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Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

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The House met at 10 a.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Government House Leader.

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 26.

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

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

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against?

This motion is 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 26, An Act To Amend The Child And Youth Advocate Act.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Child And Youth Advocate Act." (Bill 26)

CLERK (Barnes): Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's once again a pleasure to rise and speak to this very important debate as we're in Committee of the Whole. We have a number of questions here this morning for the minister.

My first question pertains to clause 16.1(1). We're hoping the minister can outline for us today why the Departments of Health and Community Services and Education and Early Childhood Development are not included in this legislation, if we could have the basis of the rationale for that decision.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the Member for the question as we move into Committee, after going through second reading yesterday on Bill 26, An Act to Amend the Child and Youth Advocate Act, for people that may be watching this morning. I know I hear – especially from some of the seniors, so I mention that just to let them know what we're doing, debating a very important bill to make it mandatory on the reporting of deaths and critical injuries to the Advocate.

Yesterday, there was a fair bit of discussion on why we did not include Health and Education. Mr. Chair, I will reiterate that how we arrived at what we would include in this bill was through many, many meetings and working closely with the current Advocate.

As I stressed yesterday, the Child and Youth Advocate has a very important role to play in this province as an independent voice for children. We do not dictate to the Advocate what she should be doing. The Advocate feels that Children, Seniors and Social Development, Justice and Public Safety – two departments that are responsible for providing services to children in care and to families that we support and to youth – is necessary to allow her to do the job that she was mandated to do.

Mr. Chair, I look forward to other questions, but we have mechanisms in place under Health, under Education. Most of us here are parents; we know that if there's an incident in school, you're going to be an advocate for your son or your daughter. If something happens, if your child breaks a foot in volleyball, like happened to my daughter, you're going to go to the administration if you're not satisfied. Maybe you'll go to the school board if you're not happy with what happened.

At the end of the day, we need to be aware in this House that the Advocate in Newfoundland and Labrador has a very broad mandate and she can investigate whatever she chooses. Any child can go to the Advocate, any parent in this province can go to the Advocate and the Advocate will decide if she is going to investigate that or not.

I cannot stress that enough that what we're doing is what the current Advocate is completely satisfied – I listened to her again this morning on VOCM. Before I was out the door, I listened to the Advocate being interviewed saying that she was satisfied with where the amendments of this bill was going. Far be it from me to try and dictate to the Advocate what she would like to have included.

As a Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development, we welcome all recommendations. If we get a few months into this and the Advocate wants something else, Mr. Chair, she has every opportunity to come back to my office and we will sit down and we will continue to work with her. As I said yesterday, at the end of the day, we want the same thing and that is the best possible care for the safety of children and youth in this province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We seem to be still bringing up where we were yesterday. I fully understand and appreciate what the minister is saying and we, too, have

every confidence in the Child and Youth Advocate. This legislation – and for all of us who were around in those days – was brought forward on the basis of recommendations that came from the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, an independent office of this House.

It was stated in a private Member's motion brought forward by government when they were Members of the Opposition, it was stated in the red book and it was stated in the recommendations, as I said, of the former Youth Advocate and the three reports that were done. It seems to me like I'm hearing the minister say that this is not their decision to remove these components. Either way, there must be a rationale; there's a reason for why for three years there was a strong sentiment that all departments be included, strong sentiment by –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS. PERRY: – all sides of the House that all departments be included and that critical incidents be included as well. We're just looking for the reason as to why today it has changed and why today –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS. PERRY: There was work done on this for 18 months prior to the Liberals coming in to office and here we are now two years later. So, really, a bill that has been in the works for 3½ years, that we still are falling short on based on the recommendations that came out of those three tragedies that we had.

Can we just have a reason as to why? I understand you are saying it's because the Child and Youth Advocate has said that's what she wanted; that's what you've said. But why is it excluded? What's the basis for that? There has to be something that justifies your rationale as to why this is excluded.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Chair, the hon. Member said we keep referencing yesterday, we're referencing yesterday because the messaging yesterday and the messaging today does not need to change.

The Advocate – and I cannot stress it enough for people watching and people who may not understand – is an independent office of this House. We are all here elected, we represent different parties, we're different colours and stripes but there are some things that politics do not belong in. In this case, Mr. Chair, we are talking about the safety of children and youth.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. DEMPSTER: What we are doing is what the Advocate said satisfies the scope of what she needs to do in her practice. What the Member is talking about by suggesting that every single incident should be reported to the Advocate, my concern, even as a parent and as a parliamentarian and as a member of this province, if we are going to inundate the Advocate with more than she is asking for with every single incident, what happens with the serious stuff?

Mr. Chair, the nature of the everyday work of social workers in this province, they are highly trained professionals. They are there to support, to provide counselling, to provide wraparound services when things happen. Unfortunately every day in this province – not every day, but in this province serious things happen. We have children that experience very traumatic things, like maybe seeing a member of their household stab another member – difficult things to talk about.

I spoke last night to a large group of grieving people at Eastern Health. So I'm a little bit close to this, Mr. Chair. I know maybe too much what I'm talking about. We have people that a child that's killed in an accident. All of these things need to go to the Advocate, but what the Member is suggesting is if a child, if there's a little altercation on a playground, and the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, if his boy is in a scrap with another boy, then that should go to the Advocate. Well, I say, Mr. Chair, that that Member could be his own advocate for the child.

This is so broad and all encompassing. When she talks about watering down, that what we brought in this House is a watered-down version – I say, Mr. Chair, what we brought in, working in close collaboration with the Advocate, is something that will focus on the very serious, difficult things that happen in this province. If we were to include everything, Mr. Chair, everything in this province, that would certainly be a watered-down version of the act.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: I'm a little shocked at some of what I'm hearing, Mr. Chair, across the way, in particular from some of the hecklers.

Mr. Chair, it's incredibly surprising to accept that as government who wanted the very, very, very best for our children when they are in government are prepared to accept something much less today. It's baffling and I have yet to hear something that satisfies me in terms of an explanation for that. We're not talking about incidents in playgrounds. To trivialize this is unbelievable.

Let's use, for example, a youth in an addictions centre, a youth who falls under the Department of Health, and this youth is being sexually abused during their time at the addictions centre. There's no mandatory reporting that requires the Child and Youth Advocate to be informed of that.

And to say that you're going to inundate the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate alarms me somewhat. If we need more resources for our Child and Youth Advocate, then I would think that is something that would be a very, very high priority and would take priority over some of the other expenditures we would certainly see.

For example, we're going to be looking at asking for additional resources for the Independent Appointments Commission. I would say that our children and our youth are far, far, far more important than that, Mr. Chair, but we'll move on. I'm not getting an answer as to why these important issues have been excluded.

Perhaps the minister can elaborate for us on what mechanisms are in place, specifically in detail in the Departments of Health and Education, that will be enforced and that makes you, as government –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS. PERRY: – feel this bill, as it's presently written, is satisfactory to you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to respond to a couple of things. The Member keeps saying what she's hearing is not satisfying her. Well, I want to respectfully say to her what we're doing satisfies the Advocate and that's what's important to me.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. DEMPSTER: The Advocate has been out in the media. We work collaboratively. As I said yesterday, they spend a lot of time talking about her; we've been talking to her, Mr. Chair.

The Member yesterday referenced what happens if somebody comes in – and we don't want to make light of this, Mr. Chair. We're talking about heavy things. I don't like politics at play when it comes to children and youth. We need to ensure their safety.

The Member said: What happens when somebody comes into a school with a gun? I say call the police, Mr. Chair. We have a lot of services and supports out in this province.

The other thing I want to say to the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune: When you reference a sexual assault or a sexual abuse case not going to the Advocate, you are wrong. You need to go back and read the details in this bill. The definition of critical injury is one that encompasses more than a physical injury; it's a psychological injury.

Mr. Chair, if there's a child in this province and they are subject to sexual abuse, that absolutely

will be reported to the Advocate. So I want to correct the record on that.

The Member has stood several times and said: Why the change? The change is simply because the current Advocate has a different request than the former one. Mr. Chair, we are not here today to meet the needs of something in the past. Today, December – I don't know what the date is – the 6th maybe, we are here to meet the needs and satisfy the request of the current Advocate.

The other thing I'll say is, as I said yesterday, we are the fifth province in the country to do this; we are the first in Atlantic Canada. What we are doing is completely aligned. When you do a jurisdictional scan, what we are doing is completely aligned with other provinces and territories in this country.

I shared this yesterday, but I'll share it again when the Member said: What specifically do we have in Health? The Minister of Health can speak much more eloquently than I can. I think he's a brilliant man and I tell him all the time. He's doing some great work in that large department. One of the things he did, as minister, was he brought in new patient safety legislation that standardizes and imposes a legal obligation. Mr. Chair, information will be disclosed to the patients and their families and they can decide, once again, if they need to take further action, which may include connecting with the Advocate's office.

Mr. Chair, what I hear the Members asking for is that every single death of every child would go to the Advocate. We have to be respectful of the privacy of parents. I used the example yesterday of a child that may pass away from cancer. It's not considered a natural death. Do those parents want that gone to the Advocate and reported?

Mr. Chair, it's a little bit close to home, to me, some of this stuff. I'm not assuming that I know everything – and I'm not going to get personal because I've had multiple tragedies in my life – but I will tell you I have met enough people over the last 20 years to know that some families are very, very private. We have to respect that, Mr. Chair.

So, once again, what we are doing is the Advocate is satisfied that the mandatory reporting of deaths and critical injuries from those two departments is satisfied. It will allow her to carry out the scope of the work that she needs to do, the important work that she does in this province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Perhaps the minister can clarify for us, then. It's our understanding, based on this, that in the example I had used earlier of a youth in an addiction centre, yes, this legislation would kick in if the child were in care, but what happens in the case of such a situation happening for a child who's not in care?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Chair, if a child is not in care and the parent wants to report that to the Advocate, they have every opportunity to report that to the Advocate. The Advocate in this province has a very, very broad mandate. As I said earlier, she can choose to investigate whatever she chooses to investigate.

I will go back again and reiterate that we have highly trained social workers spread all throughout this province, many that I have met with from Gander right to Hopedale and Natuashish in my colleague's district, doing very valuable work, doing important work, but doing heavy work, Mr. Speaker. The nature of the work they do on a day-to-day basis I commend them and I have tremendous respect for that.

If the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune is aware of something in her district, anywhere in the province, she has an obligation to report that and at least make the Advocate aware. Once again, what we are doing is we arrived at these amendments after close collaboration. This has been a long time coming. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, those are exactly the words the Advocate said to me yesterday.

I've only been in this portfolio, Mr. Speaker, for three or four months. I have a team that has been working very hard and my predecessor, the Minister of Service NL, has been working on this for a long time.

We don't want to bring politics into it, but they're asking questions about something they had 12 years to do and didn't do it. I'm happy to be a part of a government that's doing it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Funny how that commentary ended with a political swipe, Mr. Speaker. This is not about politics and I really want to keep this where it's important.

When the minister started with her introductory comments and said, in the case of a child who's not in care, it's up to the parent, therein lies the crux of the problem we have issues and concerns with in this bill. For youth that have natural advocates in parents, that's absolutely fabulous and that solution will work. But, as we all know, that's not always the case.

Like the Leader of the Opposition said yesterday, we don't want to refer to specific cases, but there are specific cases that we are aware of where children have fallen through the cracks in this regard. We just feel quite strongly that this legislation should be a stronger voice for all children in Newfoundland and Labrador. We will leave it there.

The minister did allude to bringing the bill back to the House at some point, but I still hope there is consideration to make the bill stronger today so that today we can come out as leaders in the country with the best piece of legislation for the best possible interest of all children in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Can the minister detail for us why critical incidents – moving on now beyond the departments – are no longer included in the legislation?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Chair I'm just going to go back to a couple of points and share with this hon. House that the regional health authorities in our province investigate all adverse reports. So it's important this House knows that.

These are some of the reasons the Advocate, who is much more experienced in this than we are – this is why she was satisfied with the reporting from the two departments. The regional health authorities investigate all adverse reports.

Mr. Chair, in the education system, we have a safe and caring school's policy. As I said yesterday, in addition to parents being able to advocate for their children, there are also mechanisms in place within the other departments.

I want to reiterate, I've said it before but I'll say it again, not only will we be reporting to the Advocate on something that happens with a child or youth in care, but on any child or youth that is receiving any services. We have around 1,013 youth in care in our province, but we provide support to around 3,000 families, Mr. Chair.

Yes, before I sit down, I'll ask the question again: Why, in five years, did they never legislate any reporting from any department? It just kind of really astonishes me, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Well, Mr. Chair, it's something we had started to work on based on the recommendations of 2014. Had we been in government post-2015, this legislation would have included all of the recommendations – that, I can assure you.

The minister's speaking notes talk about physical and psychological injuries. Can the minister elaborate for us why this was in your speaking notes, but not specified in the legislation?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: I apologize, Mr. Chair. With some distraction around me, I didn't quite hear the question. I think she asked about –

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: I understand, because, Minister, I'm finding it really hard to hear you as well. It's really loud here today.

The minister's speaking notes yesterday talked about physical and psychological injuries, but that's not specified in the legislation. Can you elaborate on that for us?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: I apologize to the Member that I didn't hear the question.

It is specified, Mr. Chair, right in the definition. I shared it at the press conference yesterday and I believe I shared it in second reading.

The definition of a critical injury is one that may result in the child or youth's death, or cause serious or long-term impairment to the child or the youth. Mr. Chair, the definition – and its written right here – is limited to serious physical and/or psychological injury to the child or youth. It's right there in the definition, so I'm not sure what the Member is referring to.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Where are you seeing it? 16.1(1)(a) that I'm reading here defines critical injury. It means "an injury which may result in the death of a child or youth or may cause serious or long-term impairment of the health of a child or youth"

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: I'm going to check, take a moment, as she comes with more questions, and get back to you. I can tell the Member the definition of critical injury does include physical and psychological injury. It's the mandatory

reporting of death and it is a policy in the department, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Yes, and, Minister, we certainly appreciate that, but our issue is that it's not defined right here in the legislation. If you could check into that for us, we'd greatly appreciate that.

Mr. Chair, this bill is a very, very important bill. Many of us remember the tragedies that occurred. None of us ever – ever – want to see the magnitude of those types of events ever happen again to any of our children. We respectfully are bringing forward an amendment that we hope will be given genuine consideration by Members opposite.

Clause 1 of the bill is amended in the proposed subsection 16.1(1) of the act: (1) by renumbering the proposed paragraphs (a) and (b) as paragraphs (c) and (d) respectively;

(2) by adding the following paragraph before the proposed paragraph (c): (a) “critical incident” – so we would like to see critical incidents added as well, as was originally requested based on the recommendations of 2014 – means an extraordinary or life-threatening incident that directly impacts the safety and well-being of a child or youth such as violence, assault, injury or other serious criminal matters and significant threats of self-injury or harm or suicidal ideation requiring hospitalization beyond the initial assessment or treatment; (b) “critical incident and death protocol” means the critical incident and death protocol of the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development which is numbered QA-2014-001.

(3) by deleting the word “and” from the proposed sub-paragraph (d)(i) the second time it appears;

(4) by deleting the period in the proposed paragraph (d)(ii) and substituting a comma; and

(5) by adding the following sub-paragraphs: (iii) services provided by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development or by a school board in Newfoundland and

Labrador, and (iv) services provided by the Department of Health and Community Services or by the regional health authorities.

We have copies of that for you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Order, please!

We will recess the Committee to consider the proposed amendments.

Order, please!

Go ahead.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We're having technical difficulties again this morning.

That's moved by myself as the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune, and seconded by my colleague from the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis.

CHAIR: As discussed, we will recess the Committee to consider the proposed amendment.

Recess

CHAIR: Order, please!

Are the House Leaders ready?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes.

CHAIR: We are debating Bill 26 and the amendment that was proposed is not in order.

The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's disappointing to hear, but it is something that we certainly hope the minister still considers bringing forward herself as a friendly amendment. We just feel that there's no reason not to have the strongest, best possible piece of legislation that we possibly can have.

Mr. Chair, moving on now, I do have a few more questions. Can the minister outline for us

today how the process has been working for the last year or two? In the absence of the legislation, can the minister outline who is now reporting on the deaths within her department to the Child and Youth Advocate?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to speak for a moment to the amendment that was proposed. What the hon. Member across the way proposed in the amendment – in particular I'm looking at 2(b) – she is referring specifically to existing policy. Just for the benefit of the people in the House, that policy will no longer be applicable. Once we bring the amendments to the act, then there will be new policy that will be required. So that's why that is changing, Mr. Chair, and it's not in the new act going forward.

I want to say to the hon. Member about a point she made earlier, before we recessed the House, what is included in that definition that I gave of critical injury will be operationalized in policy. We will be drafting and we will be sharing that information out jointly with the Advocate.

I guess what I also want to say to this hon. House and to the listeners, the points that the Member is raising are things that were all considered. There has been a tremendous amount of effort by senior staff in my department and working closely with the Advocate again. All of these things have been considered over a period of time.

At the end of the day, and the amendments that we find ourselves discussing here in the House, it's the language that we landed on. We landed on the wording that satisfied the Advocate.

I had a colleague say to me: I've heard you explain that 10 times this morning. Well, if I keep getting questions on it, I have to keep responding. What we're using and where we're going is what satisfied the Advocate to be able to carry out the scope of the reporting required by her office, Mr. Chair.

Since 2014, there has been a Child Death Review Committee set up. All deaths in the

province – we're bringing in legislation right now, but all deaths in the province of children in care, children receiving services, are being reported to the Advocate up to this present time.

Since 2014 we have been reporting that and now what we're doing, Mr. Chair, with the amendments in this bill is we're broadening the scope of that definition so that critical injury will also be mandatory to be reported to the Advocate. I look forward to further questions.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Sorry, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: I'm sorry, I thought you stood; my apologies.

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

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

Once again, what we are doing here in the House points to the fact that we have a parliamentary tool and mechanism that allows us to deal with such complicated and important legislation in our legislative committee structure and that hasn't been done. This is so important. This kind of legislation is complex; it's important. What we see happening in the House here today is dissatisfaction because we haven't used that process.

The minister stood up and said there has been an enormous amount of work that has been done to get us to this point. If we had been in a proper committee structure before this legislation was brought to the House, we would have been able to work out some of these situations and some of these issues.

I am sure that the goal and the desire of every single Member in this House is to come up with the best possible legislation for the protection of our children, and also information, then that would come to the Child and Youth Advocate that would ensure that every system, every service and every program that is delivered in our public services is the best that it possibly can be for the children and youth of the province. By not doing that process, by not using those tools

that are available to us in this House, violates that principle and doesn't ensure that we get the best possible outcome in our legislation and it also makes it much more difficult to work together. I know that every Member in this House wants to be able to work together on this type of legislation because it is so crucial and is so important.

I'd like to ask the minister: Why was that process not used?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the hon. Member for the comments, a long-time parliamentarian in this Legislature. Myself, I've only been here about four-and-a-half years, but long enough that I appreciate the democratic process and sometimes the spirited and lively debate.

It's absolutely necessary in our democracy, Mr. Chair, what she's talking about. So in response to that what I will say, we are here debating, we are going back and forth. I'll stay as long as the hon. Members across the way want and answer questions.

I will also remind her that it is this government of the day that is bringing an all-party committee on democratic reform in 2018, because we recognize the importance of this. It is in the minister's mandate letter that we would have an all-party committee on democratic reform.

Regarding the bill, Mr. Chair, and the point to where we are today; once again, I have to go back to the role of the Advocate. We are here today to discuss amendments to a bill, bringing before the floor to debate. Mr. Chair, it was not for us in this House to dictate prior to now what the Advocate was requesting in order to do her job. I see that in a pretty black and white.

Up to now, the Advocate, as an independent office, told us what she wanted to see. She told us the reporting she needed in order to carry out her job. Now I, as the minister, where I have a lot of children in care and we provide services to thousands of families around the province, it falls under me to bring that to the floor of the

Legislature to say this is what the Advocate has said she needed.

We need to go through the legislative process. We need to discuss it, consider things; but, at the end of the day, Mr. Chair, I don't believe – because that's an independent office of the House – it is for government or it is for the Opposition or Third Party or the independent Member to say what we want that bill to look like. I think we can't lose sight of that.

At the end of the day, it is absolutely vital to maintain the integrity of an independent office in this province that we look to her to say: What is it you need to do your job? What is it you need to keep children and youth in this province to ensure they're safe and to investigate some of the very serious, sad things that happen?

Bearing in mind, every day we have hundreds of social workers who deal with serious work. That's the nature of their business, maltreatment of children. They're trained, Mr. Chair, highly trained professionals. They use their experience, they use the training they've learned in school, their experience on the job to make clinical decisions. Those decisions they make, Mr. Chair, they make them in consultation with their supervisors. They're not making them independently. That's the nature of the job they do.

We're 526,000 people in this province and we work with a lot of families. When you talk about a watered-down version, Mr. Chair, things would get pretty watered down. I'm not sure what would happen if everything would go to the Advocate. I keep going back to that, because what we're doing right now does align with what the Advocate stated she needed.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair, I believe the minister really doesn't quite understand the structure of the committees, the standing committees in the House. As a matter of fact –

CHAIR: Order, please!

I would suggest the Member stay relevant to the bill.

Thank you.

MS. ROGERS: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

When we look at some of the specific issues that we are addressing here in this bill, about whether it's critical injury or critical incident, whether it's mandatory requirements reporting from all government departments, that in fact the due process to get to those agreements on that and to ensure there is respect for the needs of the Advocate, then, in fact, through a standing committee, the Advocate can appear at a standing committee and explain what she feels is needed by that independent office.

This does not take away or interfere with the independence of the office. This is a democratic process to ensure it isn't politicized, that the work we do to ensure that what the Advocate is asking for is heard by every party here in this House. This is about supporting the independence of the office. That's why we have those kinds of standing committees. That's why legislation can come before the standing committee before the legislation gets to the House.

