are.

But the reality of it is that there is also – and let's not kid ourselves – homophobia in our province. There's racism in our province. There's Islamophobia in our province. We all know that. It does exist. A lot of it, I think, is born of ignorance. I think there are a lot of people that are probably homophobic and, perhaps, racist in some ways. Not necessarily in a cruel and a hard-hearted way, it's just that they don't know any different because of some of the things of how people were raised and so on.

Our kids – or in my case, our grandkids – when they start playing tag and so on, they will be going eenie, meenie, miney, mo and they will be catching a froggy by the toe. When I was growing up, it wasn't a froggy and I'm sure a lot of people know that. It simply wasn't. During my generation, I'm sure there are people here who can remember watching *All in the Family*. That was supertime TV. That was reality.

Thankfully, we've evolved and, over time, those things have gone away and society has shifted; we see a lot more moves towards total inclusivity. Whether that be current members of the LGBTQ2S community – and I apologize if I got that wrong because I think it might have changed a little since then, but that's what I'll refer to it as. Whether it be that, whether it be inclusion in terms of persons with disabilities, I know we've made a lot of strides there. I have a person in my district, Craig Reid, who has made tremendous strides in terms of inclusion for persons with disabilities and access.

Or whether it be, like I say, the LGBTQ2S community and the strides they've made – thanks to the efforts of people like our former colleague, Gerry Rogers, who was here with some of us and was one of my colleagues – or whether it be Gemma Hickey. I've gotten to know Gemma over the years as well and they've done tremendous work. They have. I can remember myself and Steve Kent, actually, meeting Gemma down on Pitts Memorial Drive. They walked right across the province. Myself and Steve walked from Pitts Memorial Drive downtown to Mount Cashel, but we were there as a little part of that journey.

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

**P. LANE:** Were you there? Okay.

He didn't walk; he was there to cheer when we arrived.

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

**P. LANE:** Oh, he ran. But myself and Steve did walk in part of that and some others.

I know that Gemma has done tremendous work in relation to these issues. Gemma certainly has to be commended for that, for showing that courage and that leadership in that regard. It's important that we all respect that work and that we all do our part, as community leaders, to continue to endorse the idea, the concept of inclusion – total inclusion for everybody, regardless of gender, regardless of ability, regardless of race, regardless of colour.

We're all equal. We can all fit in. We can all live together harmoniously. That's the task that we have as a society to evolve, knowing, as I said, that there will be some amongst us who will not agree with that. That's up to them, I guess. I don't have to agree with them and I don't, but we have to continue on nonetheless.

This is a small step – well, I shouldn't say that. From my perspective, a piece of ID and a marker is a small step for me because I don't have to live that and I don't pretend to because I don't. When we talk about understanding, sometimes people say: I don't understand. I believe as our colleague from Torn gat Mountains said, not understanding what it means, whether you're transgender or whatever the case might be, and it's true, I think unless you're that person – if you're not transgender I think it's hard for you to truly understand.

You can try to understand, which I try to understand, but I can't say I totally understand. For me, it's not even really about the LGBTQ2S+ community, per se. That's what is being addressed here, but I look at it from a bigger picture. I look at it from a picture of an inclusive society for all, regardless of what our differences are, that we can all live together.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I'll certainly be supporting this. Again, I thank Gemma and others who have forged the way and made a number of significant – I will say – improvements in our community and in our society. This is one way that we can continue to foster this change, it's one way we can show our support and I'm sure if there are other things that we can do here in this House of Assembly that would promote peace, harmony, inclusion and love for our fellow human beings, I'm sure that everybody here would certainly do that and I certainly will.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be supporting the bill.

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

**SPEAKER:** Seeing no other speakers, if the minister speaks now she'll close debate.

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

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

It has been a pleasure to bring this legislation forward to the House today. I'd like to thank my fellow colleagues who spoke: the Minister Responsible for Woman and Gender Equality; the MHA for Ferryland; the MHA for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans, my hometown; the MHA for Labrador West; the MHA for Torngat Mountains; and the MHA for Mount Pearl - Southlands. Thank you very, very much for your kind words and your supportive words for these proposed changes.

I'd think to thank the team at Vital Statistics who liaise and help the people of the province with their various administrative, certifications and documentation needs. I'm sure that they will do an amazing job in helping, I guess, this transition. Once this receives Royal Assent, it should be in place relatively quickly so the people of the province can work with the registrar and team to change their certificates, assuming this vote passes.

I would like to thank all the individuals and the advocates who reached out to me and my department in support of this and asking for this. Please let me know if you have any other

feedback; if there is anything else that we can do.

Thank you, Members of the House, I'm hoping for a unanimous vote this afternoon on Bill 19 but I'll have to wait and see.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The motion is that Bill 19 be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

**CLERK (Barnes):** A bill, An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009 No.2. (Bill 19)

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

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

**L. DEMPSTER:** Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009 No.2, " read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 19)

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the House resolve itself in a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 19.

**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 the said bill.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

### Committee of the Whole

**CHAIR (Warr):** Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 19, An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009 No. 2.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009 No.2." (Bill 19)

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the hon. Member for Ferryland.

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, I appreciate the opportunity.

I just have a couple of quick questions. The first one: Will all Canadian provinces recognize this certificate of change document?

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

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

The document of change that we'll provide will be, I guess, a legally binding document from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. We believe that most provinces – we're one of the first to allow individuals to change their sex

designation to non-binary as well. We're not 100 per cent sure that each province but most provinces will accept the certificate. Although, I guess, the first and easiest path would be for someone born in another province to apply to their home province. That would allow them to change their documents.

There is a process whereby all the provinces talk together so that if someone changes their name there's a common record kept. The existing process is in place where the registrars of all the vital statistic divisions across the country speak and communicate and keep track of everyone. Those same processes would exist for this. This would be a legally binding document from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Can a person apply before they come into the province for three months and then have the certificate of change become effective on their three-month anniversary of being a resident or do they have to wait the three months to apply?

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

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

Currently, as the legislation is written – I'll just read this first section: "A person who has reached the age of 16 years and whose birth is not registered in the province may apply to the registrar general to change that person's sex designation where they have been ordinarily resident in the province for at least 3 months."

Mr. Chair, I know that our registrar of Vital Statistics is very accommodating and regularly works with members of the general public on a range of unique situations related to our Vital Statistics documentation. I'm sure that our registrar could certainly work with someone in advance of them coming, but they do have to be a resident for three months before the certification could be awarded.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** Any further questions?

Carried.

Shall the motion carry?

On motion, title carried.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**CHAIR:** Shall I report the bill without amendment?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

Carried.

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

On motion, clause 1 carried.

Carried.

**CLERK:** Clause 2.

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

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 2 carry?

**CHAIR:** The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**L. DEMPSTER:** Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 19.

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

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 19.

Carried.

On motion, clause 2 carried.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**CHAIR:** Shall the enacting clause carry?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye,

All those in favour, 'aye.'

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

Carried.

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

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

Carried.

