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Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Are the House Leaders ready?

Admit strangers.

Order, please!

I would like to take a moment to comment on the tone of debate in the Chamber. On April 1, 2020, the House adopted a Harassment-Free Workplace Policy governing our interactions outside this Chamber.

In a report accompanying the policy, the Committee states the following: “The House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to a safe and respectful work environment for Members and employees that is free from harassment, bullying and violence. It is everyone’s responsibility to foster a healthy work environment; to promote a culture of civility; to demonstrate respect; and to recognize every person’s right to be protected and supported.”

While the policy does not apply to interactions within this Chamber, given parliamentary privileges and the related freedoms of speech that Members enjoy, I see no reason why the principles accepted by the House and adopted in policy should not apply to debate here as well. I draw Members’ attention to the fact that language and tone used in debate matter. That is, I see no reason why principles of respect and civility should not apply to debate in this Chamber.

I ask all hon. Members to examine the language they use in the House and to ensure that it is tempered, appropriate and respectful.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

SPEAKER: Today, we will hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Placentia West - Bellevue, Burin -Grand Bank, St. George’s - Humber, Mount Pearl North and Exploits.

The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

J. DWYER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I sit in this hon. House today to recognize 17-year-old Sara Thorne of Chance Cove, a resident of my beautiful District of Placentia West - Bellevue who loves the sport of auto racing. Sara has been a regular on the track in Avondale since 2019 and is truly a rising star in her sport in this province.

This was evident this past weekend when Sara made history on the track as she captured the checkered flag to become the first female to win the sportsman main event during the NASCAR Advance Auto Parts Weekly Series. Sara is a trailblazer for young women and girls looking to get into the sport of auto racing and the sport in general.

She’s a great example of those individuals who want to follow their dreams and become champions. Through her determination and hard work, Sara is a force behind the wheel and feared by all who compete against her on the racetrack in this province.

I invite all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Sara and her team on this prestigious victory.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burin - Grand Bank.

P. PIKE: Mr. Speaker, 3L Training & Employment board, an organization located in St. Lawrence, has a mandate to provide training and work experience to individuals who may experience challenges in the workplace. Clients are paired with a worker who assists them in the skilled development of tasks required for the workforce. They are matched with local contractors, grocery store owners and the museum where they currently run a business.

The Town of St. Lawrence and the board made up of volunteers from St. Lawrence, Little St. Lawrence and Lawn have made significant

investments in providing the necessary equipment and space for them to operate a jewelry making business. The clients who participate in this program use local flourspar for their craft and the end result is truly amazing. People from all over come to purchase this locally crafted product. While visiting, they have the opportunity to observe the clients at work or craft their own piece.

The people of the three communities are so proud of this organization and their contribution to our community. It is a great example of what happens in rural Newfoundland and Labrador when people take care of their own and show the true character and kindness of rural living.

If you are visiting this very beautiful, historic area of the province located in the great District of Burin - Grand Bank drop by and meet the folks at 3L.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. George's - Humber.

S. REID: Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to recognize Rachael Moores, a 16-year-old student in Pasadena who recently was honoured nationally for helping other students improve their financial knowledge.

She recently entered a competition sponsored by the Canadian Foundation for Economic Education and the CIBC. In this competition, high school students from across Canada were challenged to use their creativity, skills and passion to create new tools and resources to help young Canadians improve their financial knowledge and capabilities.

Rachael excelled by creating a website called School Makes Cents to teach fellow students everything they needed to know about the cost of post-secondary education.

Rachael gives tips on how to budget, stores that provide discounts, different types of savings and outlined different ways students can pay for post-secondary education such as through

scholarships, grants and working or through co-operative education.

Rachael passed the first round of judging and was one of the 10 finalist who made it to the second round of this national competition. In the next round, she won the second place prize of \$5,000.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating Rachael Moores of Pasadena on her accomplishment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

L. STOYLES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this House in remembrance of constituents and friends who have left their mark on all of us all.

Mr. Jim Greenland, who served as chair of the Frosty Festival and community volunteer; Mr. Gerry Taylor, a huge contributor to Mount Pearl minor hockey and a member of the NL Hockey Hall of Fame; Mr. Neil Windsor who served the District of Mount Pearl as MHA for over 20 years; Mr. Jim Thistle, he is remembered for his devotion and love of his family and his community service; Ms. Carole Burke, a lifetime resident of Mount Pearl and an employee with the City of Mount Pearl; Margaret Pike, whose family was her sole existence; Cyril Colford, a neighbour, friend and lifetime volunteer; also, Dr. Val Conway; and Mr. George Murphy who will be in our thoughts forever.

Mr. Speaker, all these people surely have made their mark: we will remember them all.

I ask all Members of this House to remember them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on June 11 and 12, I had the opportunity to attend the 100th anniversary of

the St. Andrew's Anglican Church in Bishop's Falls. Friday evening was the unveiling of its centennial banner and on Saturday, a prayer walk through the town, ending with a barbecue.

We all know the restrictions that have been placed on public buildings, including churches, during COVID; however, with the dedication of its congregation and leadership of Rev. Jeff Blackwood, St. Andrew's Church has weathered the storm.

St. Andrew's Church has provided hundreds of community services this past century, including baptisms, weddings, funerals, youth programs, but most of all, a place to worship. Built in 1921 with its magnificent architecture, the bell still rings for Sunday service.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members of this House of Assembly to join me in congratulating the congregation of St. Andrew's Anglican Church on their 100th anniversary and wish them many more years of service.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

J. ABBOTT: Mr. Speaker, while many of us do not even think twice about how we are going to get to a doctor's appointment, go to the grocery store or travel to work every day, there are many people throughout Newfoundland and Labrador who struggle to get around because of age, mobility, geography or income.

The value of ensuring seniors, persons with disabilities and individuals with low income to access services and participate in their communities cannot be overstated.

To help reduce transportation barriers, the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development offers the Newfoundland and Labrador Community Transportation Program, with an investment of \$300,000 in *Budget 2021*.

This program can significantly improve an individual's independence and their health, as well as help them become a more active member in their community.

It is available to municipalities, not-for-profit organizations and Indigenous governments and communities to develop, implement and evaluate a community-based transportation project that is as inclusive and as accessible as possible. Many valuable projects have been implemented by community partners with support from this program. I am pleased that seven projects located throughout the province were supported last year, one of which was Connections for Seniors Handy Ride Program.

Just last week, Mr. Speaker, I opened the call for applications for the Newfoundland and Labrador Community Transportation Program, with the deadline to apply being September 30. Successful applicants can receive up to \$100,000 for alternate transportation services for individuals who experience barriers to accessible, affordable and inclusive transportation.

I encourage any community or group interested in the program to reach out to my department by calling 1-888-494-2266 or visiting our website.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DWYER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

Mr. Speaker, I give credit to the minister for implementing a Community Transportation Program for seniors, persons with disabilities and low-income individuals, and especially the fact that he recognized the many struggles faced by many people in our province. We recognize the fact many of these individuals need this kind of support and we're pleased to see he recognized the fact an allowance for transportation is a small step towards poverty reduction.

We believe in a strategy for the inclusion of seniors, persons with disabilities and low-income individuals in collaboration with non-profit and community organizations. It's important to remove barriers and help achieve the full inclusion of all citizens of this province.

I would hope the program will benefit the seniors, low-income individuals and persons with disabilities in every community of this province. Whether you reside on the Coast of Labrador, the beautiful District of Placentia West - Bellevue or the City of St. John's, there should be no barriers in availing of the program.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. The Third Party applauds the launch of this new program, as we believe that people can't be independent or truly free if they don't have access to equitable and accessible forms of transportation. Certainly, for many people in my district, this will be helpful.

However, we also recognize that more work must be done. Many people in this province continue to struggle to find adequate means of transportation due to age, mobility and low income. For instance, the loss of DRL means we now lack any intercity transit that is affordable and reliable. That's why we're calling on this government today to go further, map out an achievable plan to make accessible and affordable transportation a standard throughout the province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

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

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

I'm pleased today to recognize Public Service Week – dedicated to recognizing the outstanding public service employees who work hard every day for all of us. We celebrate their tremendous contributions and commitment to our province.

Each day, public service employees are on the front lines, working hard to ensure our communities are safe, our families healthy, our children educated. They work to build our communities and our economy. The important programs and services they offer positively affect families, individuals and businesses throughout our province every day.

The theme of this week, Proudly Serving Newfoundland and Labrador, speaks to the pride and commitment we see each day from the province's valued public service employees as they work to improve Newfoundland and Labrador and provide needed services and information, making it a better place to live and to work.

In response to the pandemic, they have risen to every challenge, rallying to find new and innovative ways to serve and to care. The pandemic has demanded perseverance and resourcefulness – the Newfoundland and Labrador public service has met that challenge and has once again demonstrated its excellence.

Mr. Speaker, their efforts and dedication are appreciated and their important contributions noticed every single day. I ask all members to join me in recognizing Public Service Week and the valuable contributions of those that serve.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. On behalf of the Official Opposition, I join with the minister in recognizing this week as Public Service Week.

I also wish to extend our appreciation to the hard-working members of the public service who give their efforts and talents to make this province a better place for all residents. From social workers, to policy analysts, to snowplow operators, to ferry captains, the public service has many professions within it. Each profession and each department works together to serve our province.

This past 18 months has been a challenge for the public service as many workers were forced to work from home, to find new ways of accomplishing their tasks and stretched to make sure all essential services were delivered. The public service demonstrated their true abilities and rose above this challenge. For this, I thank them.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to give a special thank you to all those who work in the public service in my district. Many thanks for the work you do.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. The Third Party caucus would like to extend our appreciation to the public service workers of this province for the massive part they play in keeping our society running.

Their dedication to their work has especially been exemplary since the start of the pandemic. We cannot thank them or the essential workers of this province enough for the service they have provided. I urge the government to keep in mind the public service's value in the coming years as they roll out their different plans for the public sector.

A minimum wage and adequate labour laws need to be in place to protect all workers of this province. We owe the residents of this province better than the treatment we have given the cleaners in this building, who saw their wages cut and benefits stripped away as a result of

privatization in the Wells administration. So, please, keep them in mind.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Are there any further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As we sit here in the House the future of the Terra Nova Project gets dimmer as the clock ticks down to the deadline.

I ask the Premier: What actions have you taken in the last 24 hours to encourage a deal among the partners?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that question.

Of course, the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology has been working diligently, long throughout the evening. We actually had a call with Noia last night to see how they could be of assistance. We're, again, pressuring the operators, the companies, the multi-billion dollar profitable oil companies to come to an agreement amongst themselves, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, we feel like we have a healthy, good offer on the table and we're looking forward to seeing what Suncor, as the operating partner, has to say and hopefully they can come to a resolution, Mr. Speaker. But this is a private sector issue and it needs a private sector solution.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the last 24 hours has the Premier personally spoken to the Terra Nova partners to express the importance of getting a deal, and has he convened a meeting?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question.

We've certainly been in close contact with the partners, the many different partners, and the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology has been spearheading that. I have the utmost faith in his ability to execute, as all of the team here on this side of the floor, Mr. Speaker. I am very encouraged with how he has led this file, I couldn't be more proud to stand with him on this file and I have every confidence in his ability to continue to advance this file, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As we get close to the deadline there are families out there who are worried about whether or not this file gets done.

Is the deadline for the deal still today? Has the Premier asked for an extension if a deal cannot be reached?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again for the question.

As we've said before, this is not our deadline; this is a deadline amongst partners. We are not a partner in this project. This is a deadline that they have implemented. We hope they extend the deadline. We hope that they are able – as I'm sure the Members opposite do – to come to a resolution that allows for the partners to execute on the significant value that is out there in that resource, Mr. Speaker, so that we can have the returns to the people of this province.

This is not our deadline, Mr. Speaker. This is the deadline of multi-billion dollar profitable oil companies.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, when defending the Trudeau government for refusing to take an equity stake, the Premier said: They have no obligation to do so.

Why doesn't the Premier believe the federal government has an obligation to help get industries and jobs growing in Newfoundland and Labrador?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

What was meant by that response was they have no obligation to help multinational, multi-billion dollar profitable oil companies.

Mr. Speaker, they do have an obligation and they've honoured the obligation in incredible ways for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. They've given the assurance that they will be there in the future for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, including on rate mitigation, Mr. Speaker, and other important files as we face incredible economic challenges moving forward.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Unfortunately, we didn't hear that from federal Minister O'Regan yesterday when he spoke to the gathering about saving the jobs of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: Yesterday, the Premier said he was considering selling off the province's equity in oil and gas sector as recommended by the Moya Greene report. But the minister seems to disagree saying: Equity in and of itself can be a good thing.

I ask the Premier, can you please clarify: Is your government for or against equity stakes in the offshore?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the question from the Member opposite. It's a good question, but I'll remind him not to put words in my mouth and confuse what was said between the Premier and myself.

The fact is that you can save both things. The fact is (a): we can consider equity. We have equity projects right now. That's certainly something we can consider. At the same time, you can obviously consider looking at the evaluation of the assets that we have: Does it make sense for us, as a government, to divest of them? I think it would not be prudent to consider both options.

Right now, there are absolutely no decisions that have been made. We've been obviously considering equity as it relates to the Terra Nova. We've made a decision on that. We do know that there have been conversations in the Greene report. These are all things that we will keep in mind as we move forward with the history of this industry and others.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Just so I'm clear: The minister does agree that equity shares are still on the table for future offshore development.

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

A. PARSONS: I guess what I could say to be clear to the Member opposite is that when it comes to making deals happen, we will always consider anything that will make a project happen, to bring work to this province. But as we've said before we will not take a bad deal, we will not participate in giveaways and we will not do everything at all cost if it's to the detriment to the future of the province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We repeat our request from yesterday: Can the people of the province see the two sets of analyses from the Energy Department and OilCo of whether or not to take an equity stake?

Mr. Speaker, let the people see the facts.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would say two things in response to that question. The first one would be: all in due time. Right now, this negotiation is still ongoing. We have conveyed our position that there will be no equity. The partners are still looking at it. We've encouraged them. We've talked to them. We're trying to convince them that there is a solution for them to participate in. Part of that is the \$500 million that we have put forward.

Again, I do know that the people are interested in this, but I will point out that there's a significant portion of this province that's actually looking at us and questioning why we would even consider equity in this province. They are questioning why we would even consider putting \$500 million in. There are people on both sides of it.

Again, where we come in is: What is in the best interest of this province?

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will share that time is running out for families and workers who work on the Terra Nova and looking to have some livelihood in the future.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: Yesterday, the minister said the government is ready to step up with help for workers in Terra Nova if Terra Nova closes.

When you weigh the costs of the equity investment against what we stand to lose in terms of employment, supply purchases, multiplier spinoffs, royalties, revenues, bailout cash and the chill effect of our industry, where does the balance really lie? Do you have a thorough analysis to table for taxpayers to see?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, I don't need a reminder about time is running out here. I've been living with this since the first day I got in the job. I realize what we are facing here and I realize what the families of this province are facing. I certainly don't need a reminder on that.

As it relates to the jobs, I can tell you that is one of the biggest driving factors in even considering any of this was what does it relate to in the indirect spinoffs that come from this, not just the jobs, but what comes out of this. All that has been considered; all that plays a role in the negotiation.

We have made our position clear to the companies. We feel that this could be a beneficial deal for them with the money we have on the table. We feel that the jobs should stay here, but we also believe that these multinational profitable companies – one of which made over a quarter of a billion dollars just in the first

quarter – we feel that there's more that they can do.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We hope that the benefactors are the workers of the Terra Nova Project and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: Over the weekend, *The Globe and Mail* published a report confirming two federal Liberals staffers were granted exemptions to come to Newfoundland and Labrador during the provincial election campaign. They are confirmed to have campaigned for the provincial Liberals.

I ask the Premier: When did you become aware of these two staffers arriving in the province to campaign for you?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

The first I was made aware of it was actually in *The Globe and Mail* article.

What individual staff members do – that don't work for me or this government – is none of my business, Mr. Speaker. Frankly, they were here, as I understand it, working for Minister O'Regan and, on a weekend, volunteered on an election campaign. The headline might as well read: Staffers go for a run on the weekend, Mr. Speaker.