Mr. Chair, it's not about interfering with the needs of the Advocate. It's about working with the Advocate, hearing from the Advocate, based on her expertise and what she feels is needed in that office. That's what that democratic process is about. That's the democratic tool that has not been used in the process for this bill, which very well should've, could've and must be.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I'm going to stand here – I take great offence to when the Member for the NDP sits here and accuses one of our ministers of not understanding how the committees work, this

after we had a long discussion last night about how the NDP don't understand how the Management Commission works. In fact, you had one speaking against it and one speaking for it last night.

One of the things I'm going to talk about, they want to talk about the structure here. That's fine and dandy. We can have that conversation.

I hear the Leader of the Opposition talking about relevance. Well, listen, you should have talked about relevance last night, too.

MR. P. DAVIS: Point of order, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Order, please!

The Member for Topsail – Paradise on a point of order.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Earlier this week, Mr. Chair –

AN HON. MEMBER: What section are we on?

CHAIR: Quote your section.

MR. P. DAVIS: I will, Mr. Chair. I was just wanting for the Members opposite in the gallery to calm down so I could have the floor.

Earlier this week, the Government House Leader stood in his place – I stand in my place under section 49 – and several times –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

– stood in his place and pointed out repeatedly the importance of staying relevant. It's obvious that the Government House Leader is now doing exactly –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. P. DAVIS: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, I'm just trying to speak without interruption.

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. P. DAVIS: Mr. Chair, the Government House Leader is doing exactly that very same thing this morning and throwing out matters and comments in debate that are not relative to the bill. We're in Committee. We should be specific to the matter that's before the House.

CHAIR: Order, please!

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

Again, the Member talked about he had a hard time speaking again. The reason I was speaking about this is because he was over chirping from the sidelines there, so I had a hard time. I was speaking about the fact that we are talking about committees here. We didn't understand the committee structure.

I'm going to let the minister continue to do the great job that she's doing, speaking about this piece of legislation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. A. PARSONS: Talking about the specific parts of the legislation. They want to talk about the committee structure here. Again, we'll have that. We can talk in the Management Commission. We can talk in Standing Orders. We can continue to do that, but let's keep talking about a bill that's finally been delivered after years of waiting.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Order, please!

I remind all hon. Members to stay relevant to the bill, please.

The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

One final comment on the democratic piece: There are times and places where the all-party

committee can be used in this House. An absolutely perfect example was the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. As a result of that, Mr. Chair, we came out with a report towards recovery with 54 recommendations, I believe, and that was good; but, in this case, the Advocate is an independent office of this House.

The Advocate said this is what she needs: reporting from two departments of the most vulnerable. Let's not forget, Mr. Chair, what we're talking about today is some of the most vulnerable children and youth in our province – not just the ones in care – that receive a service from the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development, from Justice and Public Safety.

There are mechanisms in place, Mr. Chair, in the other departments. In addition to that, everybody, every parent in Newfoundland and Labrador who has their own children – I have never met a parent yet – there are many that receive services, but all of the parents I know and that my daughter went to school with, they're certainly there pretty quick to stand up for their children when they need to be an advocate for that.

In addition to that, let's not lose sight that the mandate of the current Advocate allows anybody in this province to bring anything to her and she can choose to investigate. The definition we're using is very, very similar to the definition being used right across the country. What we're doing is we're not reinventing the wheel, we work closely with the Advocate, this satisfies her and the scope of the work she needs to do and it's certainly aligned with the rest of the country, Mr. Chair.

Thank you.

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

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

I would just like to respond to what the minister said that the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions was a specially appointed committee. It is not, was not, is not a standing

committee of the House of Assembly. The standing committee, the descriptions of what a standing committee is –

MS. DEMPSTER: Point of order, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development on a point of order.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Chair, I just want to respectfully correct the Member under section 49 –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Chair, I think *Hansard* will show that I did not say that. I understand what happened with the all-party –

CHAIR: I ask for the co-operation of all hon. Members of this House. I actually can't hear what I'm doing here. I really can't, so I'd appreciate the co-operation from everyone.

Thank you.

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

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

Once again, the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions is not a standing committee in the House of Assembly. We have standing committees that are –

CHAIR: Order, please!

I have to ask the hon. Member to stay relevant to the clauses of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

In order to be able to really support the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate in her request – for instance, the difference between critical injury and critical incident – then it's important that everyone in this House, who is tasked with the job of voting for legislation fully understand what it is she is requesting.

Let's not forget, this is a bill that is being presented to the House by government. It's not a bill that's being presented by the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate; this is a bill that's being presented by government. That's the way we work. That's fine. We will trust that the Child and Youth Advocate had full co-operation and was fully consulted and involved, actually, in the process of the kind of legislation that she needs in order to be able to best do her work and best provide for the safety of our children, of our youth and, also, to ensure the services that we provide are in the best interests of our youth and our children.

We believe that's the process that needs to take place. The standing committee is one that would allow the Social Services Committee, which has been struck, but has not been used – their role is to ensure that as well and, also, to give confidence to every Member in this House that that is exactly what is happening.

Mr. Chair, we are at a disadvantage here. This doesn't need to be happening in our House at this time. If the structures that we have, the democratic structures that exist within our legislation, within how we do business were, in fact, followed so that we could understand exactly why the Advocate would prefer injury over incident, why just children in care and youth in care – because those are many of the outstanding issues right now, issues that could have been addressed in a standing committee and given confidence to every Member in this House that this is the direction to go in.

Again, I would ask the minister: Why not use that tool in order to be able to address those outstanding issues?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Chair, I just want to correct the Member when she said why is this

bill just pertaining to – is it just going to be reported to Advocate the injuries of children and youth in care?

I want to say that is not the case; it's not just children and youth in care. While we have around 1,013 children and youth in care, we are actually working and providing services to about 3,000 families in this province. So any child or youth that is receiving service, I just want to correct the Member there.

I also want to say to the hon. Member, and I may not know the democratic structure as well as some people in this House, but I believe she could have asked to send this to Committee in second reading. I believe that could have been asked. She could have asked to send it to Committee in second reading and it wasn't done, Mr. Chair.

I also just want to let her know that the hon. Member is free to meet with the Advocate. She's free to meet with the Advocate to discuss. The other thing, Mr. Chair, when we talk about structure in this House and the Member said what we have is a government bill and she would have liked to have heard directly from the Advocate. We are bringing this on behalf of the Advocate. We don't have a structure in place that allows the Advocate to stand up here and bring a bill to the floor. She has not gone through the democratic process of being elected to represent a district and to act as a parliamentarian. So this is the mechanism we have in place. This independent office came and these were the recommendations she gave, we worked closely with her, and that's what we're here debating today on her behalf.

I will say to the Member we're certainly aligned on one thing, 150 per cent, when she says we want the best for the children and youth in this province

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. DEMPSTER: Because, Mr. Chair, I can guarantee you that I don't know if there's anyone in this Legislature or province that wants more than I do to ensure that the children and youth receive the best possible care that they can. I take the portfolio that has been entrusted to me very, very seriously.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Yes, absolutely, everyone in this House, and I do trust that the minister absolutely wants this to be the best legislation it possibly can be, and that it will empower and give the authority and whatever it is that the Child and Youth Advocate needs in order to do the work that she has been asked to do on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

So in light of that, Mr. Chair, I would ask the minister if she would give leave so that I can request this bill go to Committee, to the Standing Committee on Social Services to deal with it there.

CHAIR: The Deputy Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Mr. Chair, we've been all sitting here listening to the Member opposite talk about Committee structure, democratic process. This is the ultimate democratic process.

You have a very learned and educated minister who is bringing, on behalf of the Child and Youth Advocate, a piece of legislation that is very, very critical, that we all seem to agree is important to the people of this province, important especially to the children and youth. The Member opposite doesn't seem to understand the processes of this House and the democratic institution in which we stand.

She understands very full well we are in Committee of the Whole. Everyone in this House is having the opportunity to have a discussion and ask questions to the minister responsible for this legislation. It is the ultimate form of democracy.

Mr. Chair, what she's referring to is we can sometimes – in various legislatures we have committees of the House. Not the whole House gets together, committees, sub-committees of this House get together. I'm familiar with it because it's one of the tools in the legislature in

Canada, in the Parliament of Canada that we use.

We have been speaking about, in the Standing Orders Committee, the opportunity of having sub-committees of this House, standing committees of this House meet on legislation. But the ultimate form of democracy, Mr. Chair, is that the whole House has the opportunity to ask questions to the minister.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. COADY: The entire House has the opportunity to ask questions of the minister who has been very sincere, open, honest and dedicated to this piece of legislation.

We've heard publicly from the Advocate who is saying this is an important piece of legislation; it is the legislation she requests. So if anyone has questions with the Child and Youth Advocate, they can certainly meet with her. She will be happy, I'm sure, to discuss this legislation.

Mr. Chair, I think we should all take the opportunity to ask the questions that we need to ask of the minister, to make our points that we need to make. This is an important piece of legislation. I request that all of us turn our attention to making sure it is exactly the best piece of legislation.

I have ultimate faith in our minister, Mr. Chair. I have ultimate faith in the incredible work of the department. The social workers that are involved in this, they especially have important work on behalf of the Child and Youth Advocate.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I thank the Minister of Natural Resources for that speech. But, in fact, the Committee of the Whole is not a standing committee. It is not in any way, shape or form. It doesn't substitute for it. It does not substitute –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair, it does not substitute in any way, shape or form the work of a standing committee. It does not. I would direct all Members to the Standing Orders of the House of Assembly. It's very clearly stated, page 41, what a standing committee is and what is the work of a standing committee.

One of the things that a standing committee can do is look very closely at what's involved in this legislation; for instance, the difference between injury and critical incidents. We can call expertise, we can call the Advocate. Of course, the Advocate has not been elected and does not take a seat in this House, but the Advocate can speak to the standing committee. That dialogue is really important. It's a tool that we have at our disposal and has not been used.

I would once again draw people's attention to the difference between what a standing committee is and what Committee of the Whole is. I'm going to assume, then, that the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development – that she probably understands that as well. So in light of that, I would ask her again, with leave, will she do the right thing and refer this legislation, which is so important?

We've all said how important it is, we've all said how we want it to be the best that it possibly can. In order for us to all work together, will she refer this to the Standing Committee of Social Services?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Chair, with all due respect, the hon. Member, who's been a parliamentarian for much longer than I have, knows full well she had that opportunity in second reading to refer it out to a committee.

I'm going to try to get back to discussing the important matter of this bill. What we see is someone trying to stall in this House what the Advocate wanted here, Mr. Chair. I do believe

the Member may have asked for some definitions around the difference between –

MS. ROGERS: Point of order, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre on a point of order.

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair, a point of order on article 49 of the Standing Orders. To say that I am deliberately trying to stall this legislative process –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: – really casts aspersions on my integrity and on the work that I am doing on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. In fact, what I am doing is saying let's do this the best way that we can.

The accusation that I am trying to stall legislation is reprehensible. I ask for an apology on that, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Order, please!

There is no point of order; it's just a disagreement between two hon. Members.

The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Chair, it is really unfortunate that we are going down this road discussing the safety of children and youth in our province. What I merely said to the Member was you had an opportunity in second reading. You had an opportunity. You understand the process; respect the process. That's what I said.

I do believe the hon. Member asked for a definition between critical injury and incident. I will lay that out again for the House and for people that may be watching today, Mr. Chair.

What I'm going to do – because I've talked about a critical injury as one that may result in the child or youth's death or cause serious harm or long-term impairment to the health of the

child or youth, versus a critical incident as an extraordinary or life-threatening event. We've discussed that, so I'm just going to give a couple of examples, Mr. Chair.

Under an injury, as I mentioned, you might have a child that was injured in a car. You might have a child that takes pills and ends up in the hospital and they're unresponsive – serious things, Mr. Chair. They're very serious, difficult things for families to go through, life changing. There might be a child that goes missing who's a diabetic and then there are additional reasons for concern. These are the types of things that would fall under injury.

On the other hand, Mr. Chair, there may be a child who is receiving services from either the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development or Justice and Public Safety and they go missing from a playground and they're found or something. There are mechanisms in place.

Once again, I say we have social workers that do very important work every day. They are very qualified to do their work. They counsel children. They counsel families. Sometimes the children have to be removed from homes, always with a goal to reunify, to provide wraparound supports. At the end of the day, we all want the same thing. We want our children and our youth safe, we want healthy families and we want healthy communities.

I believe, Mr. Chair, the amendments that we are proposing here today takes us – it's a ginormous step, in my opinion. In my humble opinion, this is a huge step forward today making it mandatory to report deaths and critical injuries to the Advocate from the Departments of Children, Seniors and Social Development and Justice and Public Safety. I think it's going to be a good day when this bill gets through for the children and youth in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl – Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to take a few moments now to speak on this as well. I want to say right off the bat, though, that as I said in second reading nobody, I don't think, on this side – and I'll speak for myself, but what I've heard, nobody on this side is saying that this is a bad thing, that we don't support mandatory reporting of child deaths and serious injuries. I certainly don't. I support it 100 per cent.

I also want to say that I really don't believe there's anything political going on, on any side, to be honest with you. The government brought in a piece of legislation for all the right reasons, I believe, and it makes sense. I believe all Members of the Opposition are just simply doing their jobs in asking questions and raising concerns. I don't see that there's anything political about it, to be honest with you. I don't know why we want to go down the road of anybody –

MR. MITCHELMORE: What's the question?

MR. LANE: The Minister of Tourism there wants to chirp. Maybe he can stand up now when I sit down and he can offer some of his enlightenment because I'm sure he has an awful lot to offer to this debate so far.

As I was saying, Mr. Chair, this is not political. I can say I have stood up in this House now during this session and during the last session and so on, and *Hansard* will show I supported the vast majority of what this government has brought forward.

I said if they did something good, I would support it. If they did something I didn't agree with, I wouldn't support it. There have been times when the Official Opposition or the Third Party have voted one way, against the government, and yesterday, I voted with the government while the Official Opposition voted a different way.

So, for me, this is not political, but this is important. This is very important legislation. We have a responsibility on this side to bring forward issues and concerns that we have. I will say that the Member for St. John's Centre does raise a good point about the process. And I'm

here to talk about this legislation, but she does raise an important point about the process, and not about this bill, and not about this government either because it was no different when it was the other way around and there was a different government.

The fact of the matter is that when we get into it – it's fine when we get into legislation which is pretty straightforward, minor changes, housekeeping and so on, but when we get into complex, complicated issues that are so important, then to not vet it though every system we can to ensure that all Members are informed, well aware of what the issues are and what the rationale is. You don't get that, by the way, in a 20-minute or a half-hour briefing up in a department.

In this case, we are asked to rely on the Child and Youth Advocate that that's what she wants. I have no issue with that. She's obviously a very qualified person who is making these recommendations. I have no problem with her qualifications or her ability and so on, but I will say this, that the former Child and Youth Advocate who was there for a number of years, in three or four different reports, she made different recommendations. Some of the things that have been raised here by the Official Opposition and so on were recommendations that she made.

Now, she was also a very qualified person. So obviously, you have two Child and Youth Advocates, two qualified people, who have a differing opinion on what should be included and what shouldn't be. You can argue they can't both be right. Maybe they can, maybe it's just a matter of perspective, but because we're questioning this doesn't mean that we're saying that the Child and Youth Advocate doesn't know what she's doing or whatever, that we're not supporting her. That's not what we're saying at all.

The fact of the matter is that the prior Child and Youth Advocate made some suggestions or recommendations that are not being covered off in this particular bill. The concerns she raised are the concerns that are being raised here today. It is important. This is part of the democratic process. We are parliamentarians. We are the ones who were elected by the people of

Newfoundland and Labrador to discuss these important issues.

We're not here to rubber-stamp what gets brought forward by the government. We're not here to rubber-stamp what gets brought forward by any Officer of the House. The Child and Youth Advocate reports to the House of Assembly. It's not the other way around. We don't report to that office. That office reports here. We're ultimately the ones that have the responsibility –

MR. MITCHELMORE: I don't think there's a question.

MR. LANE: I say to the Minister of Tourism, you'll have your opportunity.

So it's important that we ask these questions, that we raise these concerns. For me, I have to agree – now, I'm going to support the legislation because we should've had this a long time ago and it didn't happen. So I'm supporting it 100 per cent – don't get me wrong, I do.

I'm just going to put on the record, as others have, that I have some concerns. I have a concern about the definition of a critical injury and the fact that it doesn't say psychological injury. Now, the minister can say, and fair enough, that in the policy and when the policy comes forward and so on, psychological injury is part of it. I have no reason to disbelieve her. I'm sure it will be in the policy, but who's to say that next year or the year after or the year after that it gets taken out of policy, the policy gets changed. There's no guarantee that those things are in the policy, unless it's enshrined in here.

If you have a definition in the act, which is the law, then the policy has to stick to what's in that. They can't change it, but if you don't include it here in this act, which is the law, then they can change it. They can not include psychological damage and so on. Someone can decide for some reason: I'm not going to include that – and the public would be none the wiser, until something happened one day and then somebody looked in to it and said: yeah, someone decided to change the policy. It didn't have to go before the House, was never debated publicly, it just happened. They were given free

will to do whatever they want. That's an issue, that's a concern.

The other issue is the fact that we don't have a –

MR. B. DAVIS: You're grandstanding.

MR. LANE: No, it's not grandstanding, I say to the Member for Virginia Waters – I think it is, or whatever the district is.

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. LANE: It's not grandstanding at all. It's doing my job, that's what it is. It's doing my job as I was elected to do. That's what it's doing.

MR. B. DAVIS: Raise a question first.

MR. LANE: I'll ask a question, I say, when I'm ready to ask a question. That's when I'll ask a question; if I decide to ask a question. I'm not restricted here to ask a question. I can make comments. I don't have to ask questions. I'll do what I decide I'm going to do because, guess what? Nobody's going to tell me what to do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. LANE: Anyway, we'll move on.

I have an issue with the fact that we don't have critical incidents included. There's no critical incident included here, which should be included, I think. Because you could have a very, very serious incident involving a child, involving a youth that did not result in them actually getting injured, but they could have been killed. If the stars hadn't aligned a certain way it could have resulted in a death, but it didn't. So to leave out critical incident, to my mind, is a mistake. I think it should be there.

The final point I have with this is the fact that we're only dealing with two departments. We're dealing with the Department of Justice and we're dealing with – it was Child, Youth and Family Services – Children, Seniors and Social Development, there you go.

I really do understand what the minister is saying that Eastern Health, the health authorities, the Department of Health have protocols. Schools would have protocols. I get

that, but I'm sure if it was the Whitbourne youth centre, as an example – I just throw it out as a random example – which falls under the Department of Justice, they have protocols, too. Even though they have their protocols, it still applies to them.

What's the difference between something happens at the Whitbourne youth centre that has protocols, but they have to report it, it's mandatory; something happens in Paradise at the drug treatment centre, granted they might have protocols, but they don't have to report it. What's the difference? I don't understand the difference.

The other thing – actually, I'm running out of time, so I'm going to take my seat. If somebody else stands up, then I'll finish.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Chair, I thank the Member for the points on the issues. I believe it was just a question right at the very end for me that I will respond to directly: What's the difference with the Whitbourne youth centre? They have protocols in place, too.

What I will say to the hon. Member is those two departments are responsible for the children and youth in their care and that they provide a service to. That's what makes those two departments different from Health and Education.

We have a direct responsibility. CSSD has a responsibility to protect children by intervening with their parents or caregivers and, in some cases, providing out-of-home care, as I talked about earlier, to ensure the children and youth are safe.

Also, I'll say to the Member: Justice and Public Safety also have youth that are in their custody in the department, maybe youth that might have committed a criminal offence. Government is, therefore, also responsible for these children and youth. That's what makes the difference there with those two departments, I say to the hon. Member.

The jurisdictional review supports limiting the scope of Children, Seniors and Social Development and Justice and Public Safety because our mandate gives us a direct responsibility to the children and youth in care there.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just to be clear, Mr. Chair, for all of us in the House, is the minister saying that the bill, as it's presently written, is exactly what the Advocate asked for? Is she saying in particular that the Advocate specifically said she only wanted CSSD and Justice included?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Chair, she is correct.

The Advocate, in collaboration with Children, Seniors and Social Development and Justice and Public Safety, determined that the definition of critical incidents was broader than necessary for the scope of reporting required to her office. I have said that a number of times already, so in the interest of time I'm not going to keep repeating myself.

The Advocate did say that incidents were broader than was necessary for her to carry out her important work. That is why we landed on the language that we did, working closely in collaboration with the Advocate.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In 2015, following the recommendations that arose that we're trying to finalize now and get 100 per cent of them in place – and we know in 2016, we believe, there was a working committee comprised of child, youth and family services, Justice, Health and Education. This was the working group that was dedicated to drafting the legislation. Can the minister tell us specifically what date, what point in time this committee was disbanded?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Chair, that would have been before my time in this department. I don't have that answer, but I will certainly try and get that answer for her. I only know that a lot of the questions that are coming from the Members opposite relate to the former Advocate. Since I came, I'm working with the current Advocate and, again, what we're doing today satisfies the current Advocate.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Has the minister reviewed any of the information in the recommendations that arose in 2014 and, I guess, the genesis of where all of this came from?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Chair, I can report to this House that committee has not been disbanded. It has not been disbanded, but some of the membership has changed under this new current Advocate. Other departments were left once the scope of what the Advocate wanted was determined.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: The committee still exists, but it now only has members from CSSD and Justice. Can you tell me when the Departments of Health and Education were removed from the committee? What month did this occur?

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Windsor Lake.

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

I'm really pleased to stand and participate in this debate. I've been listening very attentively since the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development introduced the bill. I think this is, no doubt, a very important conversation for

every single Member of this House; hence, the seriousness of the debate.