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

On motion, enacting clause carried.

The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay, Chair of Committees.

**CLERK:** An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009 No. 2.

**CHAIR:** Shall the title carry?

**B. WARR:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 19 without amendment.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have

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



considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 19 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

**S. COADY:** Now.

**SPEAKER:** Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

**S. COADY:** Tomorrow.

**SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

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

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

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

I move that Motion 1 be now called from the Order Paper.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Ways and Means to consider a certain resolution and a bill relating to the increase in carbon tax.

**SPEAKER:** The motion is that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Ways and Means.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

### Committee of the Whole

**CHAIR (Warr):** Order, please!

We are now debating the related resolution and Bill 21.

### Resolution

*“Be it resolved by the House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows:*

*“That it is expedient to bring in a measure respecting the imposition of taxes on carbon products.”*

**CHAIR:** Shall the resolution carry?

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

**S. COADY:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, the carbon tax was first initiated on January 1, 2019, in response to a national goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This was a federal initiative, which required all provinces and territories to implement a carbon pricing system.

Leading up to 2019 the federal government gave the provinces a choice: to either develop their own carbon pricing system or be subject to the federal carbon pricing system. Now, Newfoundland and Labrador – and most other provinces – operate under a hybrid carbon pricing system consisting of both a performance standards system, GHG emissions caps for large industrial facilities and a carbon tax for most businesses and individuals. Today, as part of our budget, we are looking in this bill to increase – under compliance of the federal system, the federal carbon tax – the carbon tax to \$30 a ton.

Now, Mr. Chair, allow me to say that Newfoundland and Labrador did a tremendous amount of work. When the federal government were imposing the system for carbon tax we wanted to make sure that we had some exemptions under that system and to ensure that

the federal backstop didn't apply, that it wouldn't impact too much our economy.

At the time, we were able to ensure that there were tax exemptions for some carbon product usage and I'll give you some of the examples. There's an exemption, for example, for eligible fishing and farming activities, for offshore petroleum exploration, for government for its own operations, for aircraft, for fuels – and this, I think, is very important because Newfoundland and Labrador does utilize fuel for home heating, so there was an exemption for home heating – and for gasoline used for electricity generation. I've already mentioned about the fishery, but I'll also say vessels and boats used by a fisher in commercial activity, for construction equipment and for manufacturing equipment.

We were able to put in some exemptions because we were able to negotiate with the federal government for imposition of our own system, Mr. Chair. I think that's very important to our economic well-being that we maintain that system. If we don't do the increases as prescribed by the federal government, then we'll be deemed non-compliant and the federal backstop will apply; therefore, those exemptions would no longer be.

The cost of the increase, going now from \$30 a ton to \$40 a ton, is roughly 2.21 cents per litre and 2.68 cents per litre for diesel, which is a light fuel oil. I will say that, for example, a 50-litre fill-up will cost approximately an extra \$1.27 for gasoline and \$1.54 for diesel.

Now, as I mentioned, this is a federally imposed carbon tax. We have made some arrangements with the federal government to have some exemptions to ensure a robust economy. Other provinces have already moved to implement their \$40 per ton for 2021; I'll name a few: Ontario, Alberta, Manitoba and New Brunswick, for example. I will say that Nova Scotia and Quebec have a separate system. They have a cap-and-trade system, so it's a little different from the rest of the provinces in the country.

Mr. Chair, I don't want to confuse the two, but I want to say the carbon tax, again, a federal tax, 2.21 cents per litre, roughly \$1.27 on a 50-litre fill-up. I will say that I think we all respect the fact that climate change is real. We've already

spoken today in this House about the effects of climate change and the importance of addressing climate change.

This province has a very robust plan to get to net zero by 2050. We have a robust plan for ensuring good economic growth while also ensuring we are recognizing that industry does have a tremendous impact on climate change as well, and they are subject to their own legislation. I'm just trying to make sure I have the right title for the legislation. I don't have it quickly in front of me. It's a separate piece of legislation and I don't seem to have it in front of me, but it is a separate piece of legislation to ensure that large industrial users have their responsibilities under climate change as well.

This is our responsibility, I think, as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and, indeed, as Canadians, to ensure that we are focused on climate change. This is, again, an implementation of a federal tax – a federal requirement, I should say – an implementation of a federal requirement under the carbon tax. It will be about 2.21 cents per litre or for a 50-litre fill-up about \$1.27, and most other jurisdictions have already done that.

I will leave it at that. I'm sure there will be other opportunities for discourse and for review. I thank you for the opportunity to present this today as part of the budget.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

**L. EVANS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to take a little time to talk about Bill 21, An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act No. 2, and better known as the carbon tax. I'm just looking at the carbon tax now, it's mandated by the federal government, we're going to increase it up to \$40 per ton and right now we're at \$30 per ton. Of course, people are interested at looking: Well, how is that going to impact me? Gasoline at the pumps will go up by 2.2 cents a litre, which doesn't seem like that much, but for low-income families and small businesses that could be significant. Also for people out there who

barbecue or who have their propane fireplaces it will go up by 1.5 cents a litre. There are also a lot of other hydrocarbon products out there and fuels that will be impacted, and the list is there. They don't readily come to mind when we're discussing it in the general population.

What we have to recognize with this tax is I think the intent of this tax is to stop global warming and what it's going to do is by taxing they're hoping it will slow the consumption of the fuels and, basically, the emissions. So we want to slow and we want to stop. But, for me, taxing at the pump is not the most effective way to do this, to accomplish this and, also, it's not the fairest. When I'm looking at any government change, I always say: Now, who is this going to impact? Is that a fair division? Is that going to actually impart an equal distribution of the cost or the impact?

Much can be said about the consumption of all these products that are going to be taxed. It's out there, it's in the news, talking about global warming, consumption and the resulting carbon production emissions. There is a lot of evidence being put forward now about what's actually happening in terms of global warming, the impact to our environment, the impact to our communities, the impact to businesses, the impact to infrastructure, plants, vegetation, food and all those things. It's important for us to act and I think the intent of the carbon tax is to slow, stop and start reversing global warming. That's important and I support that.

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

**L. EVANS:** Thank you.

When you look at slowing, stopping and reversing global warming, we have to look at the elimination of the sources, and the consumption of hydrocarbons really is the source. That's really what happens: carbon is released into the environment.

This tax is applied at the pump, so when a person goes in and fills up their tank, they pay the tax on that tank of gas. The end-user is paying that. The problem I have with this tax is that it doesn't matter if the person who is filling up their tank makes \$13,000 per year or \$130,000 per year; they're paying the same

amount. That's really impacting low-income families and their access to transportation. That's one of the issues I have with a carbon tax at the pump. When we're looking at reducing consumption, we should also make sure that we're not impacting our low-income families from being able to actually drive and to be able to actually go distances. I come from the District of Tornjat Mountains and transportation is a huge hardship for my district. So I know about those impacts.

