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OF  
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HANSARD

*Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA*

Thursday

April 15, 2021  
(Throne Speech)

The House met at 10 a.m.

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** All rise.

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

Please be seated.

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** Mr. Speaker, the Chief Justice of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has arrived.

**SPEAKER:** Admit the Chief Justice of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** Mr. Speaker, Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has arrived.

**SPEAKER:** Admit Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** All rise.

(The Speaker leaves the Chair.)

(Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor takes the Chair.)

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** It is the wish of Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor that all present be seated.

**HER HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR (Judy May Foote, PC, ONL):**

*Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members of the House of Assembly:*

As a representative of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, I welcome the newly elected and returning Members of the House of Assembly for the opening of this, the First Session of the Fiftieth General Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II today mourns the loss of Her Royal Consort, His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador join together to offer Her Majesty the most sincere condolences on his passing. The Duke was a great friend to this province, having occasion to visit seventeen times from 1951 to 1997. Many will remember, with affection, His work to

encourage young people throughout this province, and indeed around the world, to challenge themselves in the pursuit of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award. His dedication to public service was an inspiration to us all.

In opening this session, we respectfully acknowledge the province of Newfoundland and Labrador as the ancestral homelands of many diverse populations of Indigenous people who have contributed to 9,000 years of history including the Beothuk on the Island of Newfoundland. Today, this province is home to diverse populations of Indigenous and other people. We also acknowledge, with respect, the diverse histories and cultures of the Mi'kmaq, Innu, and Inuit.

Honourable Members, you assemble here today during a perilous time in our history. Locally, nationally, and globally we are collectively fighting the COVID-19 pandemic that has changed every aspect of our lives in previously unthinkable ways – from the economy to education, from industries to all businesses big or small. It has claimed millions of lives around the world, including six here in Newfoundland and Labrador. To their families and loved ones, you have our deepest condolences. The people of this province share your sorrow.

We are also grateful. To all those who get up every day to provide very necessary services to our province, you have our profound gratitude. Together, with continued perseverance, we will overcome this challenge.

My Government's vaccination plan continues to roll out. With more than 100,000 first doses in the arms of the people of this province, the goal of giving a single dose of vaccine to every eligible person who wants one by June 30<sup>th</sup> is achievable. There is a feeling of hope springing up, that this darkness we have all lived under for far too long is nearing its end. Hope is transformative. It is something that My Government fully intends to nurture and grow, to broaden and build upon.

Honourable Members, My Government will always be forward thinking, forward moving. My Government's priorities will include promoting a healthy Newfoundland and

Labrador, driving meaningful opportunities, fostering inclusive growth, modernizing education and childcare, and building strong partnerships. The coming years will bring reimagination and reinvention for our industries, and the reinvigoration of the provincial economy.

The road before us starts with fully coming to terms with the extensive economic crisis facing this province. It was a long slide to get to this point and there is no overnight solution. The recovery will require bigger, bolder steps. It will also require every Member of this House of Assembly to put aside partisan issues and commit to work together. All Honorable Members must act today for the future of Newfoundland and Labrador. My Government recognizes that the situation is critical, but the opportunity is great. Each Honorable Member here today made the decision to represent the people of this province. You put yourselves forward for the good of this province. Now is the time to work together to put the good of the province first. My Government is ready and willing to rise to that challenge.

My Government's legislative program will focus on its initial plans toward economic recovery, fostering economic growth, and establishing economic and social conditions that will allow the people of this province to thrive. A review of the Elections Act will be conducted in order to develop modern legislation that ensures voting is as accessible as possible for the people of our province.

My First Minister asked Dame Moya Greene to bring her world-renowned expertise and experience to bear on the immense fiscal and economic hardships facing her home province. Dame Moya will be presenting the recommendations from the Premier's Economic Recovery Team in short order. She will set out the facts and suggest a course of action to remedy the structural problems that have troubled Newfoundland and Labrador for far too long.

Using this foundational report and broad consultations, My Government will, together with the people of this province, determine the right direction forward. Understanding the full magnitude of the challenges will allow this

province to choose the right solutions for the future. My Government will ensure that the cure is not worse than the disease. It will strike the right balance in navigating the necessary transformative change for all people in this province. My Government will focus on responsible debt management while investing in our exciting growth industries.

