



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Volume L

FIRST SESSION

Number 6A

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

Thursday

April 22, 2021
(Night Sitting)

The House resumed at 6:15 p.m.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Are the House Leaders ready?

Order, please!

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move, seconded by the Premier, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 10.

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.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Warr): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 10, An Act To Amend The House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity And Administration Act.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity And Administration Act." (Bill 10)

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We've been in here most of the afternoon debating on this motion. I think it has been made clear by most Members who have spoken: It's not about the issue that, maybe, government has tried to turn it around – that it's about a raise. This has never been about the raise; it has always been about a process. I know one Member mentioned over there: Why are we not just voting for this? We're all in favour of not giving ourselves a raise. Which is a fair statement, but that's not where I am. I don't think that's where most of us are.

I feel that it is important for Members to express their concerns. This is the people's House and they were elected by the people. If they want to speak in their seat, they speak. I don't think there's any time limit. The Government House Leader gave a motion which set it to midnight. We had that motion in all week; even Wednesday we had it in. We never used it. As a matter of fact, on Tuesday past, it was shortly after 4 p.m. We had lots of time then to put some other stuff through.

A lot of it comes back to the independence piece. If you look back in the budget documents in 2016, the MCRC cost a fair amount of money. Now, based on the Greene report, we'll have to have a new MCRC in the coming year, I would assume. No doubt that will cost a significant amount of money. We just had a Cabinet sworn in; we had two extra Cabinet ministers, a considerable amount of money. Those are real dollars. They don't lie. They're dollars. Are they needed? I don't know. The court of public opinion is out, whatever, but it's the cost of doing business and that's fine.

Government can pick and choose when they want to spend money, when they don't spend money; that's fine. But if we're going to spend money on an independent review that we're not going to respect – a process, I should say, we're not going to respect – I think going forward we need to seriously consider that. I've said that point several times. Why do the same thing over and over again and expect a different result? If you're going independent, you don't know what decision is going to come. In this case here, it turned out to be something that favoured the MHAs. Like I said yesterday, if it was something that hurt MHAs or took from an

MHA, no one would care and you would never be able to reverse it.

I think it's very important for us as Members of this House to have that opportunity to voice our concerns, voice our displeasure. It's about collaboration and you want to work together and you want to try to get along. The Premier makes comments a lot of times about doing things differently and making bold initiatives and thinking outside the box. They're not bad words if there is going to be sincerity behind them. I believe – I've believed this since 2019 when we came in with a minority government under former Premier Ball – the public want us to work together. They want us to work together. We were in a minority government; we made some accomplishments, but it was still adversarial. There was no real collaboration. It was forced collaboration. It was when you never had the votes on the other side and we had to agree to stuff. That's just the way it is.

It's very adversarial and I think we all need to take a sober look and really figure out – and honestly, this is not meant to be words; I really mean it. If we want to solve the problems, we need to work together. I think that's what the public want.

You have your majority government, Premier, and that's fine, you won it fair and square – well, we'll find that out.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Order, please!

B. PETTEN: Mr. Chair, I'll add to that: When I say fair and square, I mean it. What I mean by fair and square is they had the majority of the votes from the general public, and that's the way our electoral system is set up. It doesn't mean the election was a fair process, but I've always believed the people's votes count. It's why we wanted an independent process to review the election, because a lot of those people never got their vote. Based on what went in to vote and counted, they got the majority vote. We have to accept that. If that's any clarity. If you want to take your chair and pat yourself on the back, fine, but we still have a big dilemma on our hands with the election. That's an issue for another day.

If you want to work with us and you want to find answers and you want to work in collaboration, there are a lot of smart people on this side of the House, Premier. You have your own people; there are a lot of smart people and they want input.

Yesterday at 1 o'clock, I get this release from your Minister of Justice about doing an all-party Committee. That's not collaboration. The world knew we were going with a PMR. Let us be a part of something. We've expressed concerns over this process here. It has never been about a pay raise. Why don't you just push this out? Get an independent tribunal, something similar to the judges, something remote. Again, it's not for any of us here; we'll all be long gone. But what do you do in 20 years' time? If you're going to attract bright people in this Legislature to run the province, you have to make it appealing. You have to have some incentive. Let someone else decide in 20 years' time to make this attractive enough for them to come.

You really, seriously have to look at that. Our finances will always be an issue. Giving a politician a raise will always be an issue. That's where, I think, the people lost sight of this. It was never about the initial raise right now based on our financial circumstances. It never was, and you can check *Hansard*. I'm sick of saying it here today and yesterday. It's about the process. It's about the independence. The MCRC was set up for a reason and it was done for that reason: to take politics out of it. Unfortunately we put politics back into it by bringing it back in the Legislature.

I don't agree with us debating our wages. To say vote down a raise – we already went through second reading yesterday. It was more about pushing back to say we demand more respect in this House. We don't feel like we get our proper respect in the House. We are the Opposition, as a whole here. All these people are the Opposition. They were all voted in by tens of thousands of people in this province who marked their Xs over there. That counts for something.

Everyone on this side of the House cares about what happens to us as a province. It's not lip service. It's not fanfare. It's not to get your name in the paper. It's none of that. I know these

people that I'm sitting with, they care. They really care and they want to be part of the solution. No one here wants to be part of the problem. But in order to be part of the solution, you have to be part of something. To be constantly dismissed and constantly ignored and your concerns are brought there – I think there are a lot of great issues that come up. A lot of great points get made on this side of the House. I think if we want to solve the bigger problems we face – because I heard it at the doors and I think we all heard it at the doors: We're faced with big problems.

Premier, respectfully if you make to make bold decisions and do things outside the box, we're all ears. We're willing to work with you. We want to succeed. It's a place I've called home my entire life and most of us in this Chamber have.

If we want to do what's right for this province, it's not about a raise, it's about pushing back and saying we want to be given the same respect; we want to be shown some respect. We will work together because I think it is incumbent upon each and every one of us to park some of that stuff by the door and work together. We're willing to. In my role, I know I am. I know our leader is willing to and I think all of our caucus is, but there has to be mutual respect on both sides of the House.

I won't belabour it anymore. I know we have Interim Supply to do, which is another important piece to pay the bills and keep the government going. I just want to close on saying that I feel we have to be shown more respect. If you give respect, you get respect and I think it's the mutual way. I think we can work together and solve a lot of problems.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, I had no intention of continuing on with this debate before we broke for supper, but I have to just pick up on a couple of points that

my colleague from Conception Bay South just made because he kind of opened that door. In that same theme, I just want to reiterate a couple of points he made, but also to add a little bit to it.

Part of the real issue at hand today with this particular motion – again, it was never about the money, it was about the process. The bigger picture, the bigger piece, which he just mentioned that time, which I believe what a lot of this has been about this evening, kind of ties into myself and the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands there on Monday or Tuesday, whatever it was, when we went on and we spoke two or three times on a particular issue and dragged out the House of Assembly a bit longer than was anticipated, or what was planned between the parties. It was what the Member said; it's respect.

So when the Member talked about respect for the parties, you have a majority government, he's right, but you have an Opposition over here. It's not just respect between the parties; it is respect for the independent Members of the House as well. Whether you like it or not, it's a reality. Not in the last election but the one before that, we had independents here. They were made independent by being tossed by their parties, but then they were re-elected by the people as independents. In this last election, we were re-elected again and now there are not two, there are three independent Members – three of us.

The bottom line is that like it or not we're here and we're not going anywhere. When we talk about respect – it's fine for the Opposition House Leader to be talking about respect and I agree with him, but that has to be extended to independent Members of the House as well. When you go ahead and you take initiatives like this that was going to impact all Members in this House, I think it would have went over a lot better if you had met with the Official Opposition, the NDP and the independent Members and say here's what we're planning on doing. At least there could have been some input and some discussion.

The same thing could have applied before the Minister of Justice decided to throw out his all-party Committee with a Liberal majority, of course. Before he decided to do that, he could

have consulted with other Members of this House, the parties and the independent Members. No, he didn't. Basically, what it is doing is it's just thumbing its nose at people who were duly elected by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, because you have this attitude that we're here with our majority and we're going to do whatever the heck we want. We don't care what you have to say.

Now, you can go out in the media and say we want to work together and all this stuff. That all sounds fine, but working together means consulting. It means consulting with all Members of the House of Assembly. I agree there are so many issues facing our province. I've said publicly, time and time again, that I'm prepared to take a hit. I'm prepared to take a political hit on some tough decisions, if need be, if it's the right thing to do.

If it can be demonstrated as the right thing to do, that the decision makes sense, that it's outcome based, that it's backed up by evidence, then I'm prepared to support some things because I know things need to be done. I'm sure my other colleagues, the other independent Members and everyone, would probably feel the same way. But I'm not going to come in this House of Assembly and rubber stamp everything that you guys are doing, it's as simple as that.

We can work together, for real, and actually work on issues and try to solve them, or you can ram things down everybody's throat, bring it in, your own agenda and don't consult with us. But don't expect everything to go smooth because it's not going to go smooth. It's just not going to and, yeah, at the end of the day you'll get your way.

Tom Marshall, who is a man I had great respect for in this House of Assembly, said it perfectly one time in this House; I was here. He said Oppositions have their say; government has its way. He's right. That's the way it works. That's the way it's always worked.

We all understand who is the government and who's running the government. Nobody here is saying I'm going to go in now and start telling the Minister of Justice or the minister of natural resources what to do and he's going to run his department or her department the way I'm

telling them. Nobody is suggesting that. But if you're actually committed to working together and it's more than just political buzzwords and rhetoric, then you have to show it, you have to demonstrate it.

I know the Premier agrees with me because he's paying such great attention to me there now. He's nodding his head in agreement. Everything he's saying, I have his undivided attention, showing me the respect that we all deserve. That's it exactly. I really appreciate it.

Anyway, I'll leave it at that, Mr. Chair. At the end of the day, as I've said, I'm going to support this motion. I was never against the motion and am still not against the motion. If we're going to work together, then we have to actually work together. We all have to be showing respect, we all have to be given a heads-up on things that are going on and asking for meaningful input – not just input, meaningful input – and working together.

If you think for one second that I'm going to play this silly little game of whatever you decide to do, I'm just going to go along with it and say great job and not challenge anything, it's not happening. It's not on.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Shall the motion carry?

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

P. TRIMPER: Thank you. Just a couple of quick comments, Mr. Chair.

I did want to respond. I'm just going to say a couple of other things quickly. The Member for Placentia West - Bellevue, we had quite a – I'm still thinking about his fox and chickens analogy and I'll just give this one to him. It was a former ADM in Service NL that told me this: you can't turn a tiger into a vegetarian by feeding it steak. I think that'll help you out with your situation.

I'm going to relinquish my opportunity to just keep speaking here all evening; I think we have made our point. I still remain concerned about

the future of this Legislature and the quality of the people that we attract in here. There are organizations like Equal Voice and many others who are trying to enhance the representivity of this Legislature. We should look like our province. That's who should be in this House.

If any of those people that we're trying to attract in here from those other walks of life have any kind of financial constraints and they look at the funding mechanisms and the pullbacks on the processes that we have in place, I don't think that's a good signal.

It is also, I find, quite ironic that so many of us – I think everyone of us who has spoken has said they didn't realize this was coming and with this raise they'd rather give it to an important charity, to support their fellow constituent, and so on. I can't agree with them more, but the irony is that we're not able to do that. We're certainly not able to talk about it.

The only public way that we can say that we are here, sincerely, to take care of our constituents and think about their needs, first and foremost, is to support this motion. I'll leave you with that thought.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Further speakers?

Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The House Of Assembly Accountability, Integrity And Administration Act.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair, I move the Committee rise and report Bill 10.

CHAIR: The motion is the Committee rise and report Bill 10.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

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

SPEAKER (Bennett): The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

B. WARR: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 10 without amendment.

SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 10 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

B. WARR: Now.

SPEAKER: When shall the bill be read a third time.

B. WARR: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted. Bill ordered read a third time presently, by leave.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper third reading of Bill 10.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move, seconded by the Premier, that Bill 10, An Act to Amend The House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

AN HON. MEMBER: Division, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: Division has been called.

Division

SPEAKER: Are the House Leaders ready?

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

All those in favour, please rise.

CLERK (Barnes): Mr. Furey, Mr. Crocker, Mr. Osborne, Mr. Haggie, Ms. Coady, Ms. Dempster, Mr. Byrne, Mr. Bragg, Mr. Loveless, Mr. Davis, Mr. Warr, Ms. Pam Parsons, Mr. Andrew Parsons, Mr. Hogan, Ms. Stoodley, Mr. Reid, Ms. Howell, Mr. Pike, Ms. Stoyles, Ms. Gambin-Walsh, Mr. Brazil, Mr. Petten, Mr. Wakeham, Mr. Wall, Mr. O’Driscoll, Mr. Tibbs, Ms. Evans, Ms. Conway Ottenheimer, Mr. Parrott, Mr. Pardy, Mr. Paul Dinn, Mr. Forsey, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. James Dinn, Mr. Brown, Mr. Joyce, Mr. Lane, Mr. Trimper.

Mr. Speaker, the ayes: 38; the nays: zero.

SPEAKER: I declare this motion carried.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

On motion, a bill, “An Act To Amend The House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act,” read a third time,

ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 10)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 2(a).

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply to consider a resolution and Bill 3 respecting the granting of Interim Supply to Her Majesty.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Warr): Order, please!

We are now considering the related resolution and Bill 3, An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2022 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

Resolution

“That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2022 the sum of \$1,371,724,400.”

CHAIR: Shall the resolution carry?

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I won't take a lot of time, but as I sit here in this House of Assembly thinking about the financial position of the province I go back 72 years to 1949 when we joined Confederation with money in the bank. Despite having the richest fishing grounds in the world, tremendous forestry resources, tremendous mining resources, tremendous hydroelectricity resources and tremendous offshore oil resources, we find ourselves, 72 years later, instead of all of us getting a royalty every month or every year, some would say we're flat broke. I say this because it is a tremendous challenge ahead and all of us want the same thing in this House. We want to make sure that all 40 of us leave this province in a better place than which we found it when we got elected here.

I was glad to hear the Premier say that before any new deals are signed, and an Atlantic Loop or anything else, he will bring them to this House to be debated and talked about. I was also glad to hear that we're going to make a commitment that the principal beneficiary of our resources from now on will be the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I think we can all agree on that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: Sometimes there are questions you need to ask yourself when you're talking about a budget. Usually there are three questions that get asked: What do you want? What do you need? What can you afford? Sometimes the answers will be the same, but oftentimes they're not. For example, I might want to drive a great big SUV. What I really need is something to get me from point A to point B. What I can afford is

a subcompact. So as we move forward again in our budget process let's –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

T. WAKEHAM: Especially after today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: So as we move forward – in all seriousness – let us make sure that we work hard to balance that approach.

The reason I bring it up is because government spends a lot of money, \$8 billion, and while I love getting things for my district, like every other Member does, I also have needs like every other district has. I think, for me, of the need for a stable health care system. Right now in my district we have a revolving door of family physicians. We certainly have to take a look at what's causing that. Why are we having so much trouble with retention? That's an issue that I don't know if it's simply unique to my district – I don't think it is – but we have to find a way to solve that.

Recently, there was a tender let for a million dollars, or close to it, to put a new roof on the provincial building in Stephenville. Now, I'm happy to be seeing money spent, but this particular building holds the provincial courthouse. In 2014, an announcement was made to replace that particular building because it isn't wheelchair accessible. Now, we're going to spend a million dollars to put a new roof on it and it's still not going to be wheelchair accessible, and anyone with mobility issues is still going to have to go to the local hotel to have their day in court. I would think there are lots of contractors out there and businesspeople who would be more than willing to build a building or lease a building that would be much more energy efficient and possibly wind up not costing us any more to maintain than the current building. I say that because today, as the Minister of Environment and Climate Change referenced, it's Earth Day.

This particular building has an oil tank that I'd say almost runs from the Speaker's Chair to my colleague's desk, and burns, I would think, anywhere from \$70,000 to \$80,000 a year in fossil fuel. The minister mentioned moving

away from that. What an opportunity to do that. First of all, to provide wheelchair accessibility to people who have to go to court or go to Motor Registration, and to also put the money into a more energy-efficient building. It's not about necessarily always spending more money. That's just one example and I think that we really have to take a closer look at what we're doing.

We have severe erosion issues in my district. Lower Cove Hill, which I'm glad to hear there's a tender being called for now, and in Fox Island River the main road through the community is in severe need, it's getting eroded constantly and has to be repaired constantly. But they are only simple fixes, and it's not about moving the road. Perhaps the solution is to look at what was done in Placentia, on Beach Road, where they built an appropriate barrier, protected the road and actually put a walkway on top of it. It was brilliant. That's the kind of thing we need to be looking at.

In the community of Mainland, a beautiful community, right now I have a gentleman down there and I've been trying to get him help. His house, when you step off his balcony now you fall into the ocean. We can't allow that to happen. We can't wait for that house to fall into the ocean before we do something about it. We have to help and we have to find ways to do it.

Those are just some examples of what's going on in my district. I think, like I said, it's not always about want, it's about a need. If we focus on needs and not wants, then I think we will be much better off.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

All those years in soccer still have you a bit scared of Curling.

Mr. Chair, I'm going to talk a bit about the election. I made a commitment to the people of Humber - Bay of Islands during the election, the

catastrophe that happened, that I would bring it up, and this is probably the last opportunity now before we get into the full debate.

When you have seniors coming to your house who want to vote and they're there with their driver's licence so you can take a picture, there's something wrong. When you have seniors holding their driver's licence up to a window so someone could lift up a camera, get on someone's back and take a picture, there's something wrong. Something fundamentally wrong when you hear this. This is not just Humber - Bay of Islands, this is all over the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I just have to say one thing. I'm not going to criticize anybody here, yet, and I will eventually with Commissioner Bruce Chaulk with some of the things that happened. I've been in this House a long time and I can tell you one thing here in this House: This is the first time that I have ever seen in the House of Assembly where an Officer of the House is not answerable to this House of Assembly. We hire those people. We approve them in this House. They are answerable to this House of Assembly. The day that we don't hold Officers of the House of Assembly accountable in this House of Assembly, we are not doing our jobs. We can put on any excuse we want to.