Also, small businesses. The difference between a small business and a large business, a multi-million dollar business like a national chain and a small mom-and-pop business, on that tank of propane they're going to pay the same amount and on the refueling of their vehicles they're paying the same amount. That's just one of the issues that I've always had with a carbon tax.

I'm not saying that because I don't believe in global warming or I don't believe we should be doing things. I think that we should be leaders in Canada and in our province. It's very, very important for us. But we can't lose sight of how this is going to impact.

Also, another thing, when we're looking at the low-income people in our province we need to make sure that we're supporting and making sure they have quality of life and that we're not harming them by taxes. When we look at that they don't have the option, most times, to go out and buy a vehicle that uses an alternate form of fuel, like electricity, because the cars are so expensive. Low income, living day to day and paycheque to paycheque, they can't just go out and buy a \$60,000 electric car or a \$30,000 electric car because the gas-powered vehicles are so cheap. Most low-income families actually struggle to buy a new vehicle, so they usually buy second-hand. The problem with them trying to buy a second-hand vehicle is there are not very many second-hand electric cars on the road and that are well maintained and that is not going to create a lot of problems for them. So we need to address that as well.

Another thing, too, is we also need to make sure that the infrastructure is there. If we're going to try and discourage people from using gas-powered vehicles we have to make sure the alternate sources are there and also the

infrastructure to support the – electric cars are basically the only alternative right now. So that's very, very important for us.

With that being said, I do understand the need to actually try and reduce the consumption of fuel. I do understand putting on a carbon tax but, like I said, I just wish that we would find alternate ways to alleviate some of the tax burden on our low-income people. Because, as far as I'm concerned, this is not a fair tax. Just looking at the things we were talking about, in terms of global warming, that's the whole point of the tax, to reduce the consumption of the fuels. But I have to also bring up, to me, making sure that our low-income families have access to transportation is near and dear.

In my district, right now, we went through a hard winter where we couldn't actually use snowmobiles to drive between the communities and taking us to Goose Bay where the Trans-Labrador Highway is located. We didn't have that option. There was a very short window because we never had a regular winter where we had a good freeze and a lot of snowfall. The ice was unsafe. There was very little snow so we couldn't use snowmobiles. We had to fly. Everybody knows a return ticket from Goose Bay to Nain costs \$1,000 for one person.

Everybody is waiting for the spring when the ferry starts to operate. Transportation: low-income families, waiting, waiting to travel. Right now, what it is, is there is a restriction on who can actually get on the ferry that's going to my district. The ferry leaves Goose Bay, it goes into the community of Rigolet, the community of Makkovik, the community of Postville, the community of Hopedale, the community of Natuashish, the community of Nain and then stops all points back.

When she leaves Goose Bay, it takes a week for her to go up and back. During that one week, if you want to travel, you have to be on that boat or you have to wait another week. Now, the problem is, the normal capacity for that boat is 150 passengers that can get on. During COVID, it was restricted down to 83 because of the transportation regulations at the federal level.

What's happening right now is that people are calling up and they're not allowed to travel to

the North Coast. I have families from Nain who's moved over to Lab West; been waiting all year to go home. They want to go home and visit their family for a visit. They are told they can't get on the boat. I have people in St. John's who's travelling up to Goose Bay, they want to go home and see their grandmother; they want to go home to see their sister. They want to go home and see new babies that have been born. They can't get on the boat – transportation access in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

If they want to go to Nain and see their grandmother, one person, \$1,000 return ticket and that's only as far as Goose Bay. We are restricted in my District of Torngat Mountains. We cannot travel unless we have the money to do so.

You say: Lela, you're the MHA for Torngat Mountains, what are you doing about that? That's not right. Do you know what I say to everyone? That is the fairest thing we could do right now. I feel so bad for Labrador Marine, the operator, because they've taken it on themselves to try and make sure that the people on the North Coast get access to that lower cost of travel. They've taken it on themselves to do that.

There are only 83 berths for six communities, seven days of sailing. If they open it up so families from Nain can go home and see their grandmother or go home and see new babies or go to Hopedale or travel back to their house – some people still have houses in the communities. If they open it up, everybody from the Atlantic Bubble, everybody from the Island of Newfoundland, everybody from every location in Labrador will actually have same access to those 83 berths.

In the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador right now, we don't have equal access to transportation. We don't. Not in my district. In my district, there are people in the community – as my sister said to me: Lela, there are a lot of people who never travel outside their community because they can't afford to.

Last summer, my sister was trying to go to Goose Bay, her and husband. Her husband was going crabbing. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians know what that means. He was

going to Goose Bay and then he was going to go down the South Coast and get on a longliner and go crabbing. He had a timeline. They couldn't get a reservation to go on the boat, so they ended up paying two airline tickets to Goose Bay.

Then she wanted to bring her grandchildren home for a couple of weeks during the summer. She had to wait three weeks in Goose Bay for her to get a berth for her and her two grandkids to come back. She ended up paying their travel. She said: That's all right, Lela, I can afford to do that. Think about all the poor people who can't afford to do it. I said to my sister: You can't afford that. You just take the money and pay for it.

Technically, when you look at the thousands of dollars, nobody can afford that. You're just sacrificing something else. There are people on the North Coast that don't have that option. When we talk about taxes, we talk about governing; we talk about access for transportation; we talk about putting fuel in our cars so we can drive everywhere in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador – we don't have that option for the North Coast.

I just wanted to take advantage of the time on a money bill to actually say that, Mr. Chair. But I do think that taking steps to reduce the consumption of hydrocarbons that will actually end up producing carbon in our atmosphere that will actually cause the heating of our global environment, I think that's a good thing.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's great to speak again in this House. I know it's a money bill, but I do want to speak to the actual bill about the carbon tax. My hon. colleague from Torngat Mountains made a lot of points there, too, about other things we can do on top of the carbon tax. We can take strong action into the fact that we have a problem as a world. It's a world problem that we have when it

comes to greenhouse gases, about climate change and stuff like that.

You take Western Canada, we're seeing more prevalence of wildfires, drier air temperatures and things like that. Then you come over to our side and we're seeing some adverse weather, storm surges, things like that and faster erosion of our coastlines.

We need to take action on these serious, serious things and work towards a common goal of reducing our emissions, reducing our climate change, but also shoring up our communities and stuff to brace for the climate that is already damaging our things. Municipalities are having issues with erosion and climate change is affecting their infrastructure, provincial infrastructure. The Minister of TI has said that they are taking a look at their infrastructure and future infrastructure about bridges and culverts and things like that.

We just have to look to Igor or any other hurricanes we've had in the last two, three or four years that have caused significant damage. They're more violent and they are scarier and we have to be prepared and ready for that. But we also have to do our part in our day-to-day lives to address that.

I know the former minister of Municipal Affairs, at the time, and current Speaker of this House, he was very proud about the implementation of the plastic bag ban – retail shopping bag ban. That is a small but significant step to reduce our usage of plastics, and also the damage of the environment that it causes. These are small steps, but we do need to take some big leaps now. We need to take a look and make some really big leaps now when it comes to our impact on the environment – carbon capture technology, reducing emissions from industry.