I didn't have any knowledge of it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: So in the middle of a pandemic, in the middle of a campaign, your federal counterpart sends two of their staff down here who go out and knock on doors for you and you're not aware of it?

We also heard they were making phone calls and knocking on doors.

I ask the Premier: Do you believe knocking on doors during an election campaign is an essential service?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER A. FUREY: The election was run under the Public Health guidelines, Mr. Speaker. I assume all parties within the House followed those guidelines. Making phone calls is certainly a COVID-friendly event.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

These election workers were allowed in Newfoundland and Labrador to get the Liberals elected, simple as that.

I ask the Premier: What do you say to families who had to miss funerals of loved ones? Is your election campaign more important than these loved ones' needs?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER A. FUREY: I don't know how to answer that question. I didn't look at their application to come in the province, nor should I. Frankly, that would be wrong. If that was the case, then that deserves the question, but I have no insight into who gets exempt to come in nor should I, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The federal Liberals won't do their part to help get Terra Nova back operating, but they're quick to help the Premier and their Liberal friends get elected.

I ask the Premier: Do you believe that your election campaign was more important than the countless weddings that were either postponed or held without loved ones able to be present?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

Once again, I would hope that everybody in this House followed the COVID guidelines for the election, which were published in the fall of 2020, Mr. Speaker. Again, I can't comment because I don't have any insight or knowledge or (inaudible) on who gets exempt or who doesn't, nor should I; that is a Public Health decision and should remain a Public Health decision above politics.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Premier: Why should the families of rotational workers spend weeks and sometimes months apart while workers on your election campaign are allowed entry into the province for non-essential purposes?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

I mean the answer is the same: I don't have any insight into who gets into the province; it's a Public Health decision, Mr. Speaker. I'm assuming that the Member opposite has full knowledge that he had no help from his federal cousins during the last election campaign. I would hope that is true.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: I would guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, if my federal cousins wanted to come to Newfoundland and Labrador in the middle of a pandemic with the outbreak that's in their provinces, I would not be endorsing them to come here. I guarantee you that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: I ask the Premier: Which Members of your caucus did these staffers campaign for?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

I can't answer that either, Mr. Speaker, because I wasn't campaigning with them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have been told that the federal minister posted photos online of two campaign workers on behalf of the Minister of Justice campaigning.

I ask the Minister of Justice: When did you learn that these non-essential election workers from the Mainland were knocking on doors on your behalf?

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you for the question and thank you for looking at my campaign photos online.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: We had a great campaign. We had awesome volunteers, every single one of them. During the whole campaign, whether it was knocking on doors, making phone calls or doing work from their own houses, I can assure you that they all worked as hard as they could and followed all health protocols that were required by the chief Health officer in this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: As I see the Members discard and laugh at the fact – about what we face during a pandemic and their disregard for the health of Newfoundland and Labrador, it's concerning here.

So, Mr. Premier, let me spell it out for you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: What's so concerning about this story is the disregard for the travel ban put in place on March 18, 2020. I cannot understand how knocking doors on an election campaign could've been deemed to be essential work, when I'm sure the Liberals were well staffed with provincial volunteers during the election campaign.

I ask the Premier: What exemption did the election workers apply for that allowed them to enter our province?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

I have the utmost faith in Dr. Fitzgerald and her team to make those decisions, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER A. FUREY: To suggest that there was political interference is just wrong, Mr. Speaker. Dr. Fitzgerald and her team are independent, as per the legislation, and they make the decisions. They look at the applications and they make the decisions. I've nothing further to say on that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier rolled the dice and gambled with the public's health, calling an election in the middle of the winter in the middle of a pandemic when COVID-19 cases were rising, for two months prior, across the country. He gambled and lost. Now we see the Liberal Party disregarding Public Health orders that have –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

D. BRAZIL: – protected this province from the worst of COVID-19.

I ask the Premier: Why did you put your party before the public health of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER A. FUREY: As I've suggested many times, Mr. Speaker, and answered this question over and over again, there had to be a COVID-19 election given the legislation that was put in place by the Progressive Conservatives.

I actually think, Mr. Speaker, that's good legislation, that when there is a change there should be an election. So there had to be a COVID-19 election. The numbers were low; they were the lowest in the country. We looked at the modelling –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER A. FUREY: If you save the stochastic event that occurred, then there was no way to predict what actually happened, Mr. Speaker. Dr. Rahman was on to say that there was no way to predict that massive outbreak; Dr. Fitzgerald has said the same.

All numbers looked like that it would've been fine. The baseline was lower than anywhere else in the country. Again, Mr. Speaker, there had to be a COVID-19 election and, subsequently, there was one.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier is well aware, from a lot of dialogue in this House, of public – a PMR that was offered in this House and open dialogue around not having the necessity to do that no matter what it took. He called a premature election at a time that it would have been advantageous to him and him alone.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: Last week, we learned from the Minister of Education that he had no idea about the president's contract at MUN.

Today, I would like to ask the Premier: Is he aware that the clerk of Executive Council, who he personally recruited and appointed, is collecting a six-figure pension and \$186,000 salary from the same government job he retired from?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

The current clerk is a tremendous, lifelong civil servant, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER A. FUREY: I will say this: He's getting paid less than when he was clerk for the Member opposite. I think we're getting a good value for our dollar, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Nobody is questioning the clerk's ability, but the Premier is accurate here; he is getting paid less. From \$202,000 a year to \$186,000 a year, while

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

D. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate the Premier is correct; the clerk is very competent. The issue has become he is getting less now at \$186,000, versus his \$202,000 when he retired last year or a couple of years, from which he still gets a six-figure income.

The question here: Is he eligible for a second pension doing the same job that he retired from?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

As the Member opposite knows, there's currently no legislation surrounding double-dipping. But I'm happy to have a fulsome debate on double-dipping in the future, Mr. Speaker, as it is an important question for this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If the Minister of Education believes that tax preparation and personal training are not acceptable benefits for the president of the

university to foot the bill, will the Premier table the contract of the clerk of the Executive Council for this House?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

Yes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: I look forward to seeing that report, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in a recent article in JWN Energy, it says that if the Terra Nova FPSO is decommissioned, taxpayers of this province will be on the hook for hundreds of millions of dollars in royalties to the partners.

How much money will the province have to pay and when?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy to get back to questions that are actually important and serious to the people of this province, so I appreciate the question from the Member.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. PARSONS: The reality is that there is a royalty credit or carry back, which has to go back to the partners if this project doesn't proceed. That would be in the range, roughly, of about \$150 million. The amount is due regardless. It has to go back anyway.

What I would say is that I don't have a timeline on that. Right now, our attention and focus have absolutely been on trying to get the deal to go ahead. He is correct that there is a royalty credit or carry back.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Absolutely shocked to hear that the minister doesn't think that people being able to attend loved ones' funerals – and I missed my father's funeral, Minister – isn't important or is laughable.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

L. PARROTT: I did, absolutely.

The reason the minister cannot give an answer is because he does not have an up-to-date commission or cost and analysis from the partners.

I ask the Premier: Why haven't you factored the cost into this decision?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, the Member opposite likes to play politics, and I send my condolences.

The reality is you cannot use the questions that he is asking here about two people coming down to this province and, basically, saying that Dr. Janice Fitzgerald –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

A. PARSONS: Keep going. Keep going. You want me to answer the question?

We're talking about election staffers coming down; we're talking about elections during pandemic time, and that's what we're coming back on. Why don't we put the questions back on where you've been going all week, which is Terra Nova, which is important?

If you have more questions to ask on Terra Nova, I'll certainly take them. Please ask them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Clearly, the last question was on the Terra Nova and the minister failed to answer it again.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: I ask the Premier: Why haven't you factored the decommissioning cost, the indirect cost, into your decision for not backing Terra Nova?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, we have looked at decommissioning costs, and there's a significant cost that's associated with decommissioning. The cost can change depending on when it happens and how it happens.

The big thing that we've put across here is that we do not want to take on that liability when we're coming in at the end of the field. All the other companies, this has already been budgeted in to their projections. This is something that they accounted for at the beginning, and now when we have 15 per cent left and we're going to be asked to take a percentage of decommissioning costs, a cost that we do not know and cannot control, that's something we weren't ready to take the risk for.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: I remind the minister that the Terra Nova came in in 2019, two years ago almost. I'm shocked that we don't know what the cost would be to this date.

The Premier has said the oil is still in the ground. Oil in the ground is only good if it

results in jobs and a revenue stream for the province.

How will this oil be used if the Terra Nova does not proceed? Is there a plan for a possible subsea tie-back?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Member opposite is shocked. Every question that he asks he is shocked. The reality is that we don't know everything, okay. I don't know if that's news to anybody, but certain things are unknown at this time. We would not be able to know them. We can have projections, we can have estimates, but we wouldn't be able to know them, nor would we have control.

Now, the reality is that there is an asset, there is oil still under that. We have no plans for a subsea tie-back. That's a comment that I've heard in the past. That's not our plan, that's not something that we would engage in.

What I will say is our attention solely to date has been trying to find a way to put half a billion dollars into jobs and into this project and asking, pleading with the partners to come together and find a way forward so that oil is taken out for the benefit of this province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not shocked we never got an answer.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. O'DRISCOLL: Last week, when I asked about the sad case of a rogue investment advisor who defrauded six elderly clients out of their life savings, the minister was vague and deferred to future improvements of the *Securities Act*.

Mr. Speaker, this is not going to help these seniors.

If the industry regulator has been pleading with government for years to bring in stronger regulations, what is the minister waiting for?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think financial security of our seniors is extremely important. It's incredibly unfortunate that someone defrauded these seniors. I can't comment on a specific situation, Mr. Speaker, but I do know that the current regulations do catch any specific examples that we're talking about.

If you look on the Order Paper you can see the *Securities Act*, where we are bringing in changes to strengthen the legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

It's high time that we get this stuff done. You wonder why the public is so poisoned with everybody. It's just so long to get legislation done. Let's get on it and get it done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. O'DRISCOLL: Mr. Speaker, this sounds like the same thing we heard on the ATV legislation. The industry regulator organization of Canada has complained for years that their power in NL is all bark and no financial bite. Government has been aware of this problem since at least 2019. Now, six elderly residents have lost their life savings.

When, finally, is the minister going to act?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Member asks a very important question about ATV safety and off-road vehicle safety, which is incredibly important to our government. I'm very sorry to the families and loved ones of those who've lost their lives and have been injured in an accident this year, Mr. Speaker, and any time.

We have done a comprehensive review of the legislation. We're recently in the final consultation stages. It's very complex legislation. We had to make sure all the right parties were consulted. I look forward to bringing legislation to the floor of the House, Mr. Speaker, as is in my mandate letter.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

I look forward to that legislation.

As the province transitions to welcome visitors, many residents are still exceptionally frustrated with long delays to access services from Motor Registration. My office continues to hear from residents who are waiting a month or longer for an appointment.

Mr. Speaker: When is the minister going to open up her department for normal counter service?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I know Motor Registration Division is a very important service to the residents of the province and one that we take very seriously. In the last two seasons we've had to completely change how we deliver service to the residents of this province, Mr. Speaker. If you look across our province, in seven out of 11 offices you can get an appointment that same week, and in some of the other offices it is longer.

I thank the public for their patience. We're working with new technologies, focusing on user experience and resident experience to deliver more value for taxpayers. I take this responsibility very seriously and we are hoping to improve the experience for residents of the province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology stated that, contrary to the beliefs of the NDP, we are not prepared to give up today on the workers that are involved in the oil and gas sector.

Will the minister clarify how asking for a just and orderly transition plan to avoid the sudden and unmanageable shock, such as what we're seeing with the Terra Nova FPSO, is giving up on oil and gas workers and the communities who depend on them?

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

A. PARSONS: I thank the Member for the question.

I apologize because sometimes I do get confused, because there's a leader that appears outside and actually criticized us for putting \$500 million into this to try to keep jobs here; whereas the Member inside asked questions about trying to transition. There is a confusion here. I don't know which speech I should listen to. There is someone outside who speaks for the NDP and went all over us about trying to put money into this, to try to keep it alive and, hence, to try to save jobs.

Again, I apologize to the speaker for the confusion; maybe somebody can help me out.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Mr. Speaker, I'm shocked and pleased at that response.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. DINN: The Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology said yesterday during Question Period that we will be launching a renewable energy plan, hopefully, sometime during 2021, and that's good to hear; however, we are almost halfway through 2021.

Will the minister provide details about how this plan is being or will be developed, who will have input into developing it and when we can expect to see a draft plan? Basically, what is the timeline?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hopefully, nothing that I say to the Member this time will be shocking, but I do hope to be able to try to please you with the answer that I give.

The reality is, as I said yesterday, I can't put a timeline on it, except to say that it is coming in 2021. Obviously, we will be speaking to, not just people within the department but our contacts all over the province, whether it be with Noia, whether it be with NEIA or whether it be with any of the stakeholders that are out there and have expertise in this.

We will want to draw from a wide range of experts on this so they will help formulate the basis for our plan going forward; one that we will obviously be very happy to table and to show everybody in the province when it is ready in 2021.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology: Will other groups, such as those concerned about the environment, play a role in developing a plan as well?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the question from the Member opposite.

As it relates to putting out a renewable energy plan, we will consult with experts in the renewable energy field. But I will say that as a plan like that comes forward, one group that we will consult with would be the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and multiple other departments will lead into this, whether it is the Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs. There are a lot of people that play into this, the proper and best use of our resources in the renewable field.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

E. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, the government has stated in the budget that the 911 services will be brought into the core government. I agree with the decision and completed a lot of work on this file. Many workers at 911 are experiencing anxiety, with possible job losses in their future.

What assurances can you give, Minister, to these employees that their jobs are safe in the very near future when you bring it into core government?

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Member opposite for his support of the position to bring NL911 into core services of government. We will be working with everyone at NL911 to ensure that all processes are streamlined for the benefit of Newfoundlanders

and Labradorians and we can save as much money as possible. Certainly, when we do that, we'll be talking about where they can position themselves in terms of jobs in the future, whether it be in this core government.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There are a lot of concerns, a lot of anxiety, with the workers, naturally. That is obvious and you can see the concerns.

I ask the minister: Can you get someone from your department or someone from Treasury Board to meet with the union so they can start consultation, so their workers can start on the ground and know if their jobs are safe and what they can do themselves to relieve the anxiety?

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

S. COADY: Thank you very much.

This is an important question and I thank the Member opposite for the question.

We will be working with employees, with unions on this transformation. As the Member opposite noted, this was outlined in the Budget Speech but now, as we move towards implementation, we will be working with individuals. We'll be working with the departments that are coming within core government. We'll be working with the unions to make sure it is a seamless process and maximizing the opportunities, not just for the employees but also for the people of the province to make sure they get the best level of service as well.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands, for a quick question.

E. JOYCE: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Can you confirm or give a timeline when your officials may be able to reach out to the union to discuss the concerns that the workers have at 911?

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

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

I am happy again to answer this question. As we move forward now from budget into implementation, we're putting in a process to make sure that where they move within core government, how the transition will occur will take place as seamlessly and as quickly as possible. We will be working with the employees to make this as functional and as quick as possible.

Mr. Speaker, within the next number of months, we'll be certainly making sure that this is done effectively and efficiently as possible.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Witless Bay Line is a significant piece of road infrastructure;

WHEREAS many residents commute outside the Southern Avalon region on a daily basis for work and pleasure. The region has an expanded commercial, residential and tourism sector increasing the volume of traffic on this highway each day;

THEREFORE we petition the House of Assembly as follows: To upgrade this important piece of road infrastructure to enhance the ease of the access to the Southern Avalon and accessibility for industry and others coming to and from the Trans-Canada Highway.

Mr. Speaker, this is probably the second or third time I've put this petition forward since we came back. It's a very important piece of infrastructure in our area. It's a road that's used extensively for truckers coming back and forth across the Island for crab fishing. There's a tourism section that's going to start now in July, hopefully – that's probably already started in some areas – with boat tours, Colony of Avalon, Mistaken Point. So many numerous tourist attractions along the way. It's a shortcut, too. Instead of going out around St. John's, it cuts a half hour, 45 minutes off people's drives when they are coming in for this tourism.