Newfoundland and Labrador will not be left to solve its problems alone. My Government will continue to build on its solid relationship with the Government of Canada. Negotiations are already advancing toward a renewed financial structure for the Lower Churchill Projects, toward the realization of the Atlantic Loop, and toward the end goal of affordable power rates. Newfoundland and Labrador will bring its surplus clean energy solutions to help its partners across the federation meet their global climate objectives.

My Government will address climate change with a dual sense of responsibility and opportunity. In order to reduce its environmental footprint, Newfoundland and Labrador will achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. This green transition will drive the economy with clean growth.

Demand for renewable energy solutions is growing around the world. This province's abundant renewable and non-renewable resources are needed to drive technologies that people around the world increasingly rely upon. My Government will seize these opportunities to redefine the province's traditional industries for the future – including sustainable developments in the renewable energy and mining industries. Through collaboration with the private sector, the province's clean resources will be developed in a responsible, sustainable fashion. My Government will engage with investors from around the world to promote Newfoundland and Labrador as the global destination of choice for clean energy investment.

While this transition is underway, there is still a significant demand for Newfoundland and Labrador's oil and gas resources, which are some of the lowest carbon footprint oilfields in the world. My Government will continue to make strategic investments in oil and gas to ensure it supports the women and men working

in the industry, and realize the opportunity before us to position our products during this time of transition.

Our traditional industries will enjoy modern successes. All segments of the fishing industry, including the wild caught fishery, secondary processing and aquaculture, will benefit from collaborative opportunities with our growing technology sector and efforts to ensure it offers a prosperous and inclusive career path for Indigenous peoples, women, and young people.

My Government will invest in important infrastructure projects and prioritize the hiring of qualified workers based in Newfoundland and Labrador. It will help companies and entrepreneurs reach global customers and investors through the creation of innovative platforms. In order to provide companies and entrepreneurs access to customers and investors around the world, My Government will launch InvestNL. This one-stop online portal will highlight the province's priority sectors and showcase Newfoundland and Labrador, both as a prime location for business expansion and a hotbed for investment in innovative high growth companies.

By supporting TechNL's new Innovation Centre, My Government will help develop shared work space, networking initiatives, investment and incubation services, research, and mentorship.

Technology has dissolved borders, and My Government is using the lessons learned from the pandemic to expand its presence in the world. My Government will also bring the world to this province by tripling current immigration targets and increasing retention rates.

To address the province's aging and shrinking population, and stimulate the economy, My First Minister has established a Minister of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills. My Government will collaborate with the Government of Canada to add more immigration categories aimed at addressing specific labour market shortages in Newfoundland and Labrador. This will cultivate growth industries, thereby creating more employment opportunities. This province will welcome more

people – including returning ex-pats – and grow its population.

Through regular discussions and engagement with the Premier's Youth Council, My Government will incorporate their advice into a strategy to retain more young leaders. Our demographic challenges will be addressed with investment, focus, and vision.

My Government will continue to support and respect this province's greater resource: the people. Indigenous communities will know that reconciliation is action, not rhetoric. Building on commitments made to strengthen relationships between elected representatives, their staff, and public servants, My Government will ensure all receive training on Indigenous perspectives and culture. Sound policies and programs are founded on mutual understanding and respectful relationships.

My First Minister has established a Minister for Women and Gender Equality, and work will continue to ensure Newfoundland and Labrador is a safe, accessible, and inclusive place for people of all gender identities and sexual orientations. My Government will remove barriers and empower women and girls to achieve their full potential, both socially and economically. Inclusion must become a foundational characteristic of this province.

My Government is working to achieve a vibrant, healthy Newfoundland and Labrador. By 2031 and through culturally-sensitive, inclusive, and progressive policy initiatives both at the community and provincial level, My Government will work with the people of the province to make Newfoundland and Labrador the healthiest place in the country. Its focus will be on making healthier choices more accessible to all residents by building on the work of Sister Elizabeth Davis, Dr. Patrick Parfrey, and Health Accord NL. This 10-year health transformation plan will reimagine and revitalize the province's health care system by using a value-based approach to health care across the board.