Moving forward with electric cars and that, too. That's a big step we can take now is looking at that. I know we have some charging stations in there, but I still can't drive from Lab West to St. John's in an electric vehicle yet. So that's a –

**B. DAVIS:** Stay tuned.

**J. BROWN:** The minister tells me to stay tuned.

Oh, apparently I'm told I need to buy a bigger extension cord. Okay.

Like I said, that opens up the rest of the province to the ability to encourage them to buy electric cars. I know there are a few Teslas poking around Labrador West now and that, but I would like to see more and it would be fair.

Actually, this is a good one: My wife the other day saw the ad for a new electric truck from Chevy, and she saw the ad and she looked at me and goes: That's our next truck. I said: Oh, yeah? She said: Yes, we're not having another combustion vehicle; I want an electric truck. I said, okay.

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

**J. BROWN:** I know. There's also that, but she's also a Chevy lover.

No, but she saw it and it caught her eye and she said: If it does what it says it does, that's a big shift for our population. We're a truck-loving province, no doubt about it. We can't deny it. If that comes on the market, that's a big cultural shift for us, that we can still have our truck culture but also do the most responsible thing possible and switch over to electric vehicles. There are going to be a few culture shifts and there are going to be a few things that we have to adjust, but it can be done. We're ready to embrace it, so let's embrace it. We can do the right things, but we need to make some big leaps and bounds now.

Also, here's another thing that we do, and we all say: Well, we're doing our part. What about other jurisdictions? Are they doing their part? If we can show them it can be done and still preserve a lot of the things that we enjoy in society now, they will follow. If we lead, they will follow. We should be leading because we, as a very rural province with a large, vast landscape, if we can show that we can do it, that we can have electric vehicles, we can have electric pickup trucks and we can make the shifts in our industry and our technology that can be done, then people will follow. Other jurisdictions will follow. They will have no choice but to follow.

That's how we should be. We need to be a continued leader in the change and do things: reduce our use of plastics and reduce our consumption of fossil fuels, putting initiatives in place that allow people to make these shifts. Like I said, the price tags and stuff out there are pretty scary right now, but we should do our part as a collective, as a government, to help with those transitions and help show that we need to take action.

There are a lot of great opportunities out there. I know the Minister of Industry said that they're interested in carbon capture and they're also interested in speaking to companies and technology developers to help us. So let's be a world leader. We were a world leader in designing ships; we can be a world leader in designing green technology. There's nothing really stopping us from doing that. We have a great university; we have great colleges. We have excellent minds in this kind of stuff. Let's do it. Let's just take the bull by the horns and say, you know what? We can make a difference here in this province. We can design a difference here in this province and we can manufacture a difference here in this province. We have the ability. Let's put our cards in place and do it.

A carbon tax is great now, but you know what would be even better? Initiatives to make people's day-to-day way of thinking saying: By doing this, am I doing a good or am I doing a wrong? By shifting the culture and the thought then saying: No, I don't need that piece of plastic; there is another alternative. No, I won't purchase that product, because that product will end up in a landfill, causing more problems than good. I'll purchase this product. We have to get that mindset going, but we also have to have to help with the transition, because like any new technology, it's expensive at first and it gets cheaper as manufacturing goes. We need to lessen the burden now so that more and more people will take up on purchasing the right thing or doing the right thing.

Let's take the bull by the horns as a collective and actually make this change happen sooner than later, because our time is running out. We really have to make this happen within the next decade or so. I don't think the world can really wait much longer, especially if you see everything in the news. You see the wildfires

and the droughts and the water shortages and stuff like that. Our climate is already changing, and we can see it here, so let's take the advantages.

Like I said earlier, we never had a proper Labrador winter this year. We had rain in the middle of the winter. It's unheard of. I've seen it first-hand and I'm sure everyone in this room has seen differences in their districts first-hand. It's a sign. It's a wake-up call. Let's do the right thing now, invest now so we have a brighter future and we can continue to enjoy the way of life we enjoy here in Newfoundland and Labrador, because we are so privileged to have the way of life we have here in this province.

Let's enjoy it. Let's take chances. Let's take the advantages and let's change our behaviour so we can help protect what we have here and keep enjoying it.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

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

I'd like to thank the hon. Member who spoke just before me. He hit the nail on the head, as they say, about a lot of the issues that we are facing in climate change.

I'm just going to take you through some discussions on climate change as well as some opportunities we see in the greening of the economy. I'm happy to have the opportunity to speak to consider the resolution respecting the imposition of taxes on carbon, Bill 21.

The awareness and education on environmental protection and climate change are growing dramatically in the past number of years. We all want a cleaner and healthier environment. We recognize the urgency and the required access to address climate change and mitigate these impacts. Climate change is an issue that we need to address together and I'm glad that so many people in the House of Assembly are speaking about it, not just now but for the last number of

months and even the last couple of years. It's become a real hot topic, which is important.

This goes back, I guess, long before the *Paris Agreement*, but in particular that came into force, some of the changes, in November 2016. Our Climate Change Action Plan as well was moving on at that point, slightly after that.

Tackling climate change is going to require action on two fronts simultaneously. We need to adapt to the unavoidable impacts that are happening. Some have been discussed today about municipal infrastructure and the effects that climate change is having on that. Ensuring that our province is resilient, and also we have to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to avoid it worsening over the next number of years, months and decades.

Through the 2016 Pan-Canadian Framework, we, along with most provinces and territories, committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from all sectors of the economy, to stimulate clean innovation and growth, build resiliency to the changing climate and develop a carbon program tailored to meet the unique circumstances within each province. I thank the hon. Finance Minister and President of Treasury Board for taking us through that earlier and I look forward to the discussion as it progresses later today.

This framework is a very collaborative national approach to address climate change and grow the clean economy. We report annually on these initiatives towards the agreement to Environment and Climate Change Canada, who reports on behalf of the entire nation. Our provincial Climate Change Action Plan sets provincial greenhouse gas reduction targets for 2030. Specifically, we commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030. Ambitious for sure, but we are going to do everything we can collectively to make that possible.

The Action Plan will allow us to make progress towards this target over the next five years and will inform future actions in the mid-2020s. It will also allow us to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions for those targets that are in 2050's mandate from the federal government, which is the most recent commitment. We share that goal

with the Government of Canada for environmental protection and reducing greenhouse emissions, including those in the oil and gas sector, and we are dedicated to collaborating on all aspects of the energy supply chain in Canada.

We have taken action of 43, as I've mentioned before, of our 45 action items in our plan. The plan will reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as stimulate clean innovation and growth and, as mentioned many, many times through our petitions, also reduce the impacts of climate change on infrastructure. We are working with those municipalities each and every day.

Mr. Chair, we're actively greening our operations here in government as well, such as procuring paper with recycled content, office recycling and composting, reducing travel through increased use of video and teleconferencing and many, many other things. We are converting schools and other public buildings from oil to electric heat. We've invested \$1 million in electric-vehicle charging infrastructure along the Trans-Canada Highway, as my hon. colleague from Labrador West had mentioned, which is important.