The condition of the road is deplorable in the midsection. I mean, they've done good work last year. They done four kilometres and the other end of Witless Bay Line has been done for three or four kilometres; but the midsection now, seven or eight kilometres, it is something that is desperately needed to be looked at, and hopefully we can get to do it.

I spoke also to some people that have motor homes that are driving across. If you're towing a trailer or driving a motor home, you know how bad it is when you hit these rough sections of highway. Not on the Trans-Canada, but on these side roads. It's important that you'd look at these pieces of road infrastructure. People are losing tires and rims and just delaying their trip. It can happen anywhere, but that section of the road it's happened a lot.

Also, I spoke to – as I've spoke before on this – motorcycle owners that see me and say don't

forget to question or put in about the motorcycle drivers as well, because it's an obstacle to go drive in there. Hopefully, the department can have a look at it and upgrade that infrastructure.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

George's Brook-Milton became incorporated on May 18, 2018, after conducting its feasibility study and received their municipal planning area in 2020, for which a huge section – over half of the available land – has since been designated for agricultural purposes. The town, nor the residents were ever made aware of this designation until 2020;

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to rezone this agricultural development area, removing a development burden for the Town of George's Brook-Milton and the many households who unknowingly currently reside within this area.

If I may speak to the petition, briefly. I was part of the group that brought in the unincorporated area in 2018. We had no knowledge of the agricultural development zone coming into where current property owners are, Mr. Speaker. We always had it in mind where the agricultural development zone ended, and we were quite aware of that – many of the seniors in the community.

But I think it was decision of this government in 2018-19 to increase the agricultural development areas, which again I have no problem with. But they brought it right down into a community of landowners that now they find that the homes that they've lived in for years are now in an agricultural development zone.

So the purpose would be to increase our land and increase our self-sufficiency in food services. It is not to go on to personal land

properties and restrict development into communities, when we do have so much in the Lethbridge agricultural zone. So we have lots there.

It seems like it was arbitrarily done. Arbitrarily done because we have homeowners now who find themselves on agricultural land, which they were not apprised of when they purchased the land decades and decades ago.

I would ask if the minister could come visit to have a look at this and see how it encroaches upon the community. We are big advocates of agricultural development and having zones in our province, but not taking in the households in the area of George's-Brook-Milton.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

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

I have an interesting petition here today. I believe it's directed at the Department of Education – and, in fact, it is – but there are implications for many departments and probably many MHAs in this House of Assembly.

Budget 2021 stated that government will be taking the appropriate steps to integrate the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District into the Department of Education. With this move to enhance investments in education, there will be opportunities to address inequities for the attraction of qualified teachers to all parts of the province and to all recognized education systems.

Certain schools are finding recruitment and retention further challenged as years of service for hiring purposes – i.e. seniority – is not recognized between private and public institutions, whereas years of service regarding pay scales is recognized.

Private schools, including the Mamu Tshishkutamashutau Innu Education, for example, find that teachers are reluctant to

apply, despite offers of competitive compensation. An additional equity challenge is that teachers of private schools or schools systems are not members of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, the NLTA.

Therefore, we the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to recognize years of service from recognized public and private schools when determining seniority in the province. Furthermore, impediments should be removed so that the NLTA could represent teachers from both private schools and school systems, thereby supporting government's efficiency objectives.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting, this independent role. I thank those who are bringing these interesting problems to my attention. My office is very busy and we're discovering many things. I am hearing the priority of government is around reconciliation. I'm fully supportive of it and so on, But we are constantly finding little stumbling blocks, little hurdles that exist in legislation, in policy that are keeping things back.

I go to the example of the Innu education system, but it applies also to other private schools that some of you, my colleagues in this room, would have in their own districts. In that as we try to attract and retain teachers, there is a reluctance to go into that system because any seniority they will have developed with that experience will not be recognized, should they return to the other.

So when I look at and having attended graduation ceremonies in Sheshatshiu over the last several years – which used to be zero, and now in the range of 20 – and the good progress they're making, only to encounter these kind of hurdles, I would ask the Minister of Education and government to take a look at this and see what we can do, especially with the changes being made in the department.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I once again bring a petition to the House in increased support for Labrador West seniors. This one has 283 signatures on it. Every one I bring is well over the 200 mark; the first one I brought was over the 400 mark. So these are people who are concerned about themselves or their moms or their dads.

The reason for the petition is: The need of senior accessible housing and home care services in Labrador West is still increasing. Lifelong residents of the region are facing the possibility to need to leave their home in order to afford to live and receive adequate care.

Additional housing options, including assisted living care facilities like throughout the rest of the province for seniors, have become a requirement for Labrador West. The requirement is not currently being met.

WHEREAS the seniors in our province are entitled to peace and comfort in their homes, where they have spent their life contributing to the prosperity and growth of the community; and

WHEREAS the means of the increasing number of senior residents in Labrador West to happily age in place are not currently available in the region;

WHEREUPON we, the undersigned, your petitioners, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to allow seniors in Labrador West to age in place and provide affordable housing options for seniors and assisted living care facilities for those requiring additional care.

Like I said, there are 283 signatures here. These individuals are themselves seniors or have seniors in their lives that are living in the region. These are people that want to keep the seniors in the community, keep seniors in Labrador West and provide the care and services that they require.

They helped build the community; it's their community just as much as anybody else's. Some of these seniors that are needing this service actually came to Lab West as very young people, or some were almost born there themselves. So we're getting to a place in our

community where these people are going to need these services.

We're a young, vibrant community, but we have seniors who want to stay. It's just going to get bigger and bigger and bigger. This is a problem that is new to the region, but it's not going to go away. It's something that needs to be addressed, something that needs to be looked at. I ask all the ministers that would be involved in this to have a look at seniors in Labrador West, the care that they're going to receive, the care they need and try to put the supports in place to build a seniors' system around there.

We don't have one. We're not as lucky or as fortunate, even as my colleague for Lake Melville, who has a seniors' complex there. They have the supports and wraparound services for seniors there. We don't have it in Lab West, but we're a comparable size as that community. We do need it, we don't have it and we really need people to pay attention and look at the seniors of Labrador West and how they're disadvantaged at this time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development for a response.

J. ABBOTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the Member's petition around seniors and seniors' housing in Labrador West, that's something that we're certainly cognizant, through the work with the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation and certainly through my department. We will be addressing many of those issues through our Housing and Homelessness Plan and working also with the federal government to find funding opportunities to meet that demand, which is not only prevalent in Lab West; it is true, really, through many communities throughout the province.

I appreciate the Member bringing the issue forward.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DWYER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Actually, before I get into my petition, I'd say: Congratulations, Minister. That was a good answer and very much respect for the House. Thank you.

The background of this petition is as follows:

WHEREAS there are no significant current operations at the Bull Arm Fabrication site, it is a world-class facility with potential to rejuvenate the local economy. The area has been troubled with the lack of local employment in today's economy. I find this one to be more poignant than ever now, with the work that we're looking to get done on the FPSO, on the Terra Nova. I would expect that there would be a longer term tenant. I think that's what we're really looking for here, because this is an asset of the province and to benefit the province. A long-term tenant for this site would attract gainful business opportunities; and

WHEREAS the continued idling of this site is not in the best interests of the province;

THEREFORE, we, the residents of the area near Bull Arm Fabrication site, petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows:

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to expedite the process to get the Bull Arm Fabrication site back in operation. We request that this process include a vision for a long-term viable plan that is beneficial to all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, just looking at the signatures on this one – I've obviously been presenting this since I came to the House – these ones go back to October 24, 2019, and they're signed by people in Chapel Arm. It does affect people of a vast area. It's a very world-class facility.

The reason why I'm presenting this today is because I understand there are some people that are interested in taking over the Bull Arm Fabrication site. I just want to make sure, I

guess, that the minister is working on this file as well because we'd like to see – I know that the North Sea Group would certainly be interested in sitting down and discussing long-term tenancy of the Bull Arm Fabrication site.

Hopefully, we can get somewhere in the vicinity of a 25-year deal instead of a five-year deal. I'm not saying that DF Barnes is not doing a good job out there or anything like that. They're a very reputable company, but I don't think we invested in the Bull Arm Fabrication site to become kind of the moratorium of our oil and gas industry.

I'd rather it be up and running and we can rejuvenate it and get it going; now is the time. Like I heard recently, the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time to plant a tree is today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Orders of the Day

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 9.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, that notwithstanding Standing Order 63, this House shall not proceed to Private Members' Day on Wednesday, June 16, 2021, but shall instead meet at 2 p.m. on that day for routine proceedings and to conduct government business, and that if not adjourned earlier, the Speaker shall adjourn the House at midnight.

SPEAKER: 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.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 10.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, pursuant to Standing Order 11(1), that this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 17, 2021.

SPEAKER: 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.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 1.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

P. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, it’s always a pleasure to speak in this House and to represent the fine people of Topsail - Paradise. One of the quotes that I tried to live by, as much as I can, is: Integrity is doing the right thing when nobody is watching. I try to live by that, but I am a little taken back by some of the remarks in the House of Assembly, just yesterday, made by the Premier.

I know we all make mistakes, I know nobody is perfect but you have to recognize you’ve made a mistake and you have to take responsibility for that. The key word is to recognize that mistake. Not wait for someone to advise you, not wait for someone to coach you on how to respond. You don’t need coaching or advisement to say you’re sorry and apologize.

There has been a trend here. We know recently the Premier made disparaging remarks about a news reporter, we know the Premier, essentially, told Memorial University to grow up and, of course, just recently, the Premier questioning our Leader of the Opposition’s intelligence. That’s only a couple of examples. If I stood up in this House and I called someone stupid, dense, brainless or an idiot, everyone in this House would be on their feet on a point of order. It doesn’t matter the words you use, it’s the intent. You shouldn’t have to ask yourself if you thought the other person was offended: you need to ask yourself if your comments were offensive.

Now, I said it earlier, we all make mistakes. I’ve noted, the Clerk actually said to me when I was first elected: Welcome to the fishbowl. Everyone is looking at you swimming around, nowhere to hide unless there is a plant in the middle of the bowl but you can’t hide long. We are under tremendous scrutiny. So I hope all Members, the Premier included, takes this as a learning moment because we all need to do better.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. DINN: When so many people, children especially, are bullied and harassed on a daily basis for any array of issues – we only need to see the pride flags being tore down recently – we have to do better as community leaders, as Party leaders and as Premier. We all have to do better as people.

Now, today in the House of Assembly, we all know, and we see it everyday, some Members are more easily agitated than others. We need to be empathetic because none of us are aware of what the other 39 Members are going through; how their day started, what they’re dealing with at home. We all need to realize that. We all need to take responsibility for what we say.

I'm thinking of December now, I think it was December 4, there was an article came out in *The Telegram* and it was in response to a couple of Liberal MHAs at the time had arranged some fundraising events in the middle of COVID. They took some backlash on that.

I look at the Premier, the Premier was actually quoted in *The Telegram* – and I'll see if I can get it here – as saying: “As leaders, we need to not just meet standards, we need to exceed them and live by example.” Well, Mr. Premier, you have to start living by your own words. I'm hoping they'll take this as a learning moment. You have to start practicing what you preach because as a leader you affect, not just this House of Assembly, you affect everyone that listens to you, everyone that looks up to you.

I think, too, when we come in this House – Pink Shirt Day; anti-bullying. This is children now telling us this. Children have a grasp on bullying and harassment. It's not just one day, it's every day. Every day should be anti-bullying day. The motto was: Bullying Stops Here. That applies right here. We should not be dealing with insults and barbs in this House of Assembly.

Now, yes, we get into heated discussions and you throw out a witty quip. There's a little difference, but I think we all know when you cross the line.

I commend the Speaker. I firmly believe we elected the right – although there were some fine candidates for Speaker of the House, some real fine candidates – I do say I think we have the right person in the Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. DINN: I do appreciate your opening comments today. I certainly trust that you'll continue to do your best to run this House in a cordial and polite manner as best you can. Thank you for that. It's not an easy job.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. DINN: I'd be remiss, of course, if I didn't speak a bit about the Terra Nova Project. I think we all know what that means to our province. I can't even imagine the stress and anxiety that the workers, their families and that are under.

We can always talk that there's hope and there is a light at the end of the tunnel, but that certainly doesn't help them currently. I can appreciate that. We all speak with passion on that.

I don't think anybody in this House, on this side as well – nobody is suggesting that we bail out the large oil companies or we carelessly throw money at a project with no return on investment. What we are asking is that in the words of this government that have said many times, that we leave no stone unturned when we look at this.

I think it was the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor who mentioned the difference between a risky undertaking and risks. Something that's risky is something that's full of the possibility of danger, failure or loss. Risk is the potential exposure to danger. There is a difference. I understand the Members opposite spoke to this as risks. They did not come out and say this is risky. I stand to be corrected if they did.

With any investment, there is risk. There is a balancing process. You're weighing pros and cons. You may do a SWOT analysis. You may look at return on investment. You would look at opportunity cost. I don't have any confidence or level of confidence that a complete and full analysis has been done.

I think we asked questions today, but we certainly asked questions yesterday, and government could not tell us the benefits this province would receive through HST, personal income tax and spinoff jobs. They could not tell us what would be lost in that respect. They could not tell us the value of the indirect benefits to the province from the Terra Nova Project extension. Government could not tell us the cost to assist workers who lose their jobs if the Terra Nova Project should shut down.

These are not issues that are covered by a non-disclosure agreement; this is the work of government. This analysis should be done. This analysis should be on the tip of the tongue. And I agree, we were not elected to look after the big oil companies. We were elected to look after the people here in this province. We were elected to do the best we can for them. I think we really need to look at the cost of this project not going ahead and what it does in terms of supports we may have to come up with and the like.

I have no reason, right now, to distrust the comments of the responsible minister that they're doing everything. But it is harder to believe when we cannot get answers to analysis that should be done. I would hope that government will complete a full analysis, not just of the oil but what the effect will be on our province, our workers and their health and where they're going to be and if they're going to stay here. It probably should already be done. I'd be happy if I hear that it is already done but, again, I don't have confidence in terms of the answers we have been getting. This is analysis that certainly can be completed outside of the non-disclosure agreements.

I would note the government mentioned to us that there is only a marginal return potential. Outside of the marginal return, I think when you look deeper in terms of keeping people employed, keeping families here, that marginal return becomes a little larger. I think we need to have a greater look at that. I know here we are at the final day; hopefully, there will be more negotiations ongoing. I hope so. There are a lot of people in this industry involved with this Terra Nova Project that are anxiously awaiting some positive news, so hopefully that will occur.

I do want to talk about the budget; that is the motion we're speaking to. We're going to be asked to vote on this. People ask: Are you going to vote on the budget? They'll say: What are you voting on? We'll say: The budget. And they'll say: Oh, that's good. But when I really look deeper, I say: Well, what are we really voting on? This budget is like you're sat down to a meal and they lay it on a placemat and it looks all good, but you don't know what the meal is and you don't know what's being served. A lovely placemat, but you don't know what's being served.

There are some good pieces in the budget, but there's not enough analysis to tell us what is on the plate. I mean, at a bare minimum you would ask to see the menu. I don't know if we've seen the menu. But, I mean, to vote on this budget without truly knowing the full analysis behind it, the full data and the full information, from my point of view, I don't think it's what the residents of Topsail - Paradise would want me to do in terms of blindly voting on something we don't have the full details on. Like I said, there

are a number of issues or pieces in this budget that are good, there are a number of things that are continued on, but there's also a lot of analysis that is absent and that's something that we really need to have in front of us to make a proper decision.

I go back to the comments on Terra Nova, you know, talking risk, talking risky. This is no different. In fact, this is probably more important as the budget for the whole province. We don't have all of the background information to vote on this, and so I don't even know what the risks are because we don't have that information. How are we going to create more efficient operations? What is going to be done in departments like Health? Don't know. How much money is going to be saved? What's going to be done here and there? Not truly outlined there. That's information we need because we all realize the financial position we are in and we all realize that some big decisions have to be made, but we also realize that they have to be informed decisions. To vote on this budget without being fully informed, in my mind, would not be proper.