Action on addressing mental health and addictions services in this province is evolving and will continue to be innovative, responsive, and adaptive. My Government will oversee the

completion of the new mental health and addictions facility by 2024.

As part of the plan to address the social determinants of health, making affordable, fresh, healthy, and nutritious local food choices accessible to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians is a priority of My Government. The agriculture industry will be supported and will meet the goal of 20 per cent provincial food self-sufficiency by next year.

My Government remains committed to addressing inequality and supporting vulnerable residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. Reinvigorated poverty reduction measures will combat housing and food insecurity. Government services must be provided in an accessible, modern, and efficient manner.

The community sector is vital to a healthy, vibrant, and prosperous province. My Government will provide holistic support for volunteer and non-profit organizations and the development of social infrastructure, including through the creation of an incubator and accelerator to maximize the social and economic impacts.

My Government will also increase access to fertility treatments in the province and provide free period products in schools.

This province's students will also benefit from My Government's modernization of education and childcare. New computer science and coding programming, as well as a focus on entrepreneurship, will prepare the next generations for success in the new economy. My Government will also integrate restorative justice principles into schools and update the health curriculum.

This vibrant province will continue to grow and share its legendary artistic talents with the world. My Government will expand its support for creative and cultural industries through leadership, collaboration, and leveraging technology to amplify the province's messages. The burgeoning entertainment sector continues to outperform its own successes. Enhanced infrastructure, tax incentives, and continued promotion will only solidify this province as a

place for productions of all sizes. The talent is already here and waiting.

Newfoundland and Labrador is a must-visit travel destination for so many tourists and countless others who have a cultural or spiritual connection to this place. My Government will build on the province's strong tourism sector as it emerges from the pandemic and will bolster this and all other industries even more. We look forward to hosting Come Home Year 2022 and the Canada Summer Games in 2025.

My Government realizes the importance of sustainable communities and local governance. Modern municipal legislation will be introduced, and opportunities for regional collaboration explored to further enhance the province's resilience. My Government will continue to improve on Labrador's equitable access to services, including providing access to medical transportation and the hard surfacing of the Trans Labrador Highway.

At this moment in Newfoundland and Labrador's long history, Honourable Members, you have a choice to make – a choice between complacency or action. You must choose between the status quo or change. Yes, our economic situation is difficult, but it is up to everyone in this room to build our bright future. That is the expectation for each and every Honourable Member of the House of Assembly here today. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador deserve your best.

Speaker and Honourable Members of the House of Assembly:

Estimates of expenditure will be laid before you in due course and you will be asked to grant supply to Her Majesty.

I invoke God's blessing upon you as you commence the work of the First Session of the Fiftieth General Assembly.

May Divine Providence guide you in your deliberation.

(Applause.)

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** All rise.

(Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor leaves the Assembly Chamber.)

(The Speaker returns to the Chair.)

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

Please be seated.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Elections Act, 1991, Bill 1.

**SPEAKER:** Is there leave for the hon. the minister to introduce the said bill?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Leave.

**SPEAKER:** Leave is granted.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**S. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, that Bill 1, An Act To Amend The Elections Act, 1991, be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**SPEAKER:** Carried.

**CLERK (Hawley George):** A bill, An Act To Amend The Elections Act, 1991. (Bill 1)

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

**S. CROCKER:** Tomorrow.

**SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 1 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

**SPEAKER:** Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has been pleased to make a speech to the Members of this General Assembly. We shall now take a few moments to distribute the speech to all Members.

(The Pages distribute the speech to all Members.)

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

All Members have a copy of the Speech from the Throne?

The hon. the Member for Burin - Grand Bank.

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

On behalf of the District of Burin - Grand Bank, I move the motion to appoint a Select Committee to draft an Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, seconded by the Member for the District of Placentia - St. Mary's.

Thank you to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor for being here today to read the Speech from the Throne. The Speech from the Throne, so eloquently presented by Her Honour, gives the government an opportunity to highlight the many challenges we face and how we plan to address those challenges head-on. I believe it is this government that will provide the necessary change our province not only needs but deserves.