I will say, Mr. Chair, while we talk about this in Committee, one of the things I think is important for us to recognize, as legislators and parliamentarians, is that there is an urgency, quite frankly, to the need to provide approval for this bill. The reason I say that, as has been referenced many times in this House, the Advocate has been without the ability to have this automatic reporting happening for over a decade.

The former Child and Youth Advocate, whom I know and have had dealings with before she became the Child and Youth Advocate, certainly saw the importance. The current Child and Youth Advocate, who I also have a tremendous amount of respect for and have known for many, many years – and it was a privilege to be a Member of this House and ratify her appointment in that very important role that reports to this House – has also advocated.

I think, Mr. Chair, one of the things, though, that is important to remember as part of this piece of legislation is that the Child and Youth Advocate must focus and should focus the attention and resources of that office, in my opinion, on the most vulnerable individuals and, in this case, children who are impacted by tragedy, who lose their lives as a result of tragedy. That Advocate is there to make sure those most vulnerable children are represented and that their voices are heard.

Mr. Chair, I want to take a moment to congratulate the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development, as well as the former minister for the same department; both mothers, both advocating to this House on a very important issue related to children. As we have the debate and Members opposite do the work they're supposed to do as Opposition Members – and maybe it is critiquing the standing committees of this House – I also want to recognize the efforts of our House Leader to work on how we use the tools that are available to us under the democratic process.

Let us not forget that right now, today, in our province, if there is a critical situation where a child – a very vulnerable child, without an

advocate, without somebody to be in their corner – loses their life, it is not automatically reported to the Child and Youth Advocate. I would hope, Mr. Chair, that before we leave today we can make progress on supporting the work of the department, the Child and Youth Advocate and the work of this minister.

Mr. Chair, I stand here not only as a parliamentarian, but also as a colleague of the minister responsible for Children, Seniors and Social Development, who I know, like I, has stood at the side of a grave and buried a child. I would say that while the discussions around the historical weaknesses of the former administration to act on this make great political fodder, while the intentions of parliamentarians in this House to improve the discussions around standing committees, or special committees of this House are important, let us not forget the focus of what this act is meant to do. It is meant to give the Child and Youth Advocate today, as quickly as we can pass this bill, the rights to investigate because she will be informed of those situations that happen to the most vulnerable children in our province, Mr. Chair.

With that, I will sit down and allow the minister to do the great job she's doing in presenting this bill and hope that the Members of this House understand that we must and need to pass this bill as it is.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl – Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to say to the Member opposite who just spoke that I certainly have no intentions of holding up this bill. It's not about holding up the bill. It really isn't. I can't imagine anybody who has had the loss of a child and what they would have gone through. As a father myself, it must be unbearable. We all want to do the right thing.

For me, as I've said, I will be supporting the bill. This is not about not supporting the bill, but this is about making sure that our concerns are heard. If that takes a little more time to do it right, then

I don't see a problem with that. We've said we've been 10 years waiting for this, if it takes a few more hours or whatever it takes – not that I'm planning on standing here for the next few hours because I don't.

If it takes a couple of amendments, if that was possible, if government wanted to do it, and it took a day or two or whatever – I know they're not going to do it, but if they did, I don't think that would hurt if we made sure that everything was done properly and covered everything off. Not that what's here is wrong or bad; it's about making it better and more inclusive. I think that would be my goal. I think that's the goal of all my colleagues. I would think it should be the goal of us all.

To finish off where I had spoken before I ran out of time, last time I was talking about the Whitbourne Youth Centre versus the Paradise drug rehabilitation clinic and so on. I understand and I appreciate what the minister is saying that if a child is in the Whitbourne youth detention, then he or she is in the custody of the government – in care, so to speak. It might not be the right terminology, but I think you get what I mean.

If we're looking at a facility – and I don't want to keep using the Paradise drug treatment centre, it's just one that comes to mind. I'm sure everything is fine there and they're doing a great job. I don't want to make it seem like I'm making any accusations about them because I'm not. I have no reason to believe that there's anything only good stuff happening there, but I just use it as an example because it's one that comes to mind.

You could have a child go in there, as an example, as I've read it and from the briefing, who is what you call an emancipated youth, I believe is the terminology. So, basically, it's a child who was in care, perhaps, and turned 16. They signed a waiver or whatever they do to say I'm no longer going to be part of the child, youth and family services system, so to speak.

Now, I understand there's a 12-month period here, but that brings you to 17. So there still is that gap between adult – in theory, and I know we're talking in theory, but things can happen is all I'm saying; things can happen. There is that

gap in time where it is possible, in that scenario, where you have someone who is an emancipated youth, we've gone past the 12 months from when they were part of the child, youth and family services system and they go into a facility like that – it doesn't have to be that one – or some other health facility, some other educational facility or whatever, and something could happen to that child, to that youth, and that wouldn't be an automatic report.

Granted, as the minister said, they have their own internal systems, but then again the Whitbourne Youth Centre has their own internal systems as well. So do group homes and stuff; they have their own internal. So an internal system is an internal system. In one case, it's automatically reported and the other case, it's not automatically reported.

The other thing is you could have a child who is not part of the system, so to speak. They're still with their parents or whatever – and I understand that parents would advocate for the children. That is most parents. That's the majority of parents, I would hope, but we also know there are circumstances that have happened, unfortunately, where parents involved were not good parents and may not have been picked up through CYFS and so on and they still had custody of the children. In that case, is there any guarantee if something happened that that parent would be of sound body and mind, whatever the case might be? Maybe the parents have addictions themselves. Would they report it? So would it go to the Child and Youth Advocate? It may not.

These are hypotheticals and all we're suggesting here is to cover those hypotheticals off. I heard the minister give an example when she talked about a fight at a school or something, some kid gets picked on or they're having a little scrap outside at recess time or whatever. That's not what we're saying. It's not what I'm saying, at least. I don't think it's what anyone else is saying. We're not talking about that. We're talking about very serious incidents. We're talking about things that meet the definition in here of a serious injury or a serious incident, if it was included. That's what we're talking about. That would happen or could happen in an educational setting or could happen in a health

care setting. That's what we're talking about, for those serious incidents to be reported.

If the Child and Youth Advocate don't have the resources to deal with all those things, then she should ask for more. If that's the issue – I don't know. If that's part of the issue, if it's a matter of focus and resources, then she should come out and say: I don't feel that I would have the resources to focus on everything and that's the reason why we've narrowed it from what the original predecessor, Child and Youth Advocate Ms. Chafe, said. That's why I've changed this now and narrowed the scope, because under my analysis I don't believe I would have the resources to do it all.

If that's the case, then that's what should be said. Then we can discuss giving her more resources if that's what we need. I know there's a cost to that as well, and that all has to be in consideration, but if that's the issue, then it's a discussion we need to have.

Those are my concerns that I have, Mr. Chair. As I said, we knew when the bill came through, like all bills – and, again, that's not about this government, it's about the process. We all knew it wasn't going to go to a legislative committee because we don't do it. We all know that amendments are not going to go through because they very rarely do. I don't know, I've hardly seen anything since I've been here, very little.

Tom Marshall, when he was deputy premier – or maybe he was premier at the time – put it very eloquently, I always remember it, when he stood up and said: Mr. Speaker, Oppositions have their say and government has its way. That's the way it works. It doesn't have to work that way, but that's the way it works.

With that said, we know it's going to go through as is. I'm going to support it as is because we didn't have it before and this is a good thing. This is a good-news story. This is not about trying to, in any way, say this is bad. That's not what it's about. It's good. We should have been doing it all along. We're doing it.

For me, I do see those gaps there that I would like, personally, to see closed. The purpose here is to put it on the record and to say to government, as we have on other bills from time

to time, you have the power, if you want to, that you could make amendments.

If you do or you don't, that will be your choice. You'll have your way, but at least I want to put those points forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to go back because there have been a lot of speakers. It's great to see so many people engaged in this debate here this morning, Mr. Chair, because it is very important.

I agree with my colleague for Mount Pearl – Southlands. This piece of legislation has been three years in the making and if it takes a few extra hours to make it the best piece of legislation that it can be, then that's a few extra hours very, very well spent, Mr. Chair, and certainly in the best interests of the children of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I just want to go back to a question I had asked a few minutes ago regarding the committee that was struck to draft this legislation and to work with this legislation. Can the minister inform this hon. House what specific time the Department of Health and the Department of Education were removed from the committee structure?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

When the new Advocate was appointed, there were deputy ministers from four departments that would have met with the Advocate; I believe it was in late March. At that time, when the conversation focused around what this current Advocate felt was needed to carry on the scope of her work, it's my understanding that they all met in that first meeting and then the other two departments left. The Advocate continued to work closely with the two departments that have a responsibility to

children and youth in care or receiving services, Mr. Chair.

One thing I didn't mention here this morning is the *Children and Youth Care and Protection Act*, another very, very important act in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Under the *Children and Youth Care and Protection Act*, Mr. Chair, we all have a duty to report any concerns of children needing protective intervention. I think that serves merit in being put on the record here during this important debate as well.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for allowing me some time to enter in Committee debate this afternoon.

I'll start with a very simple question for the minister. The minister has referred many times to the Advocate. I'd like to ask her: Other than the Advocate and officials in core government, who else did she consult with on this bill?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Chair, I mentioned the deputy ministers, in the departments that have been questioned here today, have been meeting with the Advocate. I have an ADM in my department, a very, very, very qualified, competent individual, once a front-line social worker herself; have spent 26 years dealing with it. She is now the individual that actually reports the deaths, since 2014, those deaths that are being reported. She is now the person in my department that reports that to the Advocate. Those are the people that are working on this and working closely with the Advocate to arrive where we are today.

I also want to say again, Mr. Chair, to this hon. House, picking up on some points that my colleague, the Member for Windsor Lake, made. She did a very good job. I appreciated the points that she brought to the floor. The Member for Windsor Lake has met and spoken with the Advocate. I'm wondering, when I look across the way at the Members, who over there has

actually sat down and had discussion with the Advocate because anybody can. Her door is open.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Maybe the minister missed my question. My question was: Other than the Advocate and officials within core government – other than those, who has she consulted with?

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I spoke on this in second reading yesterday and I won't really go back to many of my points. I've taken in all this debate today and the back and forth. I think this is a very important piece of legislation. I think it should not be lost on the House the importance of this legislation and getting it right.

This was what I alluded to yesterday and I'll keep to the high road today again. We make political comments and I'm not going there, I've made that point and I'm sticking to that point, because I think this is too important. I stated yesterday on a personal level the minister can look across and ask who has spoken to the Child and Youth Advocate, but she can never question, I don't think, any of the Members in this House how much passion, how much importance we feel this legislation means to our children, our youth, our vulnerable.

We would not be stood here today, Mr. Chair, debating this legislation if we didn't see the importance of it. All of us here could ask questions. We have our critic asking, our Leader of the Opposition and Members of the other parties – we could all ask questions because we feel it's very important.

On that note, I'm going to ask a straightforward question, and I think it's a fair question based on some of the debate that's going on: Can the minister tell this House with confidence she

feels this is the best piece of legislation without having Health and Education as part of this bill – do you feel this is the best piece of legislation out there with those two excluded? It's a simple question.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Chair, in response to the earlier Member for Topsail – Paradise – it's hard to think of it all when you're on your feet right away. I also wanted to remind him that in getting to where we are today, we did do a jurisdictional scan and we looked at what was happening in the other provinces. We're the fifth to bring in this mandatory reporting and the first in Atlantic Canada. So we looked at that as well.

I also want to say, I keep bringing it back to working with the Advocate and what the Advocate wanted. This is not about what individual groups or other departments might have wanted. That's an independent office of the House. What I take very seriously is what I need to do in my capacity, as Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development, to support what she needs to do to carry out her work.

The Member for Mount Pearl – Southlands said is this about resources. In our dialog with the Advocate there was no conversation about resources, because we're talking about children in care and these things that matter, we'll always find a way. So right now, this is about satisfying her requirements.

I say to the hon. Member to answer his question, today I can stand before you and say that I have every confidence that what we are doing satisfies the Advocate. She has said that to me and she has said that to the media repeatedly, yesterday and today. The Advocate has been out there saying, right now, this is what I need to carry out the important work that I do.

In addition to that, what we're doing today doesn't chisel this in stone, Mr. Chair. If the Advocate comes back in three months' time and says I'd like to talk to you, I have concerns, our door is open; we embrace recommendations wholeheartedly. Any opportunity that we have to

improve the safety and well-being of children and youth in your province is a conversation that we will have.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to go back and thank the minister for that response, but that's not what I asked you. I respect that that's what the Child and Youth Advocate wanted and I respect her, as I said it yesterday. My question is: Do you think, as minister responsible, this is the best, strongest piece of legislation? Because that's what we're asking for: the best piece of legislation. Again, it is not being political. In your opinion, as minister responsible, is this the best piece of legislation with Health and Education not included in the legislation?

It's a simple question, but I'm asking you, Minister, not the Child and Youth Advocate; I want your opinion.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, I would not have brought it forward if I didn't think otherwise.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My question just a few moments ago was about who the minister consulted with. I appreciate her rising to a subsequent question and pointing out that they did a jurisdictional scan. I appreciate that, but my question is around – and it really comes back to what my colleague for Conception Bay South just asked about getting

the best legislation. That's what it's about. It's not just doing what somebody asked if it be an Officer of the House or somebody else or someone within a government department, it's about coming here – there was a comment about coming here and bringing in what the best legislation is going to be.

There was a comment earlier by the Member opposite about discussing it and considering things. That's what we're doing here in Committee. We're saying: Did you consider this? Did you consider something else? We're trying to find out why they went from fully endorsing and backing and lobbying for what the former Advocate was seeking out to this. This is not what they promised. This is not what the former Advocate was lobbying for. This is not what they promised to do. This is not that, Mr. Chair.

I also have to take issue with the Member opposite who a couple of times I've heard – the Minister of Health, I heard him say it this morning: You had 12 years to do it. You were working on it for years. As a matter of fact, their own platform, 2015 platform, says for years the Child and Youth Advocate has been calling for the PC government to make mandatory reporting.

That's not true; this is not a truthful statement in here, Mr. Chair. What was in that campaign is not truthful. I say to the Member over there, it was in the fall of 2014, if you read the Advocate's 2014-2015 annual report the Advocate says: "In the fall of 2014, the Advocate made a formal request to the Honourable Paul Davis, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, that the *Child and Youth Advocate Act* be amended to include mandatory notification from government departments and agencies when a child or youth receiving services is involved in a critical incident or when a death of a child or youth occurs. Mandatory notification from government departments and agencies when a child or youth receiving services is involved in a critical incident" – critical incident, not critical injury, but critical incident – "or when the death of a child or youth occurs will provide the ACY with the information needed in order to ensure that the rights and interests of every child and youth are protected and advanced." Every child and

youth, and they hitched their wagon to it, Mr. Chair. They campaigned on it.

They promised to the people in their campaign platform that's what they were going to do. The reason why we're here today having such a lengthy discussion in Committee is the bill before the House here today, that's not it – that's not it. We're asking questions that are not difficult, that are not complicated.

Mr. Chair, the previous minister had confirmed in April 2016, and I quote from a CBC news story posted April 26, 2016, at 4:24 p.m. The previous minister, now the Minister of Service NL – and the story here quotes. The previous minister had been asked about a time frame. It says: “‘I really cannot talk to the time frame right now,’ she says. ‘It’s a very important piece of work, reporting critical incidents, and it’s a very detailed and deep piece of work.’”

Well, I agree. That's why a working committee between '14 and '15, when the change of government happened, deputy ministers from the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services, the Department of Justice and Public Safety, the deputy minister of Education and the deputy minister of Health at the time engaged in hundreds of correspondence, exchanges and discussions about this very matter, hundreds because we wanted to make sure it was done right, too.

We wanted to make sure it was done right; they wanted to make sure it was done right. There were hundreds of exchanges by those deputy ministers in their deputy minister committee – hundreds – to get it right. That was of ultimate importance to get it right. Here today, I still believe, yes, we should do it and, yes, we should get it right.

Then the Members opposite get up and say: Oh, we shouldn't make politics about it; you had 12 years to do it. It's about today and the bill before the House today. The bill before the House today is about critical injury, not critical incidents.

The Child and Youth Advocate of the day talked about critical incidents many, many times. The platform of the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador, when they went to the people and

asked them to vote for them, talks about critical incidents. The current bill before the House does not.

Even the current Minister of Service NL, when she was the minister of Child, Youth and Family Services – it was referred to in the article – talked about critical incidents. Somewhere along the way there are some changes in what was committed. It was absolutely changed and we're concerned about that, Mr. Chair.

My question for the Member opposite – and who she consulted with, she did a jurisdictional scan. She talked about how important and great people are in the department. I agree. I agree there are great professionals working in her department. Long before I came to this House, I worked with some of them on a daily basis.

I know the current Child and Youth Advocate; I have known her for decades. On a professional basis, I have worked with her from time to time for decades. I have utmost respect for the current Advocate. Absolutely, I thought and I believe, and still believe today, the current Child and Youth Advocate was a great choice to be the new Child and Youth Advocate; a good position, good appointment, no two ways about it.

Just like the minister herself said, she knows lots about it, but she also is new. Mr. Chair, she reflected on that this morning here in the House that she's new. The Child and Youth Advocate is new, but there's a Child and Youth Advocate who was around for many years who asked for critical incidents – asked and we put together all the departments.

As a matter of fact, the Child and Youth Advocate even went on to say, contrary to what the Members opposite said: “‘Since this request and throughout 2014-2015 fiscal year” – this is in her annual report – “the ACY has worked in collaboration with the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services, the Department of Health and Community Services, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and the Department of Justice and Public Safety on proposed amendment. The Advocate looks forward to further collaboration with these departments and to the proposal of the legislative amendment.”

My question for the minister is: The former Advocate you hitched your wagon to in your 2015 election platform, your predecessor was continuing to work with the four departments and the Advocate up until a few months ago. We want to know why the change? Minister, why did you not consult with the former Advocate, who has a significant depth of knowledge and experience in this area?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Chair, the Advocate that the Member is referring to that he has tremendous respect for, I would say: What's her opinion on this bill? The Advocate that we're bringing these recommendations forward today, if he has tremendous respect for her, respect that this was acceptable to her. That's what's more important here.

Mr. Chair, I also want to say to the House, when the Advocate, who works closely with other advocates across the country – the current Advocate is satisfied with the direction we are going in today with what these amendments will bring. She works closely with other advocates across provinces and territories.

They're trying to go down a rabbit hole here and make this political. I find it difficult to refrain. I want to continue to focus on the important work of this bill, Mr. Chair. Even the Member who was just on his feet, he had since 2011 to deliver. He could have delivered since 2011. He was minister in that department. While he was minister, there were three separate investigations. The former Advocate was calling for it.

I'm not going to continue to stand and answer and repeat the same thing over and over again, other than to say when he says: Why do you find yourself where you find yourself here today, what changed? The Advocate changed. We are working with an independent officer in this province. We are working with her to meet the requirements that she said she needed to carry out the scope and practice of her job, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate the response from the minister – I do. I see she's sincerely trying to provide the information, but I don't see how she's able to do it with clarity. Yes, I do – tut, tut, tut, tut, tut, that's what you have to face here.

We stand in the House, we're trying to have a debate and Members opposite are looking over like I'm a four-year-old being talked to by my mother. That's the way it feels like sometimes the way people get on over there, Mr. Chair. It's certainly not the conduct we'd expect from ministers in the House, I can assure you.

Mr. Chair, I do respect the current Advocate. I respect her position and I respect her opinion. I also respected the former Advocate. While we never always agreed on things, I respected her position. I always respected her opinion. She was the expert and the professional. There were times I met with her that we had some very good discussions. It didn't mean that we aligned in our views or our beliefs, but we certainly had a discussion, could make our arguments to each other and then go away to meet again at another time and have continued discussions. That's not a bad thing.

It's not about an official saying to the government here's the bill to bring forward, go bring it forward. It's about the government doing what they believe is right. They believed in 2015 that critical incidents were the right thing to do. They believed that all government agencies was the right thing to do. They believed in what the former Advocate started to ask for in 2014 when she asked us to make an amendment in 2014. It wasn't 2011 when I was minister.

Sometimes it really frustrates me – why didn't you do this 10 years ago, or 20 years ago? Or I don't care when it is. You can do that until the cows come home, Mr. Chair. If we did all that back then we wouldn't need to be here today. I've said it so many times here in the House, but that's the way things happen in life and society and here in the Legislature. Things change, new ways are found, opinions change, technology changes, people's beliefs change. New

circumstances arise that the previous bill, rules, law and so on didn't sufficiently cover or deal with and there's a better way to deal with it.

Things evolve and change; that's just a fact of life. In 2014, there was a lot of work done between '14 and '15 with four key departments that have contact with children, four key departments that provide government services to children on a daily basis. Not just Child, Youth and Family Services or Children, Seniors and Social Development, not just them, not just the Department of Justice and Public Safety, but also Education and Health, both of those as well.

I listened to the Member for Windsor Lake as well this morning. I listened very carefully to what she said. She made some points and she talked about the good work being done and hard work we did. I appreciate all that, but she also in her discussion when she got to – it was very interesting to me. She talked about, she said if a critical situation occurred today there's no legislation required to be reported – is essentially what she said – but she used the word critical situation.

Well, I say to the Member for Windsor Lake, after this is passed, if there's a critical situation, it doesn't mean it's going to be reported. This bill doesn't necessarily change that, unless the child is receiving services from Children, Seniors and Social Development. Unless they are receiving services from that department, it doesn't have to be reported. That doesn't change, is what I say to the Member opposite.

A critical situation is exactly what she mentioned. And I think she did it honestly because it is just the way she was thinking about it. I think she did it completely honestly to say critical situation, because that's exactly what our problem is. That's exactly the serious problem we have over here, is that a serious situation can occur from a person who is receiving services through Health Care or through Education, if they're a student in a school or receiving other extended services or they have a medical service they're receiving. It doesn't have to be reported.