I know the Minister of Justice and Public Safety will say: Well, it's in the court. But it's not in this House of Assembly. This is who we are. We're answerable to the people of this province. Officers of the House of Assembly are answerable to this House of Assembly. They're not answerable to the courts. The courts will take care of another matter.

When you see what happened in this last election – and I'll say to the Premier, and I'll be frank: If an Officer of this House of Assembly told the Premier of this province that he's ready for a pandemic election and he wasn't, how come we're not asking him into this House and saying, why weren't you ready? The statement he made to the Premier and the Premier made publicly – the Premier said publicly that the Chief Electoral Officer, the Commissioner for Legislative Standards – the ethics commissioner, by the way, the ethics commissioner. We all know the history of me and him. We all know and I bring it up front, and everything I said

before is all coming true. I can name four or five other things.

When the Officer of this House tells the Premier of the province, who then goes publicly and says I was informed that he can run a pandemic election, and he couldn't do it, and we're not asking him in this House what happened and we're not holding him accountable, we're not doing our duty.

I know the Minister of Justice and Public Safety made a few comments – and I'll just bring this up very briefly – where you said the *Elections Act, 1991* hasn't been touched in 30 years. That's not totally true. I'll just give you a good example: The *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act* was in 2008; we just made an amendment to it. Once a bill is in – and in this case, the *Elections Act, 1991* – over the years there are always amendments made to it. When something comes up, we come to this House and we make amendments. There have been amendments made to that act since 1992, a lot of amendments made –

AN HON. MEMBER: 1991.

E. JOYCE: 1991, sorry. A lot of amendments have been made to it all throughout those years. I just needed to put that out there in the record, Mr. Chair.

I'm just going to go through some of the points. I have a nice few points here, and I'm going to go through Mr. Chaulk's report. I'm going to go through the discrepancies in his report. When you table a report in this House and in it you can show that there are facts in there that don't balance with the act and we are not asking questions, we are going to wait for the court to do it or we are going to wait later on to change the Elections Act.

I welcome the Minister of Justice and Public Safety having the Committee, to sit on it, and I'm sure he is sincere. One of the things is that we're going to look and see what happened with the election in 2021. My question is, what is going to happen once we get the findings? Are we going to present it back to the House? I'll be asking that question if I'm on the Committee. If we go through and we can see the number of

discrepancies where the act wasn't followed, will we bring that back to the House in the form of a motion? Because we have to be accountable to the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador; we have to be accountable to this House of Assembly and we have ensure that Officers of this House of Assembly follow the act which we proclaimed. That is very important.

I'm just going to go through a few things, Mr. Chair, in the Elections Act. "(1) When required by the deputy returning officer, a poll clerk, 1 of the candidates or the scrutineer of a candidate to be sworn as a qualified elector, an elector shall, before receiving his or her ballot, take an oath in the prescribed form." That is the actual act. If you are not on the voters list, you have to go in and you have to swear or affirm where you live.

Mr. Chair, section 86.3: "On receipt of an application under section 86, the Special Ballot Administrator or his or her designate shall (a) ensure that the applicant's name is on the list of electors for the polling division in which he or she would ... vote; (b) if the application is in order, issue a special ballot kit"

If your name is not on the voters list – which a lot of people weren't, we know that. Now, under what just happened all you had to do was pick up the phone and phone in and say: Oh yeah, I'm so-and-so; I'm here. Send me a ballot. And the question was asked many times: How many in the household? Oh, there are four of us. Okay, I'll send you out four. Who are they?

Nowhere in this act does it give you the authority to take in phone calls on the phone. Under this act, in order to get sworn in and be given a ballot, you have to sign an oath or an affirmation if you're not on the list. Mr. Chair, those are the facts, yet for some reason, this election, we were allowed to do it. Those are the facts. That's the act.

If anybody here wants to interrupt me at any time, someone justify it and explain to me where we were allowed to call in and right away get a ballot sent to your house. Explain it to me and I'll be willing to listen to it. If not, if no one in this Legislature can explain to me where in the act this is – and I have it in front of me – how that was justified. Was it ever approved in this

House? And you're telling me that we're not going to hold the Officer of this House accountable for that? We're not going to hold the Officer of the House accountable?

Section 86.3(2): "Where an application is received from a person whose name does not appear on the list of electors for the polling division in which he or she resides, the Special Ballot Administrator or his or her designate shall, if satisfied that the person is qualified to vote, (a) add the person's name to the list of electors"

Now, without either getting an ID, getting some form, signing an affidavit, getting someone to sign an affidavit for you, how can you send ballots out over the phone? I'm bewildered that we even let this happen. I am actually bewildered. This is why I say to the Premier, and I'll say it over again. I said it publicly and I'll say it again: If this Officer of this House of Assembly told the Premier he's prepared and he's prepared by breaking the act, unless someone here in this House can explain it to me, which is –

AN HON. MEMBER: It can't be done.

E. JOYCE: It can't be done. It just can't be explained how the act was just taken and thrown aside and we just have to run by the seat of our pants. How can we not have a hearing in this House of Assembly? How can we not have an investigation done into this?

AN HON. MEMBER: An independent one.

E. JOYCE: An independent investigation. How can we not have it?

Of course, you know my history with Bruce Chaulk, and I make no bones about it. I said in this House before and I'll say it again: He made false statements in this House. He made false statements in the Management Commission. I can name two ministers who were sitting there who already confirmed that he made false statements in the Management Commission, yet he gets away with it. And now not only is he affecting Members; he's affecting all the people in the province.

CHAIR: Order, please!

I remind the hon. Member his speaking time is expired.

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just also wanted to thank the residents of Mount Scio for giving me the opportunity of representing them again. It has been a privilege and an honour to be re-elected to represent them. I would also like to thank my volunteers, a dedicated group of friends and colleagues who supported me again this election. Some new people joined our team as well, which was very exciting. I would also like to thank, obviously, the residents of Mount Scio, the ones who voted for me and the ones who didn't. Obviously, we represent everyone, those who vote for us and those who don't, so I thank the district for the opportunity to represent them again.

As we represent our districts, I know we also, all 40 of us, represent the people of the province as a whole. We all have our different kind of expertise and our place in life. At the moment, everyone knows that I had a baby, so part of that now, my new role, I spend a lot of time breastfeeding. That's something I thought that there probably hasn't been much discussion about in this House of Assembly.

Just to give you a sense of how big an audience we're talking about and how many of our constituents it applies to, if you think of rotational workers, for example, they are very important to our province. I have a lot of rotational workers in Mount Scio. The Rotational Workers of Newfoundland and Labrador Facebook group has 5,300 members. The Breastfeeding Support Group - Newfoundland and Labrador, of which I'm a member, has 6,800 members. A very active group which has helped me significantly through my breastfeeding journey which I'm currently doing – currently breastfeeding, I mean.

We do have a lot of people in the province who are breastfeeding on a regular basis, and I just thought I'd spend the next seven or eight minutes talking a bit about that – it might be uncomfortable to some, hopefully not – just primarily to raise awareness because many,

many of our constituents – thousands of our constituents – have kids and breastfeed their kids. I thought that kind of topic wasn't something that was likely properly represented in the *Hansard*, so I wanted to contribute that to this discussion today while we're speaking about Interim Supply.

The Canadian government talks about breastfeeding intention of Canadians. In 1965, less than 25 per cent of Canadian women who had children said that they planned to breastfeed their children. In 2015-2016, that number was more than 90 per cent, so five years ago more than 90 per cent of Canadians having children, their intention was to breastfeed their children. Then in 2011-2012, 57 per cent continued beyond six months.

Now, I've been very lucky that I've been able to breastfeed. I know some people can't and that there is a range of challenges. If you're on the Facebook group, you will better understand all of those challenges. I won't go into detail of those, but I have been very lucky to have been able to breastfeed Alexander.

We're following kind of healthy advice of what's recommended. The Canadian government recommends exclusively breastfeeding your children for six months – Alexander is just a bit over six months now – and sustained breastfeeding up to two years or longer. You start introducing foods after six months, but only breast milk until six months, and now we're still supposed to be breastfeeding our kids.

Most women, if you choose to go back to work, go back to work two, four, six months or a year. Most women go back a year; some women go back after two years. The Canadian government is recommending that we breastfeed up to two years, but most of those women have already gone back to work. Again, another area where I thought it would be helpful to improve, I guess, the discussion around breastfeeding in our province.

Obviously, I'm not an expert. I just have my own experience, so I'm only speaking here from a personal perspective and I by no means mean to give advice to anyone. As an MHA, we don't get mat leave, and I knew that when I decided to

have a child. I appreciate the efforts of this House and all the accommodations for me. I'm extremely lucky and privileged in this position to have such an employer where that flexibility is available. Many women in Canada don't have that option.

At the doors there were many women – well, not many. I would say maybe four or five women who were very unhappy with me that I brought my child to work, and that's their prerogative. A lot of people have strong sentiments around breastfeeding and how to transition from taking care of your child to going back to work. That's a very sensitive, emotional issue for a lot of families in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Chair.

Given we have all these women who go back to work at varying amounts of time, I think we could be doing a better job in all of society in terms of supporting women breastfeeding as they are trying to meet the Canadian government's recommendations of breastfeeding for up to two years when most of them have already gone back to work.

I guess, stepping back a bit, obviously you have a baby – not obviously, but you have a baby and then there's the lactation consultant. They are like the Genius Bar experts of breastfeeding. If you're lucky enough to give birth in St. John's, at a big hospital – I know from the Facebook group that lactation consultants are not as readily available in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. I know virtually that has expanded the options available for women in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

Lactation consultants are kind of a gem of our health care system, and, really, having access to one can make or break your breastfeeding experience. I was able to see one in the Health Sciences before I was discharged, which was incredibly lucky, and 10 minutes with her and we were breastfeeding no problem. She gave me some great tips which I think set us up for success. If I had not gotten that advice, I'm not sure we would have been as successful. My mom tells me there was no such thing as a lactation consultant when I was born, and she had a very different experience breastfeeding because there was no one professionally to give you that advice.

Then our job as politicians now – even though I never thought of myself as a politician, as some of my colleagues have said, you're all of a sudden a politician. Going door to door, running again for re-election, introduced a new element to our breastfeeding experience. I try to be someone who works really hard, and when you're going door to door all day, you can't do that and breastfeed. You have to stay really hydrated if you're breastfeeding. You have to stop and pump every three hours if you pump and then give it to them in a bottle. I found that very just personally challenging running in an election.

Every three hours or two hours I had to stop, go to my car and pump, and then you have to keep the milk a certain temperature cool; otherwise, it goes bad after four hours. It's a huge list of logistical challenges to keep in mind, I guess, as you're trying to run in an election. Luckily, Alexander took a bottle. Not all babies do that. And then, I guess, now in my ministerial role, it's kind of a more nine-to-five job, plus the MHA – 24 hours a day, as my colleagues know – and I still have to pump every three hours. I have to build that into my schedule now, which is interesting.

Also, the cost of enabling all of this is something that I never even considered. I thought, okay, well, child care is going to be this cost; I budgeted for all of that. I never really thought pumping would be such a high cost. I rent a pump and that's \$20 a week. It's like a big piece of equipment and it has a little suitcase. I don't bring it back and forth every day; I bring it home on the weekends. I rent that for \$20 a week and then I have to buy a set of equipment that goes with it. I bought a second-hand pump and all of the new equipment that goes with that, and that's at home for in the evenings so I can pump – anyway. Then I also have a manual pump, which was \$80. Over the course of a year, I spend thousands of dollars now on equipment to help me feed my child as the Canadian government and the World Health Organization recommend that I do for two years.

Amazingly, I could not be more fortunate in that I have my own washroom, because if I'm pumping every three hours I have to wash all of that equipment every three hours and dry it so that I can use it again, because you can't have

milk there going sour. It's funny, when I go for walks with Alexander, I attract all the cats because I think I smell like sour milk all the time.

I'm just extremely fortunate and I can't imagine how challenging it is for women across Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada to manage work, life, breastfeeding, pumping and making sure that your child is fed. I have to say, I've experienced a lot of stress and learned how to deal with stress. It's a special kind of stress when you're trying to pump, knowing that you are trying to feed your child. You have to relax enough to do that.

Overall, thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you everyone for listening. I wanted to increase our awareness of breastfeeding and hopefully represent the constituents who are breastfeeding that we don't always talk about here today in the Chamber.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

P. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don't know how I follow that. It was very informative. I think you'd call it a TMI moment but I'm going to one-up you on the campaign trail when you're going around pumping every three hours. Two years ago in my by-election, as many of you would know, I had a kidney stone procedure and I had a stent put in. So pumping three hours as opposed to having to do something every 10 minutes, I think I got you on that one.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

P. DINN: Oh my gosh, yeah, keeping with the theme.

First of all, I had the opportunity to watch the news this evening –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

P. DINN: – and watch the tragedy unfold down in Flatrock and read what happened. It is terribly unfortunate. There are many in this House of Assembly who have dealt with tragedies. Hopefully there are some in this House of Assembly who are lucky enough that they have not dealt with tragedies. My prayers and thoughts certainly go out to the family of the young man who they have yet to recover.

I want to thank the residents of Topsail - Paradise, the wonderful District of Topsail - Paradise. I'd say beautiful but I think that's taken by Cape St. Francis – the wonderful people of Topsail - Paradise.

I say this in a non-partisan way; I feel the election was one that should never have been called when it was, but it is what it is. We went through it. It's funny because this week is Volunteer Week and it talks about, "The Value of One, The Power of Many." I think we can all agree that through this election there was a huge strain put on our volunteers for a longer than expected period. If I were to use a theme for volunteers, I would be saying where would we be with you. I think we'd be in a huge deficit if we had to reimburse volunteers for what they do and the value they bring to our communities.

One of the huge things with the election, that I'm sure we're going to address, is around those people who did not have the opportunity to vote. That's unfortunate. When we switched to mail-in ballots, of course, we all shifted gears and we were going around taking pictures of driver's licences and such. I went to an elderly lady who had never missed an opportunity to vote. I said I'll come by, hold your driver's licence up to the window and I'll take a picture. She actually came to the window; she was in tears. She was literally in tears because – I or anyone; I'm sure everyone experienced it – someone took the time to go and ensure that she would get a ballot.

We're here talking about Interim Supply, which is something we have to put through. I don't think any of us are going to be voting it down. Going forward, I look at the red book that the Liberal government put out for the election. I look at what they have listed as their accomplishments. I question some of them.

The first one is: “Created one of the safest jurisdictions in the world through effective public health measures to address COVID-19.” I don’t argue we’ve done a fabulous job, but you know what, I cannot find any documentation that lists us in the top jurisdictions in the world. I really can’t, but we have done a good job. There’s some liberty taken with the wording here.

“Ensured a safe return to school” is another issue there. I don’t know if that’s still done. I think it’s still debatable; we took a long way to get there. I’m not even sure if we’re quite there yet, but that’s listed as an accomplishment. Introduced \$25-a-day daycare – I’m happy for that one because we advocated for it here. “Expanded the Insulin Pump Program” – happy for that because we advocated for it here.

One issue, too, is the \$844 million in immediate federal government relief for Muskrat Falls. Everyone argues about it, that it is money we have to pay back, it is money deferred and, in fact, it is. It’s due now November 30, 2021, with the possibility of another six-month extension. It’s lovely we have it, but it’s still money to be paid back.

Other accomplishments: we “commenced the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.” I don’t know if there’s any jurisdiction that wouldn’t call that an accomplishment, but it’s something that would’ve had to have been done anyway. “Started a New Immigration Pathway” – I believe there’s one that came in six years ago and we keep pushing it forward.

So as we talk about Interim Supply and we later get to the budget, I really and truly hope that we’re going to have items here – these are all good, don’t get me wrong, but let’s really do a job on getting things done and not flowering up the wording to make it look like a bigger success than it is. It’s a success, no less.

A big part, which is mentioned all the time to us, gets thrown back: you across the floor, you brought us Muskrat Falls. I have to say I look around here and I don’t know how many in this House were actually here when Muskrat Falls was voted on. We’re all working together to deal with this.

When you look at the comments made with regard to the Throne Speech, the Member for Humber - Gros Morne said we couldn’t do it alone. We must decide collectively. The problem is too big to fix alone. There’s no instant quick solution. Let’s work together and get down to work. Those were made by the Member for Humber - Gros Morne. With what’s happening in this House in the last couple of days, I find the words and the actions are not meeting.

Back to Muskrat Falls. I’m waiting for it; I think we have to deal with the rate mitigation. The Liberal government presented their strategy on it and right out of their document they promised power rates will not exceed 13.5 cents per kilowatt hour when Muskrat Falls reaches commercial operations. There’s nothing in there – there’s no maybe, there’s no approximate, that’s their words right out of the document. That’s right out of the document. I’ll say it again: promised power rates will not exceed 13.5 cents per kilowatt hour when Muskrat Falls reaches commercial operations.

I’m really looking forward to that. I know the plan we put forward spoke to a rate that was a little higher because we took into consideration PUB increases, inflation and so on. We presented a more realistic indication of where rates were going. But I’m not going to complain about that because we’re going to get 13.5 cents per kilowatt hour. That’s what was – and the word “promised” – put out as their rate mitigation plan. I’m really looking forward to seeing that happen.

I don’t know when Muskrat Falls is going to reach commercial operations; it’s been in the hands of this government for the last six years. Hopefully, we will see that come to fruition. Hopefully, we’ll have the battery that will run the Eastern Seaboard at 13.5 cents.

I look forward to that. Thank you for your time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I call this next piece three committees and a consultation.

In the last few days I've been listening to the interview with Sister Elizabeth Davis and Pat Parfrey of Health Accord NL and their committee. I'm going to come back to that.