In addition to that, there are others that are doing significantly more. That was 14 charging stations we put in; there are another 19 that are in the process of being put in through Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro as well. We're looking forward to those being installed because as people buy, as the hon. Member for St. John's Centre is looking at, the Lightning, it is important for us to have the infrastructure in place to ensure he can use that Lightning right across the Island and on all the side roads as well.

As technology improves, Mr. Chair, you're going to see the distances become longer between charges. It will perform even better and the price of that infrastructure and those vehicles has come down considerably, and there's still more to go, as more people transition to it. That's part of the reason why we put a program in place to try to help reduce the stumbling blocks to purchase an electric vehicle. By this year's budget, we increased an opportunity or put a program in place for transitioning to electric vehicles, a \$2,500 rebate that would

allow people to make that decision a little bit easier.

Mr. Chair, the Climate Change Action Plan is guiding our investments in the \$89.4-million federal Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund, and \$300 million in the Green Infrastructure Fund through the federal Investing in Canada Plan. In May, just over \$8 million was announced as a cost shared between the federal and provincial governments to support energy efficiency and fuel-switching projects across our province. These initiatives, from Burin to Port aux Basques, Cape Broyle to Gander and Grand Falls-Windsor, will lower the emissions, improve fuel efficiency and help communities save on energy costs. Additional projects are under way in Labrador. We look forward to making those announcements in the coming weeks.

As I've mentioned before, we've made some investments in *Budget 2021*. I know I haven't got a lot of time to go through everything, but I'm going to shoot to go through a couple of the highlights. In *Budget 2021*, we've committed \$1 million to transitioning homes, whose sole source of heat is oil, to electric heating systems. This is going to help transition some of those high emitters to reducing the emissions on that side and saving money for families on one hand, but also being good for greenhouse gas reductions. That's an impressive thing and we want to be on two fronts, as I said earlier. We're supporting efforts, as I mentioned, to help people make that transition to electric vehicles and making that a little bit more accessible with a \$500,000 investment in this year's budget.

The green economy is a very hot topic. It has been talked about in a lot of circles and it has been talked about in petitions here on the House of Assembly floor. We've made considerable strides in growing a green economy here in this province and stopping the increase to greenhouse gas emissions. Just between 1990 – for some statistics – to 2016, the real gross domestic product grew by 75 per cent while greenhouse gas emissions increased by 11 per cent. Although that is still not good, it shows that we're finding ways to do things more efficiently and better. We want the economy to grow but we also want greenhouse gases to be reducing, and that is some of the technology that



many Members have talked about. I know the Minister of IET has mentioned it in a couple of responses to questions in the House of Assembly. I look forward to getting those things implemented and seeing how we move forward on that.

The global outlook for energy is changing, as we know, in all sectors in our economy. Looking for ways to decrease their greenhouse gas emissions, our offshore projects are already among some of the lowest carbon-intense emitting facilities in the world. Our light oil, light sweet crude or our low sulphur fuel is relatively low emissions in relation to – I see someone looking over their glasses at me, but it is in comparison to some of the other producing places around the world where it could range from here at Hibernia to 12 kilograms of carbon per barrel to anywhere between 18 and 50 kilograms per barrel in other locations around the world.

It's not an overnight undertaking, Mr. Chair, and I think we all understand in this House of Assembly that it's going to take all of us, it's going to take a significant amount of effort, it's going to take money and investment and, more importantly than that, it's going to take time. It didn't happen overnight – and seeing as how I'm talking about time, I am running out of it myself. It is something that's not going to happen overnight.

I just want to say thank you to the individuals that have moved so fast on transitioning to this. Thank you to the hon. Members on the government side for supporting the initiatives in *Budget 2021* and also to my hon. colleagues on both sides of the House for understanding how important it is to help the economy become greener, but more importantly than that to make it better for our people that are coming after us.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

**T. WAKEHAM:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll start off by saying that I think everyone on this side of the House certainly supports the move to a green economy and trying to be as – much clean energy as we could possibly get and use.

In that light, I would like to suggest to the minister to talk to his colleague in the Department of Justice and to talk to his colleague in the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure and look at the recent tender for roof replacement on the government service building in Stephenville. That building is not wheelchair accessible, so there is one issue that we can eliminate, and it also has a fuel tank on the side of the building that's probably as wide as that and burns about 80,000 litres a year. There's an opportunity here and right now there was a tender called, I think, for over \$1 million to replace the roof in that building.

I'm not against getting money in my district, but I think if you were to look at it, it would probably be more cost efficient to look at a potential to tender for space in the community that would be a more modern space, a more energy efficient space and there may even be enough operational savings coming from all of that building to actually help pay that rent on a monthly basis. That's just something I put out there.

There are a number of government buildings like that in my district, of course, leftover from the days of the air force, and they served us well. The infrastructure that was left there by the Americans has served us well, but some of these buildings are certainly now beyond their useful life. The only reason I mention that one is because it has been an issue with the wheelchair accessibility piece and also with the fact that there's a significant amount of money about to be spent. If it's not already spent; I don't know. I hope we might be able to take another look at that.

As my hon. colleague from Torngat Mountains said, this particular tax hurts the people who least can afford it the most. We live in a province that has been described many times for the large geography it has and, unfortunately, other than people driving their own vehicles, there's not a whole lot of alternate transportation available for people in our province. Those of us

that live in the territories, as the Minister of Health likes to allude to, when you have to travel for health care services – we have one tertiary care centre; it's in St. John's and it will always be in St. John's – at the end of the day, every cent you add to gas is another cost to people. Transportation costs usually result in additional costs for food at the grocery stores, which becomes another problem for people that they have to pay out.

I know that this particular carbon tax, as the minister alluded to, is a national tax and it's imposed by the federal government. Since its inception, though, the provincial government has taken steps to negate the impact of this on the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. In 2019, when the carbon tax was implemented, the government decreased by four cents a litre the other gasoline tax that we have, which brought it back down to 16.5. Again, in 2020, when the carbon tax was increased again, the government decreased the gas tax by two cents a litre and the carbon tax increase was 2.21 cents a litre, negating that particular increase.

Today, though, what we're seeing is the carbon tax going up, but no offset to the gasoline tax. In other words, the people of the province will pay the additional 2.21 cents per litre as an additional tax starting July 1. I think the formula is even worse because we apply HST to that, which effectively turns out to be 2.54 cents a litre.

Again, I think the concept of doing something about climate change and everything else is certainly something we all applaud. I'm not sure the evidence is there that charging a carbon tax, or a gas tax or a carbon tax on the pump has actually improved the carbon footprint of our province or of the country. I think we find ourselves in a situation with a very regressive tax that's going to turn around and impact the people of Newfoundland and Labrador out of their pocketbooks.