Mr. Speaker, the people from Burin - Grand Bank are also ready for this bright future. I am thankful to all the people who supported me during this recent election. I promise to support all residents and advocate for them each day in the House of Assembly as your MHA.

Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador has certainly faced a number of challenges during its history. We take our challenges in stride and find ways to overcome them. That is our goal as a government. For the adversities we face today, make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, as it was mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, we must come to terms with the extensive economic crisis facing this province.

Our province is experiencing multiple factors coming together all at once. From the global COVID-19 pandemic to falling oil prices, it has been nothing short of hard economic times. There is no overnight solution. I am encouraged and proud to hear, in the Speech from the Throne, the forward-thinking and bold steps we are embarking on to find long-term solutions through a long-term plan.

I'm even more encouraged, Mr. Speaker, to hear about the collaboration and working together to help find those solutions. Putting aside our partisan stripes and acknowledging, as Members of this House of Assembly, that we must work together to solve problems and create solutions: This is why I am proud to be part of this government.

Building on that collaboration with MHAs, I am pleased to hear from the Speech from the Throne that the Premier's Economic Recovery Team will be bringing forward their recommendations to the House for debate and for the people of the province to have their say.

The Premier has brought together knowledgeable and innovative thinkers to provide their vision and ideas on what they see as the future for this great province. It builds on the foundation of how important it is to achieve the best results for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, the District of Burin - Grand Bank has a history and culture founded on our traditional resources. Our government is providing necessary modernization to our traditional industries so our rural communities can continue to grow and prosper. Our region, like others, was built on the fishery and on the mining. Now, we see a revitalization of these sectors, which includes aquaculture. Our district, Mr. Speaker, is a template of how these successes, outlined in the Speech from the Throne, can be a reality.

Mr. Speaker, I have worked in education for 40-plus years before being elected as a Member of the House of Assembly. It is encouraging to see in the Speech from the Throne improvements to our educational system. By making investments into new computer science and coding programs, entrepreneurship, an updated health curriculum and integrating restorative justice principles, we

are providing the necessary tools and skills to our children to have a successful future. Enriching the youth of our province is a key component of our government's plan for a more prosperous province.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not mention the global pandemic facing our province. I'm encouraged every day to see more vaccines being distributed to the people in this province. It is of the utmost importance that we continue to do our part and follow the necessary Public Health guidelines as this process will continue into the months ahead.

The Speech from the Throne outlines a clear choice, not only for us as Members of the House of Assembly but to the people of this province; it is either status quo or change. I am proud to be a part of a government that is investing in change. Our government will continue to build on the strengths of our people.

It was best said at the end of the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker: The people of Newfoundland and Labrador deserve our best.

I say to the people of the District of Burin - Grand Bank and, indeed, to the people of this great province, I will do my best, as we, as a government, will do our best to build a better and brighter future for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's.

**S. GAMBIN-WALSH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I second the motion moved by the Member for Burin - Grand Bank to appoint a Select Committee to draft an Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

I would like to begin by first thanking the residents of Placentia - St. Mary's for their vote of confidence in electing me as their Member for the House of Assembly for the third time. It has been an honour and a privilege to work on their

behalf for the past six years. I look forward to continuing to advocate for them within government and indeed the House of Assembly.

I would like to thank Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor for delivering the Speech from the Throne. I would also like to thank His Honour and Her Honour for their dedicated service to Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne is an opportunity for our government to present bold ideas and a fresh perspective to the challenges we face as a province. It is an opportunity to outline our vision of a better and brighter future for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador; a vision that is built on collaboration, optimism and hope, not negativity and pessimism.

One of the first things the Speech from the Throne acknowledges is the challenging time we have all faced together during this global pandemic. COVID-19 has exposed weaknesses our society faces but has also shined a light on the strengths we share together.

As an example, Mr. Speaker, the necessary measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 have meant that so many seniors in our province have had to make their way through this pandemic distanced from their loved ones. It has been amazing to hear from so many seniors in my district who've adapted to technology as a means of connecting with their families and friends. Many have learned how to use FaceTime to see their children and grandchildren. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador know how to come together to help one another, and I continue to be inspired by that hard work.