Now, I heard what the minister said: there are new processes set up here and there and so on. Well, the Child and Youth Advocate is the person who is to advocate for all children, and

she refers to that in her annual report. It has been discussed publicly in the past – as soon as I find it here, Mr. Chair – about it's for all children, not just for some children.

In the interest of every child and youth, that's what it's about: in order to ensure that the rights and interests of every child and youth are protected and advanced. Well, people come into services under the minister's department. Over time, there are always new families and so on coming into services. Sometimes there are families who maybe should be receiving services from her department who are not, because it hasn't been discovered yet that there are issues or concerns or something happening within that family where they should be receiving services.

If there is a family that should be receiving services and are not, there's an incident at a school, an education facility, or through Health or any other branch of government besides Children, Seniors and Social Development, besides the Department of Justice, which is essentially being detained; if there's some other circumstance, it doesn't have to be reported. Mr. Chair, that's a significant hole in this legislation. That's a significant hole.

I appreciate what the Advocate is focusing on, those who are known to be vulnerable and so on. What about those who are not known to be vulnerable? They are vulnerable, but they don't know about it? They're still children; they're still youth. It's still important to know that. It's absolutely still needed for support and assistance and need to find a way for it to be dealt with, Mr. Chair. There's no two ways about that. I cannot for the life of me understand why they would go to critical injury and change from everything they've ever said they were going to do about critical incident.

She also mentioned they did a jurisdictional scan. I'm glad they did. I remember Members opposite sitting over here in the Opposition and saying to us: Why can't we be the first to have the best, or why can't we be the first province to go further? There were times that we were. We did it with policies that happened while we were in government. There's some things they're doing over there which want to see us not to be

standard or average, but to be the best in the country.

As Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, Mr. Chair, we always do that. We've done that for a long time, especially in recent decades where we've prided ourselves on being the best of anywhere and we can compete with anyone. There's no reason why this legislation can't be better than everyone else.

We know when change and evolution occurs it's something ahead that's dragging everyone else along. We talked about people in the gallery here the other day that were here for the opening of a bill, this bill, the *Highway Traffic Act* bill. Everyone here praised them for being the advocates and those that are changing, causing an evolution in change and changing how we feel about safety on our highways and so on.

Someone has to lead that change. There's no reason why the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador can't be the government today that changes and leads that higher level, that higher standard in the country. There's no reason.

The government promised to do it. This government over here, in their Liberal platform in 2015, promised to do it. The previous minister was underway to do it and somewhere over the last two years it fell off the rails. I'm not criticizing them for taking two years to do it, Mr. Chair, because I know from the year that we worked on it there was a lot to consider. From privacy, to policy, to principle, to actually putting it into effect, there was a lot to consider. There was going to be a lot of work needed to be done to make sure it happened and that departments abided by it.

One of the big obstacles, Mr. Chair, was to find a way to ensure that departments had a reporting system that would abide by the legislation. I don't know if that's maybe why they didn't. They took out Health and they took out Education. Maybe it was too tough to do. Maybe it was too tough to put in those processes to make sure the reporting happened as required by this legislation. Maybe that was it. I don't know because they haven't given a straight answer as to why they removed them, only to say we took them out because of the current Advocate.

I honestly think, by the way, I have to say, the minister opposite has said so many times: We're doing it because of the current Advocate. I really think she's a little bit over the top on laying this at the feet of the current Advocate. I really think so.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's a low blow.

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. P. DAVIS: Do you think? Well, it's what you're saying over there. It's what they're saying over there, Mr. Chair. They're saying: We're doing it because of the Advocate. I don't think it's fair to do that. The minister is responsible for bringing the bill forward. The minister is the one to stand on her feet and say: This is the best piece of legislation that's going to protect all children and youth in our province today.

I say to the Member for Bonavista, it's not doing that. It comes up short from what you promised. It comes up short of what the previous Advocate said should be. It meets the requirements. The minister said the current Advocate is satisfied with it. I don't think we should rest on being satisfied. We should achieve to get the best we can.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just to build on what my colleague from Topsail – Paradise, the Leader of the Opposition just spoke about, that's what we all feel. I think it's important to build on that because we're not here to politicize this. We want to get the best piece of legislation out there. The best piece of legislation we can present to this House and government can take it as a win. If you want to look at wins and losses, government can look at it as a win. Make it the best piece of legislation.

Why leave stuff to chance? I spoke about this yesterday and it's comes back again today. I respect the minister –

MR. KIRBY: (Inaudible.)

MR. PETTEN: The Minister of Education likes to heckle. I just want to point that out because we're talking about a serious piece of legislation, and I'm including his department, his officials. I believe Education should be a part of this bill.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. PETTEN: Maybe he should give it more serious consideration and respect while we're discussing this serious issue here. This bill is a serious issue, Mr. Chair.

MR. A. PARSONS: I stand on a point of order, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader on a point of order.

MR. A. PARSONS: I'll just refer to Standing Order 49(2) where we talk about, not the issue of relevance, but the issue of repetition. We know this is a serious bill, but when every speaker says it's a serious bill and doesn't actually talk about the issues and continue to repeat the same issue, we are getting into repetition. I'd just like to point that out for the record.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I respect points of order and relevance and whatnot. This is what we're talking about. I'm talking about Bill 26. I'm talking about the seriousness of this bill. I'm talking about the importance of this bill. I want to make sure there's no child left out.

We're all here for a reason. I said yesterday and I'll stand here today, relevant or not, I'm one of 40: that should be our number one priority. This stuff should be our number one priority. Our children and seniors – listen, the most vulnerable people in our communities should be our number one priority. That should be first and

foremost what we're elected to do. Everything else comes with it, Mr. Chair, these are paramount in my mind. I'm sure other Members feel the same way.

So whether you want to call me for relevance or not, I am very passionate about this. I spoke yesterday – I won't go into the stories. I am personally connected to a lot of this stuff and I take this bill very seriously. I respect what the minister is doing to bring this forward. I respect the Child and Youth Advocate. I know the Child and Youth Advocate. I have the utmost respect, but we can make this better.

We're telling, we're here and we're pleading that we can make this bill better. Why not have Health included? Why not have Education included? What's wrong with that? You're closing the loops, Mr. Chair. You're closing the loops of the possibility, I said yesterday, 1 per cent, one child, just the chance – if you can do something to limit the opportunity for something to go wrong, a child, for an incident not to be reported, again we'll say the typical falling through the cracks, why aren't we in favour of that? Government can take credit for it.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: I think that multiple Members of the Official Opposition have made the point. Certainly we understand the point, but it's being made repetitively. It's not a different point. It's the same point that's being made. I would suggest that upon multiple repetitive comments, at some point, it would be in contravention of the Standing Order.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Point of order, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland on a point of order.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Mr. Chair, the general practice in this House has been that in Committee on the calling of a particular bill and certainly on clause 1, it's a general discussion on the overall intent, desire and content of that particular bill. There are 40 Members here in the Legislature and they're free to stand and give their opinions on that bill in the Committee and then, as it proceeds through Committee, there

will be particular clauses that would be called and specific discussion about those specific clauses. But it's been my understanding in 11 years here that that general discussion goes on in Committee when the bill is first called in clause 1 and Members here are free to respond back and forth to discussions that are had.

Will it be repetitive at times? Yes, maybe there will be, but that's about the discussion of the bill that is allowed and has been allowed in the past, as far as I've seen it.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: If I could just speak very quickly to the same point of order – and again, my apologies, it's under 48(2). Usually during clause 1, you have free reign to speak to the entire bill. When you get into the clause by clause, you have to speak to that particular section of the clause, but there's nothing that allows you to be repetitive. The Standing Orders say that repetition, at some point, has to be stopped.

In clause 1 you can speak to the whole bill, you can continue on, but there's nothing that says you can be and should be repetitive.

Thank you.

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will continue to speak on Bill 26, as my concerns –

AN HON. MEMBER: As you were elected to do (inaudible).

MR. PETTEN: As I was elected to do, that's right. It's the people we all represent that got a keen interest – they should have a keen interest in this bill.

The minister makes reference – and I understand you're taking your lead from the Child and Youth Advocate, what the Child and Youth

Advocate wants, and I get that. But what's not been clear in this whole process is: What does the minister want? What does government want?

MS. DEMPSTER: I answered that.

MR. PETTEN: It has not been a clear, stated fact. The minister is saying she answered. I want to be clear. Every time the question comes back, it's pointed to the Child and Youth Advocate.

What does the minister – what does this government want? Do you not want – and my question will be simple, before the Government House Leader tries to get up on relevance again.

MR. A. PARSONS: Repetition, not relevance.

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. PETTEN: Again, Mr. Chair, it's a very important piece of legislation and I think it's incumbent upon all of us to be respectful in this House and let us have our say. I represent Conception Bay South and I'm speaking for the residents I represent and I'll continue to do that. Whether I try to be bullied across the way or intimidated, I will not be intimidated, Mr. Chair.

My question to the minister is simple: You're telling us, you're telling this House, you're telling this Legislature that the Child and Youth Advocate, this is what she wants, this is a piece of legislation that she believes in, having those departments not included. What do you feel – and I'll say it again. Do you feel, clear answer, this is the best piece of legislation possible to protect our children?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. PETTEN: Simple question, because that has not been answered.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's really loud here now –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

The Chair has recognized the hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The minister indicated that the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development and Justice and Public Safety would have the most severe incidents to report as part of her justification for not including the other departments.

So I guess our question to the minister would be: In her opinion, do you believe it is better to over report or to under report?

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

MR. K. PARSONS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, I got a question, too. This is a very important bill that we have here today. I think it's important that we all get up and speak on this. I know the Member for CBS talked about his district. All I want, Minister, is to make sure that we bring the best possible legislation for the children of Newfoundland and Labrador. I believe that everybody over on that side wants the same thing. We can say whether it's to do with resources or what it's to do with –

CHAIR: Order, please!

Given the hour of the day, I'm going to rise the Committee and report progress.

This Committee stands adjourned.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): The hon. the Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

MR. WARR: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

When shall the report be received?

MR. A. PARSONS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the Committee have leave to sit again.

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, report received and adopted. Committee ordered to sit again on tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: In accordance with provisional Standing Order 9(1)(b), the House is in recess until 2 o'clock this afternoon.

Recess

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Admit strangers.

In the Speaker's gallery today, I'd like to welcome family and friends of the late Susan Shiner, who will be honoured by a Member's statement today. Joining us are her husband Rick Page, her daughter Claire and her two granddaughters Margaret and Elizabeth. Joining them are the President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour, Mary Shortall, and the President of CUPE, Wayne Lucas.

I'd also like to welcome in the public gallery friends of Ms. Shiner, including representatives from the St. John's Status of Women, the Iris Kirby House and Daybreak Parent Child Centre.

Welcome to you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I'd also like to recognize in the public gallery today – we have two hockey teams from this province. One is with us and one that's watching us. Their achievements are going to be the subject of a Ministerial Statement today.

In the public gallery today we welcome members of the Avalon Celtics Peewee House League team. We have with us today Eric Butt, Emmett Cochrane, Nicholas Dalton, Liam Davis, Sarah Gardner, Rama Ladu, Sebastian Milord, Andrew Quinlan, Connor Sullivan, Daniel Warren, Peter Whelan, Samuel White and Jonathan Whitten.

Also, before we have a round of applause and, as I said, they're watching us from home, I'd like to recognize the Grand Falls-Windsor Under-12 Cataracts team who are watching.

Welcome to you all.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I'd also like to recognize in our public gallery today Mayor Tony Ryan. He's the Mayor of Port Saunders and he's acting in his 29th year as the mayor of that fine community. Here for meetings.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: For Members' statements today we will hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of St. George's – Humber, St. John's Centre, Baie Verte –Green Bay, Windsor Lake and Lewisporte – Twillingate.

The hon. the Member for St. George's – Humber.

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to recognize the work and accomplishments of multi-disciplinary visual artist Jordan Bennett, originally from Stephenville Crossing on Newfoundland's West Coast.

Bennett was asked to be part of an exhibit at the Smithsonian and the National Museum of the American Indian. During his research for this project, he discovered photographs taken in 1930 by anthropologist Fredrick Johnson of a man from Conne River. Through further research, Bennett was able to identify the man in the photos and discovered that the man in the photo was a great-great uncle of his friend John Nick Jeddore.

Together, Jordan and John Nick consulted the family of the man in the photographs and were able to visit some of the places where the pictures were taken. They recorded the natural sounds in the areas, such as the sound of a flowing salmon river or a hike through the woods. The end result was an exhibition which brought the photos back through audio and visual elements.

The exhibit, entitled *Transformer: Native Art in Light and Sound*, continues at the American Indian museum's George Gustav Heye Center in New York City until January 2019.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Susan Kathryn Shiner: daughter, lover, partner, mother, friend, grandmother, folklorist, social worker, community builder, unionist, fierce fearless feminist activist, vagina warrior.

Forty-five years ago, Susan landed on the shores of the Northern Peninsula from Ontario. She recorded our traditional folk singers, encouraging them to perform. Awarded the Newfoundland and Labrador Folk Arts Society Lifetime Achievement Award.

Moving on to St. John's with her amazing husband, Rick Page, making the coolest, grooviest home with their amazing children, Claire and Ian, and eventually beloved grandchildren, Margaret and Elizabeth.

After co-creating the children's program at Iris Kirby House, she moved on to Daybreak working with families – always, always empowering mothers and children.

The Governor General's persons award, the YWCA Women of Distinction Award, the YMCA Canadian Peace Medal.

In July, Susan moved on again, but her work lives on in the love, hope and optimism she shared with so many. Her last wish – the SKS Daycare centre for children who have lived with trauma. It's happening.

From Arundhati Roy: "Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing."

Thank you, Susan Kathryn Shiner.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Baie Verte – Green Bay.

MR. WARR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's hard to put into words how a parent must feel when their child has been diagnosed with a serious illness. At the young age of 13, Ria Colbourne of Coffee Cove was diagnosed with schwannoma tumours, a nerve sheath tumour that attacks the nervous system. For the Colbourne family, Ria, Jessie, Kenny, Sharlene and Logan, it was to be a challenging road, one filled with long drives, hospital stays, surgeries and treatments.

Ria had spinal surgery in July of 2016 and in September 2016 a second surgery to remove tumours from her shoulder blade to her rib cage.

It has been amazing what can happen in a year. Ria is doing well, followed closely by her team of doctors at the Janeway. This year, the Children's Wish Foundation granted Ria's wish to swim with the dolphins. The vacation in Hawaii was everything Ria's family had hoped it would be.

Just last week, Ria was given the honour of switching on the Lights of Love on the

Christmas tree at the Ronald McDonald House here in St. John's.

I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting a real trooper, Ria Colbourne.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Windsor Lake.

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, 70 years – an amazing legacy for a business.

Theatre Pharmacy, founded by Bob Heale and his partner Ern Stanly, was renowned for personal service and expert advice. The pharmacy provided an opportunity for young pharmacists to train and provided jobs for many young people who drove on bike to deliver prescriptions and pick up supplies for the busy store.

Joined later in the business by his brother Harold Heale, Bob was known as a compassionate health care professional more than a business person. "He gave away more than he sold," his brother Harold would say, as the rather large ledger, which recorded the monies owed by customers, went mostly uncollected.

As a centre city business serving the community, tragedy was also part of the legacy. One need only think of the fires in the neighbourhood to remember the help and shelter provided.

Bob Heale, and many young pharmacists who followed him, saw pharmacy as a duty and that is what built this 70-year-old St. John's icon. Today, things are much the same under the stewardship of the pharmacist/owner Robert Doyle, whose compassion for his patients is evident daily at the dispensary counter.

Congratulations to all who have contributed to the Theatre Pharmacy's legacy of service.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Placentia West – Bellevue.

MR. BROWNE: Mr. Speaker, today marks the 28th anniversary of the terrible massacre that occurred in Montreal at L'École Polytechnique, where, for no other reason than their gender, 28 women were shot, 14 of them fatally. One would have hoped that society would have learned from this horrific event; however, in the intervening years, incident after incident has shown this is not the case.

Recently held functions in Marystown, such as the Red Dress Vigil organized by Keyin College and the Remembering Her Dinner organized by the Grace Sparkes House, have highlighted everyone's role in combatting and speaking against violence against women, while bringing particular focus to the plight of the family of Cortney Lake.

Cortney, a 24-year-old woman, a daughter, a granddaughter, a sister, a mother of a six-year-old son; family, friends and the search angels refuse to give up the search for Courtney. When the Member for Burin – Grand Bank and I joined the search, we were struck by the outpouring of love and support. We wear this ribbon today in her honour.

Mr. Speaker, let each of us, as hon. Members, do our part to end violence against women. Let us also pray to God that Cortney will be soon found, allowing her family to find a measure of closure to this terrible event.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I understand the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment has leave for a statement.

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber – Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, all Members.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an amazing lady. I have to do it right because she's watching.

Mr. Speaker, Lillian Mae Wells has lived a long and colourful life. Growing up, she was the only girl among four brothers. She worked in the woods with her father and she worked at the Porter's herring plant on McIvers Island.

In 1949, as a young widow, she moved to Cox's Cove with her four daughters to work as a housekeeper for Benjamin Wells, a widower himself with four kids of his own. On Boxing Day 1953, she and Bennie were married. Mr. Speaker, they did it again. They added two more children for a total of 10.

Over her life, Lillian ran a convenience store and took in boarders. She was an avid gardener. She raised all kinds of animals and along the way raised 10 incredible children.

Today, she can boast 23 grandchildren, 38 great-grandchildren, several great-great-grand kids and one great-great-great-grandchild. They just had a family photo done of six generations.

Mr. Speaker, there are people who simply amaze you and Lillian is one of them. I had the privilege of being on the dance floor and waltzing with Lillian on her 100th birthday. Today, I am privileged to stand on this floor and ask all hon. Members to join me and her furry friend, Muffin, in wishing this amazing lady a happy 105th birthday.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand today to recognize the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. On December 6, 1989, a gunman shot and killed 14 young women at École Polytechnique. This tragic incident remains one of the worst incidents of mass murder in Canadian history. To honour and remember those who lost their lives that day, flags are

flown at half-mast at Confederation Building until sunset this evening.

All 14 were killed that day simply because they were women. This horrific event is a chilling reminder of the devastating effects of violence against women and girls and the continued struggle we face every day in our society. We all want and deserve a society where women and girls are treated with equality and respect. We must work every day to achieve these goals.

Violence against women and girls is simply unacceptable, in any form, or by any means. We must stand together to make change happen by bringing our collective voice and strength to address the many complex reasons why violence occurs.

Mr. Speaker, approximately 50 per cent of women over the age of 15 will experience at least one incident of sexual or physical violence in their lifetime. Indigenous women are three times more likely to experience violence and five times more likely to die by violence.

That equates to half of all the women in this room right now. It's our sisters, our mothers, our daughters, our neighbours, our friends. This must stop. We all share the responsibility to work together to end violence so that all women and girls can live, work, learn and play in a society where they are safe.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I want to acknowledge the women and girls who have been lost, those who are hurt and hurting and those who have been killed.

The provincial government, on behalf of the people of the province, joined by the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, regional coordinating committees against violence, the indigenous community, as well as new immigrants and community-based organizations, stand together with everyone in this room today, working to address this horrific societal problem.

I ask all Members of the hon. House to stand with me, the women of Newfoundland and Labrador, for a moment of silence to remember them, and all the women, girls and families whose lives have been impacted by violence.

(Moment of silence.)

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Please be seated.

The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. On this side of the House we agree with everything included in her statement.

Twenty-eight years ago today, a gunman shot and killed 14 young women at École Polytechnique in a horrific and unacceptable tragic event. These 14 young women were killed and robbed of their bright futures simply because they were women.

Mr. Speaker, gender-based violence is unacceptable. As legislators, as community leaders and as members of society, it is all of our duty to do anything and everything we can to bring change to this world. It is unacceptable that approximately 50 per cent of women will experience at least one incident of sexual or physical violence in their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have been invited to participate on the ministerial committee regarding the issue of violence against women and girls, and pleased that government has brought this forward. It is my hope that by bringing together policy-makers, community leaders and advocates, that together we can address this terrible societal problem.

As the minister said in her comments, violence is unacceptable in any form, by any means.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister. I lived only a few blocks away from École Polytechnique. I remember the

shock and chaos of that night. It was frightening. For the first anniversary I made a film called *After the Montreal Massacre*.

We talked about violence against women, and not only the big tragic events of violence in our lives, but also the daily micro-aggressions of sexism and inequality and the issues of poverty, wage inequality, lack of affordable child care and more. We talked about moving forward together.

Today we remember, but we also celebrate and acknowledge the great work we have done together, especially our women's centres, our feminist activists and our allies. We commit to push on. We must continue to push on for a task force because the time for incremental measures is over.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers.

The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure today to rise in this hon. House to recognize two teams from this province who have won the opportunity to play hockey on Parliament Hill.

The Avalon Celtics Pee Wee Malibus and the Grand Falls-Windsor Cataracts have been chosen to represent Newfoundland and Labrador in Ottawa from December 28 to December 31.

The contest was presented by the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Ottawa International Hockey Festival, in partnership with the Ottawa Senators Hockey Club and support from Hockey Canada. It invited eligible boys and girls peewee house league teams, comprising of 11- and 12-year-olds, the chance to represent their province, territory or region at this year's Bell Capital Cup hockey tournament in a special Canada 150 division.

Mr. Speaker, the Celtics and the Cataracts were among more than 300 entries, representing more than 6,000 minor hockey players and team officials from across Canada. Entrants were asked to demonstrate why their team deserves to represent their region in the Canada 150 division by way of a brief written essay and a video submission. The winning entries were selected based on creativity, energy level and, of course, Canadian spirit.