We are doing a budget here and we're waiting on some key reports to come in. I guess the real scare we've gotten is from the Premier's Moya Greene report and that report certainly puts the scare in all of us with some of the comments and some of the suggestions, but again, lacking on detail.

As I've said before, I've had some presentation from Dr. Parfrey and Sister Elizabeth Davis on the Health Accord Newfoundland and Labrador and I'm encouraged by that. The reason I'm encouraged by that is because these individuals certainly come across as having a handle on what they've been asked to do. They certainly seem to have a plan forward. They certainly seem to be looking towards decisions, programs and services that are fully documented and supported by data, facts and analysis. The only unfortunate thing for that is we're not seeing that until December. I look forward to that.

But with this current budget, I do not have the same level of confidence. It's not that I don't disagree that we need to make some difficult decisions and that, but it's because I don't know what they're based on. The detail is not there.

There are some parts of it, again, that I certainly applaud. There are parts there that make sense but, overall, some of the larger decisions, how are you going to do this, how are you going to move along, some of that is not there. It's not in the notes.

I look at the budgets over the years for this government. All governments do it, but I just look at the current government. When they put out their budget document, there's always a little motto or a little saying on the cover; there's a title. In 2016, it was *Restoring Fiscal Confidence and Accountability*. That was 2016. Not quite sure we have fiscal confidence – not quite sure.

In 2017, it was *Realizing Our Potential*. That's five years ago now: *Realizing Our Potential*. I'm not sure that's happened. In 2018, we're starting to get some nice titles: *Building for Our Future*. I can honestly say I haven't seen any huge steps in building our future. We can go back to Muskrat Falls and talk about that. I wasn't involved in it when it came in but, of course, the current government now have six years to look after mitigation and they've talked to this, how it affects our future generations. I haven't seen anything happen there.

So we're building our future and we move into 2019 and we're *Working towards a brighter future*. Again, haven't seen the future; now we're building to a brighter future.

In 2020, it was *Today. Tomorrow. Together*. Again, you talk about *The Way Forward*; you talk about this. I'm not seeing any huge accomplishments there. In fact, I'm told – and certainly, if someone can tell me otherwise – that the family that was on the cover of that document, *Today. Tomorrow. Together.*, an immigrant family, and they were praised for being active, I'm told they're no longer in the province. Now, I stand to be corrected on that, but that's what I'm told. So *Today. Tomorrow. Together.*, we certainly have to start looking at making some real, real change.

Speaking of change, here we are in 2021 and the budget is *Change starts here*. After five years of realizing our future, building our future, building a brighter future, restoring fiscal confidence, after five years *Change starts here*. We're

finally to a place where maybe something's going to start. But again, my doubts, because this particular budget I do not see the full details that would lead me to believe that change will definitely start here. I don't see it. Right from this point on, I'm not prepared to vote on something I don't have the full details on.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

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

It's always a pleasure to speak to some aspect of the budget, whether it be a money bill, loan, supply. It's a good opportunity to talk about a variety of things that are going on.

What I thought I would do is summarize the experience that was the last couple of weeks in Estimates. What I've done is go through each of the departments that I participated in. In fact, as I mentioned in the House yesterday, I did miss just the one. I missed the Department of Finance, but I caught the others. Certainly, it's an excellent way to learn a lot about how government works, what the minister and their staff are thinking, and it's a great way to – from my perspective – to explore different policies, how they are affecting the district I represent in Lake Melville or broader Labrador, or of course right across the province.

So what I'd like to do is just run through some of the items. I'm not going to go through them in detail, because there were a lot of Estimates sessions and I know I only have less than 20 minutes. I'm just going to sketch on some of them and then comment as I go. Let's start at the beginning in terms of the book and the budget Estimates.

Digital Government and Service NL: Some of the items that I brought up when we were going through them that apply to a relatively small percentage of our population, but it's very much an appreciative one, and that's the francophone-speaking people of this province.

It was curious, Mr. Speaker, when I was asking the department – at one time I really enjoyed being the minister responsible for Francophone Affairs, and the federal government's support, some \$350,000, has not changed to this province in a long, long time. I can remember 2015, '16, '17, lobbying the then federal minister responsible for the need to look at the formula, to look at the situation and recognize Newfoundland and Labrador is doing a lot with a very small and very capable and dedicated crew, but there's been no increased support for years and years.

It's amazing what they have been able to do, but we really need to somehow convince the federal government that if they're serious about fulfilling Charter obligations across this country, all jurisdictions, no matter how big or small, need to be treated equitably.

Another item that's very important for Labrador, and I would suspect other rural parts of this province, and that's around electrical inspections. We often have work sites – and we have a very short construction season – where if you don't have a Red Seal-endorsed electrical inspector, you need to have one flown in. I explored with the minister the idea of, perhaps, engaging a private sector company where somebody would be certified to take a look at those building sites. It's actually holding up construction. I can look across Labrador and give you many examples of where things are held up just because we're not thinking of more clever ways to provide these inspections.

One that's near and dear to my heart, and certainly broader across the province, and that is on taxi insurance. It was good to see the various steps that the department is making to reduce rates and pressures on taxi drivers and owners who need to get those vehicles insured to make sure that our roads are safe. A lot of good moves there, so I thank them for that.

One lingering issue in Happy Valley-Goose Bay is – and while it's commendable that some 98 per cent of online registrations and I think some other features around Motor Vehicle Registration are now done online, there are still a lot of people that need support. I feel that we need to make sure those phone lines are available and that people are able to help those

who would prefer just to deal in person or at least have somebody on the other end of a line instead of a prompt on an online app or something like that.

In the Treasury Board meetings, just one little item, I've raised it several times, but I am still curious as to whether or not our province can take advantage of this spike in building materials, particularly around wood, whether or not we, as a Crown, could be making more as we sell our wood products, the stumpage; the stumpage royalties. I see opportunities to do it. Again, I point out Alberta which has just recently done this. They more than doubled their stumpage rate. It's represented millions and millions of dollars to the coffers of their Treasury. Guess what? It does not affect the end retailer because it's frankly the processors that are able to charge a very high fee right now for their products and the raw materials. We're basically – relatively speaking – giving them away.

In terms of Public Procurement: It's an interesting aspect, I think, for many of us to think about. It's one I do believe government is sensitive of. I was once responsible for that department as well. It's packaging and bundling the opportunities for tenders, for bidding, and making sure that where there are local service opportunities and where they can be bundled appropriately that that is, in fact, done. There's nothing worse than seeing capability being developed in Labrador or another rural part of this province, only to see an opportunity show up on the doorstep, yet that local capacity is frankly just left out of the bidding process all together. They have to run around and try to figure out who is going to win this contract and then try to make sure that we, as a government, and they, as a successful bidder, think to engage local staff and local services. Boy, we continue to struggle with this one.

I don't know, I look to the Impact Benefit Agreements that Indigenous organization, for example, has established. Voisey's Bay is a prime example of what was frankly a very successful negotiation. You look at that project now, it's been operating for well over 20 years. I remember being in the room when both signatories to the province and the company agreed with their membership to support the

project, and the celebration. The fact that that deal was done right. It has continued to prove very successful. I think we have a lot of things to learn there.

Under Transportation and Infrastructure: I will continue to speak about Route 520. I can appreciate the pressure that the minister is under; however, we did have this road identified as a priority two years ago and with the fact that the budget remains the same, the highway is continuing to get worse. I can only hope that this gets addressed immediately and we can start getting some work done. I know there is some recent tender calls for some bridge work, and we're not going to turn that away. The bridges certainly also need to be tended too, but I can tell you what's really bad is the asphalt and the rollercoaster of a ride that is between Sheshatshiu and Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

I also want to continue to speak about the fact that we have some 1,800 kilometres of Trans-Labrador Highway and we really don't have any emergency or other convenience services between those communities. Some of those gaps are as great as 400 kilometres. I challenge anyone, when they get in their vehicles at the end of the week and they leave here, just to think about that. You would set sail for Gander or points further west and if you needed to stop for a washroom, for gas, for any communications knowing that it would not be there for you: that's why I will continue to speak about this.

I am pleased, and I want to mention his name again, the ADM in Marine Services, John Baker. There are a lot of great staff out there, John is just a guy that I happen to work a lot with. He's a guy who listens and is very available to so many of the issues that I have to deal with. The moves around the Black Tickle ferry, and I just know each spring I will get the same kinds of calls from people who used to live in Black Tickle, they want to make this annual pilgrimage home and knowing that the ferry will be running this year – I think it goes on the 25th of June, which is the time that is actually convenient for returning residents to go back and set up for the summer, it will actually work very well for them. I thank the department for that accommodation.

Another study that is very near and dear to my heart, I have a lot of experience around it, there are two: the Nain Airstrip. If you've ever had to land in an aircraft in Nain, it is something that will get your attention: even on the calmest of days. Thank goodness we have very experienced and capable pilots that fly along our coast for us because I can tell you, it is not for the faint of heart. If you have a strong wind and a predominant wind coming out of the west and you're swinging in there and you have to turn your nose in one direction and then at the last minute suddenly turn to hit that runway. We are just very fortunate that we haven't had a serious incident. We really need to address that. So I make that plug for there.

Also, if you look at the map you wouldn't believe it, but I know the route very well, from North West River to Postville it actually is a very straightforward route along that direction, and I've flown it many times. While I'm glad to see progress being made on the feasibility study – and I remember my colleague from Torngat Mountains was asking: Is this a pre-feasibility or a feasibility study? I'm not sure we got a good answer. The fact of the matter is let this be the study from which tenders can be called to start that work.

Under Justice and Public Safety: It's good to see the progress going on at the Labrador Correctional Centre. There are substantial millions of dollars being allocated for the expansion. It's also really important that in addition to providing, now, accommodations for – women who need to be incarcerated traditionally have been going to Clarenville. Now, with the completion of this work, they will be able to, at least, stay in Labrador where their family supports will be there for them and other cultural supports.

It is that very point, on the cultural supports, that is so important and I've been witness to some of these special sessions where people give of their time to go down and provide that cultural – it's almost a therapy when you've been able to witness, whether it be cleaning a partridge or a ptarmigan, making snowshoes or just talking about life on the land and the healing, therapeutic aspects that can come from that. It's very important for people who are struggling to find a way in life.

Sentencing circles was another point that I spoke about. I think the minister will be interested to, hopefully, see and experience others that will be lobbying for these kinds of opportunities. I feel that they could really help, especially – it's not going to help overnight, but over the long term it will be really important.

With Environment and Climate Change:

Another one of my favourite departments and one that I know very well, both politically and in my previous professional life. We talked a lot about the rationale for the flood-risk mapping. Why did we spend \$1 million completing such a comprehensive study, such a state-of-the-art study if we are not going to really work with its conclusions and work with what it's telling us? I challenge the department to please consider ways to sit down with the residents and explain exactly what the findings mean, what it means for their livelihood and what it means for their property. I believe we need to carry on the dialogue.

Just a few weeks ago, again, as the water started to rise and suddenly the panic hit. We've got a huge river; we've got the province's largest river flowing, unfortunately, into an estuary situation where we've got a very fragile village in the lower parts of what we call the valley, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, where the shoreline is being eroded away. We need to get in there. I'm willing to work with the minister and his department and we'll see what we can do to address that.

Contaminated sites were another aspect. I just want to make a plug for – so much of the debate yesterday morning, Mr. Speaker, for Terra Nova was around the transition. My colleague for St. John's Centre spoke about the importance of getting that transition plan right. Well, there's a really interesting initiative that The Harris Centre has set up – I worked with them very closely last year when that was going on – climate change, economy and society. There are eight sessions that are being held with a variety of stakeholders.

The interesting part about this is that you have both industrial proponents, you have oil and gas people and you have people with an environmental background, and they're collectively addressing key points such as: How

does a jurisdiction, which produces 5.6 per cent of the oil in this country – how do we transfer now successfully with all of these amazing reserves we have offshore. How do we transfer to a situation where we can recognize the climate is changing dramatically? Moving to net zero in 2050? Well you know what, we need to start moving to net zero like yesterday. Anyway, a lot of these questions are being tackled. I would encourage the department to continue to support them and perhaps, most importantly, to pay attention to the conclusions coming out of those discussions.

With Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture, I spoke about the stumpage rates and enforcement officers, and making sure we have them deployed at the right places at the right time. The hunting that's going on of caribou, south of where I live, south of the Churchill River, Mishta-shipu by folks from Quebec, is becoming – not is becoming, it has become – a very serious problem. So much of the caribou and those small little herds – I used to fly them back in the 1980s and '90s; things like the Dominion Lake herd and the St. Augustin herd – they don't even exist anymore.

I'm very concerned that any woodland caribou that are left down there, if there are in fact any leftover in the Birchy Lake area – I was thinking they're basically gone. Perhaps there are a few animals but given the resources that are being deployed to find them, and make a stand politically between our provinces, we really need to fix this out. My recommendation there to the minister is to re-establish the Labrador Woodland Caribou Recovery Team. It's filled with bright minds from both Quebec, Labrador and the federal government, as well as other stakeholders. I feel that that could provide him with a lot of clean and clear direction as to how to move forward. It's a tough, tangly situation but the discussion has to go on in the boardroom, not out in the field with loaded rifles.

I'm very pleased to see the movement on the *Animal Health and Protection Act*, that the entire act is being reviewed. My CA is a senior person with the SPCA in Labrador. I get to see upfront, close and personal the challenges that the SPCA and other organizations have around

animal abuse and the need to take care of our four-legged friends. I'm glad for that review.

With Municipal and Provincial Affairs, we had good discussion. I think the challenge that we have as a government, and folks in this House of Assembly really, is how do we and what do we and where do 46,000 residents of our province who are living in unincorporated districts – how do we properly provide services to them and how do they, in fairness, provide their own financial support for those services.

Under Immigration, Population Growth and Skills, I am curious still to understand the demise of Welcome NL. I saw it as a great initiative. It disappeared, frankly, about two years ago. It's meant to help those new Canadians find employers and readily settle into this province and, better yet, stay.

Also, I'm frustrated with so much of the provincial certification programs, engineering, medical care and so on, where we have – I get off that plane, sometimes on a Sunday night, and I probably have an engineer from North Africa or Eastern Europe who's driving a taxi because that's the only service that we will recognize them being capable of, despite years of training. Some of them have even served as professors that I've met. I've met a pile of them. I have their names. They're very frustrated. I really feel we need to find a better system. There has to be mentoring that can happen to get these people in the workforce.

Under Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation, again, I want to just compliment the department for pulling off – and I look at this House of Assembly. Under the pandemic, so much of things that were planned over the last 16 months or so where you've heard the common refrain of: delayed by the pandemic, delayed by the pandemic. Well, guess what? That Caribou monument, the final one in Gallipoli, was not delayed by the pandemic. A dedicated international team, multi-organizational, all threw their efforts at that. It was done and it's a beautiful job. I just can't wait to see a delegation from this province go and join our Turkish friends with an unveiling.

I also want to put a quick plug in for Expedition 51°. It's a bit of French and English at the same

time. It's a combination of Quebec and Destination Labrador looking at joint branding around tourism and getting our link together as we reach into Eastern Canada. Really important.

CSSD: A really big challenge is the number of vacancies under our social worker caseload. It is really high in Labrador. The department informed me that we have 71 vacancies right now for social workers. We really need to get that figured out.

Under Education, early childhood educators: The big issue right now – and I've raised it as a petition – we need in-person training. We have spaces; we just spent a lot of money as a government to put up Pumpkin House and helped other facilities get in place. We don't have people to run them. I'm trying to get an estimate. It is somewhere between 100 and 200 families with their children, waiting to get into a regulated daycare facility. We really have to get that figured out.

Health and Community Services: I didn't mean to save it for last but, obviously, it's the number one challenge for any of our MHAs. I thank everybody. I thank all the team for all that they're doing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER (Warr): Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

J. DWYER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great honour to speak today on the main motion of the budget on behalf of the constituents of Placentia West - Bellevue that I'm so proud to be in this House to represent in this 50th General Assembly.