Mr. Speaker, working together has been key to seeing us through this pandemic on all fronts. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have embraced the Public Health guidelines set out by our chief medical officer of Health and the Public Health team. This guidance has helped us be leaders in the fight against COVID-19.

To even further display our efforts as a province to fight COVID-19, I am optimistic, Mr. Speaker, to hear about our vaccine rollout highlighted in the Speech from the Throne. Over 100,000 doses of the vaccine have been

administered, that is over 100,000 first doses in the arms of people in this province.

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

**S. GAMBIN-WALSH:** What a historic accomplishment as we work towards the end of this horrible pandemic. I am encouraged by the optimism and hard work this government is doing to achieve a single dose of vaccine to every person eligible who would want one by June 30.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to highlight from the Speech from the Throne the collaborative approach we will take as a government. We will work with the residents of this province to foster economic growth and build towards our recovery. It is the same collaborative approach I have taken with the communities and towns in my district to support the work they do. Supporting that type of environment and leaning on our experiences in Newfoundland and Labrador will help us work towards recovery.

Before I conclude, I would also like to highlight the importance of sustainable communities and local governance. Having many municipalities and local service districts in the District of Placentia - St. Mary's, I understand first-hand the importance of supporting infrastructure projects and working together to achieve results. I was pleased to hear these ideas brought forward in the Speech from the Throne today and look forward to working with this government to build on those ideas and provide the necessary modernization that our communities need.

My work as an MHA has helped me build relationships with our federal counterparts to provide for our communities, whether it was roadwork, infrastructure, water and sewer, capital works – the list could go on. Working with our counterparts is key to providing the necessary funds that will move our province forward. I will put my experience to work to help this government bring forward the new ideas and bold thinking that will put this province on the right track. Provincially, I look forward to working with our Cabinet and our Premier to work collaboratively on the issues of the residents of Placentia - St. Mary's and to celebrate our successes together.



Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I am optimistic about the future of Newfoundland and Labrador. Our government is ready to collaborate with the people of this province to build a better and brighter future for all of us. I am ready to be a part of this work, and so are the people of Placentia - St. Mary's.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I want to thank Her Honour for her eloquent delivery of the Throne Speech. I also want to thank the mover and the seconder for their speeches.

On behalf of the Official Opposition, I extend our heartfelt condolences to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on the passing of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. The Duke of Edinburgh demonstrated a commitment to public service which we can all aspire to. His unwavering support and commitment to the people is an example of service before self.

Congratulations to all Members elected. Voting is one of the most fundamental rights of Canadian citizens. This past election exposed serious weaknesses that we must address. The courts will have their say, but we as elected Members must take the lead in reforming the elections legislation to prevent the chaos we witnessed from ever happening again. All such democratic reforms should be driven not by one party in government, but by an all-party committee of the House and be set up to draw on the broad base of expert and public input. People must have confidence in the process as well as the final product so they will feel positive about running for office and voting in elections.

Congratulations to the government on its election. Congratulations, as well, to all Opposition Members. The people elect not only a government to make decisions, but an Opposition to shine a spotlight on accountability on everything the government does. We don't criticize for the sake of criticizing, but because

that's our job: to represent the citizens of our province in this hon. House.

That's why parliaments are set up, just like courts, to be adversarial so everything gets tested and weaknesses are exposed before they have an impact on people's lives. The government has tremendous power over people's lives, and that power must be held in check. That's the balance our system was designed to strike. I urge the government to pay attention when we do our job and be humble enough to admit when it is wrong, because no government is perfect. Sometimes we will show you a better way.

What this province needs more of is collaboration. We are open to co-operate when it is for the good of the province, but we would not be doing our job if we gave you an easy ride, so expect a mix of criticism and suggestion for better governance.

Many of the policies we brought forward in the election are worth considering. This province urgently needs a job strategy to get people working again. That was the central pillar of our platform. The current job crisis has to be tackled as an urgent priority. Ottawa must be brought to the table to do more than it has been doing because we really aren't reaching our potential in this federation, and Ottawa could be doing a lot more to help kick-start growth here. We also need to focus on Newfoundlanders' and Labradorians' benefits policy that ensures our people are not left behind when our resources and opportunities are developed.