I want to talk a little bit about the concerns I have about the comparison of these committees and consultation, the concerns I have about two of them and where they're heading. Now, we've had a lot of talk and discussion about an independent investigator, to which the Minister of Justice has responded: we have the judges and the court cases doing that more or less. They're going to investigate the election and left the impression – and Bruce Chaulk, the Chief Electoral Officer. If that were the case, why have any Committee at all until the court cases are resolved? I would assume they're going to be looking at what went wrong in the election to begin with, so let's wait.

Nevertheless, we have a Committee. This Committee appeared over the lunch hour, Mr. Chair, just before we were to debate the private Member's resolution calling for that – over the lunch hour. I thought again that we were going to be given what we had asked for because the comments were that we got what we wanted, that we asked for an all-party Committee and we got it. No, we did not. Let's be clear on that.

What we were asking for was an all-party Committee, independent, chaired by an independent Member, as we had last year, answerable to the House of Assembly. That's what we asked for. What we got was the Minister of Justice's Committee. Let's be clear about this, that what was being asked for and what we got are in fact two different things. It's about control. The one we were asking for would put control in the hands of this House of Assembly with a balanced membership so that no one party could control the agenda.

It concerns me, too, because when we look at the election – I have to admire the Minister of Justice's penchant for understatement because he said in an interview, Mr. Chair: "There is no doubt the most recent election presented challenges." A little bit like the captain of the *Titanic* saying, we sprung a bit of a leak. It was worse than that, and let's call it that, it was a fiasco. At least if I look at the people I was

dealing with, it was close to tragedy. They were upset. They were beside themselves.

Then I hear the minister talk about, well, we had an election and then a pandemic happened. The pandemic started almost a full year before the election. What happened was the outbreak of variants, which we knew about at the time the election was called, Mr. Chair. So on one hand, I'm looking at the downplaying of the fiasco that was the election. The Committee itself and what it's about, I have doubts – I really do – about whether we're going to get the results we need.

Secondly, I'll go on to the second committee, and that's the Premier's Economic Recovery committee. Again, as to why this committee is late in getting its report, we blame the pandemic. If I remember correctly, this committee was struck during the pandemic – not before, during the pandemic. When we all knew what the logistics were of trying to do face-to-face meetings, when we all knew that while schools were going back to school face to face and other businesses were back, we already knew what the challenges were.

We could probably blame the fact that we were almost three months in caretaker mode with one of the longest elections that I've been involved in. We should have anticipated that when we called the committee. Another excuse. We still don't have the report.

Today I asked the Premier a question because I have been listening to Sister Elizabeth Davis and Dr. Pat Parfrey. I asked what are the plans for consultation, because that's the question we've been asking here. When is the report going to come? I asked what are the plans because I figured a committee that was called in October of last year, we'd have plans.

We're looking at multiple approaches. We're happy to reach across the aisle – I'll come back to that one. Every Newfoundlander will have a chance; many different platforms and online portals. Now, maybe a week, days or a few weeks before the report is out, we're going to reach across. Should that not have been done back in October? Should we not have at least said, okay, let's start planning the process right now? Should we not have started setting up

here's what the consultation process is going to be?

Because I listened to the interview with Sister Elizabeth Davis and Dr. Parfrey and listened to what they've got. They have an interim report, a thorough discussion on what we have to do. There is no confidentiality around it. They encouraged people to go back and share. They will do consultations to find out did we hear you, here's what we heard. There will be further consultations. They will do a report then on, more or less, how do we achieve this, what is our way forward. Then they'll go back to do consultations again and ask the question, did we get it right? Did we get it right?

Now, I don't think there's a guarantee that we're going to get all the answers we need or please everyone, but only after that well-laid-out process – they looked at multiple ways. They brought in stakeholders; they encouraged dialogue. They certainly, I think, will not have to worry about anyone resigning from the committee, but only then will they present a report to government.

Now, to me, that's thorough consultation. That is doing your level best to make sure you engage as many people as you want. That is a committee that I have trust in. That is a report I will have trust in. That's a process that inspires trust.

Members on the other side, if you're looking for a way to encourage trust on this side in the population, take a page out of the Health Accord NL's process. Engage in true, meaningful engagement. Don't invite people at the last minute. Don't spring a Committee on us over the lunch hour, but reach out. Yes, you have the majority. It is well and good to have a giant's strength, but to use it as such is tyranny. If you're really serious about consultation, engage meaningfully, but no more tricks and sleights of hand.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

K. HOWELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is indeed an opportunity to speak here this evening and represent the people of my district. I certainly do appreciate the privilege to sit here, albeit several hours today. I am certainly proud to be the representative for St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

K. HOWELL: That district is a district that's rich in natural resources, rich in service and rich in pride. As much as the environment gives us and as many things as we do have to build on there, I always subscribe to the thought that our best asset, our greatest asset, is our people.

Over the course of my campaign I had the opportunity to meet several people that I probably wouldn't have had the chance to meet before. There are a few storied characters, some of whom had interactions with others in the room and had tales to tell about them, but I'll keep those for another day. I did have the chance to meet people, old, young and in between, and the old people they asked me: Why in the world would you get yourself into this? Then I was encouraged by some of the younger people who had asked: How soon can I be a part of it, or how can I do something similar to that? That was very encouraging to me because it's something that I've had a passion for, enjoy and wanted the opportunity to chat about with those individuals.

Everybody was courteous. Everybody was willing to engage in conversation. Everybody had suggestions; everybody had ideas of how we could do things better for the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I didn't get kicked off anybody's lawn, so that was good. I did get offered a lot of tea and I'm hoping that I'll get a chance to go back and have tea with these people when the time is right and the restrictions are lifted.

I would like to thank the people wholeheartedly for hiring me to do this job. Longest interview ever, let's just say it. But I am proud to be able to work on their behalf. I'm not sure what token

of appreciation I can offer them, except my full, honest effort to represent them to the best of my abilities.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

K. HOWELL: Which I hope is a far cry better than what I offered my first nursing manager. When I came out of nursing school, I was green and my first job was a specialty area. I went into surgical nursing in the O.R. I was so appreciative of the opportunity to get to work there that I vowed and declared I would name my first child after the manager. I said I am so glad that you took a chance on me. To honour you, I will name my first child after you. Ten years later and the best that the man got was a goldfish named Declan. I don't know what else to offer to the people of St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows, but I'm not having any more goldfish, so they're out.

In all seriousness, the campaign was a team effort. I had a great group of volunteers and I think it is very fitting to sit here at the end of Volunteer Week and recognize the people who played a part in helping get me here today. They worked tirelessly on my campaign. They tolerated me day in and day out. They figured out the best feeding schedule to keep me from getting angry or hangry. I would like to offer them my sincere appreciation for all that they have done.

I would also like to thank the number of volunteers in our district who make things happen. It has been mentioned a couple times here this week already. The volunteer fire departments, the church groups, the seniors' groups, the coaches, the leaders: All of these people contribute to the tapestry that is our communities, so we are so appreciative of the things that they do. The Value of One, the Power of Many, I think that was very fitting. Certainly all of us can appreciate that, I am sure, in our own districts.

One of the volunteer roles that I had taken on that I was most passionate about was municipal government. I know that many of you have similar stories, so if you'll just oblige me for a moment, I would like to take the time to talk about my experience. Without stealing the thunder of my maiden speech – because there

will be a few tales about that in there too – I would like to share briefly.

I started in 2015. I ran in a by-election, and my primary concern was the swimming pool in St. Anthony. It was in a bit of disarray, and nobody else seemed to care. I was after spending 20 years as a swimmer and a coach and I certainly wanted to make sure that the legacy of the pool was maintained. That was my pitch. I was going to run for council and save the swimming pool. I quickly learned that you can't pick and choose what happens around the council table; you have to work as part of a team and figure out what's best for your community. Fortunately, the people around the table with me did agree that our swimming pool was important and we did see some great work on that.

When I did get there, I found myself in a group of all men. Everybody in the council chamber was an experienced man. I noted that based on the colour of their hair and their reference to what they were doing the last time the Leafs won a Stanley Cup. I knew then that they had much experience, but I will say that they were probably a little surprised when this bright eyed 20-odd-year-old showed up in her high heels and her fancy jewellery. They didn't really know what to do with me at that point, but they quickly learned that I was there for the betterment of the community.

I would like to take a minute to thank those gentlemen to the utmost because they treated me with respect. There was never a moment where I didn't feel valued or appreciated. They continued to ask my opinion and they valued my perspective. At the end of it, one of them even said you were a breath of fresh air. So to hear them say that was certainly a confidence boost.

Now, let's not kid ourselves. There were times when they had to gently guide me and say, now, Krista, you can't really do that. But they did that with tact and respect and I think they gave me the confidence to move on to do the things that I've done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

K. HOWELL: Yes, they were great.

Then in 2019 – sorry, before that, I became the deputy mayor in St. Anthony. In the fall of 2019, I was privileged and proud to have become the first female mayor of St. Anthony.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

K. HOWELL: It was a great pleasure and I was able to work with a great bunch of people. At that time, some other females had joined council and we worked together on issues that were representative of the entirety of our community. Very inclusive and we had great conversations about how to move our town forward.

My experience with council and with municipal government has certainly been a positive one. With that said, I would like to put a little plug in for the upcoming elections in the fall. There will be municipal elections in the fall of this year and I would encourage anybody, male or female, who has an interest in making things happen in their communities, in seeing change and in being advocates for their towns, for their communities, to take up this opportunity.

It certainly was fulfilling for me. It was something that I enjoyed immensely. As a volunteer there, I wished I had the opportunity to make it my full-time job. When that opportunity arose, I jumped at the chance, and here I am today, the first female representative for the District of St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

K. HOWELL: I've enjoyed the ride and I certainly appreciate the support that I have received from Members on both sides of the House here in my new role and in my new capacity. I look forward to continuing good work and working with each of you as we work together to make good things happen for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm glad to have an opportunity to speak to this Interim Supply bill. Obviously, Mr. Chair, I'll be supporting it; bills have to be paid and employees have to be paid, that goes without saying. But, of course, as this is a money bill, we can talk about whatever we want.

As we've seen, we've heard all kinds of different things. We just heard about municipal elections and municipal councils, which is near and dear to my heart, being a former councillor and deputy mayor in the City of Mount Pearl. I even learned something about breastfeeding tonight, so a wide array of topics, for sure.

Before I get to the main thing I want to talk about – and that, of course, is to go back to the election again – I have a couple of quick things I just want to throw out there for ministers who are present. This may not be of any surprise to the ministers; they probably heard from other people. I have constituents who have reached out to me and wanted me to bring it up in the House of Assembly or any opportunity I had, so I'm just putting it there on the record for the information of not just the ministers but all Members of the House, if you're not aware of any of these.

I've had a number of families reach out to me that have concerns about the high school students and the hybrid model. I don't envy the minister; I really don't, because I know he's been doing the best he can. I have a lot of respect for this minister; I have to say that, I always have. I know he's doing the best he can. It's kind of a no-win situation because there are different points of views, there are different situations and so on.

I was getting a lot of people that were complaining, had concerns about the online model. Some students were doing quite well learning just online, but there were some students who were really struggling, so those parents were saying we need to get back to school. Of course, in an attempt to try to accommodate that – because there was a lot of that happening and I'm sure the minister heard from many families – they went with the hybrid model, which is part half the week in-class learning and half the week learning virtually at home and so on.

Now, of course, I've heard from a number of families that say the blended model is just not working for them. I'm sure the minister has heard from families. I've heard from many. There are petitions on the go and everything about that. There are a lot of families that say we should go back to school full-time. There are some families that would say why can't we have both? If you want to go back to school full-time, go back to school full-time; if you want to stay at home full-time, stay at home full-time.

I don't know logistically, from the point of view of teachers and the work they would have to do, if that's even possible. I really don't know. It's probably not, but I just wanted to raise it because a number of people asked me to raise it and bring it to the minister's attention, if he was not aware.

The second one is one for the Minister of Health and Community Services. I did raise it with him outside earlier today, about a specific case. I thank him for giving me some direction with that constituent. Hopefully they can get it resolved. For all Members of the House and so on, I'll bring this up at our health meeting that we have, our weekly meeting on COVID-19.

A concern I've heard is with cancer patents. Apparently, if you are a cancer patient and you're getting the COVID-19 shot, it's been suggested to me – and this is what, according at least to my constituent, their oncologist even said that this is the case – that the time between your first shot and your second shot has to be within three weeks or four weeks or whatever it is. After that, the COVID shot will not be effective, or it won't be as effective as it should be. The longer you go getting that second shot, if you wait the four months, which is being thrown out there now, the COVID shot will basically be useless to you if you wait that long and you're a cancer patient. They will not get the benefit of that COVID shot.

I'm not a doctor. I'm not an oncologist. I don't pretend to have any knowledge. I'm going by what I was told and I throw that out there. I think there was something on CBC last night, a story or something to do with that. Apparently, the Lymphoma & Leukemia Society are telling patients this as well, that waiting three or four

months between shots, you will not benefit from the COVID shot.

Apparently, there is just sort of a blanket policy being thrown out there, but I bring it to the minister's attention here just to look into it. If there is validity to it, perhaps there has to be some accommodation made for cancer patients or anybody in that particular situation, that they don't have to wait the four months, they are going to get their two shots a week or two apart. They should be a priority if they already are going through cancer and they have weakened immune systems.

The other issue I was asked to raise – and this is a new one; again, I readily admit I know nothing about this one. This is directed to the Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs. Of course, we've heard that the government intends on renaming Red Indian Lake and we understand the rationale for that. We heard what the new name is going to be. I can't remember what it is and I couldn't pronounce it – perhaps if I had it here. Anyway, we know what we are talking about here.

I've had two or three people reach out to me today since seeing the story in the media. Perhaps other Members have as well, I don't know. What they're telling me at least is that Red Indian Lake was the home of the Beothuk people, yet the new name is going to be named after the Mi'kmaq people.

Now, I don't know if that's true or if it's not true. Sadly, perhaps I should know more about it, but I don't, about the history of if that's right or if it's wrong. But, like I said, I've had three people today already reach out to me and say that was the home of the Beothuk, not the home of the Mi'kmaq. These people, at least, felt it was disrespectful not to name it after the Beothuk people.

Again, I'm not saying one way or the other if that's right or wrong. I don't know what research was done, who was consulted with, Minister. I'm just making you aware that that's something that three separate people have brought to my attention, so you should at least look into it. Perhaps you've already done all that research and there's a good reason why you

went that way, I don't know. But some people think it's disrespectful.

Then that brings us to the – I was going to talk about the election and I'm almost out of time already. I have one other thing I just wanted to mention, because I'm wondering – and this perhaps would be for the Minister of Finance at some point – how much money we owe the federal government. I'm just wondering because we have deferral, which was talked about earlier, of – I forget the amount – how much?

AN HON. MEMBER: Eight hundred and sixty-four million.

P. LANE: Eight hundred and sixty-four million on the Muskrat Falls. That's one amount, which was a deferral; still money we owe the federal government. I also recall back even in *Budget 2016*, at the time, when you were putting in the levy. The levy at one point in time was going to apply to everybody and then you raised the threshold, you said, no, instead of it applying to everybody across the board, you had to make over \$25,000 or \$35,000 or whatever the amount was in order to be charged the levy.

The reason why you were able to do that, at the time, was because I can remember Premier Ball, at the time, saying he was on the phone with Judy Foote, who was the MP, at the time, with their Sunday conversations, whatever it was they used to say they used to have. She managed to get a loan of some money from the federal government, a deferral of some money, then that money was put towards raising the threshold on people who had to pay the levy. I definitely remember that happening. So that's another piece of money.

I'm just wondering, do we have any kind of a running tally, if you will, of how much money we would owe the federal government? Would there be some account somewhere on the books in the Department of Finance that every time the feds loan us money for different things that we're just sort of getting this running tally of what we owe them?

I don't know if that question has ever been asked in the House to be honest with you. I don't recall it being asked, but it is something that occurred to me when we were talking about the \$864

million, I thought about that other money and I'm just wondering how much more money we may owe the federal government?

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

P. LANE: Yes, that's right. That's another thing, then there's another \$875 million we have to pay back on the Atlantic Accord money when we got so many billion dollars, the couple of billion dollars, whatever it was on the equity stakes. Part of that arrangement was in so many years' time, we have to pay money back.

CHAIR: Order, please!

I remind the hon. Member his speaking time has expired.

P. LANE: Thank you, I'll get back to the election (inaudible).

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. Member for St. George's - Humber.

S. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's great to have an opportunity to participate in this debate tonight. We're having a wide-ranging debate here tonight, I guess. For anyone who is tuning in to watch us on TV, we're dealing with Interim Supply. Interim Supply is a money bill, it's related to money and how we're going to spend money. It allows for a wide-ranging debate on many different topics. What we're doing is we're providing an amount of money for the running of the province in the interim while we're waiting for the budget to come in, in about a month or so.

That's the whole idea of what we're doing tonight. It allows for a wide-ranging debate and many Members have taken the opportunity to talk about other things as well as the finances of the province. In that vein, that same way, I intend to talk about a few different things tonight as well.

It was interesting to listen to the other Members talk about their experience with the election and their experiences being new Members to the House and the route getting to the House and things like that. It's very interesting to hear those experiences because we come from very diverse

backgrounds in many ways, different occupations previous to entering the House, different experiences and different genders, and we bring all those things to the House with us. That makes our House of Assembly so much richer when we have the interaction between people with different backgrounds, different skills and different experiences. It's great to hear about other people's experiences.

We've had some talk about the election and I'm going to talk about some of my experiences in an election. This past election was my fourth election, and it's always a very interesting experience, and this one was different in many ways from the three that we've had in the past. One thing about elections is, if you're an incumbent you've had opportunities to go to events where people will come up to you or phone you with issues they have, or if you go to an event, you're there and they will talk to you and you'll have some interaction. But an election is a time when you actually go and knock on people's doors, and people who wouldn't approach you, necessarily, and you'll ask them how they feel, you ask them for their support in the election and you'll ask them what issues are important to them. That's the essence of our democracy, it's about listening to people, hearing people and them having a say. It's always an interesting experience and this one was no different.

This week is Volunteer Week and many Members have talked about the importance of volunteers in their communities. I want to name a few groups, I guess, and maybe a few individuals. I'm always weary of naming individuals because you leave so many people out.