The teams have won round-trip travel to Ottawa, accommodations, ground transportation, commemorative Canada 150 hockey jerseys and the opportunity to play at the Canada 150 rink on Parliament Hill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, a focus for our government is supporting a vibrant and active population in our province – a population that safely participates in physical activity, recreation and sport at all levels for improved quality of life, improved health, enhanced social interaction, personal fulfillment and excellence. This initiative by our federal partners is complementary to our own efforts to promote healthy active living, and will certainly provide unforgettable memories for the participants.

Mr. Speaker, I extend my sincere congratulations on behalf of this House to the Celtics and Cataracts on this incredible once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. We wish them the best of luck.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the minister for an advanced copy of her statement as well.

Mr. Speaker, we, too, want to congratulate members of the Avalon Celtics Peewee Malibus and the Grand Falls-Windsor Cataracts on winning the opportunity to represent our

province at this year's Bell Capital Cup hockey tournament.

Both teams should be very proud of being selected from such a large group of entries. I'm sure they are all very excited about travelling to Ottawa for this very unique experience. Undoubtedly, the trip will provide a wonderful opportunity for the children to play hockey, but it will also give them a great chance to explore our nation's capital. I am certain they will build memories to last a lifetime.

We wish both teams very safe travels and the best of luck.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister and a big rousing bravo to our fabulous hockey teams.

How important for all our children to have the opportunity to play team sports. It's not only about the game and winning, but learning to work together, supporting one another and developing confidence and resilience.

Perhaps we all here in the House should be playing hockey together. I, myself, started playing hockey only seven years ago, although using the words "playing hockey" to describe what I do on the ice is very generous.

Good luck to the Avalon Celtics and the Grand Falls Cataracts.

Bravo! Go teams!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to highlight the innovative movement known as Hacking Health.

Hacking Health aims to transform health care by connecting health care professionals with innovators and entrepreneurs to build solutions to front-line health care problems. Beginning in Montreal in 2012, this province is now in its second year of activities.

Last April, Hacking Health held its first 48-hour Hack-a-Thon. I am pleased to say that Michael Bannister, an official with the Department of Health and Community Services, was a part of one of the winning teams. His team created an online tool that showed the average blood clinic wait time around St. John's. The other co-winner created a tool aimed at helping patients find appointments at local clinics. Finally, Eastern Health took the people's choice award by developing an application to increase reliability of triaging patients with heart disease.

Last week, the local Hacking Health chapter continued its works by holding a session focused on senior's health and wellness. From all accounts, I'm pleased to say there was a significant increase in participation from health care professionals. It's inspiring to see so many disciplines coming together to design solutions for patient-centric care.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this hon. House to join with me today in recognizing the vision, passion and innovation of those who are helping Hacking Health take root in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. We join with the minister in acknowledging the importance and potential that technology has to offer health care, not only in traditional use for medical procedures, but also as it relates to service delivery. We also acknowledge that efficiencies are needed in our

health care system. We should be open and supportive of such initiatives.

We join the minister in congratulating Michael Bannister, as well as the other co-winners and their respective teams in their success at last year's Hacking Health event. Hopefully, those individuals will continue to innovate and find solutions to some of the challenges we face. Wishing them all continued success.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. It's worth noting that Hacking Health has spread from Montreal to many cities in Canada, the US and abroad. The minister notes the many disciplines coming together to design solutions, not just health and IT professionals, but also project managers, entrepreneurs and venture capitalists, working on ways to bring these tools to fruition.

I look forward to hearing more from the minister in the future about ongoing practical applications inside of our health care system.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Bill 26, a very important piece of legislation, is currently being debated in this House. In the Liberal 2015 red book, the minister's mandate letter and the 2017 Throne Speech, the Liberal government committed to mandatory reporting

of critical incidents from all government departments.

I ask the minister: Why does your bill not follow through on these commitments?

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

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the hon. Member for her question. She's right; we have been having some debate back and forth. In the House yesterday, we finished second reading on a very important bill, An Act to Amend the Child and Youth Advocate Act.

Mr. Speaker, the Advocate – as she said in the media, this bill was a long time coming, where we will bring in legislation to make it mandatory to report deaths of children and youth who receive services and critical injuries to the Advocate. How we arrived at this today, Mr. Speaker, is we worked very, very closely with the current Advocate who clearly stated, and has done so multiple times in the media, this is the reporting she needs to carry out the scope of her important work.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In debate this morning, the minister said that she wasn't aware of when the working committee on this legislation was disbanded, but later said that the committee does still exist.

Can the minister inform us who sits on this committee today?

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

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, at the moment that the hon. Member asked the question, I didn't have it right in front of me, but I did provide it to this hon. House this morning before we recessed at lunchtime.

That committee, there were four departments that were involved. As I told this hon. House this morning, when the current Advocate came into office, the four departments met with her. At that time, she determined that her primary interest was in working with Children, Seniors and Social Development and Justice and Public Safety, those offices where responsibility lies for children and youth in care. That happened, I believe, sometime around late March in '17 and going forward since that time, the discussion has been with two departments, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As minister, will you accept an amendment to bring this legislation, Bill 26, in line with what was requested by the 2014 recommendations of the Child and Youth Advocate office and what you had promised originally to deliver?

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

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, one thing that we cannot lose sight of is that the Child and Youth Advocate is an independent office of this House and it's not for us to dictate how she runs that important operation that she does.

We have worked closely with the Advocate. The Advocate works closely with other advocates across this country, provinces and territories. We are completely aligned with other jurisdictions. We are the fifth province in the country to bring in this legislation. We are the first in Atlantic Canada.

She is comfortable with where we are going and I am very pleased, as minister, with this important responsibility right now that we are satisfying her requests.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, information reported to the Public Utilities Board indicates that Units 1 and 2 at the Bay d'Espoir generating facility became unavailable yesterday at 3:10.

I ask the minister: Can she give an update and is there any effect on power generation as a result?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

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

I was advised yesterday that those two units were unavailable. They were doing some maintenance on those two units. I was advised there is no impact on the power supply. They should be available for when the cold weather hits, and that work will continue.

As I've been telling the hon. House and the people of the province, Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro has put in a full year of maintenance and feels that they are very ready for the upcoming winter season.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We're hearing from the workers at the Bay d'Espoir generating facility that there are concerns with the penstocks having cracks and the effect it may have on future generations.

I ask the minister: Is she aware of this and is there indeed an impact in future development generation for Bay d'Espoir as a result?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question, to the hon. Member opposite.

I'll again repeat that Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro has said publicly, and through me to this House, that they feel confident in their generation for the upcoming winter season, Mr. Speaker. There is ongoing maintenance and there are ongoing concerns around that maintenance.

As you can remember, Mr. Speaker, during DarkNL it was pointed out from a number of independent reports that the work hadn't been done up to par and that's why we had that incident. We have made sure, as this government has made sure, that there's been money available in Newfoundland Hydro, made sure that the maintenance is being done and made sure that they have what they need to ensure the safety and security of our electrical system in this province, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister, but I just need to clarify; the information we got is there are problems with the penstocks, cracks. It could lead to problems in regard to generating electricity.

I'm just asking: Are you aware of it? Is that one of the issues being dealt with related to maintenance?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, as the Member opposite would know, I don't have the absolute details on all the maintenance and all the information on the details of what every day Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro is working on. I have heard about the penstocks. We've had multiple conversations about the requirement around maintenance and around the requirement to ensure the safety and security of electrical energy in this province, Mr. Speaker.

I can assure the Member opposite Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro has been working on their maintenance program. They have been working on ensuring the security of

supply for generation. And I can assure the Member opposite they will continue to do so.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year Vale announced, and the minister confirmed it, they were doing a review of the expansion at Voisey's Bay and had put it on hold for a 60-day review.

I ask the minister: Can she provide an update on the review, the results and going forward on the underground mine at Voisey's?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is a very important point, and I know the employees of Vale are listening carefully and closely.

As the Member opposite noted, the Vale global did a base metals review, Mr. Speaker, including going underground in Voisey's Bay. Voisey's Bay was still operational, as was Long Harbour, but the new project contracts for the underground mine was put on hold pending this review.

This review has been ongoing, Mr. Speaker. I can assure the people of this province, this is a tremendous resource. I can assure the people of the province that Vale considers it a good resource and I think that we will be seeing – I feel fairly confident, Mr. Speaker, that we will be seeing an announcement fairly soon by Vale. This is a great resource to the province.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it was in July that Vale indicated they would do a 60-day review; obviously, that time has passed.

I'm asking the minister: Is she aware if that review is done and what were the results of that review?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, it's a tremendous resource and I believe all efforts will be taken to ensure the underground mine.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, in July Vale did announce a 60-day review period. Coming out of that 60-day review, the parent company looked at some of the locations around the world and made some changes to their operations. They asked Vale, locally, to continue to do some work around the underground mine, making sure that, in this very low commodity market, it is viable and that they can move forward as expeditiously as possible.

I have had some discussions with Vale. I feel fairly confident that we'll be seeing some results in the very near future, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, this is an incredible resource, has great economic benefit – not only to this province, but to the company that is using it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, late December 2016 we asked this question and again in Estimates in 2017, and at that time the minister indicated there was an issue with procurement and engineering and the business plan with Vale.

I ask the minister: Is that still an issue, or have those issues been resolved?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

He refers to the timelines for going underground, Mr. Speaker. I had advised this hon. House and Members opposite and, indeed, the people of the province, that Vale wanted to make sure they had the right procurement strategy, the right engineering done so that when they move forward on the underground mine, they could move forward as expeditiously as possible.

I understand they have worked through some of those concerns and issues, Mr. Speaker. That's when global Vale did their final review or did their review in the base metals business.

I would say to the hon. Member that I do believe that every effort will be possible to go underground. I think we'll be hearing something in the very near future.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the original plan was to have production by 2020 in regard to availability in nickel to be mined.

I ask the minister: Have any changes been made to that timeline? Has any agreement been made with Vale to extend that timeline?

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, as I said, Vale is just coming through their review period. They've indicated that they are coming through that review period.

What exact length of time may be needed to add on to the project as it was originally intended – whether it be six months or eight months or around that time, Mr. Speaker, because that's the delay that we've experienced so far – will be

known when we get down to the final decision of Vale to move forward on this project.

Mr. Speaker, I will say to the people of the province and to the workers with Vale: Things have been continuing at Voisey's Bay. What we're talking about here today is the opportunity to go underground to procure more resource.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the minister mentioned a final decision. A final decision and agreement had been made to go underground in a time set to have that mine operational in regard to nickel in 2020.

Mr. Speaker, the Voisey's Bay Development Agreement lists the penalties for which Vale will pay if they do not meet its commitments and timelines to construct the mine.

I ask the minister: How are you holding Vale accountable in ensuring our province receives the benefits as listed in the development agreement?

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What I was referring to when I said whether they'll be moving forward is pending their global review, of course, Mr. Speaker. As I've said in this hon. House in the past and I'll continue to say: We do have an agreement with Vale and we do have timelines set out in that agreement.

There was a deferral, by the way, Mr. Speaker, by the former administration, by the former government. The Member may be aware that there was a deferral of some of the penalties because the timelines were changing. I'll just remind him of that.

We will look at all avenues under the contract as we know when Vale will be going underground.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yet another group of people impacted from cancelled appointments due to staffing shortages. Two weeks ago it was patients negatively impacted at the Grand Falls-Windsor Cancer Centre; this week it's the mammogram patients at the Burin Peninsula Health Care Centre.

Will the minister take responsibility and fix this concerning health issue?

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

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

I'd just like to cast the Member opposite's mind back to a couple of weeks ago. The issue in the cancer centre in Grand Falls was one of communications, not staffing.

With regard to down on the Burin Peninsula, there were unforeseen issues with staffing at very short notice. Eastern Health have arranged appointments for all urgent patients and will be running staff down there at the weekends to fill in the gaps until such time as the staffing, which is highly trained specialized staffing, can be replaced. It's underway.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island for a quick question, please.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have to remind the minister that our understanding –

MR. SPEAKER: A quick question, please.

MR. BRAZIL: Why do patients have to wait until January to get these procedures?

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

MR. HAGGIE: Mr. Speaker, that is the expected time of restoration of the regular staff. As I alluded to in my first answer, staff from Eastern Health's other facilities will be going down to the Burin Peninsula at weekends starting this weekend. So the effect of disruption will be minimized. For those patients who require urgent examinations, arrangements have been made in the meantime and they should suffer minimal inconvenience, Mr. Speaker.

Again, this arose at very short notice and Eastern Health has done very well to fill the gap caused by this problem.

MR. SPEAKER: I apologize; the Speaker needs to do a little bit of math.

I recognize the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island to please have a nice lengthy question.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to go back and remind the minister on his first answer that through the media, our understanding from talking to the patients and from the unions, it was indeed a staffing shortage, to a point where a staff member had to be brought in from Gander to go to Grand Falls-Windsor to provide the same service a couple of days later.

Does the minister think it's reasonable to have residents of the Burin Peninsula drive, in some cases, multiple hours to access vital services because of staffing shortages?

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

MR. HAGGIE: Mr. Speaker, the issue around the cancer clinic in Grand Falls, as I mentioned to the Member at the time, to expect staff to be travelling from other centres into Grand Falls to the chemotherapy unit, as it is standard practice

for Eastern Health. They administer the program. They do onsite training, upgrading qualifications. It's highly specialized. So it is not at all unusual that staff from other facilities would be going to Grand Falls or indeed Gander to provide services. That's part of the delivery model, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, the issue in the cancer clinic in Grand Falls-Windsor was a communication issue. The analysis has been done. That has been fixed. It will not happen again.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With all due respect, we've verified that it was a shortage of staff. Regardless of what model he now decides to use, there was a shortage of staff. That's why people had to do without a service for a period of time. It added undue stress.

Can the minister confirm that contractors working at the Mobile school have been directed to use a sewage flow design that is significantly lower than industry standards that wouldn't meet the needs of future student enrolment?

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

MR. HAGGIE: Mr. Speaker, the issue around the Grand Falls clinic, once again, was not staff shortages. I have been consistent in my response to that and I take exception to the Member opposite suggesting that somehow I am misleading the House on this. That is not the case.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would love to debate with the Minister of Health, but we'll have another opportunity to do that. There are other important issues here that we have to get to.

I do ask either the Minister of Education or the Minister of Transportation and Works if they could answer the previous question that I had asked about the Mobile school.

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can assure the Member opposite the renovations that we're undertaking at the Mobile school will be done to meet every standard necessary for such a building that Service NL would put out in our province, Mr. Speaker.

I'll take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to inform this House that the tender for the extension to Mobile school has closed. I'm happy to say, at this point in time, that right now we have a tender that is actually under our budget. Now we're going to have a school that is going to hopefully – we're going to make sure that we deliver it on schedule.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to make the minister aware – and maybe he's not aware and that's something he should find out about – that there is a problem with the sewer system on that site at this point. It's been identified as that.

Can the minister verify that there's a problem with the sewer system that's going to be put in to the extension of the new school in Mobile?

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Transportation and Works.

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, septic systems and septic design in this province is something that's governed by Service NL. I can assure you, for Transportation and Works' part, we'll make sure the necessary septic system is put in place to meet the standards set forth by Service NL.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The list keeps growing: the overall lack of space, the sewage issues, the water flow issues and the parking lot.

Can the minister finally admit, once and for all, that they just ignored the advice of the school board? He is now ignoring government infrastructure regulations with the Mobile school.

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

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, the Member comes up with these questions. I said in my earlier response standards for septic design in this province are governed by Service NL. Transportation and Works will make sure the septic design at the extension or for Mobile school is done to standard.

Mr. Speaker, again I will reiterate, the tender for the extension closed a number of weeks ago. It came in under budget. We're going to deliver the school under budget and on time.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

MR. BRAZIL: All that the people of the Southern Shore asked for, and all that the school district asked for, was that the school would be built to spec and would accommodate the growing community. That wasn't done and it's still not being done.

Will the Education Minister finally admit that he was wrong and is now sacrificing comfort and the well-being of students on the Southern Shore area?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KIRBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We're pleased to be able to provide this new addition to Mobile Central High to alleviate the overcrowding issue that was ignored for 13 years by the Members in Opposition. When they built the previous school extension, it was obviously too small to accommodate the growing population, which anyone who knows population statistics – demographers can tell you that the population was going to grow.

Now we have arrived at a suitable arrangement and extension to the school that will more than accommodate the student population there. We're really looking forward to having that done. As the minister said, it is significantly under budget and we're looking forward to having it done on time.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do know that 35 new schools were built and 54 expansions were done to accommodate students, and they were done properly. That's what we ask the same thing would happen on the Southern Shore, also.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: We know the Minister of Education has scoffed at providing additional resources to the school, but will the minister be providing a separate teaching allocation to be dedicated as school-based reading specialists?

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, as I said in Question Period previously, I'm very pleased the Premier had the foresight to establish the Premier's Task

Force on Improving Educational Outcomes. He appointed four distinguished educators in Newfoundland and Labrador to do a top-to-bottom review of the K-to-12 education system, something that had not been done in a generation in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The report was released in July. Since then, staff have been working very hard on the education action plan and the required submissions to our internal processes in government. I look very forward to seeing all of the recommendations of the report, all 82 of them, implemented.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I remind the minister the task force report was released in June, six months ago. Let's not forget what the title was: *Now is the Time*. Six months later, we still haven't done anything. Six months later, as they get into this next budget, they haven't allocated any monies to go into any of these recommendations.

I do ask the minister: Can the minister state if the department is undertaking a review of the *Teacher Training Act*?

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

MR. KIRBY: For the Member's information, Mr. Speaker, the time was July, not June. So he may want to go back and check the date on there.

In any case, Mr. Speaker, as I said, there were 82 recommendations from the Premier's Task Force. The mess that the previous administration created in the K-to-12 education, in particular the mess they created with their inclusive education policy, which they consulted nobody with other than themselves, will take a number of years to undo, unfortunately. We have started the process.

The Member thought that somehow from the beginning of July to the beginning of September, less than two months, somehow that we would be able to implement 82 recommendations of this comprehensive report. It's simply impossible to undo the mess that they made in such a short period of time.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island for a very quick question, please.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Three years in to that administration over there, I ask: Are you going to expand the operating grants for early learning and child care programs?

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, as I said previously in the House of Assembly, we are absolutely delighted that we will be signing a comprehensive agreement with the federal government to get \$22 million of additional funding –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KIRBY: – for early learning and child care over the next three years that we can do a lot of improvements to the system. We've got a wildly popular full-day kindergarten program, which both Opposition parties voted against to deny children in this province of having a full-day kindergarten program, the same as all of the other children in Canada.

We are making very progressive changes to early learning and care. Stay tuned, there will be many more to come.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Our questions today are in memory of Susan Shriner, passionate lifelong women's activist.

Mr. Speaker, I asked my first House question in November 2006: Would government invest in children and parents by creating adequate child care spaces so people, especially women, could participate in the workforce while their children enjoy the protection of regulated child care?

Eleven years later, I ask the current Premier: When will his government implement a full provincial child care program that provides quality, affordable child care spaces?

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

MR. KIRBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thanks to the Member for the question. As I was just mentioning, we are on the cusp of signing a three-year agreement with the federal government to get some \$22 million for a variety of early learning and care programs.

We inherited a 10-Year Child Care Strategy from the previous administration. It has a lot of very meritorious aspects to it. We continue to implement the ones that are well done. We continue to make modifications to the areas that will need to be changed. We have increased the number of spaces available in the child care system. We have implemented a very popular, a very successful full-day kindergarten program based on a play-based learning pedagogical approach.

A lot of positive things are happening. We recently changed the subsidy for parents. I could go on with another question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: Where is his pay equity legislation this House

unanimously supported in my March 8 private Member's motion?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is a very important issue to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and, indeed, all women, especially in this province, but I think everyone in this province. Mr. Speaker, a woman makes about 66 per cent of what a man would earn and that's not acceptable.

The one thing I will say, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador was pleased to support the Member's motion on pay equity. Since that time, the Women's Policy Office I know has been seized with this. A jurisdictional scan has been completed, working with my colleagues across government, to determine how we can move forward on implementing.

Mr. Speaker, pay equity is something that's very important. As I said, we want to ensure that women have equality in this province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: I ask the Premier: Will he commit to provide multi-year funding to women's centres in this coming budget as they have promised?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Department of Finance and the Department of CSSD and multi-department levels that we would have that provide grants and funding to various community organizations around the province that do some great work providing services and supports to communities. That is a project right now that many departments are involved in and we're making our best efforts to make sure that we get that project done and in place as quickly as possible.

We understand how important it is for those individuals, especially the management within the associations, how important it is for them to have the certainty that it's just not one-year funding, that indeed it expands many years. That gives them the opportunity to focus on the services they deliver.

I say to the Member opposite, we want them to be able to focus on the services they were put in place to deliver, not to be worried about fundraising. We're working with all the departments to put their best efforts to get this done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The time for Oral Questions has ended.

Orders of the Day

Private Members' Day

MR. SPEAKER: This being Wednesday, I now call on the Member for Bonavista to introduce the resolution standing in his name, Motion 3 on the Order Paper.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to stand here today to bring forward this motion, seconded by the Member for Placentia West – Bellevue. I'm going to read it out:

WHEREAS the provincial government recently released the *What We Heard* document on social enterprises; and

WHEREAS supporting social enterprise development is vital for advancing development opportunities that benefit the economy, support sustainability, tackle social and economic issues and encourage entrepreneurial models;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House take action to be responsive to the feedback received from this document to increase the number of social enterprises in Newfoundland and Labrador and to enhance services for existing social enterprises.

Mr. Speaker –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista, please proceed.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's truly an honour to stand here today to speak to social enterprises when we think of my district, the District of Bonavista. We are currently undergoing a major boom right now in our tourism industry and a lot of that has to do with the frameworks that have been built, footings that have been built by our social enterprises, non-profit organizations.

What I'm going to do, Mr. Speaker, is I'm going to start this off by giving a definition of social enterprise because sometimes it's confused with a non-profit organization. I'll give you an example of each.