As I said, alternate methods of transportation aren't readily available. Certainly, taxi companies will look to find ways to offset this increase at the pump for them and other bus companies may do the same thing. So I'm not sure why the government didn't offset this particular increase this year or not. It will result

in additional revenues, obviously, for the government, but it will also result in additional hardship to a lot of people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

**J. DINN:** I wasn't making that move, Mr. Chair, but I'll take the opportunity.

I don't know if we've seen the pictures, early on in COVID-19, of some of the major cities across the world with smog. The before and after. The pre-COVID and the post-COVID. It was just amazing. You'd almost think they had been doctored, but just the sudden drop, the clarity of the air, the breathability of it.

There's also an interesting statistic that the number of premature births decreased during COVID-19 significantly. I wondered at the time whether it was due to the stress of the day-to-day life or if indeed it had to do with the environment sort of cleaning up.

I did want to pick up on two things that my colleagues from the Official Opposition said – and I do agree with them – that taxes have the ability to impact those who can least afford it. It is one of my concerns, certainly, with the sugar-sweetened drink tax. I understand where they're coming from. When I grew up there were seven kids in our family, so it was used vehicles and vans. I think the first time my father got a new car – brand new – it was much later when we had all moved out. I remember the first bicycle we got, Mr. Chair; it was one we shared between the boys and then, we more or less got our own. It's not that we were poor; I can tell you that dad had a good job at the railway, but with one income and that, it was stretched.

But at times keep in mind this: Snowmageddon – who did it affect the most? For those of us with heat in the house, with the ability to put food on the table and freezers full of food and so on and so forth, I can tell you that Snowmageddon didn't impact those who were in that privileged position. I would argue that it

affected those who were already vulnerable. That's my fear with climate change, is that it's going to affect those who are already vulnerable and those who may not have the ability to absorb it.

We talk about, now, the whole notion of climate refugees. There are going to be countries where the temperatures are going to go up. It's going to devastate the crops; it's going to cause temperature rise and so on and so forth. They are going to have nowhere to go. That's the concern. If we look at climate change, it will affect – and probably in a more devastating way – those in our society who are already vulnerable.

I don't know if you've ever seen the movie *Elysium*. It's an extrapolation form of science fiction. It looks into the future. I'll tell you science fiction has little to do with the future and more to do with the present. It looks at society as it is now. It's an interesting thing, the distinction that those who can afford to escape planet earth are already there. Those who can afford to take a trip on Elon Musk's – into space are not those who are struggling to put food on the table.

I think in some ways, when we're looking at the tax, too, you're right; it is how do we make sure those who are vulnerable are not negatively impacted. But the other part of this is it has to come down to where is this money going and how is it going to be used. It's the same thing with the sugar-sweetened tax for me as well, it's about how is it going to (inaudible) and reinvest. Taxes in and of itself, I have no issue with. It's the price I pay for the privilege of living where I am. It's as simple as that.

We've presented petitions here, and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change – we've talked. I like the idea. Yes, fuel switching is a great idea. It's going to help save communities and homes money, but I think we have to go a little bit further. I referenced, in my question today, about the CarbonCure company in Nova Scotia. I think, more importantly, we have to look at – not just simply look at, but saving money.

Again, I don't know if you can save your way to prosperity or cut your way to prosperity, but you need to look at how do we invest this so that we create jobs, so that we get on the bandwagon –

not just the bandwagon, but we're actually driving the bandwagon towards a greener economy so that we're getting ahead of the game. We're not catching up. It's not going to be overnight. I don't know if we have overnight, though; it will reach a tipping point sooner rather than later.

You've seen the news, I'm sure, of the record temperatures in Nevada, where people have come away with third-degree burns and that from their feet on pavement. It's coming. I would say we've seen the effects with the collapse of the cod in the Atlantic. At the same time that the cod collapsed, capelin stocks collapsed. Salmon stocks collapsed at that time as well. The base food, the phytoplankton, collapsed. Attributed to global warming as well. I think a couple of years ago striped bass, which normally hang out around the New England states, found their way up to Labrador.

To me, with any tax it's how it's going to be used. My colleague from Stephenville - Port au Port talked about public transportation, and he hit the nail on the head. You go to many other jurisdictions – you look at Toronto or any of these places – you don't need a car. Actually, a car is probably more of an encumbrance, an inconvenience. You can get around anywhere you need to be with public transportation. I think if there's anything that we need to start looking at here, even within the city, this area, it's how do we make public transportation more acceptable, more affordable and more readily available. And then we can start looking at making sure that people who need transportation are not without.

I'll certainly support this, but with the caveat that it's about where this money is going to go. We've got to make sure that those who are the vulnerable families aren't affected, because it's not just going to be their cars, unfortunately. If businesses are paying a carbon tax on fuel they use, it's going to be transferred down to those who are the end consumers.

With that, Mr. Chair, I will end it there, except to say that, look, we'll keep hammering away at the whole need for a transition, a just transition, one that brings everyone along, that leaves no one behind, that creates jobs and that creates a new economy, a more robust economy and one

that's going to make this planet a more liveable place for the generation that follows.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the hon. Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

**P. LANE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's great to have an opportunity to speak once again in this House, rare occasion.

Mr. Chair, I kind of have two minds about this one, to be honest with you, to some degree, because this has come up before. I guess the concern I've always had – first of all, this is a federal tax, really, that's being implemented by the province, although the province gets the money is my understanding. They get the revenue. Which is why, in the past, they were able to offset it by reducing the provincial tax so that it didn't cost anybody anything. It was sort of a wash.

I was supportive of that, because from my perspective, it was more a matter of a principle than anything else, because I really didn't believe then – and I don't believe now, to be honest with you – that I'm going to stop driving my car tomorrow because of this carbon tax. If I need to go somewhere, I'm going to go somewhere. If I have to use my car, I'm going to use my car. Charging me carbon tax is not doing anything to save the planet, because I'm not going to stop driving my car over two cents on a litre of gas.

Now, I understand there are people – lower income – that every cent matters – and every cent matters to me, too, by the way. I'm not saying it doesn't matter. I'm just saying that it's not going to change anything in terms of my day-to-day habits. That was the concern I had right from the get-go when the federal government came up with this carbon tax, because I was of the view that if you wanted to do something meaningful and significant to save the planet, so to speak, instead of taxing someone at the gas pumps, you should be going after the big polluters. You should be going after industry and taxing them. The ones who are

causing the biggest problem, they're the ones who should be nailed, and force them, basically, to adapt and create new technology that's going to lessen their carbon footprint. That would be where I felt that the federal government should've been going.

I even think about – I think I mentioned this one time before a couple of years ago. There was a person here in Newfoundland; I couldn't tell you his name or any of the details. I can remember seeing a story. I don't know if it was on the news or I read it somewhere.

There was this guy. I think he might've been an instructor at CNA or Marine Institute or something. He had come up with this device, basically, that he created himself and it could be attached to a lawn mower or a snow blower or whatever and it would basically reduce any carbon output that came from lawn mowers and snow blowers and things of that nature – small engines. He had invented some kind of a device that basically pretty much eliminated any of the carbon that would be emitted from those devices. Now, it might not seem like a lot, but if you have to look at every single lawn mower and every single snow blower and everything else, it adds up pretty well. He never got anywhere with it for some reason.