Fire departments provide a very important service in the district that I represent, the same as many others. All of the fire departments in my district are volunteer fire departments. They provide a very important service to the community in terms of first responders in some cases and fire protection in other cases. But in some of the fire departments in rural communities, they don't have support from a municipality, they have to also do fund raising and activities like that. That's a big part of the job as well, as well as the training and responding to calls. I want to give a big thank

you to the volunteer fire departments throughout my district and, indeed, throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Another group of people in the district, in rural areas of the province, are Lions Clubs. There are several Lions Clubs in my district and the motto, of course, is service above self. Some people here may be or may have been member of Lions Clubs. They are still very active in Newfoundland and Labrador and still play an important part in the communities where they exist, so I want to give a hats off to them as well.

In Pasadena, they probably have one of the most active Lions Clubs in the province. The one in Stephenville is very active as well. They are probably two of the most active Lions Clubs in the province. That's due to some of the long-serving people they've had in their clubs and to some of the new people they've managed to get involved in their clubs over the last few years. They have been very influential groups in the district, and I want to recognize them as well. Rotary Clubs as well play an important part. There is a Rotary Club in Humber Valley and also in Stephenville, which encompasses part of my district as well. Many church groups have active volunteers as well, so I want to recognize them as well.

As representatives, we all recognize the importance of volunteers and the work they do. Often I think volunteer groups and the activities they do, if these activities had to be done by government, it would cost us millions and millions of dollars. Sometimes government interacts with volunteer groups; I remember one group were doing some preschool reading classes, and one of the people asked me to see if we could get some funding for snacks and books and things like that for them. I got them some funding and they came back to me in two years, and they said: We've been having these weekly get-togethers for young children, preschool children. We've used up all that money you gave us and we're going to have to come back and look for some more money from you.

They had been operating this program and they were sort of apologetic that they were coming back and asking for some more money. The amount of money that they had was about \$1,000. The amount of work they had done with

that \$1,000 through the Community Healthy Living program was just amazing. It had such an impact in the community because of the volunteers, and the government worked with them. It's something that I think we have to look at doing more of, co-operating with people.

I just noticed my time is almost up there. I was interested in listening to the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port. I had prepared a few notes there. I have three questions and I was interested that he had three questions, too. His three questions were good questions in terms of the future of the province and the budgetary measures as well.

The three questions I had were sort of different. I wanted to share the things that I'm thinking about as we head into election time as well. The three questions that we should be asking ourselves as legislators: How did we get into the situation that we're in today? How did we get to where we are? The Member for Stephenville - Port au Port sort of noted the importance of history as well, but I think it's important to sort of have a real good, reflective look at how did we get where we are? What did we do wrong? What could we have done better? Our history.

The other question I had is, how do we get out of this immediate situation that we're in? How do we solve these immediate problems? What do we have to do? The third question is, what actions can we take, long term, to see that we don't get into this same situation again?

Those are my three questions. I think we should all be thinking about that as we head into the budget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the hon. Member for Cape St. Francis.

J. WALL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I've had the opportunity to speak several times this week in this hon. House and I'm very fortunate to be able to do that. This evening is the first time for Interim Supply.

I want to mention, Mr. Chair, and bring light to the tragedy that happened in my district yesterday and unfolded today in the Town of Flatrock. I'm sure I speak for everyone in this hon. House when I say to the family of the poor soul that was affected, you are in our thoughts and prayers. That goes without saying, because it hits home to everyone. We may not know the individual, but for me it affects my whole district.

I know I have been in contact with the mayor of the Town of Flatrock, Mayor Thorne, who has kept me up to date on what's going on. I'd also like to take the opportunity just to say I appreciate the Members of my caucus, of course, to the Premier, the Deputy Premier and to the ministers who reached out to me today about this incident. It all makes a difference, Mr. Chair, and I do appreciate that. Of course, we can't forget our first responders, who do have the arduous task of completing this. We keep them all in our prayers.

Mr. Chair, it goes without saying it is an honour and a privilege to be in this hon. House and to represent the constituents of Cape St. Francis. Once again, I want to thank each and every one of them for their support. I also want to thank all of those who voted in the district, who took part in the democratic process, who were able to take part in the process. I thank them for being diligent and getting their vote in and being counted. It makes a difference when we vote, and we encourage everyone to do so. The residents' concerns are now my concerns, and they will have my full attention at all times, I can assure you.

Mr. Chair, sitting in this House would not have been possible without the help of many people in my life, and their support and guidance. First, I want to thank my parents, Robert and Marilyn Wall. From a very early age, they instilled in me the responsibility to help and to serve others, and it was very easy because they led by example. I saw the benefits of helping those around you and it has made a difference in my life. I am forever grateful for their love, care and support, and I certainly appreciate what they have done for me.

Of course, to my family, to my wife, Teena; my son, Zachary; and my daughter, Kristen, who I have had their full support and encouragement

since day one. They know full well my love of volunteerism and my want of helping others. They were in full support when I ran as mayor of the Town of Pouch Cove, my hometown, in 2013, and I have to say they certainly tolerated the time I spent away from home for meetings, training, conferences, travel and, of course, the time I spent with my boots on the ground helping the residents of my hometown, all for their benefit. I have to thank them for their love and support. They have played a huge role in my election to this House of Assembly. The only regret that I have, Mr. Chair, is that my wife and family couldn't be here with me when I was sworn in. That's my only regret.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. WALL: Mr. Chair, strong family support of course is needed; we all know that, but to win an election takes a dedicated and enthusiastic team of volunteers, and my team was second to none. We took nothing for granted and we worked hard. Even despite a prolonged mid-winter election in the middle of a pandemic, my campaign team could not be held back. I appreciate the work that they've done. They kept me in line, in check and motivated on the days that were tough, and there were many tough days during the campaign, I can tell you that. It's been often spoken about here and it was no different in Cape St. Francis. I want to thank them for their strength and determination in helping me to serve them in this capacity as MHA.

Mr. Chair, my district is comprised of five towns on the Northeast Avalon. It's a region that has proven over the years to be expanding, where development is necessary and infrastructure going forward is going to be needed. As a former mayor, I realize the constraints that municipalities work under, so I'm committing to working with them and with all government Members in this hon. House for the benefit of all the residents of Cape St. Francis, and to reduce and to solve any issues that may arise as the days go along. Open communication and co-operation is needed. I'm hearing that from the hon. Members opposite, of course, that we need to work together for the benefit of everybody and that will benefit the whole district.

I also want to reassure the many wonderful volunteers that I have in my district, the many wonderful volunteer groups that do such good work, and it's all for the benefit of others. I've spent a lifetime volunteering myself. I know what it takes to be a volunteer. We all give so freely and it's all for the benefit of others. So I want to thank them, especially during Volunteer Week. That's what makes Cape St. Francis a beautiful district to raise your children and to grow a family in, and I want to thank them for that.

Mr. Chair, I know I recognized him this week in my Member's statement, but I want to do it again, and that's to the former MHA and my good friend Mr. Kevin Parsons.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. WALL: Cape St. Francis has had exceptional representation since its inception in 1949 and my goal is to continue on with that level of commitment. Don't go laughing. That is my goal, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Parsons was here from 2008 to 2021. He worked on both sides of this House and he always put the constituents of Cape St. Francis first. So to Kevin, thank you for the work that you've done, thank you for the mark that you've left on each municipality and thank you to all of the people that you've helped in our beautiful district.

I've been told by many Members of this House, on both sides, and by the staff, that I have big shoes to fill. I know the size of the shoes, Mr. Chair. I'm ready and I'm determined. I want to show this House my compassion and my work ethic to get the job done for all of the residents of Cape St. Francis.

As a new Member to this House – and this happened today – it's been overwhelming at times. It has been, and I'm sure that everyone can relate to that at some point in their career. But I'd like to thank several people: to our party leader for his daily guidance and encouragement, to my caucus Members and to the party staff who have welcomed me and shared their experiences with me to make this transition easier. I also want to say to those on the government side, to the ministers and MHAs

who have reached out to me to make this transition easier, it is overwhelming, it is sometimes a little bit daunting, but I can tell you that when you have friends on both sides of the House it makes a huge difference coming here to do the work.

AN HON. MEMBER: You're starting to sound like Kevin.

J. WALL: Well, if I'm starting to sound like Kevin, I'm doing half the job right.

AN HON. MEMBER: You better have good fish pudding.

J. WALL: I told you not to worry about fish puddings; you'll have fish puddings.

Mr. Chair, I want to thank everyone for that, and I don't want to leave anyone out. I want to acknowledge the staff, the House staff here that are making this easier for me as well. We've had good training and, of course, the staff has been very accommodating to me, and so I would like to recognize them and to thank them as well.

To conclude, I'm looking forward to the opportunity to proudly represent the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis. I'm going to continue with that because Kevin charged me to continue on with that. I am a team player, I know what it takes for a team to be successful, but I also know the importance of how important it is to work well and respect others and that will be key in order to get the job done.

A former municipal colleague of mine said this to me just last week: We may be on opposite sides of the House and we may not agree at all times, but let's not lose the friendship. That says it all; I agree that we need to keep that here. We are all working for the benefit of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, first and foremost, and we need to do that to make a better way of life for everybody. I'm committed to that as well, Mr. Chair.

I would just like to close and say thank you to all of the Members of this hon. House for your attention this evening. It is, indeed, an honour and a privilege to serve and represent the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis. I will be their voice in this House of Assembly, Mr.

Chair, and I look forward to the district as it grows and it prospers in the years ahead.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. Minister of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills.

G. BYRNE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I am truly honoured to be amongst such august company in this the 50th session of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador. When we think of our privileged place here in this House and we consider the fact of how few Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have had this privilege, we are among a very small group of people who can say that we have been elected to the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador, and with that privilege brings great responsibility. We are a unique group, and when we think of our position we should think of exactly what that means and the incredible responsibilities that it places upon each and every one of us.

It is easy, Mr. Chair, to succumb to the challenges, to the cynicism and to the troubles of the job, because it is a troubling job at times. Tough decisions have to be taken; choices have to be made, and sometimes there will be those who feel we have taken a bad decision, or a wrong decision or there could have been a better decision that was taken. Mr. Chair, I am convinced that each and every Member of this House of Assembly, the same as the 49 that preceded us, are all guided by a universal principle of how can we make our province and our country a better place to live.

I look at this from the vantage point of having served in several sessions of both the Parliament of Canada and, as well, the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador. I look at this as an opportunity always to advance, always to make something better, but recognize that there will be times when we will doubt ourselves. We can't let others doubt us. It's okay to be a little bit introspective and it's okay to be always thinking about how things can be done better, but at the same time, Mr. Chair, we can never project to others that we doubt ourselves. We've

been put into this position of trust and we must fulfill that position of trust.

I want to thank the people of Corner Brook District and of Newfoundland and Labrador for putting their trust and confidence in myself, putting their trust and confidence in our government and trusting as well that we all respect the dual nature of our House, which is of a government and an Opposition both aligned with one intent and one intent only, which is to advance the best interests of our province.

We can succumb to cynicism and we can actually play to the cynicism. In fact, I have had the unfortunate experience where while we all mouth the words that we need to act and do better, sometimes we are the authors of the cynicism of this place. So while sometimes we take advantage of the circumstances and play upon those that find themselves in a difficult spot and we use that to malign or to diminish the reputations and characters of each other, if there is one thing that I have learned: When we diminish each other, we diminish ourselves; we diminish the nature and power of this House and we have nobody to blame but ourselves.

There are forces there that would like to play upon the negativity of the House and the negative interactions within the House. If we let them do that because we foster and fire it, if we add oxygen to that fire, then we have nobody to blame but ourselves.

Mr. Chair, I truly want to say that we're all going to encounter difficult times. One thing that is capturing this particular Session of the House of Assembly, the 50th session, is why we ever had an election to begin with. In adversity why should you have an election? Why should you operate within the democratic framework, the statutory framework of our election cycle? Given the fact that there was a decision of the Assembly to say that upon transition to a new leader, a new Premier, that there must be an election, by law, within a year; not at a year, but within a year.

I remind myself that we are in the company of giants who never ever succumbed to adversity. Do you know, Mr. Chair, that Canada had a federal election in 1917 in the middle, at the height of the First World War? There was a

decision that was taken for Canada to have a national election in 1917. Do you know we had a federal election in 1940 and then a subsequent one in 1945? We had two elections in the middle of the Second World War. We've had elections during incredible times of unrest, whether it be the Red River floods when Manitoba was flooded almost to its entirety, the entire Red River Valley. Eleven or 12, maybe even 13 different federal ridings were negatively impacted because we had elections in 1997 and in 2011 while the Red River flooded.

The challenge is not simply to decide when you should have an election, the challenge is how can you overcome the challenges and have an election. I think of the election of 2021 and I say to myself, well, the easiest thing is let's just not have one. Then, of course, let's not have one until the pandemic is over. Well, as we're now discovering that if we were to make that decision we would be in a very serious constitutional issue where we would not know whether or not we'd be able to meet our statutory obligations, nor would we be able to even have an election within 2021 or maybe 2022 – we don't know.

Mr. Chair, it is easy to succumb to the cynicism, to be overpowered by the weight of the challenge that has been placed upon us in our province, but what we can never ever do is just simply say: Let's govern by optics; let's govern by what is popular. What we really need to do is be leaders and bring people with us to the challenges of today for a better future tomorrow. It's why, Mr. Chair, I am incredibly proud to be a Member of the caucus in which I sit. I'm extremely proud of the leader who has received the confidence of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and who elected him in a majority government.

I've already seen evidence, Mr. Chair, that instead of taking that position of authority and responsibility and simply saying, well, we have the majority, he has reached out. He has sought the advice of very, very intelligent Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who are wise and experienced in things that can assist us, whether it be through the Health Accord, whether it be through the provincial Economic Recovery Team, whether it be through revising or reforming or making consideration for

changes to workplace safety and workmen's compensation.

Mr. Chair, we all have a responsibility to lift each other up. If we don't do that in this Chamber, if we simply mouth the words of populism, if we simply echo the words that are spoken, that may not necessarily get us to where we need to go, and then we have diminished the 50th session of the Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador.

So I want to say to everyone, just as you are committed, we are committed; just as I am committed, we all need to be committed to working with each other. But that does, indeed, go both ways, in the sense that we would love to hear ideas brought forward. We often hear that democracy does not speak, unless it speaks outside of this Chamber. We hear the necessity of all-party Committees; we hear the necessity of special Committees, of working groups and other things.

Well, Mr. Chair, I'll finish where I began, which is the greatest committee that will ever assemble in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador is assembled here tonight on the floor of the House of Assembly. This is where we are currently exchanging ideas on a whole manner, a whole realm of topics. If one were to argue that the only productivity, the only efficiency can be achieved by forming committees outside of the House, you diminish the House.

We are in a privileged place in this spot. We are exchanging ideas. As someone once said to me: Whose mind did you change tonight within the Assembly? I often think that I've probably changed nobody's mind, because we are so patently stuck in our own positions that we are not accepting each other's point of view.

Mr. Chair, I promise, I hope everyone promises, to rise to the challenge, work with each other, but that should not be an imposition of a one-way path.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

That was a very passionate speech from the Member for Corner Brook. I say that in order for all of us to work together we must go back and ensure that we represent our districts properly and bring the concerns forward. One of the biggest concerns I had during the election is the way the election was run and the fiasco of the election. As I said, and I'll say it again so people in the general public will know, this is probably my last opportunity to bring up the concerns that I committed to bring up during the election on their behalf to this House of Assembly and, Mr. Chair, I'll continue on.

I have a copy of the report that the Commissioner for Legislative Standards, Mr. Bruce Chaulk, presented in the House. When you get a report on this here you expect certain things to be in the report. I can tell you a couple of things that are not in the report. One of the things is about him hand-delivering ballots to people. If people want to look at that while there were seniors home holding up their ID to a window so you could take a picture, he went through a hundred thousand ballots to hand-deliver three, four, five or six – we don't know how many, but it's not in this report. It's definitely not in this report.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

E. JOYCE: So how complete is this report?

Mr. Chair, the other thing that is not in this report, and it's very concerning, is –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

E. JOYCE: I know, Mr. Chair, I'm touching a nerve over there. But I'm sorry, I'm doing it on behalf of the people of Humber - Bay of Islands. I'm sorry about that.

Mr. Chair, the other thing that's not in this report, and it's very concerning, is how many days were the phone lines and the computer system down? He said we were going to start on

Saturday and then vote up until that Friday. We know, I know, the phone lines for outside the Avalon weren't even up until Sunday evening, and during that period the phone lines were so blocked, the computer system crashed. Friday night, we already know the fiasco that, okay, well, they should have voted earlier. That's fine, too, but in this report it doesn't even mention that. It doesn't even mention it.

Here's an Officer of this House of Assembly doing a report for this House about the election, and look at the pertinent information that's left out. Just left completely out, Mr. Chair, that's not even in this report. This is why we need the hold Officers of this House of Assembly accountable to the House of Assembly. It's very, very, very important, Mr. Chair.

The other thing –

P. LANE: Voting over the phone.

E. JOYCE: Voting over the phone, I'm going to get to that now in a second about voting over the phone, Mr. Chair.

What the Commissioner has here is under 86(3) of the act, this was done in accordance of 86(3) of the act. This was considered to be an acceptable method to apply – this is what he applied, that's what he stated; 86(3) of the act: “An application to vote by special ballot may be made by those methods that are acceptable to the Chief Electoral Officer.”

Now, the only difference when you read 86(3): “An application to vote by special ballot may be made” This wasn't an application. Once you called in, put your name in; say you had three or four, you were given a ballot, and you didn't have to apply. You were given a ballot.

Now, Mr. Chair, when you go back to 86(3), once you make an application you have to ensure the applicant's name is on the list. If it's not, if the application is not in order, they must have identification. But when you call in by phone to get a ballot, you didn't apply for a ballot. You can't say: Well, here's my name, I'll send in the information like everybody else had to do. Once you called in, they called you back: What's your name? Your address? You got a

ballot. There was no verification who was on the other end of that line, no verification.

