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Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

Tuesday

June 22, 2021

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Are the House Leaders ready?

S. CROCKER: Yes, Sir.

SPEAKER: Admit strangers.

Order, please!

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

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a point of privilege. This is the earliest possible time to raise the point of privilege. It is my first opportunity to do so.

O'Brien and Bosc in the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* states that a "Member must satisfy the Speaker that he or she is bringing the matter to the attention of the House as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the situation."

As per our discussion, you agreed that this the earliest possible time. I have given you notice and a copy of the point of privilege. This point of privilege is being raised as there is new evidence from a Supreme Court decision in the past few days, which is contrary to the findings of *The Joyce Report* of October 18, 2018.

You advised me that the point of privilege I raised in the last General Assembly died on the Order Paper when the House of Assembly dissolved and that I would have to file a new point of privilege, which I am doing so.

Due to what I've mentioned above, there is also new evidence from the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador on a recent decision which has implications with the findings of *The Joyce Report* of October 18, 2018.

My point of privilege is concerning *The Joyce Report* of October 18, 2018, presented to the Management Commission by the Commissioner for Legislative Standards and subsequently

tabled in the House of Assembly and voted on in this House of Assembly on November 6, 2018.

In our Members' Parliamentary Guide, May 2019, Parliamentary privilege is defined as "the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively ... and by Members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions, and which exceed those possessed by other bodies or individuals."

Privilege or peculiar rights can be divided into two categories: Rights to the Members, individually and rights extended to the House, collectively.

As Speaker Sauvé stated in a ruling on March 22, 1983: An allegation of criminal or dishonourable conduct inevitably affects the Member's ability to function effectively while the matter remains unresolved.

The Joyce Report of October 18, 2018, and the vote in this House of Assembly violated my rights and affected my ability to carry out my duties effectively and damaged my reputation. Bruce Chaulk – and I quote – "I think his attempts to influence the Complainant's actions, as well as his response when she failed to affect his desired outcome, were outside the "norm" of political interactions and were below the standards expected of persons in their role within government. Relationships between Members and government employees should be professional and based upon mutual respect and should have regard to the duty of those employees to remain politically impartial when carrying out their duties.

"I find that the conduct of MHA Joyce is a violation of principle 10 of the Code of Conduct. His behaviour during the hiring process fell below the standard expected of a member of the House of Assembly. I find that the manner in which he addressed this issue was unprofessional and showed a lack of mutual respect towards members of the public service by placing those individuals in the middle of a process that is supposed to be politically impartial. This type of conduct is not acceptable and must be discouraged."

In *The Joyce Report* of October 18, 2018, the Commissioner for Legislative Standards found

myself in violation of Principle 10, which states: “Relationships between Members and government employees should be professional and based upon mutual respect and should have regard to the duty of those employees to remain politically impartial when carrying out their duties.” He classified the complainant as a government employee, who was a Member of this Legislature which is contrary to the act. This was intentional, malicious and an abuse of his powers.

On November 5, 2018, when the Commissioner for Legislative Standards was questioned in the House of Assembly, I questioned him regarding Principle 10 and asked how I violated Principle 10 when the Speaker of the House, Perry Trimper, stated in a letter November 2, 2018, to me that: “Members of the House of Assembly are elected officials, they are not employees.” There is no employee relationship between a Member and the Crown. The Commissioner’s reply was: “The only thing I would suggest is that relationships between Members is certainly plural.”

This House of Assembly accepted this false report and voted on it in the House of Assembly and damaged my reputation. It has to be brought back to the House of Assembly for consideration.

There was a request by myself and former MHA Dale Kirby to obtain a copy of the Rubin Thomlinson report, which found that there was no bullying and harassment. The Commissioner for Legislative Standards refused us a copy. Mr. Kirby appealed the decision to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

During the investigation, less than three months after *The Joyce Report* of October 18, 2018, the Commissioner for Legislative Standards made a total contradictory statement to the Privacy Commissioner pertaining to Principle 10. On page 3, paragraph 7 of the Privacy Commissioner’s report it states: “... the Commissioner for the Legislative Standards states that the Complainant is not an ‘employee’” Paragraph 7 continues: “In support of this position, the Commissioner for Legislative Standards provided this Office with an opinion from the Clerk of the House of Assembly:

“MHAs are not considered employees. They are public office holders.”