The budget really affects us all. Having a big district like I have, it really affects us in many different ways. One of the things I would like to touch on is how industrial my district is. If we can get some of the industry back up and running to full capacity, I think we'd be well on our way to very much a growth economy.

I just did a petition on Bull Arm; there is Vale in Long Harbour. We have the refinery and the state-of-the-art fish plant there in Arnold's Cove with major investment. We have Grieg down in Marystown; we have the Cow Head facility in Marystown. None of these are really up to capacity.

Mr. Speaker, these entities and these industrial facilities were in trouble long before COVID. So it's not really something we can blame on COVID, but it is something that we need to come together and make sure that we can utilize our assets to the benefit of our province, as opposed to selling off our assets just to keep the lights on.

At the end of the day, somebody can offer me \$10,000 for my \$5,000 car, but I still have to get home. So the \$10,000 is really not much good to me at that point if I still need something to drive. Yes, I can go out and buy another car, but in the meantime why not utilize the one to the best of my ability and get the most out of it that I already have.

We do have great infrastructure, but the biggest asset that we have in our province is our workers. Our workers leave this province en masse all the time to go and be rotational workers and stuff like that. They're the best of the best in these companies that are hiring them throughout the world. So if we can get up and running with our industry, then obviously these are people that would love to come back and not be rotational workers. I don't think they'd have a problem being a rotational worker from, let's say, Terrenceville going to Bull Arm or somebody from Chance Cove working in the refinery.

So like I said, it affects us all. It's something that we have to focus on because, right now, really what we need is to improve the provincial coffers to afford these budgets. We're just north of \$8.5 billion on a budget that, for a lot of people, it's hard to wrap their head around that kind of numbers. I think it's incumbent on us all to find these efficiencies, as was determined through our Estimates for CSSD. Because when you have the most vulnerable people in the province that need services, then we need to have these wraparound services and tertiary services that they can avail of at a moment's

notice. Because that's the way things come up. It's not like we can plan for something that is acute two months out.

So like I said, it's good to see the new programs. The minister actually talked about the new transportation program for low-income families, seniors and people living with disabilities. It's a very good hand up for these people, because now they're able to avail of some of the programming that's in their area and be part of probably their 50-plus club or be able to go out and do some seniors' yoga on the soccer field or whatever.

We've learned from COVID, we just have to make sure that we give our people a chance to succeed and enjoy their life to the best of their ability. Again, that comes down to, for our seniors, having help with their eyes, their ears and their teeth. I think that's incumbent on us all. I never ever would have imagined that somebody would fall below the threshold, after retirement, of not having insurance. That kind of bothers me and I think we could be better. Because like I said before, these are the people that trail-blazed for us and gave us an opportunity to be here. I think it's incumbent on us all to certainly have that respect and see what we can do for our seniors.

One of the biggest issues I really have with the budget is that it's kind of carried over from last year, which is somewhat understandable. But to not have any cost-benefit analysis for some of the things that we're asking about, it's hard to ratify this contract based on the vague information that was in some of the different sectors. I will note that one of the initiatives that I've been fighting for since day one in here is the Wi-Fi and cell service. To see that kind of an initiative now, brings us that much closer to the 21st century, which we're already 21 years into.

I guess I'm a firm believer that if these big companies – we talk about these multinational, profitable oil companies then we should probably talk about these national media companies that are certainly seeing numbers in the billions as well. They can't just come to our province and go where the concentration of people are to get the largest stipend. I think it's an opportunity for government to let them know that if they want to do business here, then they

have to really consider doing business outside the overpass as well and not just the big centres.

Just from a personal side, we're digitizing government, everything is coming down to emails and send your form via email or text or anything like that, but we're not realizing that not everybody in the province has that opportunity, just for the simple fact that the services are not there, Mr. Speaker. I think that we are in a day and age where it's kind of second nature that we would have these kind of entities in place so that we can avail of them.

Like I said on a personal side, for personal households is what I mean. We're sending kids home to do their education online. That's kind of at a disadvantage for some kids, for the simple fact that they don't have the availability of Wi-Fi and cell coverage. It's pretty difficult for them to carry on and have the same experience or opportunity. Let's say a kid in Grade 11 in my district or a kid in Grade 11 in St. John's, probably having two different experiences based on the Wi-Fi and cell coverage. That's just one entity of it.

Another side, I guess, that I looked at this from was the business side of it. When you talk about the business side of Wi-Fi and cell coverage, then that's second nature to them. It's probably that they're looking at what the next best thing is for communication. There's nobody coming here and taking a drive in a car to check out the Bull Arm site and not want to be on their phone for that hour-and-a-half drive. They're not going down to Bull Arm and getting on the pay phone to call back to their company to see if it's a good deal or not. Like I said, from a business perspective, it's incumbent on us all to get those communication services in place so that some of this redundancy or bureaucracy doesn't happen between these business-to-business sales.

One of the bigger ones, I guess, from my side of things for Wi-Fi and cell coverage is really the virtual medical care. It's something that I can see being very prevalent in our society quite soon. Virtual medical care, not everybody needs to go to see a doctor physically to get an update or report or anything like that, so I think with the investment in Wi-Fi and cell coverage, we're actually going to free up some of our doctors'

time and be able to probably get more people in to see them.

The issue, really, is that we're in a pandemic and we've cut back some of those services. It would be nice that now that we have a reopening plan and stuff like that, we can eliminate this epidemic we've created inside of a pandemic in the fact that people's needs didn't go away with the pandemic. They still need to get in and get their tests and their X-rays and their scans and all this kind of stuff. I know we want to protect our front-line workers, but we have to make sure that we are getting these timely appointments adhered to and make sure that people are getting the care. We've okayed all this money for the health care department; let's make sure that we're getting the proper outcomes. I think with Wi-Fi and cell coverage being prevalent to all, that will be a lot easier in the very rural parts of our province.

Another big one for me – and I volunteered all of my life. I have 16 volunteer fire departments in my district and Wi-Fi and cell coverage would be so much more important to them just knowing who's on the scene. As we try and regionalize some of our services, it would be no sense that we won't be able to be in contact with somebody that was out on the highway. The Trans-Canada part is spotty in places, but at least there's a great prevalence of cell coverage.

But, like I mentioned yesterday, I would love to work on the Burin Peninsula, especially with my colleague from Burin - Grand Bank, despite our strip or anything like that, because me and the MHA for Burin - Grand Bank have known each other for a long time and have had a very cordial relationship. I look forward to working with him on that because a lot of the people in his district are good friends of mine as well and a lot of people in my district are quite familiar with the former mayor of St. Lawrence.

Like I said, I want to make sure that we're all working together to make sure that we can bring these services to the residents of the province to make life easier, I guess, because we are in a digital age and there's no sense in talking about these services until we wrap them around everybody in the province.

The big thing that we talked about this year is tourism and how the tourism operators have had such a hard go of it, really, because of COVID and everybody being shut down. But one thing I did notice in the last year in my district is that our walking trails are becoming some of the highly sought-after destinations in the province, especially Chance Cove. If anybody hasn't had a chance to get out to the Chance Cove trail, I would highly recommend it. I did it a couple of weeks ago, about a month ago, probably, myself and my assistance, actually. We're probably not in the best of shape for a young fella and an older fella. In the meantime, we would certainly do it again. I don't know if we would need to take shortcuts next time.

In the meantime, it was so beautiful and so picturesque that it really made our day. It was really a good hike for us, for sure. I commend the people in Chance Cove that are working on the trail. There is some more money being infused, I believe, soon. The advancements that have been made on that trail since I became aware of it, I guess, in May 2019, has been pretty tremendous.

Just talking about Chance Cove for a second, there are some certainly great challenges when it comes to their roads, but their priority when I first got in was their water. I do get some compliments, I guess, that it's nice to turn on the tap and be able to drink the water, but now it's turned into fixing the roads again. I'm here for you Chance Cove. I'm working on it and when the minister and I meet, your roads are certainly on the list as well.

The other trails are Otter Rub and the Bordeaux Walking Trail. There's a new trail, Center Hill in Sunnyside. The Cleary Hiking Trail in CBC. You can go and probably stay at the Fiddler's Green or you can stay at The Killick. There are a couple of opportunities; there's the Arnold's Cove Inn as well. You can get three or four trails done there in those few days, if you want to stay in the area.

There are lots of beautiful attractions that, like I said, just get out and explore. Actually, in Arnold's Cove, they have a really good walk around the town with their app about the homes that were brought in from the islands, Mr. Speaker. It's quite interesting because as you get

to each destination the app actually tells you the story of that house and the people from that house and the reasons for coming over and stuff like that. Right in Southern Harbour, we have Paddy Miller's house, it was the first one brought across Placentia Bay.

My buddy Dale Ryan, who's an artist originally from Southern Harbour, did a depiction of Paddy Miller's house coming across the harbour. I was lucky enough to be able to avail of one of those off my good friend. Consequently, a lot of his art is in many different parts of the world that I've sent out to different friends and stuff like that. I commend him on that. I know he has a new series ready to go. If anybody likes good Newfoundland artists, check out Mr. Dale Ryan. I think you'll be quite impressed.

Like I said, when you have a large district, not only is it industrial, but it comes down to having a lot of towns. A lot of these towns have the same needs, whether it's roads, care for seniors, certainly Wi-Fi and cell service. While we do have a pretty industrial district, it's incumbent on us to realize that it's not just industry. It is tourism and it is a lot of really great spots to shop and stuff in my district.

When you go down to the Marystown area, it's quite beautiful. Anybody that goes to Marystown, I would recommend you go look at Marystown from the Marymount. As I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, you've probably seen it from that perspective, which it really opens up your eyes to the size of Marystown and the beauty of the longest ice-free harbour in North America. That's a pretty good moniker to have. Like I said, around that area the people make it a million times nicer. So anybody that goes down to the Marystown area or anywhere down the Burin Peninsula, stop off at the Tea Rose there that the Placentia West Development Association has to offer. They have the EcoMuseum there. It's a national museum that was acknowledged about a year and a half ago or probably two years ago now. It's beautiful.

Like I said, there are lots of areas to avail of in my district. For anybody that's planning a staycation or anything like that, come stay and have fun because the people in our district are the real resource here.

I'm here to work with every town. I treat everybody the same, and in saying that I don't take things personally. Anybody can come to me with anything. I don't judge people and I represent everybody with the same integrity and respect –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

J. DWYER: – as I do represent them here in this House and at all their functions.

The last thing I will say is that I hope that the Bull Arm site will get a long-term proponent soon. Hopefully, the minister will be talking to the many groups that are interested in taking over this site.

The one thing that I always say, if you can be anything in this world, be kind. Because you don't know what somebody dealt with yesterday, you don't know what somebody's dealing with today and you don't know what's facing them tomorrow. So if we can be anything in this world, please, be kind.

The last thing I'll leave on is that I want to acknowledge, again, Pride Month. I think everybody deserves the opportunity to live their best life. Let's give everybody that opportunity. Let's look out for our seniors, our people living with disabilities and let's get our industry back and running so we can get these programs availed of.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

J. WALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's indeed a privilege to be able to speak in this hon. House today to represent the people of the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis. I appreciate the opportunity and I appreciate the confidence that they put in me to have me here and represent them.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to speak on the Estimates that we went through last week. As a new Member to this House, it was certainly an experience to sit in Estimates. I had the privilege of being on the Social Services Committee. I'd like to first of all thank the MHA for Placentia - St. Mary's for doing such a great job of chairing those Estimates. I have to say it was very professional and I'd like to acknowledge that.

Thanks to my colleague from Harbour Main, I was nominated as Vice-Chair. I very much appreciate the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's for doing such a great job that I didn't have to step in, Mr. Speaker. I have to say kudos to her and great job on doing that.

I had the privilege of sitting in on all the Estimates under Social Services: Justice and Public Safety, Education, Health, CSSD and, of course, Municipal Affairs. I'd like to thank all the ministers and, of course, their staff for the planning and preparation that went in to all of those Estimates. A professional crew, no doubt.

My predecessor Mr. Parsons said: If you want to learn, listen to the staff. They had some great information that we shared. Of course, there were great questions asked by the Opposition, by the Members of the Third Party, by the independents, no doubt. It was a great learning experience for me. I do appreciate all of the Estimates that I sat in on – I also sat in on others, of course, but today I'm going to focus on Municipal Affairs, my shadow Cabinet.

As I said, this was a new process for me; I did learn quite a lot. I would like to thank the hon. minister for her work done on the Estimates as well, as to members of her department. With respect to the information that I requested during the Estimates that were followed up with, with respect to Municipal Operating Grants, the gas tax approvals, the Special Assistance Grants and the Community Enhancement Employment Program, all of these are essential to all municipalities across our province, Mr. Speaker. They are quite important.

Municipalities rely and depend upon these various funding opportunities for the benefit of their residents and for the advancement of their municipalities. I do thank the minister and her

staff for providing that information and we will go through that as well.

I have spoken in the House several times with respect to several areas of concern that I'm hoping that the minister and her department will address. Of course, the updating of the Municipalities Act, that new legislation is required, no doubt about it. Municipalities are operating under old legislation. I have heard from many municipalities across the province in my former life as mayor and my current life as MHA with respect to the need for updating that, and I do appreciate the minister taking that under her advisement and coming up with new legislation, hopefully, by this fall.

The second was the mandatory municipal training for councillors. As we are all aware, when we come into this hon. House we do have mandatory training for Members of the House of Assembly – which I agree with. I am advocating for the municipal training for councillors to be mandatory as well. I am sure the minister and her department officials – even under the pandemic that we're in now, hopefully by this fall, some of it will be released or slackened up. But even with the pandemic, we can make sure that all municipal councillors are trained in municipal training and have the proper legislation there as well.

Mr. Speaker, as we went through not just municipal and provincial affairs, but all of the Estimates, COVID kept coming up again and again with respect to the different numbers from the budgeted and the actuals. The departments had to shift on the fly many times to mitigate with issues.

Again, I will speak to municipalities. They did have a plan in place. Of course, there were extra expenditures at times, there was less at other times with travel and meetings and what have you; but I would like to see the minister continue forward with looking at savings in her department with respect to continuing on with the plans that they have, how they dealt with COVID, what was put in place. It was encouraging to see that the minister was willing to work towards change. There are many towns in our province who are looking at regionalization and many towns have already put that forward on their own. So I did speak

with the minister with respect to that, the importance of regionalization, as many towns are struggling.

I spoke about those grants and approvals earlier. They are key, no doubt, Mr. Speaker, but we have many towns in our province who are struggling. They have increased costs with respect to the rising cost of lumber and building materials. Some of their projects are not getting approved. Or if they are approved, they can't move forward with them because they can't afford to do so. That's always a concern, Mr. Speaker, when we look at municipalities and what they need to do to improve the lives of their residents.

Of course, when we're looking at our municipalities, we can't afford to have a population decline, as was spoken to by my colleague from Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans. If that happens, Mr. Speaker, we have a smaller tax base and we have to rely more upon the grants and subsidies that are there from the province and her department. It's something that we all have to keep in mind and be very mindful moving forward for all municipalities throughout our province.

I'd like to touch on the municipal elections coming up this fall. Of course, I've spoken about it before in this House, but I'd like to speak to it again with respect to the importance of municipal government and municipal leaders and the work that they do on the ground level.

I do know that municipalities are looking forward to change with respect to the way the election is going to be done this fall. The minister and her department are working towards that. I hope that it can be facilitated in time with respect to a mail-in ballot, if that's the way that it's going to be approved. I do know that there's going to be a fair bit of work that has to be done on it. I will, of course, ask the pertinent questions to the minister and her department going forward to make sure that it is certainly the case and that it would be there for the benefit of all people so that all residents of all municipalities have the opportunity to vote and to cast their ballots. We don't want to see their struggle in order to do so.

I'd like to thank the minister for that, with respect to the Estimates, and all ministers that were involved, that I took part in.