The Commissioner at this time may say, yes, I can go ahead and I can take it by phone; 86(5), Mr. Chair: “An application to vote by special ballot shall contain the information that the Chief Electoral Officer may require, including (a) the name of the applicant and the address of the applicant's residence in the province; (b) proof of the applicant's identity by reference to documents of a class determined by the Chief Electoral Officer; and (c) the applicant's mailing address.”

So over the phone you can get a ballot but you don't have to show the applicant's proof of identity. If I applied before, and at times during, which a lot of us did, we had to take someone's photo ID or they had to do it, or two pieces of identification, where they lived, and we had to include it in the application. But nowhere in the act does it say that you can give a ballot over the phone without proving the person, and that's not in the report either, Mr. Chair. That's some of the things that are just not in the report.

As I mentioned earlier in this House of Assembly, and I ask anybody in this House of Assembly who would like to be able to give the answer: How many hours, how many days were the phone lines and the computer system down to accept ballots? No one can answer it. How can anybody in this House not want the Commissioner for Legislative Standards to come to this House and justify the election? It might never overturn –

P. LANE: Scrutineering.

E. JOYCE: And scrutineering, I'll get to scrutineering. Scrutineering is another thing, Mr. Chair.

Here's what the Commissioner said for scrutineering – and I'll get back to this again – “... appoint a scrutineer to witness the counting process. In an effort to balance transparency and safety of staff, Elections NL also established a virtual portal whereby a scrutineer could view the entire facility as well as review any ballots or declaration envelopes that were being rejected.” That is true. They were allowed to look in a big room, 40 or 50 people in the room and then you

could look and just see, okay, if they had a spoiled ballot they would show it to you.

But here's what the act states, 86.5(1) –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

E. JOYCE: I know, Mr. Chair, I know.

“The leaders of registered political parties having membership in the House of Assembly at the time the writ is issued shall each designate a representative, to act as scrutineer, who may be present during the verification of the declaration envelopes referred to in subsection 86.6(2) and during each stage of the procedure for the counting of the special ballots.”

That's the act. That is 86.5(1). That's the section, Mr. Chair, where it is in Canada, even in Canada, we send people all around the world to validate elections. One of the cornerstones of validating elections is being able to keep an eye on the ballots and keep an eye on the ballot box, and when they come out be able to count them; be able to count each ballot that came out of that box.

Why anybody in this House wants to allow the Chief Electoral Officer of this province to take this act – take the cornerstone of democracy to make sure that everything is run properly and not allow it and say that this was run properly is fundamentally wrong.

So when the Chief Electoral Officer told the Premier: B'y, we can run an election in a pandemic. Did he tell the Premier: Oh, by the way, we're not going to allow scrutineers in the hall? Did he tell him that now there is not one person in this hall – I had this in an email – and what he did to compromise? He said: We won't show you the special ballots as they're voting, but what we'll do, after we count the boxes, we'll tell you the numbers on the boxes. We won't see the actual ballot when someone hauls out the ballot, who they voted for. We won't show you that, but what we'll do, when we put them all in the box, we'll count them up and tell you. How's that? Is that okay? And I said: No.

That is not in his report again. That is another big issue that is not even in the Chief Electoral Officer's report to this House of Assembly: how he took it upon himself to not follow the act. Mr. Chair, this is why I have major concerns from day one of this election, right down to the counting of the ballots. I'll have another chance.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the hon. Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equity.

P. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's always an honour to speak in this hon. House. I find that these sorts of sittings at this time of night, usually 8:30 as we are here now, the conversation tends to get a bit lighter and I guess more pleasant. But that said though, we often have pleasant conversation and productive conversation in the House ongoing, no matter what the topic is.

It is National Volunteer Week and I want to thank my volunteers. I spoke earlier this week, but I can't emphasize enough what it means to have the support from the people in our districts. We can all relate here because we are literally all in the same boat across all 40 districts, how important it is because we certainly couldn't do this alone.

This being an Interim Supply bill, that gives us the liberty to talk about things, such as the things that are important and the people in our district.

I'm going to take my memory back and yours and for the people watching at home: I took on this journey, most of us here did, back in 2015 and actually the year prior to that, gearing up to run and to get nominated and all those fun things. I just want to thank the people from years ago, ultimately 2014, when I started campaigning.

It is interesting to note, Mr. Chair, we can all appreciate that from that time there are a lot of people who supported all of us who are simply not with us now. So many people in my district I know – the list unfortunately continues to grow – that have passed away since that time when I

first started. You don't forget the nice stories that stay with you or the kind things and the genuine support. Although there are challenges that we face in every election, people go out of their way to do what they can to cast their ballot for you. I'll be forever grateful for that.

A couple of stories I'm going to tell. It was back, actually, in the 2015 election. It was a fall election. I think we've campaigned in every season now. We're like the four seasons in here, Mr. Chair. The very first one was indeed a fall election in November and I'll never forget. My good friend, the MP who represents the area out in Grand Falls, Scott Simms, came out and –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

Lower the volume, please.

Thank you.

P. PARSONS: He came out, of course, from his federal riding to give me a hand out in the beautiful district, the strong District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave. I'll never forget, it was Mrs. Marie Brazil. She's an elderly lady in the Town of Spaniards Bay, someone I've known forever. She can remember me when I was a little girl going to church in Spaniards Bay, going to Mass.

Scott and I knocked on her door one evening. She came out and she was all excited. It was around suppertime and I'll never forget this story. She was making meat loaf, Mr. Chair. She was in the early stages of making the meat loaf and she had the onions and the ingredients over her hands, but she still came out and answered the door. We had a chat and she told me how proud she was of me. Of course, before she left, she gave me a big hug and she had all those onions and meat over her hands. I'll never forget. It got in my hair.

Of course, we were still campaigning and all night going around Spaniards Bay knocking on doors, on Brazils Hill in particular, I had the smell of the meat loaf and the onions in my hair. I didn't complain because that was love. To this very day, that support is still strong. Some of

those stories, of course, I'll just keep with me forever and be forever grateful for.

It is a privilege and an honour to represent the people because it's the people who put us here. As we can all appreciate, we all have different priorities in our district, as we heard Members talk about all night, whether it be a swimming pool, whether it be a primary school; in my case, Coley's Point Primary, of course, with the list of other priorities. You never forget those stories.

It is National Volunteer Week and we can't do this without volunteers. Despite the challenges, Mr. Chair, we had during the campaigns, those volunteers stay by you. My team went from calling the election – number one, it was a winter campaign this time, so, of course, we had to battle with Jack Frost, snowbanks and you name it. I have to say, my team were there for me and we got out.

I'll never forget my campaign manager, George Warford. He's a sweetheart of a man who's been with me from the very beginning and still is, him and his wife Donna. George and I were out, of course, campaigning one night; it could have been January when it was still okay to go around and knock on the doors. We had our masks on and we were all bundled up with our toques, our hats. We were down in the dark – and this was on a side road in Bay Roberts. We were going down; we had the masks on and the hats.

Mr. Chair, I see you shaking your head.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. minister.

P. PARSONS: Thank you for your protection, Mr. Chair.

Anyway, so where I was – on a side road in the Town of Bay Roberts. George and I were down knocking on doors. We had our masks on, as I mentioned, bundled up in our toques. One resident said, is that you? I guess he didn't know who I was. He said, you're down here tonight looking for your cat, aren't you. You're looking for your cat. I said, no, my friend, I'm down here tonight looking for your vote. It's just these

funny things that you'll always hang on to. Then he said, oh, that's you, Pam.

Again, I just wanted to send my heartfelt thanks, of course, to the people of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave. I'm very proud of the district I represent. I grew up in the Town of Spaniard's Bay, of course, and I'm now currently living in the neighbouring Town of Bay Roberts. We are an expanding district, an expanding powerful region in CBN, out there in Conception Bay North.

I invite all my hon. colleagues this summer on a staycation, if you're looking for somewhere to go, there are lots of great things to see and do in our great district. Of course, I look at my colleague across the way in the neighbouring District of Harbour Main, another beautiful district, actually, where my parents live. Of course, part of my heart is in Harbour Main as well and always will be.

Again, I want to thank the people who put me here. I'm certainly always going to do my best to represent them, their needs – anything I can do. Again, I want to throw out my big thanks to my constituency assistant, Lisa Brown. Our number at the constituency office is 786-1372. If there's anything that we can do to help, certainly give us a call.

I'm happy to say we work collaboratively with all levels of government – the municipal governments in the district. The Joint Council of CBN is also a very important body out there – they voice their concerns for the priorities – as well as our federal government. I want to throw hats off as well to my friend and my colleague, MP Ken McDonald. He's been there as well and always takes the time to come out and have a fun time knocking on doors with me. We get to announce a lot of projects together and join on projects and to support the people. Again, I want to send my thanks to him.

It is getting late, it's almost 25 to 9 here and I appreciate everybody is getting a little bit antsy. People need a snack, a chocolate, coffee or something. Everybody is a bit chatty but that's the nature of this. We do sign up for this work. It's not a nine-to-five, it's a 24-7 gig. I think we can all appreciate. That said, I'm confident that everybody who puts their name forward here to

do this is here to represent their people. We hear that in the passion and we hear the stories that everybody talks about.

I consider everybody friends and colleagues, and we've worked together. We work on Committees; we work on all-party Committees. I've had the privilege of working on a number of Committees over the years, since I started in 2015, and go to conferences. When we go and travel to conferences in places like New Brunswick or wherever all over the country, we're there as a team. We're known as the Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. People love us; they tend to flock to us. We're known for our good nature, how hard we work, for our hospitality and just the fun-loving people that we are. I'm very proud. Despite the times, we're going to have challenging times; arguably, we are in the most challenging fiscal time in our history.

That said, we're here for the long haul. I'm confident and everybody in this room certainly is, as well as the staff that we see here. You guys are here late at night as well. I look around and they're here when we are; the security staff as well. A big thanks to everybody who contributes to do their part for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Again, thank you to the people. Thank you to my campaign team. I love you all. We met, we had a change of course to a virtual campaign towards the end of things, but we met every morning on Zoom. We would have our Zoom meetings and it was fun. It helped us to keep that cohesion among the campaign.

I'm very grateful for the experiences and support that my constituents continue to show me. I had 71 per cent of the vote this time in the election. I'm very grateful. I will do everything I can to represent you with virtue, with honesty and, of course, to do the absolute best I can. I'm one of them, I'm proud of them. I always say when I speak, especially to students, Mr. Chair, always focus on where you want to go. Focus on your goal, but never forget where you came from.

On that note, Mr. Chair, I will take my seat again here tonight. Again, I'm grateful to be here.

Thank you to the people of the Harbour Grace - Port de Grave District.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's a privilege again to sit here on behalf of the people of Labrador West. I want to take this opportunity to thank them for their support once again. It's a little different this time around. Not by two, but it's nice. I also want to thank everyone that turned out and everything like that.

As everyone knows, like I said, one thing, a bright spot, especially in this province right now, is the mining industry. Everything home seems to be on wheels right now, as we say. As I said, the demand and price for iron ore has been absolutely staggering, so things have gotten very busy there.

Once again, with great prosperity come great problems. We've seen an increase in mental health issues, we've seen an increase in the need for housing, affordable housing and, also, the increased need for addictions services, obviously, because it all comes together, unfortunately, in that way. When we talk about budgeting and we talk about all this stuff, too, like costs, we also need to recognize the needs for mental health and additions and the needs for low-income housing and things like that because it all seems to cluster together under the same thing. We have to take a look at what is really needed in that sense.

I know my district is a lot different as it does have peaks and valleys with the market. Weirdly enough, the iron ore market dictates the needs and everything like that, but it also comes in cycles, very predictable cycles because there will also be a global need for iron, it's the building block of so many different things that it always will be a requirement. So when we do these kind of things, the forecasting needs to be in place.

The thing is that when we're in lows we tend to neglect the actual needs of the region, as we've seen there when the market was down and everything like that. We seem to put aside that. Okay, eventually, we may need this again, but we keep turning a blind eye to it. That seems to be a big problem that we seem to have, is that we turn a blind eye during the lows to housing and to different kinds of services.

In the low there would've been, as we said before, the need for affordable housing, but also emergency shelters. We're one of the largest regions in the province by population that don't have an emergency shelters, which is very staggering that we don't have that ability, that someone in crisis who needs housing, we have nowhere to put them. We're over a six-hour drive from Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and that would be the nearest emergency shelter to Labrador West. It's unreasonable to expect someone who's in a housing crisis to be driven to Happy Valley-Goose Bay to be put in an emergency shelter.

I know they can put them in hotels and stuff like that, but as we see a market rise, those hotels are completely blocked out by contractors and other people passing through for business. There are actually cases where we had nowhere to put them, someone who was in a housing crisis situation, because these facilities were blocked up. So we're facing a lot of challenges that way.

When the pandemic and stuff seems to settle down and we see more work-related travel again, from what I'm seeing now in Labrador West, I can only imagine how much greater it's going to be in the region if more contractors, more specialist and stuff come into the region to do work. We just don't have anywhere to put these people. This causes great stress to the municipalities. It causes great stress to all the social safety nets and also to volunteers and other not-for-profit organizations that work to try to solve these problems and things about it.

We do have the Housing and Homeless Coalition and, God love them, they do everything they can for people in housing crisis. But there's only so much you can expect from groups like this and there are only so many resources to go around. If there's no housing

available in a region that's stretched thin right now, it just gets a lot worse.

When we do sit down and talk about a budget, we talk about all these things and we really need to take an eye and turn to people who are most vulnerable in our society. When we see prosperity, we see things like that. These people are the people who are unfortunately left behind in this and sometimes surprises come around that we don't expect until it's too late. We really need to be conscious of the decisions we make but also conscious of these people around us in society that need a hand up, more or less than anything else. They just need a caring, kind hand up to help them.

We have the ability to do it. That's the thing about it, we have the ability to take the most vulnerable people in society and help them with these issues. It's hard to say and see, everyone thinks about Labrador West, the mining industry and the great prosperity that does come with it, but we do have homelessness, we do have addiction issues. We do have these. They may not be as present and visible as other jurisdictions, but it's there and it's very unfortunate that we don't have the tools in place in our region to help these individuals as expediently as I would like. We have to be mindful of all of this.

It's not a great ask but it's an important ask. I'm fortunate where I come from, I'm fortunate that we have what we do have there. I'd like to see when we talk about the budget, we talk about putting in and implementing stuff. I'd really like to see people, not only in my district but other districts, that we put the tools in place to make sure that we don't see anyone on the street, we don't see anyone suffering with addictions issues and we don't see anyone who is down and out. We have the ability, as a society and here, to do everything we can to make sure that people in society have the social safety nets around them; that we can continue to do the best that we can for our residents.

That's something that really truly touches my heart, is helping people like this in time of need. We need to think about these individuals and make sure we give them a hand up, because we live in a kind and just society where we should be helping our neighbour. Everybody, in my

opinion, is my neighbour especially if you come from Labrador

With that, Mr. Chair, I would like to say thank you. I want to say a thank you to the residents of Labrador West, once again, for putting me back in this seat. Also, it's nice to see all of our colleagues here. Hopefully, we will continue to do great things together. It's really important to work together to end poverty, to end these kinds of things that we see in our society. We have the ability to do it and we should do it. It's the right thing to do.

With that, thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'll take a few minutes now, I guess, to have some comments on tonight's debate and offer some thoughts on a number of items.

First and foremost, it's always a pleasure to represent the District of Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde. It's a privilege that I've had now to have been elected in the 47th, 48th, 49th and now in the 50th General Assembly. It's kind of special when you think about this is the 50th General Assembly of this province; all the thanks go to the people of Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde. I'm going to deviate a little bit tonight and I'm going to talk about the new department that I find myself in.

Mr. Chair, when you think about the tourism industry – and I'll concentrate my remarks primarily on tourism and hospitality tonight, because I was speaking to the Member for Ferryland just out in the halls a few minutes ago and we were talking about the impacts that COVID-19 has had on our tourism business around this province. It's been substantial.

Tourism and hospitality, I saw a figure – maybe it was earlier today – that if you look at the impacts on tourism and hospitality in the

Canadian economy, there's no industry that comes close to the impacts that have had on jobs in the tourism and hospitality industry. The Premier formed the Premier's Advisory Council on Tourism and enlisted some of the, I would say, brightest tourism talent and tourism operators in the province to bring a report. They presented an interim report a few weeks ago, and they're going to come with their final report, hopefully, next week.

We're going to have to make ways to support them again this year, because, unfortunately, even in Nova Scotia tonight we're seeing changes around COVID and other impacts. It's going to be another tough year for those operators. I say to the Members – and I know we all would anyway – in May, while the House is in recess, if you get an opportunity to support a local tourism operator or a hospitality business, take that opportunity. Their impact from COVID has been, actually, harder than any other industry, so it is important, if we get the opportunity to do that, to do it.

Looking down the road, I had the privilege this morning to attend the announcement of the awarding of the 2025 Canada Summer Games to St. John's and region.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

S. CROCKER: Absolutely.

That was no small feat by the bid committee, by all levels of government. I know my predecessor, the Member for –

AN HON. MEMBER: Virginia Waters.

S. CROCKER: – Virginia Waters – sorry, it has been a long day – the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave and the Speaker all played roles getting us to where we are today. As a government, I know we all support the Canada Summer Games in 2025. Mayor Breen actually made a very interesting point today in his remarks. His summary was the Canada Summer Games, in a two-week period, is 10 Briers.

Think about that. The activity of the Brier a few years back and how much activity there was in this city for that week, the Canada Summer Games will be 10 Briers in a two-week period:

5,000 volunteers, 550 jobs created, an economic impact of somewhere around \$100 million. It will leave a lasting legacy in the city.

I can't remember much about the 1977 Summer Games here in St. John's. The Member for Cape St. Francis was four; I was five, so I can't remember. But if you think about the legacy of those Games, it's a lot of the ball fields, a lot of the parks around the city. It is the Aquarena. One of the questions the media asked me today as we were finishing up the news conference: What will be the lasting legacy of these Games? I said: We may not build a new Aquarena, but if anybody knows the current condition of the Aquarena, this will breathe new life into the Aquarena. I believe the Aquarena is going to receive nine – a lot of money. The Aquarena is going to receive a very big cash infusion, which is well needed.