Social enterprises are businesses owned and operated by non-profit organizations that have dual objectives, earning revenue and achieving social or environmental missions. They are one more tool for non-profits to build healthy communities.

This definition excludes organizations that are sometimes described as social enterprises. Small businesses with a community focus or co-operatives that pay out their members are not included. Social enterprises help communities control their own economic future, fill critical gaps in the economy, bring new ideas to bear on tough social problems and provide a space for new and entrepreneurial generation to apply their skills.

Where this came from, Mr. Speaker, as you're aware, is in *The Way Forward* document that was released in October of last year. We've set our government's mission to bring us back to a sound fiscal footing on *The Way Forward* document. Where this went from, is there was public consultations held in early spring.

Just looking at my notes – sorry, I'm going back here now – just to give people at home some examples of social enterprises, you would have the Hungry Heart Cafe here in St. John's and the

Salvation Army and Value Village thrift stores. A little closer to home you would have Rising Tide Theatre, which has now been in operation for 40 years this coming year, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to get more into the details of what we have to offer in the District of Bonavista and why this private Members' resolution is important to get more social enterprises in our regions, in the cities and also to help grow established social enterprises.

There was a consultation process that took place called What We Heard, based on *The Way Forward* document. This report, called *What We Heard*, social enterprises, was released earlier this spring. They were with the public engagement sessions; they were facilitated sessions with partner and stakeholder groups. That took place from January 27 to March 3 of this year. Eleven half-day engagement sessions were held in government offices in the Avalon, Eastern, Central and the Labrador regions. Eighty-six people participated in this feedback. I'm going to go through some of the things that they hit and what we heard as well, Mr. Speaker.

There was a public online questionnaire which ran from February 21 to March 17 of this year. Forty-three written submissions were received. There were interdepartmental working group meetings between Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, CSSD, Education, Executive Council, Health and Community Services, Municipal Affairs, Service NL, Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation and Transportation and Works. Now, that's a mouthful, Mr. Speaker. That's a lot of people to get feedback from, I can tell you that.

These people that we consulted with, they're experts in their field. They've been running social enterprises for years. They've seen the economic benefits that social enterprises bring to our province. That's why we want to focus on this through *The Way Forward* document to grow these social enterprises, to bring revenue to our economy, to build up social standing within our communities to supply people with jobs and skills that they can use throughout their lives.

Within the engagement process the following question areas were asked. We asked them what their definition of a social enterprise was. We asked them about business skills and

organizational development, research and opportunity development, policy development, promotion and awareness and access to financing and capital. The definition of social enterprise is important because, sometimes, like I said, it gets confused with a non-profit organization. This has an economic aspect to it or a social aspect.

On the first one, on business skills development, what we heard is supporting the sector means ensuring ongoing learning opportunities throughout the province; build specific business and organizational skills needed to blend financial and social goals. Stakeholders were asked about required skills to start and grow a social enterprise, which skills are most challenging to acquire and what the provincial government can do in collaboration with key partners to support skills and development in the social enterprise community.

What we heard is we need greater access to fundraising, financial management, proposal writing, things that will help them get things off the ground. They have challenges with human resources, volunteer commitment, board diversity, especially in rural areas. They wanted delivery of training in partnership with other organizations, like MUN's Centre for Social Enterprise, CNA, Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Co-operatives and industry associations.

We asked them questions about research and opportunity identification. What they came back with is they use a model to research opportunities or community needs to service productions in multiple sectors such as health, immigration, agriculture, technology, tourism and culture; build self-sustaining social enterprise development in rural and urban areas; increase awareness of best practices of existing successful social enterprises – and I'll discuss some of those as I have in my district – increase the role of post-secondary institutions. We have a recurring theme there. They want post-secondary institutions, like MUN and CNA, to get involved.

It talked a lot about policy development. For the sake of time, because I'm over halfway through my 15 minutes, this can be found online, Mr. Speaker.

Promotion and awareness – this is important because a lot of the challenges that social enterprises and non-profit organizations have is getting the word out there of what they have to offer. They want to work through partners and organizations to increase the profile of the model as benefits impact communities, use word of mouth, activate an awareness campaign, develop presentations for key stakeholder groups, provide networking opportunities, promote social enterprise via social media platforms and enhance community benefit. Then, there are a couple more.

Access to financing and capital – that's a big one because a lot of funding for social enterprises, Mr. Speaker, does come from government. Through the last 2½ to three years since I've been on the campaign trails, since I've been an MHA, I've been meeting with these groups. What these groups are telling me is roll out – and timely roll out – of funding is key to a successful year, especially in short seasons such as the tourism industry. We're looking at growing those shorter seasons, getting earlier into spring and growing it into the fall.

I see the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation is nodding his head because we've met with groups in my district on numerous occasions to grow their operations.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. KING: To be an (inaudible) is right.

All of that is how we can help organizations grow. Social enterprises have always been a big aspect in the District of Bonavista for the past 25 or 30 years, predominantly. It's created opportunity for people to start new businesses, created opportunity for jobs.

We're seeing a boom right now, Mr. Speaker. I've never seen the District of Bonavista be this busy and I've lived there all my life, except for 10 years when I lived in Halifax. The amount of people we had go through our communities was phenomenal.

This didn't happen overnight. This happened because the social enterprises and non-profit organizations in the region work together. They don't do things individually; they work together,

as he mentioned in the report, to grow our economy.

One of the biggest ones we have is Rising Tide Theatre, which enters their 40th year this year. It's run by Donna Butt. If you know Donna, she's quite the person and very dynamic. I enjoy every time I get to have a conversation with her. She came to Trinity in 1993 with the *New Founde Lande Pageant*, otherwise known as the Trinity Pageant to my friend from CBS. These were a series of dramatized vignettes celebrating our province's history.

What that did for the people of our area, Mr. Speaker, was it gave them a new opportunity. In 1992, we were devastated with the closure of the cod fishery and the collapse. We've seen people work there since then, every year. They've transitioned from the fishery into the tourism industry.

I was talking to Donna on Friday night. She told a story about Doug Ballett. He went with Rising Tide; he's worked several years with the organization. Donna asked him how he liked his job after the first year. He said: This is the worst way I've ever had to get my stamps. But he stuck with it and grew a skill set. It's remarkable.

That kind of led the way, Mr. Speaker, into other areas. We have the Sir William Coaker foundation, which is Canada's first union-built town. Its trading company building was renovated several years ago and now operates. It's leased to the Iceberg Vodka company where we make the bottles. They're doing remarkable work upgrading the apartments there and their printing press. We had new businesses reach out to Edith Samson with the Coaker Foundation looking to find out when renovations are going to be done because they want to start businesses in Port Union.

We have the historic Trinity society which has houses, the Lester-Garland House which has the cultural craft store, the Green Family Forge, the Cooperage – these are creating jobs for people who get to use highly skilled trades. Blacksmithing is something we don't see any more, but they do remarkable work, Mr. Speaker.

Another one which I'm going to talk about – and I'm getting a little short on time, I get another 15 minutes at the end so I'll hit the other ones – is Tourism Elliston, Mr. Speaker. This one amazes me the most. It was formed in 1997 when the town was forced to turn off their street lights because they didn't have any money. Imagine that.

The town had one business. It was a corner store. What they did is they looked at the tourism route. They looked at the success of the Cabot 500 celebrations, they looked at the success of what was going on in Trinity and they said: We can do that.

Their main focus initially was on root cellars. They were the root cellar capital of the world. Then it turned to puffins. Now they have a successful Bird Island Puffin Festival every year; Roots, Rants and Roars, which has a remarkable food festival, which sees chefs come from not only Newfoundland and Labrador, but from across the country and within the United States; they have Nanny's Root Cellar Kitchen and gift shops. What that allowed people to do is – I think there are 10 or 15 businesses within Elliston. They increased their tax base. That allowed them to turn back on their street lights.

You have the Matthew Legacy where you have the replica of the *Matthew*. They were instrumental in the Cabot 500 celebrations, which was not just a boom for the Bonavista area in 1997, but the province as a whole. You had a replica of the *Matthew* come here. There was a replica of the *Matthew* built here in Newfoundland and Labrador and it's still housed in Bonavista right now. That's promoting history. It's giving tours and gift shops.

I could go on and on – and I will – but what I'd like to see, Mr. Speaker, is have full unanimous support here today, to support social enterprise, to support non-profit organizations. We know the PCs started it; we're continuing on.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Member's time –

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm very pleased to inform my hon. colleague for Bonavista that we certainly do support today's private Member's motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. PERRY: We're very strong believers in any form of enterprise, be it not-for-profit or private sector, Mr. Speaker. As Progressive Conservatives, we believe it is the private sector that is the engine of growth.

It is the private sector that makes communities sustainable. It is entrepreneurs who drive the economy. It is the role of government, in our view, to provide the necessary supports so these entrepreneurs can flourish, Mr. Speaker. We certainly are supportive of social enterprise in Newfoundland and Labrador.

There's a phrase, Mr. Speaker, in French that Members opposite might be familiar with and it's the phrase *déjà vu*. On Private Members' Day, November 30 of last year, the House passed a resolution very, very similar to the one we're debating today. The 2016 resolution was to implement the Social Enterprise Action Plan, the goals of which include increasing the number of social enterprises in Newfoundland and Labrador. The 2017 resolution we're debating here today is to increase the number of social enterprises in Newfoundland and Labrador, a goal of the Social Enterprise Action Plan, so a lot of similarities.

Last year's resolution was we should do it. In January and February, the government held consultations to ask people: Should we do it? The people responded: Yes, you should do it. This resolution certainly encourages government to listen to the people and actually do it.

I hope when we're back here next year in 2018 we're doing a resolution; we're celebrating we got her done. We'd love to be back here applauding you for listening to the people and getting it done, for actually moving it forward, because we do truly believe in the Social Enterprise Action Plan.

Mr. Speaker, I'm quite proud to say that in my District of Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune, one of our very earliest social enterprises was born. Many of you are familiar with the craft enterprise NONIA. That actually came from the ladies of Pool's Cove who were knitting socks and mittens for people who were fighting overseas. It's something we're quite proud of to this day.

We also have enterprises that exist in my region like Pool's Cove Crafts, Yarn Point Knitters, which provide very meaningful employment for the persons who are involved. It provides great social activity for people to come together. The profits are always invested back in the community and back in the people, so truly, truly supportive of social enterprise in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, social enterprise is not government driven, it's community driven. It is people taking the initiative to become the change they want to see in the world. We really have to give people credit where credit is due here. The applause for social enterprise really belongs, I believe, with the pioneers and the people of our communities for stepping up, Mr. Speaker.

I have to say of late I, personally, as a proud representative of rural Newfoundland and Labrador – thriving rural Newfoundland and Labrador in my opinion – all of this talk about resettlement has been jarring, I will say, in the last little while. I'm quite pleased to see voices now starting to speak up and speak out against this new move towards resettlement and speak up in support of rural Newfoundland and Labrador. One of the areas they see as potential for sustainability of these communities is social enterprise, Mr. Speaker.

I certainly will do everything I can, as an hon. Member of this House, to support social enterprise in every way I certainly can. I believe, and the Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland and Labrador believes, that rural Newfoundland very much does have a future. It is the people of rural Newfoundland and Labrador who will sustain their futures.

We don't expect Cadillac services. We expect core services. We expect to be able to access services within reasonable time frames and

reasonable distances. But we don't expect Cadillacs; we expect to be able to continue our way of life that has produced so many fine people that have become leaders all across our great globe.

We have a community called Grey River in my District of Fortune –

MR. BROWNE: A beautiful spot.

MS. PERRY: It certainly is, I say to the Member opposite, my colleague for Placentia West – Bellevue. It's a beautiful spot. You know, one of today's scientists at NASA is originally from Grey River. You're not held back because you grew up in a small community. In fact, sometimes I think you flourish even more because you're raised by the whole community. I'm pleased to say I can still go to bed at night where I live and I don't have to worry about locking my door, at least not for humans; bears and moose maybe, but not for humans.

Rural Newfoundland is who we are. It's part of our culture and anything and everything that we can do as a people and as a province to support rural Newfoundland should be considered. Social enterprise is a very, very big part of that, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to see the government opposite continuing on with this initiative that we commenced as a government and that you continue to recognize its value.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to talk as well a little bit about some of the successful social enterprises that some people here in the province may be familiar with. One of my favourites is the Stella Burry Community Services enterprise. They have a social enterprise called the Hungry Heart Cafe. I have to say to this day the best muffins you can ever buy are at the Hungry Heart Cafe; fabulous service, fabulous enterprise and fabulous people.

The Shorefast Foundation also operates as a social enterprise. It's based on several principles. There's an inherent irreplaceable value in the place itself. The key to sustainability lies in nurturing the specificity of place, in the intellectual heritage and cultural wisdom, talent, knowledge and abundance that exists naturally in each place.

With an initial investment, viable enterprises and businesses can be developed so that the surpluses from these businesses contribute to the resilience and economic well-being of a community. Art is a way of knowing, of belonging, of questioning and of innovating. It is such a way of participating in global conversation and a way of making sense of the world. As such, it has potential to contribute to positive social change. Fogo Island and the Shorefast Foundation have clearly demonstrated a successful approach to community revitalization.

As some of the Members opposite will talk about again today, as we did last time we debated this similar motion, we talked about SABRI, St. Anthony Basin Resources Incorporated, another example of a fabulous social enterprise; the Rising Tide Theatre; the Battle Harbour historic trust; the Hub. We don't do Christmas cards anymore as Members of the House of Assembly, but when we did we intentionally – I, as a Member of the House of Assembly, intentionally went to the Hub because I wanted to encourage social enterprise and, in particular, social enterprise that employed persons with disabilities and gave them the opportunity to earn a meaningful wage, have a meaningful career and be part of everyday life just like all of us are.

I think, though, when we speak about community enterprise, there is a very important organization we must reference and that being the Community Sector Council. For more than 30 years, the Community Sector Council has been a province-wide leader in the voluntary community-based sector. One of the province's first social entrepreneurs, the CSD has been connecting people and organizations to community resources, mentoring new community enterprises and bringing the voluntary sector and government together on important issues of the day.

Community Profits is a preliminary inventory of organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador involved in community enterprise activity. Its listing includes about 140 groups, some of which generate some level of revenue through the sale of goods or services on an ongoing, regular basis. Most rely on a variety of funding sources and almost all have paid staff, although

there is still very much a strong volunteer component involved in sales, even among many well-established enterprises, Mr. Speaker. We certainly believe volunteers are the fabric to our communities and a very important part of social enterprise that we highly value.

Community Profits also involves a number of exceptional organizations to demonstrate the breadth and ingenuity of community enterprise activity as well as its impact on the people and the regions of Newfoundland and Labrador. I certainly would be remiss in speaking about the Community Sector Council without paying tribute to Penelope Rowe. Certainly one of the ladies that I have always strongly, strongly admired; incredibly intelligent, incredible energetic, strongly believes in the activities she pursues, a fabulous advocate and someone who I have looked up to, certainly, my entire working career.

I have to ask myself: What would a social enterprise network be in this province without her leadership? She's a national leader in social enterprise advocacy and development and has been for decades, before some of the Members opposite probably were even born. I can't include myself in that any more. She is second to none in this field and she's done it right here in Newfoundland and Labrador. She has earned every accolade by working for it. She is the one, I think, who truly deserves a lot of applause for spurring, advocating and driving the social enterprise movement forward. She's teaching all of us lessons in getting social enterprise right.

It certainly is good to listen to the people. We support this resolution for urging government to listen and to act, to facilitate, remove obstructions and allow social enterprises to grow and multiply. It's the right thing to do and this province's pioneers have been doing it effectively for a very, very long time.

I truly believe in continuing to support their efforts and doing what we can as a government to ensure social enterprise continues to thrive, to ensure it continues to grow in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. Five hundred years hence, rural Newfoundland and Labrador will be stronger than it is today and still around and sustainable.

We're not going anywhere. We're staying around and social enterprise is going to help us do it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Reid): The hon. the Member for Burin – Placentia West.

MR. BROWNE: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for hearkening back to the history of the old District of Burin – Placentia West before the Members opposite played musical chairs with the House of Assembly. So now it's, of course Placentia West – Bellevue.

I'm very delighted to hear the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune proclaim that social enterprises will help us sustain ourselves and move forward, because God knows we need something after their decade in power.

Mr. Speaker, she also invoked a French saying: déjà vu. I'll invoke my own: Celui qui oublie l'histoire est condamné à la revivre – he who forgets history or she who forgets history is condemned to repeat it. So I certainly hope we have learned from that decade.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I digress. I am pleased to stand in this hon. House today to speak to this private Member's motion on social enterprises in our province. I thank the Member for Bonavista for bringing this forward. As the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune has pointed out, this subject has been debated here in this Chamber before and we're very happy to be doing so again.

As hon. Members would know, the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation last week released a summary of the key areas discussed during an engagement process to support social enterprise development in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, as committed in *The Way Forward: Realizing Our Potential*, the provincial government is working to increase the number of social enterprises in Newfoundland and Labrador and to enhance services for existing social enterprises.

Work continues on the development of a Social Enterprise Action Plan. Social enterprises, Mr. Speaker, are operating in sectors such as tourism, construction, the arts, culture, fisheries, home care and social housing. These enterprises create employment, reduce poverty, develop entrepreneurial skills and successfully operate in all regions of the province.

To inform the action plan, engagement sessions were completed as well as a public online questionnaire. During this process the provincial government heard views and perspectives from individuals and organizations about the direction government ought to take to support social enterprise development.

Mr. Speaker, we want to thank all participants throughout the province for taking time to either attend a session or complete an online questionnaire. I'm told by officials in the department there were a high number of detailed questionnaires, written questionnaires that were developed. So this enlisted a great number of responses.

The document released summarizes the input gathered during the engagement process, which can be found online. It explored issues and opportunities in the following areas: The definition of a social enterprise, business skills and organizational development, research and opportunity identification, policy development, promotion and awareness, and access to financing and capital, which often, Mr. Speaker, can present itself as one of the most significant challenges and barriers.

I'd like to take a moment to comment on some of these, Mr. Speaker, first, with the definition of a social enterprise. What is a social enterprise? It is something that not everyone agrees on what the term means. It can mean different things to different organizations, to different people. Through this process we honed in on really what is the general consensus for what the term means. Social enterprises generally are agreed upon that they are enterprises that produce and sell goods and services using generated revenues to reinvest in social, cultural, economic and environmental goals.

We heard that the aim of social enterprises should be to achieve a social and a financial return on the investment. Social enterprises, Mr. Speaker, are gaining attention nationally and provincially, and rightfully so. Increasingly, they are recognized as key contributors to community and economic development. Such enterprises can provide a public service which benefits the entire community, while at the same time playing a lead role in the creation and maintenance of a competitive economic environment.

Furthermore, social enterprises create employment, reduce poverty, develop entrepreneurial skills and successfully operate in communities, which can be a clear benefit for many rural communities such as those I represent, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to business skills and organizational development, we heard from stakeholders that there are opportunities on how best to combine business and social impact skills training required to operate a social enterprise. We are listening, Mr. Speaker, and we will ensure the action plan we are developing will address this issue and other opportunities for skills development.

I make no apologies – and I'm sure the Member for Bonavista makes no apologies for bringing this issue to the floor of the House of Assembly because it's showing progress, Mr. Speaker, and that we're taking it seriously. We've had consultations; we've had an engagement process. We are now reporting back to the people of the province and now to Members of this Chamber on what that process told us.

We recognize the role various partners are taking to support skills development. We want to maximize our collective efforts, which will involve working with groups such as Memorial University's Centre for Social Enterprise, Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Co-operatives and the Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador as the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune alluded to.

Another priority is research and opportunity identification. Social enterprise development should be supported by well-informed research, proactively identified and appropriately directed

to your interested community groups and partners in social enterprise. During our engagement process, we heard there was an opportunity to build self-sustaining social enterprise development in rural and urban areas and in multiple sectors such as health, immigration, agriculture technology, tourism and culture – very important sectors, Mr. Speaker.

Social enterprise is not something new in this province. There are many examples of them, which I'll get into in a moment. Another area is policy. We are looking at that very closely as we develop the Social Enterprise Action Plan. An interdepartmental committee within government has been formed, representing a cross-section of departments within government – nearly everyone, Mr. Speaker. Having such diverse mandates will ensure ongoing opportunity identification in areas for social enterprise and development.

Another issue we need to address is promotion and awareness. We heard from stakeholders that it's important to enhance access and generate public awareness at the same time. As we continue to develop our action plan we recognize it will be critical to work with partners to increase the profile of social enterprise models.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, also in the *What We Heard* document was accessing financing and capital. We're going to consider the feedback and share it with our financial partners. For example, there was a clear message about the need for timely access to capital throughout the social enterprise life cycle, as well as the need to increase awareness of provincial and national funding programs. In addition to our local engagement process, our government continues to examine strategies throughout other jurisdictions, as well as best practices and research developed by various entities such as the Social Enterprise Council of Canada and the community sector here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few moments to discuss some examples of social enterprises that are fairly innovative and beneficial to the people of the province; one such, of course, would be Project Sucseed with Enactus. The Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation and I,

as well as the Premier, joined the Enactus team before they went to London for the international competition.

I had an opportunity to see one of the most impressive presentations I have ever seen, Mr. Speaker, and I've never witnessed something of its kind, detailing the Project Sucseed which is a partnership between Enactus and Memorial and Choices for Youth which, of course, is a social enterprise. It's addressing food sustainability in the north and it's, of course, placed in numerous competitions around the world.

If you look on the Burin Peninsula, Mr. Speaker, the St. Lawrence Miner's Museum has a group that mines fluorspar on the surface, small samples. The group is led by persons with disabilities. They make jewelry from the fluorspar and they end up selling it in the gift shop of the museum. The Minister of Service NL actually put her hand to this, in fact, the Premier put his hand to this while in St. Lawrence over the summer and I believe the Minister of TCII as well. It's been a raving, raving success. That's the kind of success we see with social enterprises.