Mr. Speaker, today I had the opportunity to visit Holy Trinity High School in Torbay. I had the invite to attend their pride flag-raising ceremony. I had the opportunity to be there with the Grade 9 students and the administration and staff. It was a quiet, short, but powerful flag-raising ceremony. We all know what's going in the news this past week with respect to the taking down of the pride flags. In one instance – I believe it was in Mount Pearl – the flag was destroyed. Being there today and seeing those Grade 9 students and listening to them, no doubt it's an impressionable age and we need to encourage everyone that we are all equal, no doubt about it. I want to thank them again for their invitation.

It was great to see Constable Krista Fagan from the RNC there as well, with support dog Stella. Stella was there to meet and greet all the Grade 9 students and staff. So I'd just like to send a shout-out to the Holy Trinity High School administration and staff for that pride flag raising today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. WALL: Thank you.

Just to touch on Route 20, the roadwork that's being done in my district, Mr. Speaker. As I said last week, it is ongoing. I viewed the sites today that are being worked on in the Town of Flatrock and the Town of Torbay. Work is coming along great I have to say. It's pleasing to see that work is being done. I just wish that my colleague from Stephenville - Port au Port with Cold Brook would have the work done as well. So I'll just get a plug in for my colleague for Stephenville - Port au Port with respect to that work.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that no doubt there's much more work to be done. I do realize the parameters we're under, but we do what – we do have to keep in mind with respect to that the work that's there. My colleague for Ferryland has a petition; I believe he had a petition today with respect to the roads in his district. We have

to keep that in mind, the work that needs to be done and the important work.

Also, just to touch on my colleague for Ferryland, he spoke earlier this week about emergency response times, ambulances and what have you in his district. Mr. Speaker, being a district on the Northeast Avalon one would think that we have no issue with response times, but that's certainly not the case. In my former life as mayor, I've witness 25 to 30 minutes of a response time from Eastern Health to my Town of Pouch Cove. It was because of that, that we as a municipality stepped up – with, of course, the lead from the volunteer fire department – in order to respond to Code 4 medical calls.

That being done in our town has certainly made a difference, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the service that we provide to the residents. I do know that the response times are much shorter now with respect to our department responding. It's certainly great to know that we have those responders there.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: The volume level here is at six and I need it brought back down to four.

Thank you.

J. WALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that.

With respect to the emergency response time, I do want to commend the Pouch Cove Volunteer Fire Department and the Torbay Volunteer Fire Department for their efforts in reducing response times for those who are requiring Code 4 medical calls. So it's not just an outside-the-Avalon issue, Mr. Speaker.

I understand that Eastern Health at times is strapped with respect to the calls they receive, with respect to the backup that they have from St. John's regional. This is why these two municipalities put in place the level of commitment that's required in order for fire departments to do Code 4 medical calls. It's made such a huge difference in my district. Again, with a budget of \$561,000 from the

Town of Torbay and \$200,000 from the Town of Pouch Cove, they are able to do that with the commitment from their members. I'd just like to give a shout-out to all those who are involved and to say in this hon. House that's not just a rural issue. Response time is, of course, crucial and it's being felt, I'm sure, throughout all districts in our beautiful province.

Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board recognized Public Service Week. I'd like to do that as well. Of course, being a former public servant, I recognize the importance of celebrating that week and putting that back onto the servants who deserve our respect. We have a lot of hard-working members in our public service. They just worked for the last 18 months through a pandemic. Their efforts and dedication to their positions have to be applauded no doubt.

It's difficult when you cannot stay home – and I did speak about that earlier in the House – when you have to go to work, when you cannot work from home and you have to report and to serve. I'd just like to thank those hard-working public servants for the work that they do. I do hope that this government will keep in mind, if there are changes coming to the public sector with respect to workers or the numbers of workers – that we keep that in mind as we go forward for what the province needs to operate in a safe manner going forward and we keep that in mind as we do celebrate Public Service Week. We do know that the public service proudly serve their province in all areas of what they do.

Mr. Speaker, I know we spoke many times this week here in the House on the Terra Nova Project. I'd just like to recognize the many residents that have reached out to me in my District of Cape St. Francis about the importance of this project. I do like the term: We'll leave no stone unturned. I do hope that the government are truly following through with that. To those who have reached out to me and to my colleagues here in the Opposition, we will continue to ask the important questions. No doubt, that is our job, to ask questions. We will continue to do that.

I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that everyone here in this hon. House has heard the personal stories with respect to oil and gas workers. During the

campaign, I was campaigning in Torbay and I spoke to a young couple who both are in the oil and gas sector. Of course, good jobs, good paying jobs, you live according to your means and they were living quite comfortably for the last number of years. Having been out of work for the past 18 months has certainly made a difference to the money that they have put away to their nest egg. That has been depleted and now the process has begun of selling what they can sell around them in order to stay here in our province.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, they're down to their house and their vehicle. One vehicle has been sold to try to have the money to stay here in our beautiful province. The last thing that's going to be sold now is the house; they're keeping the vehicle so they can drive to the Mainland, to Fort McMurray. That's a sad story and I know it tugs at the heartstrings. It mightn't be numbers, or facts or dollars and cents, but I do know that when I'm standing on their step and they have tears in their eyes – they want to stay here but they can't because they don't have work because this vessel is not producing right now – that speaks volumes.

I can tell you I've witnessed it too many times. This is only one instance. I've witnessed it too many times during the election and I've heard from many people since the election about the oil and gas. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board said yesterday that revenues from the oil and gas sector to this province is crucial. That's true. There's no more truer statement than that. It is crucial when you're looking at our budget and what we have to face.

The Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology said they're negotiating in the best interests of the residents of the province. I firmly believe that the minister is doing that – I do. We, on this side of the House, can ask the questions and try to get answers, but I do believe that there's no one in this hon. House that's not operating or doing the best that they can for this. I know that, but it's very little consolation when it comes down to having the conversations on the doorstep or, as some people in this hon. House say, on the bridge with respect to the people who are involved, who are impacted by

this oil and gas sector and the lack of work right now with respect to the Terra Nova FPSO.

The Premier has said that the table has been set. Well, Mr. Speaker, I certainly hope it has, because it's going to have to be quite the spread to bring forward another partner or another business here in this province if the Terra Nova Project is not signed and a deal done.

So how long will we have to wait for the province for the next one to come across? I don't know, but I do hope that the table is going to continue to be set moving forward because, if not, we're going to be in a dire strait when it comes to the income from the oil and gas and what that's going to make on the bottom line for our budget here in our province.

I do want to say to all those who have reached out to me: Thank you for reaching out to me. I thank all the workers in the oil and gas sector throughout our province and their families, because it is just as taxing on the family members as it is the workers themselves. All of them have contributed to the prosperity to our beautiful province, Mr. Speaker. That cannot be lost as we go forward.

I'm hopeful that the deal will be signed. It is going to make or break a lot of lives in our province. I do want to just take a moment to speak about that and their importance and to thank all of those workers in the oil and gas sector who contribute to the prosperity of our province, and have over the years, and I hope it will continue going forward.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your time. I thank you for your patience and your protection at times. I look forward to speaking again in this hon. House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

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

Mr. Speaker, today is a very, very important day for the people of the province. It is also a very important day for the people of the District of Harbour Main.

I can first of all say that, as I have stated before in the House, there is much concern and worry by my constituents and the tradespeople who work in the oil and gas industry and those specifically impacted by the Terra Nova potential abandonment. That is what we are waiting to hear today, Mr. Speaker, the fate of that project will, in all likelihood, be determined by the end of the day, unless there is an extension.

Mr. Speaker, the people in the District of Harbour Main and others in other districts in the province that have workers working on this project are feeling the uncertainty, they are feeling the financial stress, and, Mr. Speaker, this stress is very real.

Mr. Speaker, in an effort to try to understand what's been happening here with respect to the Terra Nova Project – it is a complex matter. We do recognize that the government doesn't have an easy task here. We're all, I think, reasonable people and will acknowledge that.

In an effort for me to understand this topic, I've spoken to many of my constituents who are tradespeople who work in the industry, who have worked on the FPSO. They've helped me understand more about what this is. I'm not an engineer. I'm not an oil worker. I don't have that background, so it's been a learning curve to say the least. I've spoken to engineers to try to understand. I've read many things about the oil industry and, as well, in general about the green economy in an effort to be able to relate and to understand better for my constituents about what's happening here and to, hopefully, be able to communicate to them what I'm learning in the House of Assembly and from government.

Mr. Speaker, on that note, I've tried to break it down for me and for my constituents to understand it. I've broken it down, really, into two categories: what we know and what we don't know.

What do we know? We do know that oil will be with us for decades to come, and most people

believe that, eventually, oil will be phased out. That is what we know. We also know, Mr. Speaker, that green energy is important and that there is a future for green energy. No one is disputing that either. For now, my research and what I've learned and listened here in the House and from other sources, oil and the fossil fuel-based energy is needed and the demand is there.

Mr. Speaker, what does the real evidence say? This is just in general terms from what I've learned. I stand to be corrected. I have learned that the evidence says that there are about three types of energy. The energies typically promoted in renewable mandates are solar, wind and biofuels. The evidence is equivocal that solar, wind and biomass energy can meaningfully supplement fossil fuel energy, let alone replace it. There is conflicting evidence on that, Mr. Speaker.

Maybe in the future these industries can overcome the obstacles which exist with respect to the solar, wind and biomass energy; the obstacles that currently exist that do not make it cheap, plentiful or reliable. But if in the future that can happen then that's fantastic. I don't think anyone will disagree with that.

Mr. Speaker, our offshore oil industry provides opportunity for us here in this province and it makes good, smart sense to pursue responsible development of this resource. We must develop it, I would argue. Not only do I argue that, but the PERT also argues that with Moya Greene at the helm. Her view on this, and the PERT had said, that the window for investment in the offshore has narrowed to as little as 10 years, and if development in the province does not happen within these timelines, considerable wealth will be stranded hindering the province's ability to improve its fiscal situation and limiting its ability to fund a transition to a green economy.

So, Mr. Speaker, we know that from what Dame Moya Greene has stated and the report. So it does make good sense to pursue responsible development of this resource.

Why does it make sense? Because we have to pay off a massive debt – a massive debt. We have to support our important services. This industry, Mr. Speaker, and specifically the Terra

Nova, is so important to us that it continues to put more money in our Treasury. We saw from the budget that \$1.4 billion of increased oil and gas royalties from the Terra Nova. We also know that there are 80 million additional barrels of oil out there to 2031. Imagine, 80 million recoverable barrels.

Mr. Speaker, we hear from the government that, well, it's 85 per cent and there's only 15 per cent. But I would suggest that we're looking at the wrong equation here. What about that 15 per cent? That 80 million recoverable barrels, what does that mean in terms of profit?

What we also know, specifically, about the Terra Nova, Mr. Speaker, is there are profitable reserves. There are profitable oil reserves in that sea floor. The hydrocarbons are there. They are there; we know that to be true. That is factual.

Terra Nova, we also know, has been profitable for us. As the Premier stated even this morning, yes, it's been profitable for the oil companies. I find it somewhat curious when I hear the tone of the Premier when he says: The multimillion-dollar profitable oil companies. Bad oil, in other words. Well, Mr. Speaker, those profitable oil companies have also provided much opportunity for the province and have provided much prosperity for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and we cannot forget that. I think that has to be acknowledged and recognized.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Mr. Speaker, we know 80 million additional barrels of oil are out there in the sea floor. We know we don't have to drill new wells to get that oil. The hard part has already been done. All of the infrastructure is there. Some engineers I've talked to have said that the subsea plumbing is in place; it's just waiting for us to extract it. If we walk away from that Terra Nova Project we're leaving untapped resources there, we're abandoning this opportunity and we know that there's at least 15 per cent of that remaining.

We also know, Mr. Speaker, through Noia's analysis, I might add, that the project has the potential to support over 1,700 jobs and \$138 million in wages and almost 3,400 jobs and \$139 million in wages annually during 10 years,

over a 10-year period. We also know from the analysis that \$11 billion in royalties, provincial and municipal governments would receive a total of \$1.49 billion over 10 years. Those are the facts, Mr. Speaker, and we need to know these facts. The people have a right to know these facts and understand that.

Mr. Speaker, we hear, for example, when we were given the technical briefing – and I'm going to talk about that in a minute in more detail, but that technical briefing that was provided there was a reference to a marginal recovery. But when, for example, the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port asked: What is that marginal recovery? We don't know. We need to know. We have a right to know. How can they not know? How can you make a decision and base such an important decision without having that data, without having that information? I don't understand that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing I want to point out as well is with respect to the federal government. Now, we know that the federal government, under the prime minister's leadership, is committed to a green energy agenda. It's interesting to note, just this week after the G7 Summit concluded, Canada, our federal government, said it would double its climate finance pledge to \$5.3 billion over the next five years. The taxpayers of Canada are doubling their commitment to \$5.3 billion over the next five years.

Our federal government, as well our Natural Resources minister who is also a Newfoundlander and Labradorian, I would submit, we know that he has not been a strong advocate, in my opinion, for the people of the province as far as the oil and gas industry is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, in trying to understand this important topic and this important issue to the people, I also inquired or looked into what our former Premier Peckford had to say about this – our former Premier Peckford who fought for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Basically in his understanding and comments about this, he has stated that that's why I fought for oil and gas development in the first place, because there was

and is simply no other source that can supply the level of revenues as oil and gas does.

He went on further to say that there's no compelling evidence in the report – well, no evidence at all; and he's referring to the PERT report – that the so-called new economy proposed – meaning the green economy – can replace this level of revenues. I think that's important for us to also recognize that right now where we stand in terms of the green economy, we have to be smart about our support and development of this important resource, especially for Newfoundland and Labrador which is an oil-based economy.

Mr. Speaker, the other point I want to make with respect to what we know, which is so important to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, is in regard to jobs. The Terra Nova Project is really about jobs. We know that jobs are created through investment. Jobs our people need to stay here and to move here. Jobs our communities need to survive: the Terra Nova means that. Right now, as we deal with such a huge population decline, there is no greater priority, in my view, than jobs.

In the past year, we have seen layoffs. We've seen Husky and Suncor, Terra Nova, Come By Chance refinery. And that can't sustain our province if we continue to lose jobs. If we continue to see these job losses, we will not be able to sustain our province. Without jobs and the income that comes from that, every other challenge that we face in our province will only escalate.

Without jobs, there is no revenue for health care. There is no revenue for education. There is no revenue for poverty reduction. There is no revenue for infrastructure. There is no revenue for a balanced budget. Mr. Speaker, Terra Nova is a great opportunity for generating jobs. And not only those jobs that Noia's analysis has given us, that we have to at least look at and see what those numbers are, but the spinoff. The spinoff benefits to communities is real, Mr. Speaker.

This is so important. Government has to ensure that Terra Nova gets back in service as soon as possible, producing oil and sustaining jobs for our province. We have a golden opportunity in

our province. We have the skilled labour; there is no question about that. Our Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are skilled. They are recognized globally for their skill and their experience and their talents and abilities. We have the skilled labour to harness this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, hundreds of tradespeople who are capable of working in the Terra Nova.

Mr. Speaker, one other thing I think it's important to acknowledge that we do know. We do know, for example, a joint media statement came out just on the 7th of June from 12 mayors in municipalities on the Northeast Avalon saying, recognizing and calling on the partners – not only the partners in the industry but government – to invest in our people, our industry and our communities by coming to some sort of resolution. They stated that they recognize the industry has been integral to our social and economic well-being. There's no disputing that. We know that is true.

It has afforded us opportunities to cultivate a research and development sector. That is what it provided to us. To help us diversify into new areas of business and technology, the oil industry helped us do that. The big bad oil helped us do that, so we have to be fair in our assessment of this. They presented opportunities for us to grow our talents and expertise and support our communities.

Mr. Speaker, in the last few remaining minutes I'll ask some of these questions. I've gone through what we know. What don't we know? What we don't know is that according to the government and the minister – and the Premier said, I think, yesterday that it's too great a risk. Well, what exactly is that risk? I'm not one to have blind trust, nor are the people that I represent. If it is too great a risk, you show us why that is. We don't know. Simply saying the proposed terms were not acceptable given the risks – too great a risk; that we're not looking at profit we're looking at risk – that's not sufficient. That's not adequate, without explaining what the risks are. Identify them. Exactly what are those risks?