Our own people include immigrants and anyone who moves here to live, as well as those that want to move back home. We have to stop opportunities from draining away. There are opportunities enough to support all of us, and we have to do a better job of turning those opportunities into employment for our people. The next budget has to be more than just a placeholder budget; it has to set a sound, credible course for growth. Too much time has been lost; we can't afford to keep slipping.

This Premier came to office talking about deep cuts and he appointed Moya Greene, who was saying the same kind of things. During the campaign, the Premier distanced himself from

that stance, saying a pandemic is no time for deep cuts that would leave us weaker when the province is already struggling. We all heard the Premier's words and we will hold him to this. When we see the Greene report, we hope it focuses more on growing our way to prosperity than on cutting the services that people need and deserve.

Let's drive tourism with a new air access strategy and better land and sea links that people can actually afford. Let's drive offshore exploration. Let's make power rates affordable by finding the best uses of all the new hydropower that is coming on stream, and bringing Ottawa in as a true partner. Let's get mining ventures growing. Let's generate more income from the wild and farm fisheries. Let's position ourselves as science and technology leaders, including ocean tech and computer science. We need to be doing more in all these fields of opportunity. Let's get our province healthier and give people access to timely health care across our disciplines.

The Premier borrowed the PC health accord strategy by setting up the Parfrey-Davis process, which we support because we've calling for the exact same thing. Let's use this opportunity to bring improvements to health care delivery. The principal focus has to be on improving patient outcomes and finding ways to do this affordably. Dr. Parfrey and Sister Elizabeth assure us it can be done if it's done right, but not if it's done wrong.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed serious weaknesses in health care delivery, but also amazing strengths. We commend all of our front-line health care workers and the chief medical officer of health and her team for keeping us far safer than any other jurisdiction battling this challenge.

We commend Newfoundlanders and Labradorians for taking COVID-19 seriously and acting cautiously to keep their friends and neighbours safer by wearing masks and social distancing. We urge people to continue to be cautious because there are parts of this country and the world that are showing us that the threat still remains. Hopefully, the vaccine will be available soon to every person in the province and we will finally turn the corner, but there's a

great deal of time left between then and now, and we have to be cautious.

In the meantime we're hearing concern from parents, teachers and students about changes in classroom learning. It's our job to bring those concerns to the floor, and we will. We need to do more as a province on truth and reconciliation with Indigenous communities. It has to be more than lip service and symbolism. There are major issues that must be addressed. We need to combat systemic racism wherever it exists, because our society must yield no ground to bigotry or intolerance.

Much more could be said today, but there will be many more opportunities in the weeks ahead. All of us in this House want our districts and our province to prosper. That's the common ground we have to build on. So now let's collaborate and let's get to work and starting to deliver.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I thank Her Honour on her speech. Members of the Third Party join her and Members of the government and the Official Opposition in offering its condolences to Her Royal Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on the passing of her husband, His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

We also congratulate the Speaker on being selected as well.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my wife, Michelle, and my children – Jamie; Sarah and her husband, Zach; Kathleen and her husband, Will – and, of course, our two grandchildren, Charlotte and Emily. I cannot forget my mother, Mary, and, of course, my mother-in-law, Dorothy. I say this because this job cannot be done without the support and love of family. That's a truism, I believe, that is understood deeply by my colleagues, all colleagues, in this House of Assembly. a

I am thankful to the many people who supported me in my re-election. An election campaign, as we all know, depends on the support of friends, volunteers, campaign organizers and financial donors. I'm humbled by the faith they've placed in me as I am by the trust of those who voted for me. Regardless whether people in the district voted for me or not, my job – my primary purpose – is to represent all citizens of the district and to serve them to the best of my ability.

Most of all, I'm grateful to all those constituents who braved the elements and took the time to open their doors and have a conversation with me. If there is anything that is the true benefit of a campaign, it's that. People expressed fear in not being able to afford to live comfortably. They had concerns for the future: the desire to keep all of our young people in our province, the ability to raise their families, the need for all Members in this House of Assembly to work cooperatively and collaboratively to solve our problems.