If you look in my District of Placentia West – Bellevue – formerly Burin – Placentia West, as you've aptly pointed out, Mr. Speaker – the St. Gabriel's Hall itself offers itself as a cultural space for performing arts. It's a wonderful idea and concept that really brings together the artistic community and ability for performing. It's having a social and a financial consequence that's very positive to the community.

Finally, I wanted to mention the Placentia West Economuseum, Mr. Speaker, where the minister and I have dined. They have a wonderful restaurant; it was a former resettled house out of Placentia Bay that was towed in. It is right on the highway of the Burin Peninsula. I encourage all the Members to come to the Burin Peninsula and taste the wonderful food that I think would be enticing to them at the Placentia West Tea Rose.

They can witness also the crafts that are there that are mostly all made right in the facility. They have a gigantic rug-making facility, they hook and they do everything. This is another example of a group, the Development

Association. They lead this social enterprise. It provides jobs, it provides a service and it provides a restaurant for tourists. There are so many opportunities.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I will go on to conclude. I will just say that as parliamentary secretary for Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation, I am very pleased with the work our department has done with social enterprises to date. It's very important to continue monitoring our progress to ensure we extract the best value for every sector of our economy, which is what we are planning to do through *The Way Forward* and many, many other means.

So thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member for Bonavista once again for bringing forward this motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's indeed an honour again to stand and talk to the private Member's resolution. I think we've had four or five since we've come back in the House for this sitting. I've had the privilege to speak to each one of them because they were relevant to things that were important to me and, no doubt, important to everybody in this House of Assembly, but things that I may have at least a small bit of background in that I could feel comfortable talking to or something that I was passionate about.

This is another one of those. It is indeed an opportunity for us to speak about the importance of social enterprise and what it means. I've found social enterprise to be one of the few things in Newfoundland and Labrador that we can bridge all gamut of geographics, cultural backgrounds, social backgrounds, economic backgrounds, the geographic differences between the Island and the Big Land in Labrador, because it has that ability there to draw out the talents and the resources in particular communities. That becomes the positive things that I think are very important.

I have to go back; 35 years ago I got my start as an employee in the social enterprise. For those who may be able to remember, back in those days the economic development coordinators, rural economic development coordinators, there were 52, and they had at one point 422 social enterprises between them. They were in from agricultural to craft, to tourism, to the fishing industry, to the hunting – massive, massive amounts. There were 17 youth-oriented ones that were solely ran by young people, and these were business enterprises.

Some of those still exist today. A lot of these organizations in rural areas still exist. They may not exist in the same traditional social enterprise, but they exist because there's a bridge there, too. There's a bridge to going to the other business sector, the for-profit business sector.

People get their expertise, they get their training, their talent and sometimes they'll spin off into their own independent business, which is all healthy, purely healthy for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians because it drives the economy. It ensures that no matter where your geographic location is or whatever skill set you may have, or whatever resource is available, you can develop an enterprise that's profitable. Profitability all determines on where you are.

Social enterprise profitability is a little bit more fluent, because the plan is to make a sustained living. If you do generate some additional monies you put it back into the business, expand it, bring in more people to be part and parcel of it; or, in some cases, people get their training and move off to start their own independent business, which is a good segue to us being able to ensure that small businesses still drive Newfoundland and Labrador and is one of the good key components of being able to ensure that rural Newfoundland and Labrador that may not have all the basic larger infrastructures that the urban centres would have, but would have a built-in infrastructure. Its own built-in infrastructure is it has a skill set, it has a qualified group of citizens, it has a committed group of citizens and it has a supportive mechanism to make those things work.

Over my lifetime, I had the privilege of working with a number of social enterprises, including the community sector council – which was the

community services council at the time – in trying to find ways that we would open up opportunities for citizens out there, particularly in smaller areas, to give them the skill set. Because people in Newfoundland and Labrador, we're second to none when it comes to our skill set.

What we may need is some basic inherent supports or extra training in certain areas. We have people who have – their hands itself are a very viable business, but they may need someone to help them with a business plan, a marketing plan, a physical location and how to do it. They may need to be partnered with another individual or group of individuals, but in a lot of cases what they need is support.

What people feel more comfortable about is in a community setting where there are a number of people who are not only taking charge of that business entity, but are taking also some of the risks. Because if you come and you have minimal ability to invest from yourself, but what you have is a talent, you need other people who can help you develop that business. If there's a group coming together, you know you all have a vested interest. If it's the community that has a vested interest, then you know there's much more of an opportunity to be successful and make it work.

In the early '80s, I started as the economic development officer in this region. It was a lot of rural areas then, which took in the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis. In those days Portugal Cove-St. Philip's, Paradise and Bell Island were considered rural and remote at the time. We would look at enterprises there as part of the whole process. There were a lot of good businesses that got started, particularly around farming, fishing and in the crafts area.

To this day, if you look at, particularly in Portugal Cove-St. Philip's, some of the entities that are existing there now, the farming ones that now are part of a private sector, were quasi-private to social enterprise, they came out of that whole process. So there are all kinds of things there that stem from different levels that went to all the different components that are very important to social enterprises.

On Bell Island, they still exist over there. The Community Development Co-operative; the bakery was founded 30 years ago as part of that process. I was happy to say I was part of that whole process.

I would think the acting Leader of the Third Party, when she gets up she might note that, because myself and her spent many a day over a number of years working on making that enterprise, in her previous life, viable and it still exists to this day.

The housing co-op that's over there right now is still very valuable. These assets are worth millions of dollars when you look at the assets that are there.

In the earlier days, I remember one time as a young man having 74 employees in a social enterprise in agriculture and livestock and in the fishing industry on Bell Island, where you wouldn't think would be the traditional entities there. Unfortunately, outmigration, changing tides, economic changes and lack of support from various government administrations at the time, not seeing the vision of how you could invest in a social enterprise and what that would mean for rural Newfoundland and Labrador, what it would mean for the next generation – because what I found in social enterprise in my travels around Newfoundland and Labrador, in my years as a civil servant, if you start a social enterprise you're more apt that the next, second and the third generation will still be connected in some way, shape or form. As they advance in education or their skill set or their knowledge, they add to that social enterprise. They bring in their thought process, their new innovative ideas to move things forward.

Thirty-five years ago we didn't have Facebook and Twitter and we didn't have social media to be able to promote what we did, but there were hundreds, if not thousands of social enterprises in Newfoundland and Labrador. People didn't know what they were being part of was a social enterprise. They thought it was a group of people who came together and they knitted sweaters and that, that they sold at a craft fair or they sold to a supplier who was coming in on the world market.

We were producing some of the best things in the world. The Grenfell coats, for example, all the things that were part and parcel of that. People don't realize the millions, the tens, maybe even hundreds of millions of dollars over the years that the social enterprises have developed and, inadvertently, people not realizing what they were into. That they were into a full-fledged business with a skill set and an ability to grow second to none.

What at times, unfortunately, we didn't have was that connecting mechanism. It's gone up and down. Certain administrations come in and see the value of it and invest heavily into it and want to make it work. Some other administrations come in and say: No, that's old school. We're not going to entice that. We're going to stay solely with the private sector and make that work.

I'm a believer that there's a connection between the two. The private sector and the social sector are very important to each other because one can drive off the other. While there's a business model there that works for both of them, there are two different types of skill sets that are needed to make that work.

What we probably haven't done adequately over the years is bridge the two and I think there's a way of doing that. It's having more collaboration between the private sector businesses and the social sector businesses. We need to be able to start that at an early age. I know we do a great job. We know what the university and the school of business have done and the engineering division, what they've done for social enterprise and setting up things as collective co-operatives as part of that process.

I know at least 20 years ago, the Federation of Co-ops was one of the biggest employers, it's membership; all the co-op stores it had, all the entities it had around farming and all the other enterprises that it supported, tourism and craft development. It's still a very strong force, but still hasn't gotten – I don't know if it's the support mechanism, if it's the model to be able to move things forward to keep up with modernized competition from multinational corporations that move into our business entities.

There's an entity that has by far the best set-up, the best model for social enterprise where it's about supportive services, it's about collaboration. It's about bringing in – if you notice on most boards of co-ops, you'll see they're independent business people, for-profit business people who support the co-op movement and are on their boards to give advice to help foster those types of entities that may work. They've been very successful.

I think we need to get to a point where we need to start supporting more of that bridging between the private and the public sector when it comes to the social enterprises. We need to be more creative. We need to be able to use social media, from a marketing point of view, to get out what our product is, what our service is.

We've gotten to a point where we are into a billion-dollar-a-year industry in tourism. Look at the spinoffs that are the potential here as people, on a daily basis, now start to look at Newfoundland and Labrador as a destination. Well, when they come here the scenery is beautiful, we know that. The people are great, we know that. The attraction is great, but we also need a way to use other things.

There's more money in people's pocket that they want to spend. When you go on vacation you want to spend money. I know that from my own community. It gets tens of thousands of tourists a year. When they go and get off the ferry and I'm speaking to them and talking, they're saying: Beautiful place, love to go there, but I still have a pocket full of money I haven't been able to spend. You need to come up with some other entities.

We need to be able to support some other forms of social enterprises. That part is training. It's part education. It's part of coordination. It's part of, as I mentioned earlier, the bridging between all those sectors there. It's part of how we foster what this is all about, starting at a younger age in the school system, making sure that young people are more familiar with financial management. Financial management is about business management. It's about understanding the flow of money, being able to make money.

It's much easier to say you don't have to take a risk as a young person if you've got four or five

of your friends who have bought into it and you're collaboratively doing that as a social enterprise, or the whole community supports it. There are ways to do that.

Every community has one or two, or a number of agencies or organizations that will foster what happens in a community. There are either tourism organizations, there are economic development organizations and there are craft organizations. We need to use the expertise that is there because, again, and I keep reiterating this, the people who run the volunteer organizations are the same people who have experience as entrepreneurs and/or are educators or have been part of other social enterprises.

We need to be able to take that expertise to be able to move it forward. The responsibility to a government is to be able to coordinate that. That is the responsibility. We operate on policy and legislation here. We have programs and departments. Ours is not to administer programs and services in most cases; it's to foster the development of them. How do you do that? By putting supports in play.

The old cliché of hand up versus a hand out, that's what needs to be done here. Every now and then government needs to step in and take the lead on the coordination. Then, when it's successful, move it to another entity, a third-party entity that runs it because then it's arms-length from government to make it work.

For years we've done it. Administrations come back, drop it and say it doesn't work. Some administrations pat themselves on the back because they change the names on something and they have a different philosophy, they change the geography and all of that. That's fine and dandy, that's the politics of it.

For social enterprise and economic development, and survival of not only rural Newfoundland and Labrador – because you go to the urban centres, they have as many social enterprises as the rural communities. They may stand out more in rural communities because that's the hype when you go into that community, particularly a group that's promoting what it is, the service or the product that they're selling or providing. In areas like St. John's, Corner Brook, Gander and Grand Falls-

Windsor, there are a number of social enterprises that provide valuable services or supply a valuable product. So we need to define it.

Having this here is great. Again, one of my colleagues had mentioned it seemed like the second time around. I really don't care. Second, third, fourth or fifth, it's still something that's necessary, something that should be supported, something that's in the best interests of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Something that can work to diversify what we do in our society, in our economy. Also, it can be used to ensure that we don't have massive out-migration.

People have choices. It also gets a point to be able to foster one of the key things we have, a skill set that is second to none. So let's take that skill set. Let's find ways to develop it, support it, bridge the partnering between municipalities, service agencies, the private sector and the business sector, develop it into something that is collaborative that works for everybody. That's not a hard task to do and it's not one that we need to reinvent the wheel.

If you go back to the late '70s when it was first formed with the economic development movement in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, then the economic bases in urban centres that were there, the chambers of commerce, the businesses associations. If you look at what the community services sector has done and the council over the last 30 years, they've outlined exactly approaches that should be done. We just need, at times, to find a way to make the connections work.

We've got dots all over the place in rural Newfoundland and Labrador and in urban Newfoundland and Labrador; we need a straight line. The straight line is that everybody has access to services, everybody has access to be able to use the talents they have to provide a business plan and be able to put in play those social enterprises that benefit the communities and foster what Newfoundland and Labrador is all about and, obviously, outline that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have choices here and can take the lead and be the designers of their own destiny.

I thank you for that, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great honour and privilege to speak to the private Member's motion from the Member for Bonavista, which is on social enterprise. What I'd like to say is that community is the engine room for people-powered change. When it comes right down to it, the grassroots of a strong community and what they can do in terms of building social enterprise. I agree with the Member opposite. I'm very happy to hear that the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island raises the point that social enterprise is as relevant to urban economies as they are rural economies because they are all over Newfoundland and Labrador.

One of the tasks that this government has undertaken is to create an action plan around social enterprise. In order to do that, we went out and we consulted. We had stakeholder engagement and we listened to groups and organizations, co-operatives, the federal government. We did a significant amount of outreach throughout the province and also people provided submissions.

Some of the concerns that were raised during consultation were released in a *What We Heard* document, some of which included more supports for business skills and organizational development. That is very pertinent. I think that was relayed just by the Member opposite, as well, in some of the conversation around either having adequate training or finding ways. Because if an organization has an entrepreneurial arm to it or has an avenue of which it can generate more purchase orders or generate more value, then it also creates a better ability for a longer term sustainability where there is less reliance on cyclical, either one-time programming that may come up and these types of things. So providing somebody with the right

organizational business skills was something that was relayed.

Determining strategic areas of social enterprise development should be prioritized using well-informed research, proactively identified and appropriately directed to interested community groups and partners in social enterprise. You need to have good evidence and you need to have a good base line in how you make decisions. That's something that came across from people across Newfoundland and Labrador.

To explore policy areas impacting social enterprise models that can be applied throughout numerous sectors and enhance access to information about social enterprise development, and generate public awareness about the innovative models that can be used in community. There were numerous ones that have been highlighted here today. It's very exciting to see what's happening, whether it's on the Bonavista Peninsula, whether it's in Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune, in Labrador, on the Great Northern Peninsula, or anywhere else here in this province.

I'm going to take a moment before I continue going down through to highlight a social enterprise that's very dear to my heart and it's one that I started after I started my own business: a museum. In 2002, I got hired part-time working for the Straits – St. Barbe Chronic Care Corporation, and then I worked with security there and really fell in love with what the organization was all about.

It was a social enterprise that was run by a volunteer board of directors. They actually saw a need for a personal care home, Level 1 and Level 2 care in the region of which they serve. There was a regional hospital, banking services, pharmacy and all the other supports in the community, but when people got older and they needed that higher level of personal care, they had to leave the region. So the community got together, they worked; they fundraised and made sure that there was an investment in a 20-bed home in the beginning.

As I started working there they had just expanded, and going through an expansion process as well where they got to 30 beds for

residents in the area. They also managed the Newfoundland and Labrador affordable housing unit known as the Richfell Place and recreation services.

When you look at the mix of what they've been able to do in providing respite care, when I moved back to the province in 2009, and having the expertise in business and business management, I decided to put my name forward for the board of this social enterprise and got involved and served as the vice-president of the organization.

We really saw the value of now they're at 36 beds, employing more than 16 people. These are good jobs that have impact, that are actually keeping community and keeping people closer to home, and that's a very important matter. It's a community being that engine room for people-powered change and the impact that they can have in making a real difference.

I know the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune talked about SABRI. There's also the North of 50-30 Association where they take benefits that are a public resource and they invest back into people and into the community. They've done some great examples of regional trail development, broadband Internet, other connectivity that they've done in scholarships and investment.

The International Grenfell Association and Dr. Grenfell was probably one of the great social enterprises, or social entrepreneurs, well ahead of his time when he came in 1892 to the Great Northern Peninsula and set up his first hospital in Labrador in Battle Harbour. The investments in co-operatives, in textiles, in craft development and creating co-operatives – the oldest co-operative in the province was set up in Red Bay, Labrador. We see now a UNESCO heritage site that is in Labrador, but the oldest co-op in the province and the oldest retail co-op in the country is the Grenfell Memorial Co-Op in St. Anthony that bears Grenfell's name.

But the International Grenfell Foundation gives back to non-profits, to social enterprise, and has community impact in bursaries and education; over \$1 million basically every year to residents of Labrador and the Great Northern Peninsula. These are really important when we look at

making the right investments at the right time and how we can continue to give back to people in the community.

If we talk about enhancing not only access to information and all of these innovative models, but to explore financial sources available, revenue from their business operations to their grants, to loans, to donations and access to capital opportunities and challenges for social enterprises, such terms and conditions for loan financing to meet the needs of social enterprises.

I've talked to a lot of them. I've talked to Rising Tide Theatre. I have talked to many groups and organizations and they say: We have this idea. We have this opportunity. Sometimes it's the mix of getting that access to financing. But for a number of volunteers taking on lending, if there has to be personal guarantees, or if there has to be different things signed, it can be a real challenge for that volunteer group to take on that risk. So sometimes social lending that's in the form of a loan needs to be looked at in that instrument.

I think these are types of things that we'll explore as we go through our action plan. I know the Community Business Development Corporations – and here in metro area, Metro Business Opportunities, their partner organizations, 15 together here in the province, they lend to social enterprises. There are also credit unions and commercial banks that will look at that, and government will as well.

We've done some initiatives where we've worked with the CBDCs to create the Drive program and that allows access to up to \$10,000 for somebody who is a young entrepreneur – that capital.

But there are avenues of which we can unlock potential, too, for social entrepreneurs. I think that's where we continue to have these conversations with organizations like the Community Sector Council. I'm very pleased that the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune had raised the organization and the executive director, Penelope Rowe, who is so well respected in the sector and across the province for the work that she does do, and their whole organization, whether it be looking at the organizations they work with.

The Member for Placentia West – Bellevue, my parliamentary secretary, raised the success of MUN Enactus and Project Sucseed. These Memorial University students are brilliant students, our bright minds. The future is so bright in Newfoundland and Labrador when you have teams like the MUN Hyperloop team coming out of engineering; engineering students, business students and others collaborating on MUN Enactus with Project Sucseed to create a hydroponic growing system that allows you to sell in northern, rural and remote communities.

They've had so much success that they have an agreement with Tim Hortons to have these units all across schools in the country. There have been partnerships with the Woodward Group that had made a major contribution to look at entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurship is very important. They created the Mel Woodward Cup at Memorial University. They also supported Project Sucseed to make sure there were units throughout various places in Labrador.

I go around and I don't have to go too far. In my own district, at the senior's home we see the Project Sucseed unit at Shirley's Haven; we also see it at the Boys and Girls Club. This is a whole educational process where food product can be grown at an affordable rate here in this province using their system. They're employing youth that will be at risk because they partnered with the social enterprise Choices For Youth. That is phenomenal.

They're going to generate over \$1 million in sales this year. This is something that was started by students. They've become their own entrepreneurs, they have their own employment. They know where they're headed. They've done big things, they've won the worlds. They placed second in the world this year. We're very proud of their accolades.

The more we can use the services of organizations like MUN Enactus and that talent we can have that kind of activity. We need to continue to have that outreach all across Newfoundland and Labrador. This is why our government, in partnership with the federal government, supported the Centre for Social Enterprise. This is a partnership with Memorial's school of business, school of music and school of social work. They see that

connectivity that brings full circle, that social side that makes a business and the mix of the arts that exist. Social enterprise is so diverse in what can be done across our very province.

I have to say that I'm very proud of the collective efforts that we are doing as a government. It's great to hear support from the Opposition as well because I believe, collectively, if we focus our efforts on strengthening, promoting and advancing opportunities for social enterprise and encouraging entrepreneurial business models, both rural and urban economies will be stronger. They'll be better off.

There are certainly social enterprises that are a testament of time, those that have been around for a very long time, some that have evolved and some that have spun off into many new organizations. Then there are others that are not yet created that have tremendous opportunity to have a job impact, an impact on the economy, an impact on a social issue or a society. There are various mandates, whether it's around the environment and training youth at risk.

One province that's done an interesting job around social enterprise is Winnipeg. When I was there on an FPT meeting for tourism first when I was elected, I took some time. There was time in the schedule so I took time to go visit the centre that they had for social enterprise. They had a hub of activity. It was an old manufacturing building they converted. They had put all the offices together.

Can you picture a space where there's a hub of social enterprises or organizations that are mandated, that are like-minded, that think and support similar issues whether they're foundations, non-profits, economic development arms of governments where there's complete alignment. I think once you have collaboration, you can do so much more. There is a lot that can be done, whether you're producing or selling goods and services, generating revenues, investing back into social, cultural economic activity or environmental goods.

I believe one of the other Members here, one of my colleagues, will get into talking about a number of other entities that are supported through social enterprise. I won't go further into

that, but our government has committed early on. It was a commitment in our red book that we would devote and support, foster social enterprise, support the innovation and diversification of the non-profit sector, consult with stakeholders of the non-profit sector and develop a Social Enterprise Action Plan with the aim of enhancing the benefits of this valuable sector for the provincial economy.

I want to go back to what I said in the beginning that it really is community that's the engine room for people-powered change. I've had the opportunity of being Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation to work very clearly, work very collaboratively with members of the arts, members in business, members in the non-profit sector and to work on something.

I feel there are good things that are happening all across Newfoundland and Labrador. This action plan can lead to more positive things. It's up to all of us collectively – collectively as people, collectively as a community – to make sure that we have the greatest success here in our province.

I thank everyone who's already contributed to the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I'm very happy to stand and speak to this private Member's motion, but I'm having a severe, severe case of déjà vu.

On November 30, 2016, just a year ago, there was a private Member's motion that spoke specifically about this. This was from the government side as well, Mr. Speaker. A year ago the private Member's motion read:

“WHEREAS Newfoundland and Labrador has a diverse and thriving social enterprise sector, which is actively meeting social, cultural, economic and environmental needs throughout the province; and

“WHEREAS social enterprises can help communities control their own economic future, fill critical gaps in the economy, and provide space for a new generation of entrepreneurs to apply their skills; and

“WHEREAS social enterprise development is another innovation tool for advancing regional growth opportunities to benefit the economy;

“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House supports the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's initiative to implement a social enterprise action plan, including long-term strategic goals supported by an annual work plan and certainly it would be tabled early in 2017.”