The other interesting part about the announcement of today's Games – and, yes, St. John's was the bid committee, but we're going to see activity in Mount Pearl; we're going to see activity in CBS, Paradise, Portugal Cove-St. Philip's. I believe out in Cape St. Francis as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

S. CROCKER: These will be a regional Games. Facilities will be used in all these areas, and the impact will be lasting. One of the other things that we are going to see from these Games, which are so important: For the percentage of the Canadian population we are, 1.4 or 1.5 per cent, we always hit above our weight anyway when it comes to our sports on the national stage. We're going to invest, through SportNL, \$800,000 in the coming years for athlete development, because we want to make sure that our athletes shine at these Games. I'm quite confident they will.

We haven't had a Games since 1999 when we had the Winter Games in Corner Brook. Again, legacy left behind: the Pepsi Centre or the Corner Brook arena. It's very important as we go forward that is a very positive note for our province. It's four years from now, but it's something to look forward to.

In the meantime, again, we have a lot of work to do in the tourism industry in our province. I kind of likened it very early to my first portfolio as a minister in government back in 2015, Fisheries. One of the challenges in Fisheries is we can't control the resource that we harvest. But when you think about tourism –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

S. CROCKER: Right.

But when we think about tourism, the resource that we're going to need to rebuild our tourism industry, it's out there. It's there. We know where it is; we just have to go and get it. I think it's very important, as we move forward, that we get our campaigns properly targeted to get into those markets to make sure that our visitors, when the restrictions are lifted, from our country and other countries around the world can get back in here. It's a very, very important industry in our province. Pre-pandemic, the tourism industry reached \$1.2 billion in benefit to this province.

Another highlight that I was really – the Member for Virginia Waters used to tell me about it on occasion, about the television and film industry in this province and the potential that has. Just this week we saw *Hudson & Rex* renewed for a fifth season.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

S. CROCKER: We are getting close, very close, to a television and film industry that will be \$100 million per year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

S. CROCKER: The contribution in our province of the television and film industry – and I had the opportunity to meet with some people from the industry this week. Last summer was the first time that we actually did two TV series simultaneously here in the city. That's a capacity-building exercise, and it's important that we invest in it. One of the questions I asked is, why? Why do people doing productions look to us for a place to come and shoot films? They said there are lots of reasons: It's the resources that we have; it's our scenery. I said: But we don't have good weather. They said: Weather

doesn't matter, because a TV series is not based on a sunny day necessarily. Our weather is not a factor. We have to invest.

The mandate the Premier has given me in this role is to invest in infrastructure; to find ways to grow that industry, our cultural industries. We've seen some good investments in the federal budget last week – or, sorry, this week – when it comes to the tourism industry. I say to the tourism and hospitality side of it, we know there's more work to be done. I can assure them we will continue to lobby the federal government for what needs to be done there, to get specifically into them.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, I will conclude. I could probably go on all night because it's a very exciting department. I'm looking forward to the opportunity in the coming weeks as we'll all get lots of time in here. I was out and did an interview a few minutes ago and asked about sitting late tonight and I said the reality is this portion of the budget is a 75-hour exercise, and we'll go through with this portion of the exercise of budget, which started with Interim Supply. We'll have the month of June that we'll all get multiple opportunities to speak to the budget and talk about things in our departments and our districts and the people we represent throughout the province.

I look forward to having the opportunity, if not tonight, early in June to speak to budget 2021-2022.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. Member for Lake Melville.

P. TRIMPER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm not going to take too long, but I did want to summarize, I guess, my first full week in sitting with this independent voice representing the great District of Lake Melville. I need to thank those folks again. It's a fascinating perspective. I need to always remember how I got here, and every decision I make every day, that I'm thinking about them.

What I wanted to do was just talk a little bit about how interesting this is now sitting here and being able to speak about so many issues, bringing issues forward, engaging with government and my other colleagues and so on. I'm just going to summarize what my week has been like.

I first of all wanted to identify, for those of you who may remember, Anna Hutchings, who used to serve us quite well as a Page here for, I think, the 48th and the 49th Assembly. Anyway, she's working with me now. She's a neighbour from Happy Valley-Goose Bay. She's down here completing her society and law degree, and I'm pleased to say she started working with me. My team is building, Mr. Chair. She joins Bonnie Learning, who's back in Labrador as my constituency assistant.

I can't forget when we took a little supper break here tonight and I sent over to Hong's Take-Out. Although it's no longer operating, my wife is in town and she did deliver some lovely food courtesy of her and her mother, so I thank them for that.

I guess I will, on a personal note, say a thank you to all of my colleagues who reached out and expressed condolences on the loss of my father-in-law, my wife's father, Yan Quon William Hong, on his death just a week or so ago. I thank all my colleagues for that.

What I would like to do is just talk about what I spoke about quickly this week. I had three petitions. The first one was on the need to provide support and attention for the folks in Mud Lake. I've spoken about this a few times now on the floor in my new role, and it's very important that we think about what's going on there. We have a very comprehensive document, which is saying that community is going to get hit again.

This afternoon, we met with the department, and I thank the minister for his staff's availability and competence, because we're now watching the flood levels very carefully and, unfortunately, crossing our fingers to see whether we will have to evacuate the community or whether their properties will be again flooded out. Others on the Happy Valley-Goose Bay side continue to see erosion. I look forward to,

hopefully, getting the minister up there as soon as possible.

We have a highway between Happy Valley-Goose Bay and North West River and Sheshatshiu, Route 520. I call it this roller coaster. It's really in need of attention, as so many other highways in this province. I'll be doing my best to argue for a complete overhaul and paving of that highway. It sorely needs it before somebody is killed just driving on it. In fact, I would suggest, perhaps, people have already died because of it. Certainly, their vehicles have taken some serious hits.

The other transportation-related item that I spoke about in a petition was today and these huge distances in Labrador. We are building highways; it is good to see progress. Both this administration and previous administrations have been investing in the Trans-Labrador Highway, but we have distances as far as five hours, and you can imagine crossing your legs for five hours before you can get to the next bit of washrooms or conveniences or any kind of emergency facility. We really do need to get washrooms, communications and other facilities – basic services that you expect to see on any highway in this country – in place. I have a strategy; we just need to get an expression of interest out there.

The questions that we have tackled yesterday, very important one to the minister responsible. We have unfortunately been subjecting our Southern Labrador caribou herds to illegal hunting. It's been going on each spring. When the conditions are right, unfortunately, we are seeing this happening. The only way to resolve this, in my opinion, is to convene a gathering of leaders of all levels of government, community leaders, there are several scientists, several elders, frankly, who are very familiar with caribou in this area, who can help us. Let's get them all in one place and get this resolved. We cannot have the debate going on in the bush where people are carrying loaded weapons and the tempers are very flaring. So for the sake of these caribou and our legacy for our grandchildren who hope to also enjoy the wilderness that we have in Labrador. Remember, this is undisturbed landscape and we are losing a species. The solution is very simple, but implementing it is very complicated.

The other question that I raised this week was to the Minister of Education, the fact that we have early childhood educators who, unfortunately, are struggling to become certified. We need to reinstate this in-person training program so that they can get certified. Lots of people lining up, they just can't get through the certification because it's online, and there are all manner of issues.

One little fact that I didn't mention yesterday, I will today, the largest daycare facility in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, it's called Pumpkin House, 75 per cent of the staff there right now are not certified. They do not have the proper certification; they are granted exemptions because of this location in the province. We really need to overcome this. This is our most precious resource and we have people who want to help them, we just need to deliver the training. So let's get this resolved as quickly as possible.

I've been talking about the issues in a variety of ways, and I've been trying to tie it because it's not just my district but it's the entire province, and I think we are all preoccupied. I'm just going to mention, again, the four key themes. Here we are in Interim Supply and our fiscal responsibilities and obligations, again, for future generations, we need to fix this now. I hope we can get the best minds for it and I look forward to seeing the budget, the Greene report and so on as we move forward over the next four years.

This pandemic is amazing. There's a gentleman who is harassing all of us in this House right now. I wanted to respond back to him tonight and just tell him we should put him on a plane and ship him to India, so maybe he could see for himself what it's like to see 300,000 new cases of this pandemic unfold. The reckless actions and allegations that that guy is on with here, I don't know, but I just want him to go away.

The demographic challenges of our province – I'm meeting in the morning with Rob Greenwood of the Harris Centre, and I compliment him and his organization for what they're doing to look very closely at our demographics and other questions that we need to challenge ourselves and resolve right now, again, for the future generations.

Again, it all comes back to what I think is the big kahuna of the crises facing us, and that is climate change. As I said earlier this week, the community that I live in is going to be facing a 6.5-degree temperature increase over industrial levels by 2050. I just can't imagine. I think my snowmobiling days are going to be over, if I can get to that point.

With that, Mr. Chair, I didn't want to go on too long, but I do want to summarize. I thank everyone in the House for what I think is a very productive week for Lake Melville and our province.

Thank you very much.

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

B. DAVIS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm very excited to get the opportunity to speak in these hallowed halls of the House of Assembly here today. I'm so happy that I got to listen to colleagues on both sides of the House, listening to their stories about their districts, the details that are so different. Each and every time people speak they come up with something different to talk about, which is always impressive for me. I'm excited about that and I look forward to hearing the differences that people have within their district and the things they face. That's how we're going to get through a lot of the problems that we face in this province: by communication and working together.

I'm going to start by going through a couple of little things. The Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation stole a little bit of my thunder, but as a St. John's native, I'm still going to take some opportunity to talk about the monumental announcement that happened today here in Benvon's Room on Crosbie Road in the beautiful District of Mount Scio. I think it's an important thing that we should highlight. It's the announcement of the Canada Summer Games for 2025 being awarded to the City of St. John's.

I'd be remiss if I didn't say a big thank you to the bid committee for the great work they did. I know there are so many thank yous that could go around, but the bid committee of Kim Keating

and Karl Smith did a fantastic job leading that team, with staff support from Karen Sheriffs and Tanya Haywood from the City of St. John's, along with the many fantastic staff in the Recreation Division that I had the pleasure of working with for a couple of years.

Those individuals eat, sleep and breathe recreation. They get it; they understand the benefits that come from recreation. Not just from the ability for elite athletes to participate at a high level, which could be the crowning achievement for their athletic career, but more importantly – the minister earlier touched on it a little bit – the legacy projects that are left behind in the wake – and I say that in the most positive way I can – after the Canada Summer Games in 2025 pack up and move, along with the 20,000 people that will be here visiting the province and extending their stays, from a tourism perspective, peaking their interest to hopefully come back again and spend some more money in this province, which we'd definitely like to have – come each and every time. I think of the benefits of that and being the showcase for Canada.

I received a message from TSN on my phone that mentioned the Canada Summer Games, so –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

B. DAVIS: I know how Members really want to jump in and talk about how great it is that the Canada Summer Games are placed here in this province. I think the whole region will benefit. I think it's important –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible) Carbonear.

B. DAVIS: Carbonear will get some benefit, as well as Mount Pearl and as well as all regions of the province.

But more importantly than that, I wasn't alive – the minister mentioned earlier –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

B. DAVIS: The minister mentioned that he was four or five when the Canada Summer Games in

St. John's were there, and I wasn't even born. So I wasn't born –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. DAVIS: Some people in this House actually competed in those games, so I'm happy.

I think many people in this House and many, many thousands of other people used the infrastructure that was created in this region after the '77 Summer Games. Whether it be St. Pat's Ballpark, which I had the pleasure of playing on for so many years – many more years coaching than playing – as well as the opportunity to watch soccer games that are happening down at King George V. Also, the minister alluded to the Aquarena; I learned how to swim there. So I think it's an important piece that talks about the infrastructure that's left behind after these great events happen.

That doesn't happen without the great work of volunteers, and it being Volunteer Week I'd be remiss if I didn't say thank you to the volunteers that make these things happen. The amount of resources that go into, whether it be the Brier or whether it be the Scotties that came here, all of these things, individuals gain experience in how to do big events like that. St. John's, like Corner Brook in '99, has done a fantastic job, and I look forward to seeing what they're going to bring forward in 2025. I can't wait to be there cheering on our athletes; not just from here, but from right across the country.

I'd also like to talk about another thing that was another major announcement that happened recently, it was the announcement of the completion of the Trail of the Caribou. I think everybody realizes how important this piece of history is for this province – for a lot of reasons. There are so many people to thank. I'm not going to individually thank very many only because I would forget some that have been involved for so long. This transcends governments, many governments have worked on this. I'm happy that I was in the chair to see it almost completed. But the minister delivered on what he started out with, so I'm very happy with that.

In all fairness, this is about the people that paid the ultimate sacrifice so we can enjoy the freedoms we do today. This was a completion that needed to happen, it has been a long time coming and so many people played a role. I think the hon. Member for Lake Melville did a great job talking about some pieces of this as well and some of the great people who have been involved, whether it being Speaker Osborne or Speaker Trimper when they were involved. I know Premier Ball had a role to play in this as well by starting the process again.

Every person has an affinity and every one of us in Newfoundland and Labrador has been touched by the loss in World War I and World War II, and we give so much to the Canadian Armed Forces and the military from this province. I was so happy and proud at 4 o'clock, 5 o'clock in the morning when I was getting the messages coming in about the caribou being hoisted up onto Hill 10 in Turkey. I was so excited to see that. It was a very proud moment for me, as well as so many others. Watching that right from the start in Bowring Park where the students at CNA took digital renderings of the caribou that's there, so it's an exact replica of the ones that are all over Northern France and Belgium.

If anybody hasn't had the opportunity to do the Trail of the Caribou, I know this is – no one has done the complete Trail of the Caribou at this point, yet, because we just finished it. But anyone who has the opportunity to have seen those first five caribous will understand what I'm talking about when I'm saying it's such an emotional piece for a Newfoundlander and Labradorian to go over and see where our people delivered so heavily for the Allied forces during that time frame and are spoken of so highly in all of these communities, even to this day.

When I went over to represent the government a couple of years ago we went over with a contingent of students from this province. It was eye opening for me to see that these little tiny communities and mayors that couldn't speak a word of English, and I couldn't speak a word of French – similar to the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation as we know from today. I couldn't speak a word of French, but one of the things that we could do was that we could all see how important us being there was

to them and how they still remember, to this day, the impact that our soldiers and our people had on their communities in providing them the freedom that we enjoy.

The battlefield was not here in St. John's, Newfoundland, or in Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair or anywhere in this province, but it touched every part of our province and it has for generations. To see the completion of the Caribou over in Turkey, it means a lot to me and I'm sure it means a lot to the many family members of those that paid that supreme sacrifice.

InnovativeNL is the company that was contracted to do that, it is a Newfoundland-based company. I couldn't be happier that Frank had the opportunity to work on this project; it has been a passion project for him for decades. It has been something that has been talked about. Whether it be Carmela, Melanie or Jamie in our department here in the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, it's important to say thank you to those individuals that never gave up on trying to push this forward, knowing full well that the political climate in Turkey wasn't always favourable for this. I have to say thank you to all of those people that were involved and it's such a happy day for me, in particular, but everyone in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Chair, I could go on and I look forward to having the opportunity to speak about this again sometime soon if not tonight.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to just have a few more words. I saw a lot of people were laughing at me earlier when they were talking about the Canada Winter Games and how old I was. The way I get treated in this House sometimes, Mr. Chair, the lack of

respect, I wouldn't mind having a few of them in the ring for 30 seconds.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

E. JOYCE: All in fun, Mr. Chair, all in fun.

I say to the minister, Frank Gogos, as you know, was the manager of this project and he is such a great guy, and everybody else who helped out with this project.

I'll just give you a little story before I get to my last little bit on the election. I was over in 2017, I think it was, and Frank Gogos was there. We had a great-uncle that died in the First World War, and mom always talked about him and no one could ever find him. Frank Gogos found my great-uncle's grave in a little, small town in Northern France. Six days before the war ended he got killed in a raid and Frank Gogos found his grave. We were led there by a man in a tractor in a field. Six graves were there. That's why I remember so much about Frank Gogos. He's so passionate about the people in the First World War. Such a great guy, such a great promoter of Newfoundland and Labrador, such a great promoter of the Trail of the Caribou, and he gives such great respect for the people who lost their lives in the First World War. I just have to recognize that with Frank Gogos.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

E. JOYCE: Mr. Chair, this is going to be my last opportunity to speak on the election itself, and I thank the people of Humber - Bay of Islands for giving me this opportunity. I made the commitment that I would speak to this because I saw the anguish and the frustration and the disappointment in their faces on many occasions all throughout. Of course, every question I brought up here tonight – every question I brought up – I'm still waiting for answers. If we can't supply answers in this House of Assembly, the Commissioner for Legislation Standards should be called to this House to get answers. They should be.

I'll just give you an example. I'm going to use me for an example. Of course, we all know the history of myself and the Commissioner for Legislative Standards. The report that came in about me, he was in contact with Dwight Ball.

Absolutely everybody knows that now. I have documentation on it, signed by Dwight Ball. I already know that he had side conversations.

Mr. Chair, during this election, when it was changed over, I was notified by my colleague – and then we started writing – that he noticed on someone's Facebook page that there was a number to call in to get a ballot. We said, what are you talking about? We started writing: What's this all about? How can this be on someone's Facebook page? Then, a day or two later, you see it on someone's brochure. How come? When did this happen? I think the Member for Torngat Mountains mentioned yesterday she wasn't aware of it; the PCs weren't. We weren't aware of it. How did the Liberal Party or someone in the Liberal connections get hold of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards, get a number that they can post and we not know about it? Other candidates don't know?

I already know the side conversations that the Commissioner had with the former premier. This is why it's important for me. Who was he in contact with on the Liberal campaign team that would give them the information? He's supposed to be independent. He said it himself. We heard the Premier also say – well, the Premier answered the question. He said: I shouldn't be involved with that; he's independent. How can he give information as an independent body of this House of Assembly to one group of people campaigning and who are candidates for this province, but not give it to the NDP, the PCs or the independents?