St. John's Centre is at once a district facing great challenges and offers tremendous hope. Issues of poverty and housing claim most of the attention of my constituency assistant and me daily, but it's also a district where many not-for-profit organizations work to address these challenges and offer hope to those in need. It's a district where small businesses thrive and new businesses begin, even in the middle of a pandemic; where people raise their families, retire, contribute to the economy and to their community. It is a district I call home. I grew up in the area. My wife, Michelle, and I chose to raise our children here. Yes, we are townies and we're proud of it. I'm proud, more importantly, to represent this district.

To my colleagues on both sides of this House, congratulations on your election or your re-election, and especially to my colleague from Labrador West. We look forward to continuing the work with returning MHAs and to new collaborations with newly elected Members. We are – to quote a former leader – a small but mighty caucus ready to serve the people of our province. We are fortunate to still have Alison Coffin as our leader, who for the moment, at least, joins us in the Speaker's gallery.

All of us here understand it is a significant decision to offer oneself and to serve in public office. We are no longer private citizens; we are here out of a sense of public service. We may hotly debate issues in this Chamber and view them from different lenses, but I have to believe that we are always motivated by the common good and the interests of those we serve. What members of the public do not often see, the part that does not always make it to the evening news, are the many examples of collaboration that take place between Members of all political stripes.

Barack Obama in his memoir *A Promised Land* said: "Politics doesn't have to be what people think it is. It can be something more."

In her speech at the opening of the House of Assembly in 2019, our leader of the Third Party called for the crafting of a new style of government, a new way of doing business. As she noted in what would be a prescient comment: "Certainly, we are facing tumultuous times." The challenges she enumerated – Muskrat Falls, rate mitigation, crushing provincial debt, climate change, demographic challenges, affordable health care and many others – still face us.

However, it was the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic that threw our economy, our way of life, our relationships, our routines and our peace of mind into disarray and turmoil. The pandemic further highlighted the need to mend the holes in our social safety net.

In the tumult of those early months, it required the collaboration of all three parties and independent Members to navigate the demands and the challenges facing us. It required us to do things differently, to be innovative and to transcend our political differences. It was not easy to put aside partisan differences and mistrust but it was necessary and it worked, not perfectly, but it worked. We got through it. We are still getting through it as a result of the efforts of our chief medical officer, our health professionals, our school communities, our front-line workers and the people of our province.

Less than a year later, vaccines were being developed, well ahead of what was expected at

the beginning. There is the promise that we can return to some semblance of normality. Variants still pose a threat, but we can see a light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel.

We still have challenges ahead of us that will require our collective wisdom. Strengthening and making the electoral process more inclusive and responsive is one of them. An ill-timed election in the middle of a pandemic left many people feeling angry, mistrustful, disenfranchised and cynical about the process.

Now, the Premier has stated on several occasions that now is the time for boldness and to that end he has tasked his Minister of Justice with fixing, improving and modernizing the Elections Act. If the Premier is sincere about the need for boldness, about working together; if indeed he is truly serious about the need to do things differently, then I challenge him here to reinstitute the Democratic Reform Committee and allow it to continue the important work it began in the last session.

It was our private Member's resolution, unanimously adopted by the Members of this House, that made it an all-party committee answerable to the House of Assembly and not just to the Minister of Justice. The Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands chaired it. I am confident this Committee is more than capable of bringing forth recommendations, not only for democratic reform but also modernizing the Elections Act.

As Members of the Third Party, we believe in affordability and we need to be concerned about the price of food, building supplies, gas, electricity, minimum wage, women's issues, housing, child care, health care and other issues because the other casualty of COVID-19 was the economy. It's clear from my conversations with people that they are deeply concerned, even afraid; however, it is also clear that the people of my district, of our province, are resilient and are seeking leadership in meeting the challenges ahead of us.

Nelson Mandela said "After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb." If any people should know what it means to climb hills both figurative and literal, it is Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The

challenges ahead of us are daunting. No one political party, no one Member of this House of Assembly, no one leader of a political party, no one report by an economic recovery team has the answers to meeting these challenges.

The responsibility lies with all of us to restore the confidence of the people of this province to provide a positive and hopeful future for all – for everyone. I firmly believe the solutions lie with all of us, but it will require meaningful collaboration. To quote our leader again, from 2019, it will mean crafting a new style of government, a new way of doing business in our province. Like her, my colleague and I look forward to the opportunity to do that over the next four years.