Like I've referred earlier, the technical briefing said it showed only marginal returns on an equity investment, as well as the royalties. Well,

what are those marginal returns? We have a right to know. What is the amount that you're talking about? Why won't government give us the exact figure of the returns? What is the profit we would be losing? We need to have that information to understand the basis for their decision and how they came to the conclusion that they did.

The technical briefing was given to us from 8:30 to 9:15. Because of that, I had to be in the House and could not be out on the steps where my constituents, many of whom were tradespeople, were out on a rally. I could not attend like other Members in the House on the Opposition side. At any rate, we wanted to find out the information. The technical briefing was vague. There was a non-disclosure statement that was referred to; we can't tell you anything because of the non-disclosure. That's an explanation for keeping us in the dark. Mr. Speaker, they very well know that they could have sought and attempted to waive – see if they could waive that non-disclosure agreement so as to give us the information.

Government says there's too great a risk; in order to come to that conclusion we need to know how much can we recover. Mr. Speaker, we don't know the facts. We need to know them. This is an important decision. It's very unfortunate that there's such a lack of transparency. That is the problem here; the public has to have all of the records.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Your time has expired.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always an honour to speak in the House.

Mr. Speaker, I grew up in Labrador West, a mining community. I've seen the downturn; I've seen the effects of losing an industry. My mom and my dad both worked in the mines and I would argue that my mom, while not the first, was one of the first women to go to work in an industrial situation in Newfoundland.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: In the '80s, when Wabush Mines closed down the first time, suicide was rampant. People left. They didn't know where to go or what to turn to. There was a program that came out from the federal and provincial government; I think it was called (inaudible). Some people tried to avail of that, some people were too old to avail of it and some people lacked the initial education in order to take advantage of retraining and schooling.

My point is that regardless of where you work, not everybody is on the same foot, not everybody has the same ability to push past a career that they've spent 20 or 30 years at. I really believe that it's okay for us to sit here and say we're going to transition to a green economy, we're going to take money and we're going to take oil workers and put them in a situation where they can go back to work into a green economy. But I'll say I heard the minister today say that we don't even know what a plan for a green economy looks like. That plan hasn't been released. These people are hungry now, these people are struggling to put food on their tables now, to pay bills and it's tough.

Mr. Speaker, after spending many years away from Newfoundland and really making every day my goal to get back here – because I love this province. It's why I ran because I love this province. I ran because I didn't see a future for my children in this province. I ran because I see industries slipping away, jobs slipping away and complete sectors – the fishery, agriculture – different things that we just haven't been able to do right. I'm not saying that I have the silver bullet to fix any of that, but I want to be a part of fixing it.

I'm sure that all 40 people in this House feel the same way. They all want to be a part of it. That's why we're here. We're here because we love the province; we love our families. Each and every one of us, I believe, stepped up because we think we have something to offer. If we don't have something to offer, then we shouldn't be here, but we need to listen to each other also.

Somebody asked me the other day why I'm so passionate about the Terra Nova. I'm not just passionate about the Terra Nova; I'm passionate

about the people of this province. I'm passionate about oil and gas in general, but certainly all of our natural resources.

To put it in perspective, I live in Clarendville. A few kilometres down the road is our national park, Terra Nova. The subdivision I live in is made up of Hibernia Drive, White Rose, Hebron Place, Jean D'Arc and the street I live on, Terra Nova. I happen to be the MHA for Terra Nova. If somebody wants to question why I'm so passionate about the Terra Nova, it's everywhere I turn. Everywhere I turn, I see Terra Nova. I understand what it means to people today. It's not that I think that oil and gas is our future. I believe that oil and gas is the path to our future. Oil and gas is our present. Without oil and gas, we may not have a future.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: We sit here, we banter and we ask questions. People get offended by questions and people get offended by responses. I just think we really need to sit back and understand what this is all about.

I said it yesterday and I'll say it again: I'm really shocked that I haven't heard one person from the other side talk about the Terra Nova and how it affects their constituents and how they want to understand this. It's not understanding why we're making a decision not to go forward; it's that we don't have all of the facts.

Today we asked a question about abandonment, a number that was never thrown around, but now we come to find out that walking away from this is going to cost us \$150 million or \$200 million in royalty carry backs. This is the information that we have been asking for, but hasn't been offered up. We shouldn't have to ATIPP this stuff. We shouldn't have a Minister of the Crown sitting over there saying that they've received emails from constituents saying that this is a good idea. Then, if we ask to see those emails, they say: Well, you can ATIPP them. You know what? Just table them. We're all here for the same reason. I really just don't understand.

Terra Nova represents 1,100 direct jobs. I listened to the Member for Harbour Main who spoke very eloquently. To her credit, she put a

lot of facts on the table. Those are the types of things we need to hear. It's about the facts, but it's also about the realities. The facts and the realities come together to give us the situation we're in here today. Those numbers are not clear.

This government has convinced the population of this province that there's \$500 million coming from this government's pocket. I heard a minister yesterday say if we don't use that money we can use it for other things. We can use it for training or education or health care. All along that question has been asked. As a matter of fact, that question has been asked in this House for maybe eight months now and the answer is always been a firm no. Not a maybe, not a let's see; it's an absolutely not. When we asked if any of that money could be used to help with the refinery the answer was absolutely not. But now all of a sudden we can use it for health care. I don't know, I don't know. It's not clear.

Then there's the \$300 million in royalties. Well, let's be clear. That money is not coming from the provincial coffers. But let's be clear about something else, if the Terra Nova fails, that money is also not going into the provincial coffers nor is a whole lot of other money that nobody is considering. I find it hard to believe that government can sit here and tell us that they've done an analysis, but nobody can tell us the downside of this decision. Nobody can tell us what it's going to cost us not to put the Terra Nova back into production.

If we're making a decision based on not having all these facts, I don't get it. Now, if the harsh reality is that we don't have the money to buy into this and make it work, if that is the harsh reality, then somebody over there ought to have the courage to stand up and say that. It hasn't been said. It hasn't been talked about. It hasn't been suggested.

The reality that we're in here today is that we have 1,100 men and women who don't have a job. We have 1,700 men and women who could be employed almost immediately at about \$138 million over a two-year period for refurbishment. After that period, when it goes back into production, we have another 1,100 people that go back to work full-time and then we have, by this government's own numbers,

four times that amount working in our public sector – not public sector but working in our private sector supporting oil and gas.

Right now, by the numbers I've got, there are 102 companies that have direct contracts with the Terra Nova. Some of those companies, 75 per cent of their business is directly related to the Terra Nova, 75 per cent of their business is directly related to the fate of this rig and we're not considering those people. When we talk about 1,100 people losing their jobs, buckle up, because it's going to get a lot worse. There are a lot more than 1,100 people.

We need to look at that. We need to consider that. For this not to be talked about in this House, it bewilders me. It's the reality of a decision that's being made here today. We need to know all of the facts. How can we not be looking at the indirects? How can the minister stand over there yesterday and say, well, we have \$35 million put in the budget, but, obviously, that's just not there if this doesn't go back.

So it's \$35 million this year. What about the next 10 years? What is the cost over the next 10 years? What is the cost of failure? I don't understand it.

This rig has been idle since 2019, along with a lot of other ones. Yesterday, I listened to the minister – and, listen, I'm not saying that the minister is saying things wrong. The reality of it is there are a billion barrels in Bay du Nord. That's great. Do you know what? There are probably two or three billion barrels outside of Bay du Nord, all over. Awesome. We have liquid nitrogen gas offshore that's the envy of the world. There's no question of that. The science shows it.

This government would argue that the federal government has shortened the time for environmental approvals – yet to be seen. Maybe they have, maybe they haven't. Six hundred and fifty finds possibly as big as Hebron or bigger. It all sounds good, but in reality none of that is any good to us if we're not utilizing it.

What good is a billion barrels of oil in the bottom of the ocean if we have no activity going

on? We have Bull Arm out there, a glorified parking lot for dead rigs. The Henry Goodrich: cold stacked. Not a good word, bad word. We've had this conversation a few times. West Aquarius: cold stacked. Again, bad word, not coming back. The Barents: gone, left, gone overseas.

The first time, I believe, since 1979 – and I could be corrected on that number – that there hasn't been a drill rig off the coast of this province, up until a few weeks ago when the Stena Forth came here. We went almost a year without a drill rig. We actually jeopardized our entire offshore industry. We didn't have any way to do a work over or fix any of the tie-backs or if there was a major blowout. We didn't have the capacity to look after our own ocean. Yet, not a word, not from not only government but from the C-NLOPB, which shocked me.

We don't have a plan. We can talk all the time about a plan. We haven't heard anything about projected offshore land sales. As a matter of fact, the C-NLOPB decided this year that they wouldn't go out for land sales in the Bay du Nord. Don't know why, but they didn't.

It's not good to have all of this data if we're not going to use it. We sit here in a place that should be thriving. We're a province that has it all, yet we don't use any of it. We should be thriving. We should be pushing forward. We should have a plan that advances us. And, no, COVID should not have restricted us. We should've made a plan while COVID was going on, like the rest of the world. We should have been looking for a way forward. To coin the phrase: *The Way Forward*.

Instead, Third-World countries like Guyana have surpassed us. They're going way, way, way further ahead than we are. As they're putting rigs out to the ocean, we're going backwards.

We have the cleanest fuels in the world and we don't get support from our federal counterparts, yet they think it's okay to bring Saudi fuel in here to be refined, to be used. They've forgotten about us. They look at this Island as if it was floating wharf. I think they wish they could cut the lines and set us free so they didn't have anything to do with us. We sit here and don't say a word, not a word.

It's okay for us to sit here and complain about each other and what we do in here as a House, but there's one thing that's common in this House that I don't hear anyone say, that is that our federal counterparts do not stand up for the people that represent this province. They do not say a word and we don't hold them accountable. We don't say a word. It's shameful.

We have a federal minister who has said nothing about this file, not a word. Three hundred and twenty million dollars for an industry, yet they inject \$200 million into a casino. Do you know what? Oh, they keep saying that; of course we keep saying that. Think about it. A casino that probably employs a couple hundred people. We're talking about an industry, in the minister's own words, that employs 6,700 people directly. That doesn't include the indirects; 6,700 people offshore, \$320 million; 200 people in a casino, \$200 million. Do the math. It's pretty simple math. It's not real hard to do.

The only thing worse than being blind is to have sight with no vision, and we've lost vision in this House. Our federal counterparts have certainly lost vision. We ought to be standing up for the people that put us here. For some reason, unbeknownst to me, we've lost our way and we don't want to do that. We can sit here and talk it over and over again, I've said it. I've heard lots of people in this House say the same thing. At the end of the day, we have to find a way to do it.

There's an old adage about having tools in your tool chest to do the work that you have to do. We have the tools, folks. We have a lot of tools here. We have the manpower, we have the willpower and we have the knowledge. It's not good to give someone a shovel and watch them dig a hole with their hands. That's exactly what we're doing here. We continue to do it all the time.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is very similar to the information that we got yesterday. I say that because it lacks information. We got a briefing yesterday morning where it wasn't what was said; it's what wasn't said. When you ask questions about how you got to this decision, again, no answers. We don't know what it's going to cost; we don't know what the impact is;

we don't know what the next 10 years look like; we don't know how this affects the rest of the oil industry; we want to believe that it won't have any detrimental effects – all speculation.

The budget is very similar, you know; the meat is not there. The people I represent in my district are tradespeople, they are people who work offshore, they are people who work in a refinery that has been shut down for a long time, and hopefully now there's a glimmer of hope. We're hearing some maybe positive news, but we'll have to wait and see.

But it's no different than all of Newfoundland and Labrador. We're spinning our wheels here for no good reason. We, as a province, have allowed COVID to take a hold of us and decide our destiny. We have not looked at a way to develop our natural resources going forward and we have not looked at a way to take advantage of a downturn in the economy, which we could have turned into an upturn. We allow companies – we're paying more for gas now than we ever have for no good reason and then we just added a tax to it. It's time for us to start looking at what we have here and to utilize our own people and our resources.

For some reason, like I said, it's always the same way. We talk about our workers and we talk about how great it is we're building a mental health facility, yet we don't understand what we're doing to people's mental health by not helping them pick themselves up. Mental health in my district is a big deal and I'm sure it is in everybody's district here. There's not a day that goes by when we don't receive a call or we don't have someone who's on the edge either because of finances or employment or both and they can't get help. They can't get help financially and they can't get help mentally. They can't find a way forward and we don't give them the opportunity to pick themselves up. That opportunity comes from making people feel good about themselves and giving people the opportunity to succeed on their own steam, and all we do is throw water on the fire every time we get close to doing something right.

Today will be a dark day in Newfoundland if this Terra Nova rig fails. Again, I said yesterday and I'll say it again today, I'm not suggesting that we go all in on equity. We don't have the

information to make a decision on that and that is not our fault. Maybe we didn't need to know the cost of equity, but we ought of have known the cost of the next 10 years without the Terra Nova offshore producing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: We ought to have known what it costs for us as a province to have 1,100 men and women immediately unemployed and to have possibly as many as 4,500 unemployed. We sit and we talk about migration and population growth, and I can tell you, I've heard it from the unions and I've heard it from the people in my district that work in this industry, they're not sticking around – they're not sticking around. Somebody said, oh, they're gonna to leave because the taxes are higher. No, they're not going to leave because the taxes are higher; they're going to leave because they don't have any money. They got no income. They got nothing.

Go to the grocery store and try and buy a steak or a piece of chicken. Go have a look at the price of food now. It's gone through the roof. It's probably gone through the roof partially because of supply and demand, because people can't afford to buy it so it gets more expensive.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

L. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, somebody is whistling; can we ask them to stop?

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

L. PARROTT: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of people who have men and women in their district throughout this entire province. I would argue that there's probably not one individual in this House that doesn't have somebody who works in the oil and gas sector, either here or in Alberta, or overseas or in South America. They've all seen the effects of the global pandemic on oil and gas. We've all seen that.

Last March when we got shut down, there was an opportunity for us to chart a path forward. Part of that path was to look at ways to save the Terra Nova, to save the West White Rose and

possibly get a long-term plan for Bull Arm. A lot of things that would have given us a future, and none of these things happened. Right now, we've got the West White Rose out in Argentinia sitting idle. It's sat idle forever. Actually, we pumped a bunch of money into it and the end result was layoffs.

It's easy to say government can pump in \$500 million, we're not putting in anymore and we're going to walk away because of our financial stance. But it's not entirely honest when that is said. Again, the \$205 million is a flow through. That's cash that's coming from Ottawa. Nobody can answer us whether or not that cash stays here. We've asked the question; nobody can answer that.

Now, I had somebody yesterday chirp out and say there are other requests out there. I'm still being told that there's not. Again, the \$300 million in royalties, not only do they equate to zero if we don't move forward, but we have a bill for \$200 million. We have 1,100 people out of jobs, a bill for \$200 million, no future royalties and no possible future.

I don't know, Mr. Speaker, sometimes we need all the facts before we make a decision. Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, it's always an honour to speak in this House.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, as we wind down debate on the 2021-22 budget, it's an honour to speak again about the impact this and a number of other programs that it directly funds will have on the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

This is my third time to speak directly on the budget itself. The last time I started by saying it has been a confusing and saddening day when we first learned of the potential fate of the Terra Nova Project. Today, it is still a saddening day, but it is still even more worrisome now that we are close to a point where the lives of so many

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, the oil industry and Newfoundland and Labrador itself could be dramatically altered by what could possibly happen over the next period of time.

I said it the last time and I'll say it again: I am a continuous optimist. I always believe there is a solution to every challenge, there is a way to make things better in our society, in our lives and there is a way collectively to find a path forward. I am still hopeful. I don't know if the lead has to come from levels of government. I don't know if it is the lead that has to come from the oil industry. I don't know if it needs to come from the union leaders, or from the rank and file themselves. Collectively, this industry is too important to us, it is too important on a global perspective and it is too important for the future of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians for us not to do everything. And I mean everything possible, within the realm of what's in the best interest of all that's involved, to try to find the solution to this challenge.