AN HON. MEMBER: I got it to my phone.

E. JOYCE: You might have gotten it to your phone, but I can tell you how we found out: It was posted on someone's Facebook. Then a day later, someone had the brochure already done up. They knew a day or two or three days in advance of this. Those are the questions that we can't get answers for. It's not right.

I wasn't worried about losing the election. If I lost the election, I lost a lot of stuff before. I lost a few boxing matches before. It's not a big deal if you lose the election, as long as it's done right. I know people who played sports in their time. If you lose, if the better man wins or the

better woman wins in whatever you play with, it's good. That's the way it happens. If you lose an election, it's not a big deal, but when you know that there are things being done that should be given to all candidates in this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, there's something wrong.

We can't get answers. Can you imagine? We're in this Legislature; we create the laws and we can't get answers in this House of Assembly of what happened during the election; why did this happen? Why did this happen? We just can't get answers.

Mr. Chair, the other thing I want to bring up is just in the District of Bay of Islands also, as I mentioned earlier. We faxed in ballots; they were lost – up to three weeks, lost, completely lost – until we phoned in and started complaining. We had people call directly to the Chief Electoral Officer; all of a sudden, mysteriously they were found and all of a sudden the extension was made. Mysteriously, the extension was made then, all of a sudden. Up to 9:30, 10 o'clock that night they were still calling people, trying to say your ballot is on the way. We don't know. If people didn't keep calling, if we didn't give that number – you had up to Friday to get the ballot out and back in – would we have gotten the ballots? These are the kind of questions, Mr. Chair.

There are two other things I'm going to bring up, Mr. Chair, and this is in the report, so this is not me talking. I'm going to read his report.

Mr. Chair, on page 3 of his report: "Section 153 requires the returning officer and election clerk for a particular district to perform the official addition of the polls. As the counts were all completed at Elections NL headquarters, the official addition was overseen by the Director of Election Operations and were completed by senior Elections NL staff in the presence of scrutineers from three of the political parties and scrutineers from two candidates." But the only problem with that, Mr. Chair, is "in the presence"; they could not see the ballots. When you get the weasel words "in the presence," everybody was saying: Well, jeez, they were all there looking at it. They weren't. The act says you're allowed to look at the ballot and you can see the ballot. They weren't.

Mr. Chair, here also in his report: "... appoint a scrutineer to witness the counting process. In an effort to balance transparency and safety of staff, Elections NL also established a virtual portal whereby a scrutineer could view the entire facility as well as review any ballots or declaration envelopes that were being rejected." But they could not see the ballots.

The question I'll leave this House, and this is a question that, if I ever get on that Committee, I'm going to ask: Who gave the Commissioner for Legislative Standards the authority to take away the rights of the candidates to have someone to scrutinize each ballot? Who gave him that right? No one gave him that right. That's the question.

I've been around many Legislatures. I've been around many, and this is the worst that I've ever seen, to have an Officer of the House do things and we're just going to let it slide and not take it in this House of Assembly. The bigger question I ask for that: If we're not going to keep an Officer of this House of Assembly accountable to this House of Assembly and to the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, how are we going to handle a \$2.5-billion deficit? That's the question. That's the point with me.

If we don't have the courage to sit down – I don't think the election is going to be overturned; I don't want the election to be overturned. I want to have a government that's stable, but you need the legitimacy of the people. In order to do that, we need to get the fact-finding of the election. As the former minister of Tourism just said, for all of the people who died in the First World War, who fought so that we can vote, shouldn't we have the right to know why a lot of people could not vote in this province? Shouldn't we have that right? Shouldn't we, as legislators who govern this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, who make the laws, who ask that the people of this Legislature pass the law, Mr. Chair, that they should follow the law?

I ask each Member in this House: If any of us here today broke the law while we were in this House, how long would it take for us to have to stand up and withdraw the statement and apologize? If we have to do it as legislators –

and we do it willingly when we understand there are mistakes – why are we letting an Officer of the House not do the same thing, to apologize to this House of Assembly and to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, if he made any mistakes to this here? By not allowing scrutineers, that is definitely a violation of my rights and every right of the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

CHAIR: Order, please!

I remind the hon. Member that his speaking time has expired.

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I guess I want to thank all of the voters in Windsor Lake again tonight. I know I've done that a couple of times in my first week here, but obviously it's very important. A lot of Members have thanked their constituents for putting them in their seats here in this House of Assembly, these hallowed halls, I think, as referred to earlier by the Minister of Environment. I agree with them; it is an honour to be here. I'll never forget all of the voters over the 10 weeks that voted for me.

I'm very lucky, too, to be in a district that's very close to this House of Assembly. I've been reminded many times by my colleagues from rural districts how lucky I am that I can go home for lunch and I'll be able to go home this evening very quickly to my bed. A lot of people here, my colleagues on both sides of the House, have to sleep in hotel rooms or rented houses, et cetera, et cetera. Certainly, the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, one of my rookie colleagues, has reminded me a lot over the first four days here that I'm fortunate. All of the city Members here are fortunate. As most people know, my District of Windsor Lake overlaps a lot with Virginia Waters and it overlaps a lot with St. John's East - Quidi Vidi. That's where I grew up; that's where I spent a lot of time in that area growing up. I spend a lot of time there still.

The Member for Lake Melville tonight mentioned the passing of his father-in-law. My

condolences to him and to his family. I will just tell a little story about that. I got a text in a group chat that I was in with some friends of mine last week. It said: Sad news for east enders/Wedgewood Park residents. The man who ran Hong's Take-Out passed away.

As I said, I spent so much time in Wedgewood Park growing up. It was where all of my friends lived. You couldn't miss Hong's Take-Out. If you just drove up Torbay Road and took a right into Wedgewood Park, there was Hong's Take-Out. I must have drove past Hong's Take-Out, or walked past Hong's Take-Out or ran around Hong's Take-Out thousands of times.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

AN HON. MEMBER: I couldn't resist.

J. HOGAN: That's pretty good.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

AN HON. MEMBER: My apologies.

J. HOGAN: You talk about stealing someone's thunder.

Well, anyways, the joke was that he used to give us huge bags of fortune cookies when we were kids to stop playing in the river behind the restaurant. I guess my friends were kind of nuisances and they drove him crazy a little bit and he tried to buy them off with fortune cookies, but my friends weren't always the best listeners and he said, we took the cookies, but we didn't stop playing in the river.

My condolences to the Member for Lake Melville and his family for that.

Again, Mr. Chair, there's been a lot of talk back and forth on both sides of the House today about working together and collaborating and whatnot. I just want to say from the outset here tonight that I am more than willing to do that as well. I did announce, as the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, an all-party Committee to look at

the Elections Act, to modernize the Elections Act.

There has been a lot of talk tonight and there's been a lot of talk in the last hour about the 2021 election and the challenges that all Members of the House of Assembly and all other candidates faced. That Committee was referred to tonight as the Minister of Justice's Committee. Nothing could be further from the truth. It's not my Committee. It's a Committee of the House of Assembly, it's a Committee that I'm one Member of and there are nine Members of that Committee.

I just want to say before the Committee is criticized for the work that it might do or will do in the future, we haven't had a meeting yet. I would say, let's just give it a chance. I would ask everyone on the other side of the House to give it a chance, to come to a meeting and see how it goes before we start criticizing it. I wouldn't prejudge anything before you try it. I have a four-year-old daughter and a lot of people in this House have kids, and you give them their supper and they say: I don't want it, I don't like it. They haven't even tried it yet. So let's try it, let's try the all-party Committee.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: Let's try it.

The electorate elected some red people, they elected some blue people, they elected orange people and they elected some blanks, and they're all going to be on the Committee. That's what the people voted for, that's what the people want and we're going to give the people what they want.

I do want to talk about a few things that I heard on the doors and phones when I was running in Windsor Lake over the course of that 10-week campaign. What I would say to people – I would knock on the door, they would answer the door and they'd say: What are you going to do? What's your plan? I would talk to them about some ideas I had and then I would always say to them, what do you want? What are you concerned about? Because I'll represent you. It doesn't really matter what I think. It doesn't really matter what I want. It doesn't really matter what's important to me and what my

priorities are. I'm only one person in the district. There are thousands and thousands and thousands of people who voted in the election in Windsor Lake and what their priorities are, that's what my priorities are. That's what I'll take to the House of Assembly. I will do that and I expect everyone else in the House of Assembly will do that as well.

What they did talk about was the fact that we do have a huge fiscal problem that faces the province. The Member for Humber - Bay of Islands has talked about it probably once, twice, three, four or five times tonight, and you know what, he knows it and everyone in the House of Assembly knows it and everybody in Windsor Lake knows it. What they would say to me at the doors is that they know there's not going to be a quick fix. They don't expect us, or anyone in this House, to snap their fingers and by next week these problems are going to be solved. But they are willing to be patient and let us do our work, as long as we're honest and forthright about what we're going to try and do to get us out of this financial situation that we find ourselves in. It took time to get in this mess. It didn't happen overnight and we're not going to get out of it overnight.

If we can take our time, look at solutions, look at ways to get out of it, talk about it, debate – and I am more than happy – there was a comment made tonight that we didn't even ask for suggestions. Well, I didn't have any in my inbox either, I'll tell you that. I will listen; I will take any and all suggestions and I will give credit. I couldn't care less who comes up with the solutions to fix any problems that this province has. I can tell you that right now. It makes no difference to me. I'm not looking for credit; I don't want credit. I want the problems fixed because I want this place to be better for my daughter when I'm done in the House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: Other things they said at the door: They were concerned about health care. It's always health care. I bet you for dozens of elections it's been probably the top one or two priorities of constituents throughout this province.

I'm extremely pleased that the Premier went to Sister Elizabeth Davis and Dr. Pat Parfrey to commission a report which they call the Health Accord. We all know an accord is an agreement. We're all going to agree together, collectively, as a province, to work on how we can have better health outcomes here. We need to be healthier, we need to treat better, we need to treat different and we need to modernize it. I think we will do that, and with the help of that report and the long-term vision from them and the Premier and everyone in the House, we will be a healthier province.

Another issue I heard that people were concerned about was child care. I know the Minister of Digital Government tonight talked about the importance of breastfeeding and being able to come to work. Just imagine that 20, 30 years ago, 10 years ago, maybe, she couldn't do what she's doing now. She has a six-month-old at home and she's here at the House of Assembly at 9:30 at night. That's very progressive of this province to be able to allow her to do that. She's in the workforce. She's one more person in the workforce, and child care is a very important part of that process.

A \$25-a-day daycare is certainly a step in the right direction, and it didn't take the Premier very long to bring that in. I think it was a promise he made early on and he committed to and he saw it through very quickly, and I'm very happy about that. I'm sure a lot of women are happy about that and I'm sure a lot of men are happy about that as well. It's an issue for everyone in this province; it's not just a women's issue.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: I am running out of time and we are talking about Interim Supply, which is obviously financial issues, so I do want to talk a little bit about what's going in the Department of Justice and Public Safety and why it's important, why the financial ability of the province to keep paying its bills is important.

One thing I'm excited about doing over the next four years is building the new correctional facility. We talk about stuff not being modern; I can tell you one thing that's not modern is Her Majesty's Penitentiary. I don't think anyone was

around when that thing was built, not even the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands. I am looking forward to contribute to building that. It's a place where inmates can go. It's not just about punishment; it's about rehabilitation. We need to provide them with recreational programs, educational programs and mental health access so they can rehabilitate, move on with their lives and, hopefully, leave the penitentiary and contribute to society.

So I do look forward to that in my role as Minister of Justice and Public Safety, as a look forward to all other issues and items over the next four years, including things in my department, other departments and all of the districts throughout the province.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

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

P. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm just going to take one more opportunity. This will be my last time this evening. I know there are a lot of disappointed Members here, very disappointed to hear it, but anyway. Of course, this is a part of the budgetary exercise, so the longer we continue with this, this is time coming off the budget debate when the budget comes, so that has to be a consideration for us as well.

Mr. Chair, I want to speak one last time, I guess until we come back, about the election and to, sort of, pick up where my colleague from Humber - Bay of Islands finished. Some people will say: Why are you keeping it up? Well, quite frankly, I've been hearing from constituents, and not just my constituents; I'm hearing from people all around the province, from districts over on that side, of people saying: Please continue to bring these issues up; this is an important issue. I was denied my right to vote. I'm absolutely disgusted with what happened yesterday, that the motion was voted down and that we're not going to have an independent investigation.

Now, I'm not making that up. I can show people the emails, the messages and so on. I'm not making this up. I've heard from people who are long-time supporters of the government party who have contacted me, a couple of names that would probably surprise Members over there – I'm not going to name them – who said keep it up. Keep it up. This was a bad decision not to have an investigation into this election.

We've all voted on things and we've all said things in this House that sometimes you regret them after the fact. In my time in the House of Assembly, there are two votes that I can remember that really stand out for me, that I wish I had not voted the way I did. I honestly do. Hindsight is 20/20, I get that. I had a choice back then, but it's like anything else: We all make choices; we all vote certain ways.

One was Muskrat Falls. I regret that I voted in favour of Muskrat Falls. The only difference though, I will say, about Muskrat Falls is when I did vote for Muskrat Falls, I did so based on what I thought to be accurate information. I didn't know that there were numbers being fudged and risk reports being hidden, and the questions I asked were answered and so on. I believed what I was being told.

AN HON. MEMBER: You were hoodwinked.

P. LANE: I was hoodwinked, the Member says. Yes, I was, but I voted for it and I have to own it.

It will go down in the history books that I voted for that project. It will be there and there is nothing I can do to shake it, other than to acknowledge it, say I did what I thought was the right thing at the time, and I did. I can remember when we had the sanctioning of the project. It was out here in the lobby. The picture keeps coming up every now and then. Someone will throw it at me just to remind me. Premier Dunderdale, I'm stood right behind her with a big smile on my face – me and, I think, Sandy Collins and Steve Kent or something. They will, just to have a little dig every now and then. But I thought at the time I was doing the right thing based on the information I had, and I still believe that.

If I were to go back and do it all over again, I probably still would have voted for it. The only thing I would have done different, though: I don't think I would have taken people's word for things the way I did. I never take officials' words or anyone coming with anything now; I never just take their word for it anymore. I'm always skeptical. I always want to find out for myself, ask questions and research myself before I vote on stuff now. That's why I'm so, I guess, anal with this because of Muskrat Falls, because I don't want to get burnt again.

The other one that I voted for that I regret was Bill 29. Bill 29 was a different one for me. Bill 29 was a different one, because at the time when we were debating – there was a filibuster on Bill 29; we were debating it – unlike Muskrat Falls, where I felt like this was a good thing and a wonderful thing, during Bill 29 there was something telling me I'm not really comfortable with this, but I played the game; I toed the party line, as we know happens in party politics. But I went along with it; I voted for it.

I can remember at the end of that filibuster, after I voted for it, turning to my colleague – I think it might have been the former Member for Terra Nova; I could be wrong, but I think that's who it was – and I said: You know what? We're on the wrong side of this one. This is going to come back to haunt us. I just knew that it was going to come back to haunt us, and sure enough it did.

I can remember the minister of – I'm going to say Natural Resources; I forget his title now. He was over on this side and they were here with all the paper, with all the blacked-out ATIPPs, and everything was all black and so on where everything was redacted. I said, b'ys, this is going to be the downfall. I can remember going to caucus meeting after caucus meeting and everything, bringing up we have to change it, we have to change it, we have to change it.

Unfortunately the Cabinet of the day wouldn't go down there. They kept saying we'll look at it, but they never did. Even though it wasn't just me – it was other Members as well – they wouldn't do it. It was the downfall.

Unfortunately, after Premier Dunderdale left and Davis came in, they did change it. They got Clyde Wells and we have arguably the best access to information act in the country now –

modern, it's a good act. It was too late at that point. The damage had been done and the public had turned against the party at the time.

But the reason why I bring this up – because you're saying, why would you be bringing all this up? What does this have to do with the election? The reason why I bring it up is when you're here long enough and you see how things go down and you see the history, you see history starting to repeat itself sometimes after a while. I believe – I could be wrong, but my gut feeling tells me that yesterday's vote is kind of going to be like my Bill 29. I believe there are people over there that voted against that motion who know what we are bringing up is right. They know all these issues happened with the election.

Interesting that I never heard one Member over there, not one – either in that debate or in Interim Supply tonight or whatever, I haven't heard one Member over there stand up – well, they're not standing up, but when their turn came to speak, to say: I had a problem with the election; I had a problem with people not being able to vote –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. LANE: I had an issue with the phone lines, with the computer lines; I have concerns about the scrutineering. Not one Member has an issue. It's amazing.

Everybody on this side has talked about all the issues they've had. The general public is talking about all the issues they've had. We have whistleblowers coming forward talking about everything that happened. So we're not making it up. This is not being made up. I'm getting messages – I'm sure everybody is. But nobody over there seems to have one problem, not one issue. It's amazing.

I don't mean this in a nasty way, I really don't. I'm just being honest here; someone who's been around. I've admitted myself I've made mistakes, and I had to wear it. I have a feeling this could be your Bill 29. I really do. This is not going to go away, because what happened was wrong. What happened was wrong. You can laugh at it, I say to the minister. You can laugh away, but I'm telling you, we laughed away too.

There were Members over there who laughed away at Bill 29. Don't be so foolish, don't be so foolish, that's just the Opposition now getting on with their foolishness. I'm telling you, the people were upset and it came back to haunt them. This is going to come back to haunt you because this is not right.

I'm going to urge you, there are still lots of opportunity. Like the Member for Bay of Islands said, you have your all-party Committee you're going to have and it says you're going to look into the election. It's very vague in how that's going to happen, but I hope that this Committee is actually going to find out, like do what – I think it should be independent – but maybe this Committee should recommend that they're going to hire someone to do it independently, find out what happened and hold the Chief Electoral Officer to account.