I look at that as a concept and I would say, if Canada really wanted to do things to try to reduce carbon footprint and things like that, that would an example, to say to the manufacturers of snow blowers – and God knows that we have enough of them in this country, enough of them in Newfoundland – and lawn mowers and everyone else: If you want to sell these products in Newfoundland, then the only ones that are going to be allowed to be used are the ones that have this device on it. If nothing else, it's banned. We're going to ban anything that doesn't have these devices, as an example.

It might cost the consumer an extra \$20 or \$30 or whatever it is on their snow blower or on their lawn mower or whatever, but I'd rather do that and know that I am actually doing something to contribute, even in a small way, to climate change than simply paying taxes going into the government coffers that could be spent on anything.

That kind of brings me to the point that the Member for St. John's Centre was saying, and I have that same issue. I can remember when I was on Mount Pearl city council and I can remember going to a Federation of Canadian Municipalities conference – one of them; I'm not sure where it was to. They had done a survey across the country about road tax. They had done a survey about road tax. Basically, the outcome of the survey was that most people said that if they could be guaranteed that the road tax would go into maintaining and paving the road, then they were prepared to pay a little more and they were prepared to pay a road tax if it could be guaranteed.

The problem we have with our system, I guess nationally and provincially – and we're no different than other jurisdictions I would suggest – is that we don't have any particular pools of money, per se. Every time I am paying taxes on – look, a bottle of water here, you have to pay the taxes on the bottle. Any time I am paying tax at the pump or any time I'm paying fees at a provincial park or every time I'm renewing my driver's licence or whatever it is I'm doing, all the money is just going into the general revenue. Then the government can divvy that money out however it feels like. I guess that's a part of the issue as well. For example, if I'm paying a carbon tax, which I might not – nobody wants to pay more taxes. By the way, I'm going to support the bill; it might not sound like it, but I am.

If I was paying this carbon tax and someone could show me a graph to say: Guess what, all this carbon tax that you paid in Newfoundland and Labrador this year, here's exactly how much money was collected and here's exactly what was done. So we collected \$10 million, for argument sake – I don't know what it would be; it might be \$1 million, but whatever it is – we collected \$1 million and we spent that \$1 million on charging stations. There it is. Money in, money out and gone to this cause. I think a lot more people would pay in to it if you could show that. But if all you're seeing is that the money is going in and then government is spending it on whatever – a lot of stuff people question and don't agree with and so on – then psychologically, if nothing else, it becomes nothing more than a tax grab. That's how people feel, like it's a tax grab. It's just government

trying to find another way to dip in to my pocket, to take my hard-earned money and I'm not seeing anything for it.

Now, I know we all understand and we will say: Yes, look, you're getting health care, you're getting education and blah blah. I understand all of that. But that's not necessarily how people see it. I would say you would get a lot more buy-in for a carbon tax and different things if you actually did that. If you could show this is the money we took in on the carbon tax and we invested all that money into charging stations and other infrastructure and so the money that you're paying in this carbon tax is going towards the cause for which you're telling me it's for. It's not being just spent on other things that I don't necessarily agree with and going into the government coffers so you can waste it on this and that, which some people feel happens. Sometimes they're right and sometimes they're not.

It would be great if we could do that. No different than the MMSB, if I'm paying into the MMSB and my bottles and stuff like that, people would like to know, I think, that here's how much money we collected from you every time you went to the store and bought a Pepsi or a bottle of water and here's how the money was spent and it was spent on something related to the environment.

You took all the money, you did a bunch of cleanups and you cleaned up all the garbage that was around, for example. You went into the woods, you got backhoes, you hauled out all the car wrecks, you did whatever and you cleaned everything up. You went out on the beaches and you cleaned up all the garbage on the beaches using the money that I spent every time I bought a bottle of pop or something like that. People would feel like they were getting something for their money. Otherwise, like I said, it feels like it is just another tax grab.

Anyway, with that said, I will support the bill and I know government is doing a lot of stuff in terms of green initiatives and so on. I'm not trying to downplay what you're doing, I'm really not. I'm just trying to point out – sort of piggybacking on the Member for St. John's Centre, that I think a lot of people, regardless why you're collecting money, if you can't show

that I'm getting a benefit for what I'm paying into specifically then people don't necessarily buy into it and they do think it is a tax grab.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I sit here today as a very happy MHA. I can say that because of the news that we've heard with respect to the Terra Nova FPSO and the deal being extended.

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

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** I know that the people in the District of Harbour Main and throughout different districts within the province are very relieved today to hear this news. I know I can speak from people that I've heard in my district, the incredible stress that they've been under with the uncertainty of not knowing, so this is really a great day.

I think we also need to acknowledge and to recognize the people that were involved. I think that this was a joint, collaborative effort by so many groups and individuals. First of all, the workers who stood up – the workers that have contacted their MHAs, I know in my district, indicating that they wanted us to take action and wanted us to advocate on their behalf. Although as difficult as it was, they remained steadfast and committed and were patient and were hopeful and had trust that we would come to a resolution.

I must say that different stakeholders that were involved including the trade unions – the government, of course, they have to be recognized for their role in the negotiations that took place as well. Including the Opposition, I know that we here in the Opposition took a strong position and continued to advocate and stand up for the interest of the oil and gas workers, specifically with respect to the Terra Nova Project.

I think that needs to be acknowledged and we really have a lot of hope now going forward with respect to our future. Yes, I understand that green energy is important and it is our future. There's no question about that. Fossil fuel energy will eventually be phased out; however, for now, fossil fuel energy, coal, oil, natural gas, that is still in existence. We know that that type of energy produces approximately 80 per cent of the energy that we use in the world. For now, that type of energy is needed. The demand is here. It does make good sense for our government and for us to recognize that we have to pursue responsible development of our offshore oil and gas. I think this, what's happened with the Terra Nova, is an example of and an indication of the commitment that we need to definitely explore and do further development with respect to oil and gas.

It's interesting, now that we are discussing – and I've heard and I've listened carefully to the other Members who have spoken on this carbon tax, Bill 21. I'm not going to repeat a lot of the evidence. I'm just going to say I have some concerns about this tax. I think that we need to, when we look at this type of tax, what the impact of this tax is, first of all. It has been raised by some of my colleagues. When we look at this tax, does this tax have a disproportionate effect or detrimental effect on certain peoples, on certain populations? Perhaps on people who cannot afford to have alternate types of transportation and who are dependent on driving cars and vehicles.

It looks to me, when I assess this tax, that it is primarily targeted at drivers of vehicles. I wonder about that. I don't see the evidence, also, that this tax is succeeding or has succeeded in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. If it does do that, I don't see the evidence that exists there. Has it produced a deterrent effect, for example, on pollution? We've seen the tax in effect for a number of years, so is pollution less? Do we see that people are driving less? Has consumer behaviour changed as a result of this tax? These are some of the questions that I have.