This is what that motion called for. We all supported it. I think there was unanimous support.

“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House supports the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's initiative to implement a social enterprise action plan, including long-term strategic goals supported by an annual work plan and certainly it would be tabled early in 2017.” We are heading into early 2018, so I guess they didn't quite reach that goal.

Again, from the same government, from the same benches: “THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House take action to be responsive to the feedback received from this document to increase the number of social enterprises in Newfoundland and Labrador and to enhance services for existing social enterprises.”

Part of their PMR is “supporting social enterprise development is vital for advancing development opportunities that benefit the economy, support sustainability, tackle social and economic issues and encourage entrepreneurial models” Well, Mr. Speaker, we're sort of at the same place, aren't we? We haven't really moved forward. I don't know, they may even have moved backwards.

I have *Hansard* here, Mr. Speaker, from last year, from November 2016 when I spoke to this private Members' motion, and I said: “Thank

you very much, Mr. Speaker” – and this is again from November 2016 – “I’m very happy to stand and speak to this private Members’ motion which calls for a strategy and an action plan for social enterprise. We’ve heard a lot today in this House about what is a social enterprise and why it would be good. I agree with all that.” We’re hearing all that again today, one year later.

Again, Mr. Speaker, from 2016 *Hansard*, speaking to the social enterprise private Members’ motion –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MS. ROGERS: I’m having a little bit of a hard time hearing, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: These are my words in *Hansard* when I was speaking to the private Members’ motion about social enterprise last year: “It is my hope that in fact this is not just talking about how great social enterprises are, and it’s not just talking about why we need to do them and what they are, but that actually we will move beyond simply a strategy or a plan, put resources in place and make sure that we put the problems – as Shaun Loney, I believe his name has been mentioned here in this House – in the hands of the problem solvers.”

Mr. Speaker, here we are again just talking about how great social enterprises are and wouldn’t it be great. We’re praising the ones that have already been established for quite a while, but has government actually moved forward? Are we just talking? Where’s the action plan? Where is that strategy? Where are the resources? Whether they be financial resources or using some of the existing resources that we have to actually help and make it possible for social benefits, for social enterprise to happen.

Now, the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation talked about the Boys and Girls Clubs and the wonderful things that we’re doing. Last year, Mr. Speaker, they cut the funding in half. They cut the funding in half to the Boys and Girls Clubs just before the end of their fiscal year. Many of them ended their fiscal years with huge deficits.

The Boys and Girls Clubs – there are two of them in my district, the one at Mews Place and one in Buckmasters Circle – are scrambling. They’ve had to cancel after-school programs for the older youth and they’re really concerned. They’re concerned about what’s happening to those kids. They’re out, there’s nowhere for them to go after school. They’re out forming gangs out on the corners in their neighbourhoods. They’re very, very, very concerned about the impacts on the cuts.

They’ve had more demand on their services, but they’ve actually had to cut services because this government cut their budget. The government is also saying it’s not core funding, so there’s nothing that’s committed that’s stable for these groups. Yet the minister is talking about the great work they’re doing and what they can do around social enterprise. They cut the guts right out of them.

The other thing is that the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation said that he visited this great building in Winnipeg. I went there as well, Mr. Speaker. I met with Shaun Loney and I met with some of the social enterprises that work out of that building. It’s wonderful what they have done.

We have buildings. Mr. Speaker, we have buildings. We have schools. We have land that belongs to the provincial government. Look what they did with the school I. J. Samson in my district. They let it go, for what? I don’t know. That would have been a perfect spot to do exactly what the minister is talking about in terms of being a hub for social enterprise and a hub for groups that can help disenfranchised people be ready for work. It would have been a perfect incubator, I. J. Samson school.

What has happened? Government threw it away. They gave it to a private developer for \$180,000, who then put it back on the market for over \$3 million. He’s talking about the great building in Winnipeg. I’ve been there; it is fantastic. It’s fantastic, but what has happened, Mr. Speaker, is that the government in Manitoba supported that. The government in Manitoba supported that effort. This government has resources and, again, here we are simply talking about how wonderful social enterprises are.

The other thing I talked about a year ago was the procurement legislation that was before the House. I pointed to the procurement legislation out of Scotland – incredible. All bids to governments –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, maybe my colleagues here might want to take whatever they're doing outside in the hallways there. I'm sure they want to hear –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: I'm sure those who want to hear what I have to say are having a hard time hearing because I'm having a hard time hearing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask all Members to respect the people who are speaking.

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

I think that a year ago in this very same House, and for this very same private Members' motion, I spoke about what's happening in Scotland with their procurement legislation, that there are social benefit clauses. They also really, really push social enterprises in with their calls for proposal.

That's what we've seen in Manitoba with Aki Energy and also with Shaun Loney's – the social enterprises he helped set up in his incubator building that belongs to a number of organizations. For instance, Mr. Speaker, one of the programs that came out of that building is a bedbug program. It's very interesting to see how this works.

There was a huge bedbug problem in Manitoba in a number of social housing units. Government would pay a private company to fumigate and rid the houses of bedbugs, but it would just return. So this crowd, knowing that there was a

need for effective bedbug removal and extinction, came up with a much better system.

What happened with the system before is that people would take all of their furniture, a company would come and take all their furniture and belongings and put it in a great big trailer. That great big trailer would go to the bedbug place. They would unload all the furniture and belongings into their warehouse. You have to cook bedbugs – intense heat. They would do that. Then, in the meantime, people would sort of get rid of other stuff in their apartments. Then this company would put all that stuff back in the trailer and drive it back to the apartment. The stuff would be re-infested with bedbugs because the bedbugs were in the trailer.

Shaun Loney's crowd developed a bedbug social enterprise. What did they do? Well, they had a trailer, and before they brought their trailer to the apartment, they'd go and they would meet with the people. They'd help them with a little bit of grief counselling because people who have a serious infestation of bedbugs, some of the belongings can be taken care of and the bedbugs can be exterminated, some can't.

What they did is they helped people sort out what could and could not be dealt with. They helped them let go of things they had to let go of. Then the trailer would come and they'd load up everything into the trailer and then the trailer would go off to that big old building where there's a hub for social enterprises. Everything was left in the trailer and then they would hook up a hose to the trailer and they would cook everything right in the trailer. They didn't take it out and put it in a warehouse and then put it back in the trailer and get re-infested. They cooked everything right there with high heat in the trailer.

In the meantime, workers from the social enterprise would go and help the people in their apartments, undo the light switches and the electrical plates and everything where bedbugs can get behind; helped them remove – what are those things called – baseboards. They helped them really prepare their place for a full extermination, and it worked.

It provided jobs for people who had before been unemployable in some ways or had a hard time

getting jobs or getting very precarious jobs. Also, what it did is it provided a solution and they were able to respond to requests for proposals from government. They weren't looking for handouts from government. They were actually responding to goods that government really needed to procure. The procurement that government did would look at the social benefits and also at social enterprises.

Really, what needs to be done, Mr. Speaker, we don't want to just keep talking about how great social enterprises are. We did that last year and we've been doing it all through the year, but there are some very specific things that government needs to do and it doesn't seem like they have done it. I don't want to be here another year from now doing the same thing, talking about how wonderful social enterprises are.

Government should implement some of the recommendations of the Community Sector Council in their November 2016 document. We need loan –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MS. ROGERS: I can't hear myself, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: We need very specific concrete actions. We need a strategy and an action plan that was promised a year ago. Here we are a year later, we still don't have it: a loan guarantee program, social venture capital fund, business management and planning assistance, linking of social enterprises with private sector purchases, government procurement legislation.

We had the opportunity last year, Mr. Speaker, to do the best social government procurement legislation on the planet and government blew that opportunity. I hope they'll reintroduce that legislation because they blew that opportunity to do really good legislation. We need a requirement for community benefit agreements in our social procurement policy and we need multi-year funding for community groups so they can plan ahead, so they can be the incubators for social enterprise.

I want to celebrate and honour and congratulate those successful social enterprises in our province, but let's not just keep talking about how great they are. Let's do the concrete things we need in order to ensure we have them. Let's get a strategy, let's get an action plan and let's do it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So the Member for St. John's Centre doesn't want to talk about how great the social enterprises are, but at the same time she wants to celebrate and congratulate them. Awesome!

Mr. Speaker, we are a whole of government, we are talking a whole of government approach. We are coordinating; we're collaborating and thus taking more time to prepare the action plan. Now we have the *What We Heard* document, we have a plan. We, as a transparent and open government, are ensuring all are involved are engaged in our plan. That's how it works, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of TCII spoke here just a short while ago about the details that were in the plan. It's in *Hansard*. We all heard it, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, let's bring this conversation here back to social enterprises, what we are talking about here today in this House. Let's bring it back to Newfoundland and Labrador social enterprises because the Member opposite just went right across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we're governing here in Newfoundland and Labrador and we're continuing to invest and build and support social enterprises. Unlike traditional businesses, companies engaged in social enterprises are driven by a social cause, putting social impact before profit to create a sustainable business model for the greater good. They are also rethinking the way corporations work with the community.

Social entrepreneurs' primary intent is to create a good impact. By using revenue streams to improve financial stability, this impact is increased, Mr. Speaker.

The social enterprise that is closest and dearest to me personally is the Pantry, at the Elaine Dobbin Centre for Autism. Not only is the food at the Pantry absolutely delicious, the atmosphere there is welcoming. The friendliness of the employees is heartwarming and the parking is great. It is a very successful social enterprise. It serves a delicious meal and the desserts alone are worth going there, Monday to Friday from 9 to 3.

Since opening in 2006, it has come to represent not only a revenue source, but it represents the openness and the value of diverse employers. The current dining room can accommodate up to 36 people and it caters both in-house and outside to community groups.

Mr. Speaker, the Pantry is a full-service cafe and it's a social flagship for the social enterprise for the Autism Society. It was initially geared towards skill development and training and public awareness – skill development for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder for persons with disabilities. So not only does it bring a profit into a non-profit organization, it helps families and individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I remember sitting as a member of the board of the Autism Society when the concept of the Pantry evolved. It became a reality. It provides the employment and the work experience for persons with a disability and 100 per cent of the profits go back to the community.

Profits are seen as a tool. They constitute the business model of for-profits and is contained within the financial dimension of the social business model. There are key differences, Mr. Speaker, and the Member opposite didn't clearly address the key difference. The social impact model explains the mission of the business, while the traditional model defines the value of a business it has to offer to the market and to the customers. The financial sustainability model generates enough revenue for the social mission,

while the traditional revenue model seeks to generate revenue at any cost.

Mr. Speaker, when a social enterprise generates income that exceeds the operation, they then take the money and invest it back into education and awareness. Our government is working towards investing and improving social enterprises in Newfoundland and Labrador. They're working to accommodate the individuals whom we represent. We're working towards education. We're working towards awareness. We're working towards employment, Mr. Speaker. For The Pantry, it is individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families.

My own son goes to the Elaine Dobbin Centre every Monday. He goes to bowling offered through the Elaine Dobbin Centre. No doubt, families pay a nominal fee; however, it is supported by a social enterprise. It's a reasonable fee, secondary to support from the social enterprise, in addition to other supports.

Social enterprises educate, they support and they generate operational income for many non-profit organizations. So yes, Mr. Speaker, I will stand in this hon. House and I will talk about the positive impacts of all social enterprises in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: The value of a social enterprise ran by organizations and the advocating and the supporting of persons with disabilities is huge. It is a massive impact to the daily lives of persons who are living in this province with disabilities, and to the families.

The emergence of the social business is the result of a multitude of converging factors, which will only increase as technology advances and continues. Mr. Speaker, as the movement gains momentum, it's intriguing to think about the consequences: an increased awareness of brand ethics, for example, forcing the brands of tomorrow to take a political or ideological stance, both to attract customers and the best talent. One of the key and more important factors is a rise in the traditional for-profits measuring their social impact.

If you have a business out there, Mr. Speaker, that realizes the value of a social enterprise and the impact on the education and society as a whole and the consumer base and the increase in their business because of what they are doing, the for-profits are going to see that and they're going to realize and they're going to also put come forward and put forward an impact to community.

The awareness that is created when the for-profits realize the value of measuring the social impact is huge to communities and to individuals involved. There are numerous success stories, Mr. Speaker, in this province that have a huge impact on community, and I'm going to talk about some of those success stories: the Pantry, as I've mentioned here and been talking about, operated by the Autism Society; Previously Loved, a second-hand clothing store on Kenmount Road. Mr. Speaker, it's a place where you never have to pay sales tax and 100 per cent of the profit from the sales at their store stay right here in Newfoundland and Labrador –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: – where we as a government are governing, Mr. Speaker.

Impact Construction. Choices for Youth. I remember Impact Construction and how it evolved from the Train for Trades. When I worked as the executive director for the Association for Community Living, I remember going across Canada and attending a conference where the Train for Trades was explained out and I thought to myself, wow, what a magnificent idea for at-risk youth in this province.

Sure enough, Mr. Speaker, Choices for Youth at the same time they saw the same value, they adopted the model, they brought it back here to Newfoundland and Labrador and, today, what was Train for Trades is now Impact Construction – a social enterprise construction company with the on-the-job safety in construction training for at-risk youth, ready to secure long-term sustainable employment or pursue skilled trades training. Seriously, Mr. Speaker, what else could be of more value than to train at-risk youth to give them a skill set that

will make them employable into the future and for the rest of their lives? That is a fantastic way to invest in social enterprise.

The Hungry Heart Cafe on Military Road, another fully serviced restaurant and catering business – delicious food. I've been there a couple of times, beautiful atmosphere, employs people again at high risk. Take Two, as I mentioned, a brand new store opened by the Empower Newfoundland and Labrador, a gently used clothing thrift store located on Ropewalk Lane.

Mr. Speaker, based on the feedback that we are receiving as we go forward through the Department of TCII, we're going to improve and we're going to advance social enterprises right here in Newfoundland and Labrador. This is about getting it right. It's about getting it right; it's about doing it right. It's not about running ahead and advancing. And yes, we've had social enterprises in this province for a number of years, but we as a government want to ensure that those social enterprises continue and they employ people, they support families, they support vulnerable youth, they support individuals with disabilities and they continue to serve the valuable place that they serve in society today.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to reiterate that social enterprises create a solid impact and they improve financial stability. I strongly support increasing the number of social enterprises in Newfoundland and Labrador, I strongly support what the Department of TCII is doing and I have lived experience to support my point of view here.

As I go about my district and I talk to my constituents and individuals who live in rural Newfoundland that don't have access to these types of social enterprises today, they only wish that they could have more for their individuals and their sons and daughters with disabilities to offer them an opportunity for employment.

When we try to address the needs of vulnerable youth, Impact Construction, what else could you ask for but that type of model that assists persons who are high risk? So the Department of TCII continues to advance this, Mr. Speaker. As I've said, I strongly support it. I thank the

Member for Bonavista for putting this private Member's motion forward here today. I thank our government for continuing to support individuals with disabilities, families and vulnerable youth in our province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's certainly an interesting debate and it was great to hear from all sides of the spectrum. I'd like to thank the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune, Placentia West – Bellevue, Conception Bay East – Bell Island, the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation, the Member for St. John's Centre.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. KING: I did. I said, yeah – and Placentia – St. Mary's. It was all interesting feedback.

I'm just going to touch on some things people brought up, and we heard a lot about the *déjà vu*. Do you know what? So be it. It's two totally different private Members' motions, as far as I'm concerned, leading into the one we did last fall, what we heard, social enterprise in *The Way Forward* document wasn't completed. So what we did, Mr. Speaker – and if people had actually bothered to listen to what I had to say at the beginning, we would have heard what took place, the results of that, and what we're going to do on *The Way Forward*, talking about that.

So getting back to the Member for St. John's Centre and bringing in the doom and gloom on the social enterprises, it never ceases to amaze me, when we talk about something good they have to bring the negative into it. They talked about, oh well, it's the same thing as before. Like I said if you actually had to listen to what I talked about earlier, we would have got into the details – and I'll say it again, because I want to get it out there. Let me get my paperwork straight. I want to talk about what we touched on.

So the engagement process, the first part, there were three sessions facilitated with partners and stakeholder groups. Those are subject matter experts in the field. There were 11 of those that took place. We had 86 people attend, participate, giving us the feedback of what they wanted. So they talk about, oh, it's the same as before. It's not the same as before. We're getting feedback from the experts in the field of what they want to see us do with regard to social enterprises. I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I hope we get up and talk about it again when we fully implement the plan. I know the Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation is working hard on it.

What they also talked about: We're moving backwards. Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that's moving backwards when you say you're going to do something and actually do it. I don't know about you, but to me that's moving forward, moving the process forward. I mean, you take something and you turn it negative all the time, it's unbelievable.

They talked about procurement legislation. Well, they bothered to look into that as well. There's actually a section within that legislation that allows for social and environmental procurement.

We also brought in legislation for it last year, Mr. Speaker, that allowed for multi-year funding for non-profit organizations, including social enterprise. This is stuff they've been crying out for for years, Mr. Speaker, and the NDP don't want to hear nothing of that. It is stuff they've been saying for years and now that we bring it forward, they don't like it.

Anyway, getting back to my speech; I know I have a few minutes less. I'm glad that we at least had some positive here today that talked about the benefits of social enterprise.

The Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune did bring a good point forward. A lot of this is private-sector driven with government supports, and I agree with that. She also brought forward that this is community driven. That was echoed by the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island, and I totally support that.

Mr. Speaker, I didn't get a chance to talk about this when I first gave my introductory speech because I was telling them about what the process actually was and what the results of that process we actually got.

The impact on social enterprises in the District of Bonavista, this is in my own district, and it talks about community. These organizations, the social enterprises, I hit on it a little bit when I spoke previously, they built the foundation for the economic boom that we're seeing right now in the tourism industry. We've got operators there that have been over 25 years.

I talked about them working together. The Bonavista-Trinity Regional Chamber of Commerce just inducted Donna Butt and Rising Tide Theatre in their Business Hall of Fame, the first non-profit social enterprise to have that designation for that organization.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: What the Chamber of Commerce has also done is formed a subcommittee for tourism. Do you know who most of those members are? They're members of the board of directors or the executive directors for social enterprises. Myself and the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation have met with them on two occasions. We're listening to their feedback. We're bringing it back. It's ending up in documents like this and it's going to be implemented based on what we hear. That wasn't done before, Mr. Speaker.

What we've also seen is more increases of CEDP funding. I know two organizations which just qualified for it in my district.

So what's next? It's going to be the finalization of the implementation of our Social Enterprise Action Plan. Stuff doesn't happen like this overnight. You don't just do a report and get consultation in and get feedback from the subject matter experts in the field and write a document overnight and say here it is – it takes time.

The Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation is working very hard on that. Their valuable staff is working very hard on that and I look forward to when that gets released.

I do have eight minutes left, so I'm going to talk about some of the social enterprises I missed in my district. I talked a little bit about the Matthew Legacy, but I'm going to talk a little bit about the Bonavista Townscape Foundation. I will give the former government credit when credit is due.

The Bonavista Historic Townscape Foundation received funding through the provincial and federal government and through the Town of Bonavista to do a beautification of Campbell Street and Church Street. They started it, and when we came in we continued on.

If you go up Church Street right now, you look at the beautiful sidewalks. If you go up Campbell Street, you look at the beautiful sidewalks, the facade of OCI, nice parking lot there, wonderful street lights. That is what government has contributed to an organization such as the Townscape Foundation.

The Townscape Foundation, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if you've been there or not, but they operate the Garrick Theatre. The Garrick Theatre is well-known throughout the province and that was just lying dormant. It was a nightclub at one point with a movie theatre. Right now, every Saturday night in the summer there are live performances.

So you have a lot of the artists, which the NDP supports – but apparently not social enterprise – come out and play in the Garrick. They do wonderful performances, Mr. Speaker. I'm so proud of that organization. They have the Annex, and I attended an event there. It's a beautiful area. It's a conference room. It's an area where you can have a Christmas party. I was out with the Chamber of Commerce, which I'm a proud member of as well, with that venue. It's absolutely beautiful, Mr. Speaker.

One final thing and this is very exciting. I've been in touch with a group called the Discovery Aspiring Geopark. I know most people have heard about the fossils that were found in Port Union, in the top of the Bonavista Peninsula and area. So you take the communities from Keels, all the way to Melrose, up around Bonavista, down through Elliston and Catalina Dome.

What that group is working towards, and they just had their first AGM – they're working towards a UNESCO designation for Geopark. They're working; they're getting all their ducks in a row. They have all the professionals with the universities, through Oxford, through MUN. They're getting themselves ready to put an application in to UNESCO so that we on the Bonavista Peninsula, and we here in Newfoundland and Labrador, can have another UNESCO designated site, and I'm very excited about that. I know they're working hard on the application.

Now, the NDP might want the application done right now and not be filled out properly and not do the proper work because they want things rushed, but that's not going to happen. They're taking their time. They're going to get that application in next fall. They're going to do their homework. I'm very proud of that organization and I look forward to working with them. The Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation is excited about working with them.

With all that said, Mr. Speaker, I think this is a very, very valuable private Member's resolution. It talks about what we did a year ago leading up to what we did after Christmas, and we are giving everyone an update. Here's what we did, here's what we're doing, here's what the results are, here's what the subject matter experts are saying, Mr. Speaker.

This private Member's resolution is going to push the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation to get that work done and get it out so we can get our social enterprises fully, fully funded, fully supported and we get those new social enterprises that the NDP were talking about up and running. We didn't forget about those. We're going to get those going to.

I have full faith in the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation and his team that they're going to get the work done.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

This motion is carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: It being Wednesday, and in accordance with Standing Order 9, this House now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 o'clock.