I know we have talked about it continuously in this House. We have asked over 45 questions directly. I suspect we debated it and discussed it – my colleagues on this side maybe for another five, six, seven hours in discussion that Terra Nova and the oil industry itself were the primary discussion topic in having a roundabout on where we are, because we are passionate about it.

I don't think in any way, shape or form that the Members on that side are not just as passionate as we are, because I think everybody understands it. My colleague just now, from Terra Nova, noted the point that everybody in this House, everybody in this province is directly or indirectly connected to somebody who works in the oil industry or benefits from that.

If you are so far removed and you've never even understood what the oil industry is about, you're still affected in a positive way because of the money that have been generated, the use of technology. What this has brought to our province, not just in the direct benefits to the oil industry or the production and all that, but all the other spinoff things; the skill sets that have been learned in that industry that have been able to be transformed into other careers; enabled to be

able to make that bridging to help things in manufacturing; and even in health care and education, all kinds of things. If you go to the college system here and our university, do you think part of what they've developed here didn't come and be driven by technology advances in the oil industry and the skill set there? Without a doubt. Not counting the hundreds – and I do want to emphasize hundreds – of millions of dollars that have directly been put in there because of the oil industry in Newfoundland and Labrador.

For anybody out there – and I know there are some skeptics about: Oh, we shouldn't be funding the oil industry. We shouldn't be in bed with the oil industry. We shouldn't partner with the oil industry. I want you to realize and look around. Everybody in this province benefits from the oil industry.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: Now, I'm not saying that we have to bend down to any level of any industry, the oil industry included, but we do need to set the environment that includes industry, particularly the oil and gas industry, that want to come to Newfoundland and Labrador. Set the environment where they know we're open for business; set the environment where they know we're willing to give a fair deal as long as at the end of the day we get a fair shake also. That's not too much to ask for of any governments, it's not too much to ask for of any society and it's not too much to give up from any company or corporation out there.

We've seen it, and my colleague from Harbour Main said the same thing. This is not big bad oil, by no stretch of the imagination. I have dozens of friends who are at every level in the oil industry, up to senior executive levels. They don't do anything different than we do, they don't think differently than we do and their moral beliefs are not different than ours are, Mr. Speaker. They believe in the same things we do. They just have a role and responsibility to do, no different than we have in this House and no different than anybody who came in their former careers before they got into this House or those who may leave and go into another career. They do what they think is in the best interests of their employers and what they're trying to do, while

at the same time ensuring that everybody they work with benefits from what they're proposing. So I want to dispel that out there.

I know it's very easy, particularly in our province, to rile people on one side of the fence or the other, but this shouldn't be about that. It's not about us and them. I think that too often that has become the conversation than it should be around how do we find a way to do things. I want to clarify that on this side of the House we're not anti anything, what we are is let's find the best way to use all the resources we have, all of the people we have and all of the benefactors we have to ensure we all benefit from that as part of that process.

To those people who are listening and watching out there, the oil industry is not about giveaways from the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador. As I would suspect, the chair or the CEO of one of these corporations is saying to their shareholders: You know what, this is not about giveaways to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador or any other jurisdiction, it's about a balance. It's about a balance that ensures we all achieve our objectives. I would suspect in the corporate world – and I know because I worked there for a period of time – it's about ensuring that they are profitable; that the expenditures that they have are met; if they're in to a shareholder process, their shareholders are happy by the way that the corporation is moving forward; that they change their branding; and that they change the products and services that they're providing.

No different than we in government do the same thing. We want to look at that we are going to be profitable in what we do. If it's profitable in social programs, if it's profitable in our revenue generating, if it's profitable in how we develop our infrastructure processes, we want to do that. The population of Newfoundland and Labrador, the same way. At the end of the day, they want to know whatever they're gaining in our society, be it whoever provides that – if it's the corporate world, if it's the social world, if it's the government world – they benefit from that. There are certain expectations and obligations from them also, and realistic expectations about what is the limit that can be expected, that we all gain from what we are doing from part of that process.

I wanted to dispel that because I've gotten, like everybody here – we've all gotten dozens, maybe hundreds of emails since this whole debate started around Terra Nova. I've tried to explain, as I know my colleagues on this side of it, this is not about taking a side, one way or the other. This is about finding the path forward that ensures those who are most affected by what may happen in this particular project, and in future projects, are looked at to find solutions to address their immediate fears. Their immediate fear is being unemployed. Their immediate fear is how do I pay my mortgage. Their immediate fear is my kids are in programs and services; what do I say to my kids now about doing those? My immediate fear is – and I suspect the biggest one – I don't want to leave my hometown; I don't want to leave our province. This is where I came to stay; I don't want to leave this.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: We're trying to keep as optimistic as possible. We've put out overtures – and the Premier knows that, the minister knows that and the government knows it – that we are willing. I particularly know that the Official Opposition are willing to try to find a solution and work with it. We won't banter for the sake of bantering. We will challenge, don't get me wrong, and we will ask for clarification. We may even stretch the line sometimes on knowing where it is the information can be shared and when, but there is an ability here to do the right thing.

The right thing may have to be, at the end of the day, we just could not get to where people wanted to go. That necessarily isn't the wrong thing. It's never the wrong thing if it's done for the right reason and everything possible has been examined. I just wanted to start that by saying that at the end of day I'm still optimistically hopeful. I don't know who's driving the bus right now to make that go in the right direction to get us to that school, but I'm hoping whoever the bus driver is and whoever is sitting in those seats have the best interests of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians when they make the decisions. The best interest here would be that the Terra Nova Project continues forward.

I think all involved – I think the oil companies themselves will not lose from being involved in this. They may have all kinds of logistical reasons why some would prefer to pull out. I understand that. That's business. But at the end of the day, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and this province have been good to the oil industry, as the oil industry has been good to Newfoundland and Labrador and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We need to be able to find a way to get everyone – everyone – to be cognizant of the roles and responsibilities they have to ensure that people are financially equipped and that our oil industry doesn't take a black eye because we weren't able to continue one of the projects that have deemed very viable.

The data says that there are still reserves there. The seismic dictates that as they start moving towards the additional resources that are there, they're going to find additional, as we have in every other one of our wells that we've started. Particularly, let's go back to our original one with Hibernia and where we are now.

I had the privilege, Mr. Speaker, of being on the platform with the minister of natural resources – sorry, I apologize for the new change to the department, but the minister, the premier and senior officials. Again, I've said this to this House before, amazed at the technology and what's been achieved for over a quarter of a century ago and what the potential is. I mean what we've done has only scratched the surface. These are the oil industry people. I don't mean the people who are worried about their shared dividends as shareholders; these are the rank and file, the people who drill the wells; the people who unload the supply vessels; the people who make sure everybody is safe on board; the people who ensure that the operations are in line with everything environmental.

These are the people who are telling us that. They're telling us that and then I have a smile on my face that our oil and gas industry is vibrant, alive and has a great future. But at the same time, we have to send a message to the world that we are open for business. We're open because we understand the value of this industry and we're not afraid to take some risks.

Now, the risks can't be that it's going to be detrimental if it doesn't work. I realize – and I'll

preach more than most people – that government shouldn't be in the business of creating employment. They should never be. Sometimes, unfortunately, it's forced to because either circumstance or the environment itself or timing dictates that something is more important to go against what would normally be their philosophy. Government should be in the business of setting the environment, the tone, the policy regulatory processes and possibly directing the educational needs of certain industries. We have been extremely good at it.

Let's go back to when this started in the early '80s when the Hibernia process was being talked about, when the Atlantic Accord was signed, when there was hope here that we were diversifying. We all know what happened to our fishing industry, which is still a very viable industry and I think has a very vibrant future and it continues to be and still will be one of our major financial contributors to the economy of this province, but we needed something.

Even in those days the mining industry, which is very valuable – like my colleague who grew up in a mining town, I'm a fifth generation of a mining family and then to see it go from boom to bust was disheartening. To see that the mining industry then started to take a downward swing and now to see where we are again. To see that we have diversified into other types of minerals that we weren't even into at one point, particularly out in some areas in Central Newfoundland.

It tells me that our industries in this province are still very vibrant and it tells me partnering with people in those industries is not a bad thing. I have been fortunate enough to have been to a number of the mining conferences out in the Baie Verte area. I have to say I say this with pure respect: Because it is not in the middle of a downtown city, you would sometimes question if they could put off something of that magnitude when you think of it. But when you have people from all over the world attend and it is a class A operation and you learn so much. In a classroom setting in the college system, I learned as much from people who are from China talking about exploration down there and what their industry means. When I'm hearing from European countries, when I hear from all other places of this country.

But when I see the skill set of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and the lead from our college system to our university system, what they're doing, and I see all that in the Baie Verte peninsula and those communities there, I'm saying we have not only a vibrant industry there, but we have an unbelievable skill set. A human skill set that is second to none. For that skill set to flourish and move beyond just our own borders here and have people not move away but have people come here to learn from us or people come and say train us in your skill set so we can go back to our own jurisdictions and pass on that knowledge and that particular skill set.

I had one of the reporters in the scrum today ask me that question: Do you think you've asked enough questions on Terra Nova? And my response: We've asked everything we possibly think we could. We've asked about additional information that would be beneficial to us making some decisions, making some recommendations, or maybe 100 per cent siding with the government that the path they've taken is the right path. But the issue was about we don't know. We literally don't know. The gaps there don't give us enough confidence to be able to say this is what we should do, this is what the government should do, or collectively between us all we all should walk away from it. We don't know.

So that's the question there. I did say to the reporter that this is not over yet. We haven't given up, and I would hope and expect nor has the government given up. But particularly I'm hoping that the oil industry themselves haven't given up on this. I'm hoping somewhere in a boardroom or a Zoom room where somebody is actually now still having a conversation, or there are some officials of companies that are crunching numbers and looking at potential investments or looking at how they can defer certain expenses to be able to make this project continue where it needs to go. Or someone to have the innovation and the foresight to be able to say, you know what, we have a vibrant industry in Newfoundland and Labrador. We're going to stay with that. Even if it's not as profitable – if our margins are 22 per cent and it's not as profitable as some of our other projects here or in other jurisdictions, we're going to stay with.

But to do that – and I said it earlier – we, in this province, need to set the environment. The financial environment, the investment environment and the technical supports that is necessary to do that. That's the role and responsibility of government. If it's around tax regimes, if it's around dividends, if it's around equity share, whatever it may be, those options should all be there for discussion. Doesn't mean you're going to take all of them. Doesn't mean you're going to take any of them. It might mean that you mesh a couple together because that works in one area. It might mean you don't touch anything; you let it all go naturally to one entity.

So I wanted to talk about that because, at the end of the day, I wanted to remind this reporter that we've done everything. Everything, I think, in our power here to advise government, support workers, support the oil industry and support the oil companies to come to a solution. Right now, again as I said, it's worrisome for me because there's so much at stake.

When I had the opportunity yesterday out on the Confederation Building steps to talk to some of the individuals directly affected by it – it's heart wrenching when you don't know if you're going to have employment. And unfortunately you're in an atmosphere in an industry right now that isn't exactly booming. There aren't exactly direct opportunities next week to jump and change your jobs.

Now, do we know? Are we confident the oil industry will come back? No doubt it will. Particularly if we set the proper environment and the proper tone here to do it. Because as I said earlier, we already have the resources. We have the cleanest energy around, the cleanest oil energy. We have, by far, the most skilled individuals to be able to do that. And we already have our infrastructure. We have our ice-free ports. We have what I hope – in another one of those optimistic things – is a refinery up and operational in the very near future. We're hoping and very optimistic, because that's another cornerstone of what the oil industry means and the draw and attraction for people.

So I do want to reiterate again to all those who were out there yesterday, to all those workers who were affected by it, to all those supply

companies, all those who benefit from it – people forget it's not just the workers who jump on a ship and go out or on a helicopter to go out. They are very important, because they're the front-line people who are doing the work. But it's all those other companies who provide services. It might mean the groceries that go out to feed all the individuals out there. Or it might mean technical support that's necessary. Or it might mean somebody having to go out and spend two weeks away from their family because they work for a contracting company doing something specific to ensure people are safer out there and the operations are working so that there is no slowdown and there is no gap in services for people. So that's the worry part here.

I'm also worried because I wasn't reassured by the federal minister yesterday. There's no slight on the provincial minister and there's no slight on the Premier or the government at this point. But yesterday my slight to anybody was the federal minister did nothing, said nothing that would reassure me that they have an understanding of what this means to the people of this province; have an understanding of the impact this could have on the oil industry nationally, globally and our stake in that. I did not get a real, true sense that the first priority would be the workers of Newfoundland and Labrador, from what he would find to foster or advocate for that the federal government's role and responsibility would be here.

I was taken back by that. I thought it was a dialogue with some workers about nothing that was relevant to them. I think that was the response I noticed from people, particularly when I spoke to them. So that's worrisome. When our minister, when the minister responsible for Natural Resources is a home-grown individual who should have a better understanding of the value and the need here, and I don't see that individual as our champion, then that's worrisome. That's why I say that's worrisome right now, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: I understand MPs, various roles up there, other MPs that are here. I'm not singling any of them out, because I've worked with other MPs and I understand different roles and

responsibilities, people have different skill sets and people do things differently. Behind the scenes, they do work for their constituents. Maybe they lobby not as publicly as people would think and want behind the scenes to get things for our province. I respect that. So I don't disrespect any of them going up there. Nor do I disrespect Minister O'Regan, but I do have a concern.

When you're in that position, when you have that ability and in an hour of our need, in the crisis time you don't step up and do everything in your power – if that means you have to work with the oil companies, if it means you have to flex your muscle with the oil companies, if it means you have to flex your muscle with your own cabinet. Let's not forget why we're still a very vibrant, alive province: somebody like John Crosbie. We all know the story. He stood his ground.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, he went to his cabinet, he went to his prime minister and said, this is not just about John Crosbie; this is about the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. He went one bigger. He said this is about the people of this great country of ours; we'll all gain from that. Because of who John Crosbie was, because of his respect within his caucus – and no doubt, he had people there who wouldn't support it.

No doubt, I suspect there was a difference of opinion in the provincial Cabinet here on where things are going right now, as it has been when I was a Cabinet minister. We don't always agree; we come from different perspectives. But I will tell you John Crosbie stood up and convinced the prime minister who took a risk also. Who had no real loyalty to Newfoundland and Labrador, no real connection here, about the oil industry and went against some of his counterparts and some of his own caucus and cabinet ministers to look at something. Had a little bit more vision. That Newfoundland and Labrador being prosperous makes the rest of this Confederation prosperous.

We've all seen when we ran into a bit of a bump in the road with Hibernia and that it all could have come to a complete stop, that it was the federal government who stepped up and said,

you know what, we have a role, a responsibility but, more importantly, we have an ability to do the right thing here, to continue to make things going. They bought a stake in this industry because they believed in the industry, they believed in Newfoundland and Labrador and they believed in the workers who were going to make that a vibrant industry.

I guarantee you, \$5 billion later they didn't make the wrong investment, Mr. Speaker, with out a doubt.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: It wasn't the wrong investment in Hibernia, it wasn't the wrong investment in the oil industry and it wasn't the wrong investment in Newfoundland and Labrador. I guarantee you it wasn't the wrong investment in the workers of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker.

That's the foresight we need here and we need it from Ottawa. We need that partnership. I don't care what the political stripe is up there. We need vision and we need support because we have a vibrant future, we have an extremely vibrant future. We're part of this Confederation but we also have responsibilities in it. We also have obligations and so does the government have responsibilities for us, and obligations. Their obligation and responsibility is to ensure that we are a vibrant province.

Mr. Speaker, I see the hour of the day. We're ready to take our supper break.

I do adjourn debate, seconded by the Member for the Conception Bay South, and that we'll return after the supper break, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: The motion is that we do adjourn now until 5 p.m.

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

AN HON. MEMBER: Six.

SPEAKER: Sorry.

This House sits adjourned until 6 p.m.