Again, I'm concerned about the impact that this kind of legislation has. Is it keeping in tune with the intent of the legislation, which is to reduce greenhouse emissions? I don't see that. If it is, I would like to have evidence. Before I can really

get behind any type of legislation and as a legislator, I have to see the evidence that the tax that's being proposed is succeeding to reduce and attaining the objective that it proposes.

Also, I have some concerns when we see taxation anyway. In terms of revenue generation through taxation, I wonder is that the way to grow our economy? Is it just taking more money out of our residents' and our people's pockets? How do we encourage, for example, people to stay here? I'm very concerned about the big issue of out-migration, Mr. Chair. We see the devastating effects that out-migration has and the implications it has for our province and the loss of population.

We need people to stay. We need to give them a reason to stay and we need to give people a reason to come here. Whenever I look at these kinds of taxes and these economic policies that are being advanced, for me the test is to assess whether this kind of policy is growing our population. I think that should always be an important lens to look at any kind of economic policy that's being put forward.

One other point I want to make, I know I hear from my constituents all the time; they are struggling. They feel they're taxed to death. I just don't know if this is the way to do it. We already saw a couple of other bills that have passed: Bill 13, which was the tobacco and cigarette tax; Bill 14, the personal income tax. Again, these kinds of further tax increases, what is that going to do in terms of continuing to support people living here in our province? With this drain of our important resource including our youth, that's always a concern.

Again, those are some of the issues that I wanted to address. I thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to speak on this issue.

Thank you very much.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. Member for Cape St. Francis.

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak in this hon. House as always and to speak to Bill 21, with respect to the carbon tax. I listened to everyone here this afternoon when they spoke to this bill. My colleague from Torngat Mountains put it the simplest and the easiest to understand with respect to who will it impact. It will impact everyone including the low-income families and those, of course, that have the least ability to afford that.

We all know what the intent is, Mr. Chair, with respect to slow and stop and reverse this from global warming. Yes, I believe that we have a responsibility here in this hon. House to do our part to make that transition process for a cleaner, healthier environment.

We certainly need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions for all members and sectors of this economy. I did listen to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change when he spoke and said that there were, I think, 45 action items and that his intent was for his department to work with businesses and municipalities throughout our province through these federal and provincial initiatives. I was encouraged to hear that from the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

We all know that climate change is an important issue. There is no doubt about that, Mr. Chair, and we're not going to dispute it. However, how we manoeuvre through this process, with the residents of our beautiful province in mind, is what we should keep first and foremost. A well-formulated plan for the upcoming generations is our responsibility. I am glad that I have the opportunity to be here, to be able to speak to it and to be part of it. I do hope that everyone, as my hon. colleague said, will be kept in mind when going forward with this particular bill.

Mr. Chair, I just want to take a few minutes to touch on a few things that we had over these past few days. We have had a busy few days in this House, no doubt. We spoke to Bill 15, which was the Physical Activity Tax Credit. I have to say, when I was listening in the House to all that, I have to thank my mother; she is the athlete in our family. Not my father, I can tell you that. He has no times for sports. My love for sports came from Mom. She still loves to watch the Blue Jays today. Of course, her favourite

Blue Jay was Kelly Gruber back in '92 and she still holds fast to that.

I can tell you, we are a product of what we're born and brought into and what we have around us. I am very thankful that I had the opportunity to grow up with sports. As my hon. colleague said yesterday, the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, it's team building; it's life lessons; it's everything included when you come up with sports throughout your life.

I do know that I have passed it on to my children, with respect to fast-pitch softball and basketball, soccer and swimming. For my daughter, she has been dancing since she was two and she is 18 now, so those tax credits, I can tell you, are certainly needed when it comes to times for a lot of people throughout our province like that. Of course, my daughter with respect to rowing. I laughed and chuckled to myself when I was asked to put in a senior men's crew in the Regatta. I can honestly say, Mr. Chair, that if I'm getting in any boat on any body of water, that boat is going to have a 75 Johnson strapped to the back of it, I can tell you that.

I was also encouraged, Mr. Chair, to hear the Minister of CSSD say yesterday that his department was going to be working with Municipal and Provincial Affairs to educate and provide the implementation of programs through the municipalities with respect to that tax credit as well. All that's encouraging, no doubt about it.

I'm not going to take up too much more time, Mr. Chair, but I want to speak to the Minister Responsible for the Office of Women and Gender Equality when she spoke yesterday with respect to Pride Month. I became Mayor of Pouch Cove in the fall of 2013. That following June was the first time the pride flag was raised in the Town of Pouch Cove and the proclamation was signed. At that time, I knew it was an important issue, but I didn't realize the full importance of it until residents came forward to me and saw the pride flag flying in our town and thanked me for doing that, for recognizing the equality of everybody.

I want to give a shout-out to the minister and her department for, of course, this week and what has been done.

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

**J. WALL:** And, of course, to everyone who has spoken in this hon. House with respect to Pride Month as well.

On that, Mr. Chair, I will thank you for your time and for your attention and I appreciate the opportunity.

Thank you.

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

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

Shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 2." (Bill 21)

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**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 Revenue Administration Act No. 2.

**CHAIR:** Shall the long title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, long title carried.

**CHAIR:** Shall I report Bill 21 carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the resolution and a bill consequent thereto, carried.

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

**S. CROCKER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 21.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 21.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

**SPEAKER (Bennett):** The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay, Chair of Committees.

**B. WARR:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Ways and Means have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

**SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee of Ways and Means reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

When shall the report be received?

**S. CROCKER:** Now.

**SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that the resolution be now read a first time.

**SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the resolution now be read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**CLERK:** *"Be it resolved by the House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows:*

"That it is expedient to bring in a measure respecting the respecting the imposition of taxes on carbon products."

On motion, resolution read a first time.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that the resolution be now read a second time.

**SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the resolution be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**CLERK:** *"Be it resolved by the House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows:*

"That it is expedient to bring in a measure respecting the imposition of taxes on carbon products."

On motion, resolution read a second time.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, for leave to introduce a bill, a resolution respecting the imposition of carbon, Bill 21, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

**SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 2, Bill 21, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

Motion, that the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board shall have leave to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 2." (Bill 21)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 2. (Bill 21)

On motion, Bill 21 read a first time.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that Bill 21 be now read a second time.

**SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the said bill be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 2. (Bill 21)

On motion, Bill 21 read a second time.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that Bill 21 be now read a third time.

**SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 21 now be read a third time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 2. (Bill 21)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 2," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 21)

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

**S. CROCKER:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I'm just going to take 20 or 30 minutes – no, I'm just joking.

I move, seconded by the Leader of the Official Opposition, that this House do now adjourn.

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

**SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that this House do now adjourn.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

I just want to wish everybody a great weekend. Those on the highway, please drive carefully.

This House does stand adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

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