Thank you.

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

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

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

First of all, congratulations to each and every one of you on all sides of the House for stepping up again and representing the people of your districts. To echo the hon. Member opposite's comments, we all understand that that comes at great sacrifice personally. You can't do it alone, so congratulations to your families, to your volunteers and to everyone who made it a successful campaign, regardless of political stripe.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank the beautiful District of Humber - Gros Morne for giving their confidence in me again to sit in this Legislature.

My friends, all of us in this House today have a clear choice to make. Yes, two roads have emerged, but we must decide collectively which path we take. We can either get bogged down in the day-to-day rhetoric of the status quo, or we can all stand united against the menace in front of us: our economic crisis and what it means for the people of the province.

A predominant issue we all heard on the campaign trail was the unease and worry of each

Newfoundlander and Labradorian about the future of the place we all love. The narrative out there is that the problem is too big to fix, that failure may be inevitable and that bankruptcy is imminent. Well, I don't believe that and I know no one in this House does either. We all made a choice to run in an election because we believe in the resilience and the fortitude of the people of this place. We hope for better and choose to actively, passionately – together – work towards it.

We all stepped up for Newfoundland and Labrador and the people of this province, but stepping up, as we know, is just the start; now comes the heavy lifting, the hard decisions and the hardest work. As I've said many times, our province didn't get to this position overnight, and there are no instant, quick solutions, no one budget to fix it all. It will take time. It will be a journey, and we must all take that journey together. We can disagree with each other; we should. We can offer opinions and best advice, but we must all be guided by what is best for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in this critical moment of our history. Our province's legacy asks that of all of us. The people of this province expect that of us, and we must work together to achieve it.

Looking around this 50th House of Assembly, I see some new faces eager to start and I see the familiar faces of those who have been here for quite some time and know the fight that is ahead of us. I see Members of all parties and independents, but collectively I see the faces of those who recognize the seriousness of the situation we are in but have the strong will, boldness and passion to change it. So, my friends, let's together get down to work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that a Select Committee be struck to draft an Address of Thanks to be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor in reply to the gracious Speech from the Throne with which she has been pleased to open the present House of Assembly. The Members of the Select Committee will be the Member for Burin -

Grand Bank, the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's and the Member for Cape St. Francis.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

Notices of Motion.

### Notices of Motion

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will move that this House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply to consider a resolution for granting of Interim Supply to her Majesty, Bill 2.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will move that this House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply to consider a resolution for granting of Interim Supply to Her Majesty, Bill 3.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will move that this House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider a resolution relating to the advancing or guaranteeing of certain loans made under *The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957*, Bill 4.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Act, 2015, Bill 5.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting The Protection Of The Health Of Persons Exposed To Radiation And Respecting The Safety Of Persons In Connection With The Operation And Use Of The Electrical And Mechanical

Components Of Radiation Producing Equipment And Associated Apparatus, Bill 6.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009, Bill 7.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move the following motion: That this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move that this House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply to consider a resolution for the granting of Supply to Her Majesty, Bill 8.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move the following motion: That the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay be appointed Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will move the following motion respecting the 2021 Parliamentary Calendar of this House of Assembly:

That notwithstanding Standing Order 8 and the Parliamentary Calendar previously established for 2021, the Parliamentary Calendar for 2021 shall be revised as follows:

That this House will adjourn on April 22 and resume sitting on May 31, 2021;

That this House will sit from May 31, 2021, until June 30, 2021, and that no constituency week shall be taken during that sitting time;

That this House shall resume sitting on October 18, 2021;

That a constituency week shall be taken the week of November 8, 2021;

And that this House shall adjourn on November 18, 2021.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move the following motion: That under Standing Order 11(1), this House shall not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, April 19, 2021.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move the following motion: That under Standing Order 11(1), this House shall not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 20, 2021.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move the following motion: That under Standing Order 11(1), this House shall not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 22, 2021.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**SPEAKER:** I'm glad I don't have to repeat all that.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move, seconded by the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair, that this House do now adjourn.

**SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the House now adjourn.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

This House now stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Monday, at 1:30 p.m.