My God, he's an employee. If you were working for a company and you had a board of directors and CEO and there was a total catastrophe happening in the company, what would the board of directors do? They're going to say: That's all right, b'y, don't worry about it. You just lost the company a couple of million dollars on a contract. That's all right, b'y, you'll do better next time. It's unbelievable.

CHAIR: Order, please!

I remind the hon. Member that his speaking time is expired.

I recognize the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We've had an interesting evening so far and some subjects closer to my old job. We've had breastfeeding in some detail, we've had kidney stones. I will share with the House that before I changed careers I was a proctologist, but now I've seen the light, so I'll move on for fear of upsetting people with TMI.

On a more serious note, given the fact that this is budget-debate time that we are talking through and it is distinctly possible now that the Estimates for Health might not actually get read in in the usual process, and bearing in mind that

I haven't seen the budget, I thought I would provide an update for the Members opposite of the activities of the department over the course of the last year so at least there will be some record that we did our due diligence.

Our expenditure for this year will be within a hundred million, I think, of last year's. The difference may well actually be down to federal transfers related to COVID. That would appear on the budget Estimates books, which you will get, as money in and money out. In terms of global expenditure though, I would be pleased to be able to report that our expenditure has not increased by even a fraction of inflation, year on year. This will now be the sixth time I, in this portfolio, have been able to report this to the House or the Estimates Committee.

That is an achievement unparalleled in the history of this province, and it's unparalleled in the history of any jurisdiction in Canada. Quite frankly, the average increase across Canada has been 4 per cent and the range has been up as high as 6 or even 8 per cent some years. Bearing in mind that inflation over that period, on an annual basis, has been less than 2.5 per cent. The fact that our increases amount to a fraction of a per cent would suggest that we have, in terms of net present value from 2015 dollars, for example, actually been able to reduce our health spending.

We've done it at a time when we've invested over \$200 million, for example, in mental health and addiction services across this province. We now have 70 locations across the province with Doorways clinics. These did not exist three years ago. We have met or exceeded every one of the timelines laid out in *Towards Recovery* for short- and medium-term goals. The long-term goal, which is the opening of the new adult mental health and addictions facility, is on track, but it is obviously something for the future.

The time between now and then will be used to build up community-based services, community crisis beds, supports within rural Newfoundland and Labrador to compensate or to balance the fact that we are shifting mental health and addictions, as we will be, with physical ailments, for want of a better description, into a much more community-based, patient-centred approach, and not necessarily simply relying on

bricks and mortar and thinking that that equates to health care.

But on the bricks and mortar, we have actually taken the numbers that were generated prior to my time in office for new long-term care beds and we have, as a government, over three mandates now; we have put in place a significant increase in the number of long-term care beds. There are 120 new beds in Corner Brook. There are 60 in Gander and another 60 in Grand Falls-Windsor. These represent a major increase in numbers.

But it is also at a time when, for the first time in our history, we have actually been able to discharge patients from long-term care back into the community because we have been able to provide supports that didn't exist before 2016. That is unheard of. We've never been doing that before, and Central Health led the way with the first 19 in 2019. This shows that we can, in line with the Seniors' Advocate recommendations, look after people in age-friendly communities and they can age in place.

To pick up on my colleague from Mount Scio, breastfeeding is a key to a healthy population. Lactation consultants were brought in and have served an invaluable role in this area, but there are new players – actors, if you like – in that area. That is one of our proudest achievements, which is to bring back to Newfoundland and Labrador the discipline, the speciality of midwifery.

That is in place in Gander. It will be marched out, moved out across the province as other centres are identified. My department is currently working on at least three, if not four potential locations, some of which could be announced even in the budget, perhaps, but if not, certainly over the course of the coming 12 months.

This is a traditional, but also very advanced way of providing sexual health, reproductive health and childbirth support for women. It is extremely popular amongst women and it is a choice that they have a right to expect. Over time, I will regard it as one of my greatest achievements and our greatest achievement from this side of the House to have reintroduced that to Newfoundland and Labrador.

I will actually take issue on a health point with one of the comments that were made earlier on, about the Member opposite didn't seem to think that we'd done very well with COVID from what he'd seen in the media. I would point out that the prevalence, our one-week case numbers for Newfoundland and Labrador are 3.4 per 100,000. That is at a time when the same week, Regina, one city, not a province, hit 348 per 100,000. I would argue that not only is that not bad, it's very good and actually does lead the country with the exception of the Territories, which have lower numbers still.

I would say that our Public Health mechanism, our Public Health legislation, which is the best in the Northern Hemisphere has enabled us to do what very few jurisdictions have done. Yes, we have seen the variant come. Yes, we've had our clusters but they have been dealt with promptly and efficiently. We are not in the same position as those provinces on the Mainland. If you say that's an unfair comparison, I wouldn't disagree with you to some extent, but look at Nova Scotia, look at New Brunswick. PEI isn't doing badly but they're in a situation they don't want to be in and for their population, 13 cases and two hospitalizations for the first time ever is troubling them.

We are in a very good position. I would argue we are an example, not just for Canada but for the entire world. We have vaccinated, as of the 19th of April, close of business, 31 per cent of our eligible population with at least one dose.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HAGGIE: That is well ahead of a lot of Canadian jurisdictions.

I haven't looked at some of the figures from BC but I don't believe anybody else's figures, with the exception of some of the Territories, will beat those. The reason the Territories are different with their vaccination is that they were different and they were treated differently from a Public Health perspective, and rightly so, so their percentages are higher.

On behalf of my colleagues, and my staff in Public Health, I think it's unfair to leave anybody listening to this broadcast tonight with

any impression other than that Public Health in this province is superb.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is indeed an honour and opportunity to speak to my colleagues in the House of Assembly on a later than normal Thursday night in our first week back in the House of Assembly.

I first want to start by congratulating the City of St. John's and the bid committee and the government for being supportive of the 2025 Canada Summer Games coming to Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: We all see the value, financially, but we also see it socially for our society. I was fortunate enough to be at the '77 Games, not as an athlete but as a follower of the athletes who were there, and saw Gord Follett, the first individual Newfoundlander and Labradorian, win a medal in track and field, and what that meant at the field that day for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The spirit of sport has taken off since then.

When we look at what's happened over the last number of years when it comes to the sport industry, from a financial point of view, but from a social, moral point of view in a sense of getting our spirits up, we don't have to look very far. Look at the Brier and Gushue winning the Brier here for us, what that meant for the province and what it meant for expats all over this country being proud of it. Look at the Growlers and the Kelly Cup, first year in the league, and what that meant for the City of St. John's and all the outlying areas and what it meant for even promoting pro hockey in Newfoundland and Labrador. We have a great industry here that, not only brings financial benefits to the people of this province but it also brings other social inclusions that are very important as we look forward.

I have to note, six months ago we debated financial situations around the needs of people in Newfoundland and Labrador when we passed the COVID budget. Six months is not a long period of time, but we've been through a lot. We've been through a COVID budget that you have to adjust to try to meet the needs, not really knowing where your revenues were coming from and what your expenditures are going to be. We had an election, a very extreme, unique, at times challenging election that obviously has left a bad taste in some people's mouths when it comes to the operations. We do respect the will of the people, but, again, it was a challenging time.

We went through another major spike in the COVID challenges and pandemic here in Newfoundland and Labrador and we went through another Newfoundland and Labrador winter. What all of this tells me is that it tells me something about the people of this province: We're very resilient. We're still here. We're still vibrant. The people haven't given up on this province. I know the people in this House haven't given up on this province and we intend to keep doing that on both sides of this House, without a doubt.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: I do want to note a few things about this past week. We've only been here a week since the last election and since the last time we sat in this House, and we've had some spirited debate in the last number of days. We've talked about democratic reform, we've talked about the Elections Act, we've talked about the MCRC for Members and we've passed some legislation that was relevant and very necessary to improve the lives of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. I would hope and I am confident that we did it all in the spirit of what we feel is in the best interest of everybody in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We may not always agree, no doubt. We may have a differencing of opinion. We may even challenge individual's views on why they take a certain stance and what they stand for. But I want to make it clear, and I do this with the full respect of this House of Assembly, we realize everybody on each side of this House has a role. We understand the role that government has. We

understand the role of putting legislation forward that's important for the people, based on information that they would use.

But it has to be clear, too, so that people who don't understand – or people would realize not to take anything personally, we have the ability, but more importantly on this side of the House, we have a responsibility to ensure that the will of the people that we hear is discussed and debated in the House of Assembly. We bring that to the government's attention, we challenge the government sometimes on some of their policies, we'll challenge them on some legislation and we'll challenge them for clarification in Question Period. But it's done in the spirit of representing the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Not a specific district; sometimes there are issues particularly to a district, but it's about the betterment of all of our residents in our society.

I think we have an opportunity to start. This is the 50th General Assembly of the House of Assembly, and that's a milestone. I think we have an opportunity to do something unique, to be much more collaborative. I understand, at the end of the day, collaboration is normally felt that it is the responsibility of the Opposition, because we're the adversaries of government by the nature of what people would think. But we've made it clear on this side of the House, particularly the Official Opposition, that our objective here is to work with government, to work with our colleagues on this side of the House, to work with everybody that are responsible within the government and to ensure that we improve people's lives.

We know we have challenges. Nobody has their heads in the sand not to realize that Newfoundland and Labrador has challenges. This whole country has challenges. But we've got to be responsible for our own here in trying to make sure that our stake in life is better improved than the way we found it. There may be some harsh decisions that have to be made, but the best way to make harsh decisions and the best way to ensure that people understand why you're doing it and they don't take it as a personal attack on them or it's something that they're being singled out about is that we share the information we have, that we be honest with people and be open.

I will tell you, over here, this is the philosophy of our caucus. We will engage, with the right information, the best way that we can support any piece of legislation that benefits people in our province. We will support moving forward in the best interest of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, but to do that, we ask that everybody be open to sharing as much information as possible, that we don't become adversarial when it comes to looking at the best approaches for us and that we become collaborative. I've always been taught that it's much easier to do this than it is to do this with somebody. You get much more out of it at the end.

As an Opposition, I know we've had a challenging week. I know we've bantered back and forth. Maybe it's coming back to the House the first time. Maybe it's people feeling they have to take a certain role in certain things. Maybe it's an opportunity to, say, move away from where we were before to where we want to go. But I think we have the ability now to do the right things for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. People are on the edge now worrying about if their children are going to be able to stay in this province and find employment. We know businesses are on the brink of financial disaster and we know everybody has done what they can to support local as part of that process. Let's collectively find a way to work together in this House. Let's collectively find a way to look at legislation that best fits what we do.

We did something unique the last sitting. We took a piece of legislation, and instead of going through the normal, standard process that bureaucrats write the legislation; the minister and their executive look at it. They bring it to Cabinet. It gets discussed, may get modified. It's brought to the House; it becomes debated, but at the end of the day, in a majority government, nothing really changes.

But we did something unique, and that was a collaboration between all Members in this House. We took a piece of legislation, where a Committee – Committees that have been struck for years but really, other than debate in Estimates in budget, have no real influence or power at the end of the day, but took something unique, took a piece of legislation that got vetted through all parties, got extra information brought

forward so that the piece of legislation that came to the House was the best felt piece of information that could be put in legislation that would best represent what that piece of legislation was set out to do.

I thought it was a great move forward. I was hopeful that we would continue to do it. I know everything went astray when COVID happened. A COVID budget is totally different than any other standard thing. Legislation became based on immediate stuff we needed, because we only got to meet a number of times. We talked about meeting virtually and the challenges that would be around that.

But I do encourage this administration – because we're open to it over here – let's continue that process. There are a number of pieces of legislation there that could be better fitted to the needs of the people in Newfoundland and Labrador and serve better in this House of Assembly and actually save time if it was vetted through the Standing Committees that we all just signed off on as leaders – that had representation on it by individuals who come from different and varying backgrounds who would give 110 per cent to ensure that piece of legislation works for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Chair, as we wind down, as we get a chance to pass the Interim Supply, I do again want to reiterate: We're here to collaborate. We have a responsibility, but collaboration has to be a two-way street here. We need to share information with each other; we need to be open with each other and we need to be honest with each other. Don't worry about if the honest answer isn't the one that somebody likes. If it is the honest answer, it is the right answer.

Mr. Chair, on that note, I do welcome everybody back. I do look forward to working with everybody over the next four years.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Order, please!

The Chair recognizes the Deputy Premier.

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

It is an honour, even at this late hour, to have the opportunity to speak in this House. I represent the historic district of St. John's West. It is a proud district that predates Confederation. It has been represented by the likes of the Cashins; Mr. Smallwood, at one point; Mr. Crosbie; and Mr. Adams. It is a historic district, and I am very proud to represent the people of my district and very proud that they have chosen me to do that for them. I will work very hard and always with integrity and strength. It is an honour tonight to be here, to be with my colleagues and to be back in the House of Assembly.

A few things I wanted to say in conclusion of, really, debate of two Interim Supply bills. One was to dispense with the special warrant that was required because of the election and the fact that House of Assembly was recessed because of that, and the second to get us to the end of July. It is a tremendous sum of money. I think together there was almost \$3.6 billion that we are approving over those two Estimate bills. I want to point out the intense amount of work that goes on to prepare for Interim Supply, to prepare the Estimates and to prepare the budget. We have a tremendous budget here in Newfoundland and Labrador, a large budget.

I can tell you if you walk down the corridor in the Department of Finance tonight, there are people working. I want to recognize them. I want to thank them. They are an incredible group of dedicated professionals. I'm very proud to work with them. I think everyone in this House is proud of them. I say that with sincerity and honesty, because I've heard many over the last, I think, six or seven hours that we've debated Interim Supply. There have been officials available. If there was a question that needed to be answered, my officials were available to do that. They certainly are dedicated to the task.

I want to recognize and thank them, on behalf of all of us in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

S. COADY: Mr. Chair, we all know – and many, many people talked about this over the last number of days – that Newfoundland and Labrador is faced with a difficult financial

situation. We were making improvements over the last number of years, and then came COVID.

Mr. Chair, we have to ensure we have financial discipline and fiscal discipline. I heard many of my colleagues in this hon. House talk to that. We cannot continue to use the credit card. Our credit card is maxed out. We're now going to Payday Loans. We have to now address this. But just with the same tenacity and strength that Newfoundland and Labrador worked to ensure that we were keeping each other safe during the pandemic, I know that we have the strength, the resilience and the fortitude to address our financial concerns.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

S. COADY: I know there's a lot of chatter; I'm just being interceded here.

I think that we are now armed with some more knowledge and as we move forward towards budget – and as the Member opposite pointed out in this remarks, it's only a few short months ago that we had – I think he called it the COVID budget. We had a budget; it was only a few short months ago. Now we're heading towards our next budget. We're armed with knowledge. We have the post-secondary education report. We have a report by Health Accord. We will have, at some point in the next couple of weeks, the Premier's Economic Task Force report.

We will be armed with knowledge and we will move forward. We will have a plan to get us into a better financial situation. It will take all of us, our collective strength and our collective wisdom to get there. It will be in conjunction with stakeholders and individuals, the people of the province. We represent the people of the province, so all of us working together, I think, will help us to ensure that we modernize, that we transform, that we improve and that we can be seized by this opportunity. We are very, very fortunate, I think, to have that collective strength to push past the concerns that we have financially, now that we're almost through the pandemic to pass through the concerns that we have financially to get to a much better place. We need to define the vision of our province, and I think the budget in the coming weeks and months will help to define that; I think the election helped to define that, the strength of

Newfoundland and Labrador, the opportunities in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and the resilience.

As I conclude this evening, as we all conclude this evening on this discussion, Mr. Chair, this particular allocation is for \$1.371 billion. A tremendous amount of money, and that's only for an Interim Supply for two months. That's on top of the other Interim Supply that we did earlier this week. It's a tremendous amount of money and a tremendous strength that we have to take forward to address our fiscal concerns. I know we're going to get there. I have incredible faith in the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I have incredible faith in the people in this House of Assembly. So I am seized with knowing that we can address these concerns.

I always reflect back; my father used to quote Socrates a lot to us when we were kids and I'm reminded of a quote: The secret of change is to focus all your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building and creating the new. Socrates said that, Mr. Chair. That is indeed what we're going to be doing. Building the new, modernizing, transforming and improving. I think that Newfoundland and Labrador will be in a better place. I think Newfoundland and Labrador will have a bright future. I think Newfoundland and Labrador should be proud of not only its heritage, but of its future.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you.

Order, please!

Shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

A bill, "An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2022 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service." (Bill 3)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 to 4 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 4 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 4 carried.

CLERK: The Schedule.

CHAIR: Shall the Schedule carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, Schedule carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: WHEREAS it appears that the sums mentioned are required to defray certain expenses of the Public Service of Newfoundland and Labrador for the financial year ending March 31, 2022 and for other purposes relating to the public service.

CHAIR: Shall the preamble carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, preamble carried.

CLERK: An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2022 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

CHAIR: Shall the long title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, long title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the resolution and a bill subsequent thereto, carried.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 3 carried.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 3 carried.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

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

B. WARR: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of Supply reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report that the Committee have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

When shall the report be received?

S. CROCKER: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: My apologies, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that the resolution be now read a first time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the resolution be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

"That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2022 the sum of \$1,371,724,400."

On motion, resolution read a first time.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, that the resolution be now read a second time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the resolution now be read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

"That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2022 the sum of \$1,371,724,400."

On motion, resolution read a second time.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, for leave to introduce an Interim Supply bill, Bill 3, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce Bill 3, the Interim Supply bill, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

Motion, that the hon. Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a bill, "An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of

The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2022 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.” (Bill 3)

CLERK: A bill, An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2022 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 3)

On motion, Bill 3 read a first time.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the Interim Supply bill be now read a second time.

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

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Year Ending March 31, 2022 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 3)

On motion, Bill 3 read a second time.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that the Interim Supply bill be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2022 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 3)

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

On motion, a bill, “An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2022 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service,” read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 3)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move, seconded by the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, that this House do now adjourn.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that this House do now adjourn.

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

This House now stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m., tomorrow afternoon, May 31, 2021.

Safe travels to everyone that's driving back to their districts and enjoy.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Monday, May 31, 2021, at 1:30 p.m.