The Information and Privacy Commissioner in his report on page 5 states: “While section 41 is a mandatory exception to disclosure, section 33 creates a mandatory right of access in the context of a workplace investigation. However, based on the definition of a ‘workplace investigation’ at section 33(1)(c) the conduct at issue must be that of an ‘employee’. The Commissioner for Legislative Standards and the Clerk of the House of Assembly deny that a Member of the House of Assembly is an ‘employee’. The language of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act* supports the conclusion that a Member is not an employee, with a distinction made between the two roles throughout that Act, for example:

“55 (1) An employee or a member who reasonably believes that he or she has information that could show that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed may make a disclosure to his or her supervisor, the clerk, a member of the audit committee chosen under paragraph 23(2)(b), or the investigator.

“62. Where a supervisor, the speaker, the clerk or the investigator is of the opinion that it is necessary to further the purposes of this Part, he or she may, in accordance with the rules, arrange for legal advice to be provided to employees and members involved in a process or proceeding under this Part.

“[12] Furthermore, the definition of ‘employee’ found in the ATIPPA, 2015 is clear that an employee performs services ‘for the public body.’

*“2. In this Act
(i) ‘employee’, in relation to a public body, includes a person retained under a contract to perform services for the public body.*

In this case, the person is a member elected by his constituents to represent them. He does not perform services ‘for’ a public body. His relationship is to the electorate, who ‘hired’ him through their electoral process, and they determine his tenure of employment.”

Donovan Molloy, Information and Privacy Commissioner, ruled on page 6, paragraph 15: “Further, a Member of the House of Assembly is not an ‘employee’ and, accordingly, section 33 of the *ATIPPA, 2015* does not apply to require that access be granted” as an MHA.

Mr. Kirby appealed the decision through the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador. The decision of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador, Justice Frances J. Knickle, page 32, paragraph 91: “**The appellant is not an employee as understood in the common law.**”

The House of Assembly Law Clerk, in a letter dated July 11, 2019, makes it clear that MHAs are not government employees. In her letter she states: An MHA is not a government employee.

In a submission to Justice Osborne on November 27, 2020, for an access to information review, the Commissioner for Legislative Standards stated: Members are not government employees. Signed, Bruce Chaulk, Commissioner for Legislative Standards.

The people to date who contradicted the Commissioner’s finding of October 18, 2018, on Principle 10, that Members are not government employees are as follows: the Commissioner’s own testimony to the Privacy Commissioner; his letters to Justice Osborne; the Supreme Court appeal with the Commissioner for Legislative Standards supported this decision of the Privacy Commissioner; the Clerk of the House of Assembly; the Law Clerk of the House of Assembly; the Privacy Commissioner, Donovan Molloy; Supreme Court Justice Knickle; and former Speaker Perry Trimper.

I am tabling all the documents, if possible, as clear evidence that contradicts the findings in *The Joyce Report* of October 18, 2018.

Mr. Speaker, it’s very disturbing that the Commissioner for Legislative Standards presented a report to the Management Commissioner, which by his own submissions, and many more, were false and this infringed upon my right as a Member.

Mr. Speaker, the second point I produced that you informed me of that died on the Order Paper

and that I should resubmit is interference by former Premier Dwight Ball, which questions the independence of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards.

The Commissioner stated on many occasions that he was an independent officer who completed the report without any interference.

Mr. Speaker, in *Hansard*, the Commissioner for Legislative Standards stated on November 5, 2018 – I quote – “As a statutory officer, I have a solemn responsibility to administer the law exactly the way specified in the law. In doing so, I am expected to behave in a non-partisan manner.” I am expected to behave in a non-partisan manner – that was his quote, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, these statements were absolutely false, misleading and the Commissioner for Legislative Standards presented a report to the House of Assembly that was not independent and have political interference that resulted in the Commissioner for Legislative Standards misleading the House of Assembly. On August 6, 2018, former Premier Dwight Ball informed me that another report concerning former MHA Colin Holloway would be released on August 7, 2018.

We attended a funding announcement in the Harbour Main District. That night on August 6, Mr. Ball called me and informed me that the report would not be released, but reports about myself and former MHA Dale Kirby would be released together in several weeks.

On August 23, at the beginning of the by-election for Windsor Lake, when asked by reporters about the bullying and harassment report, Mr. Ball stated and I quote: “There’s no room for political interference in those reports ... I’ve not received any information from the commissioner, neither have I went looking for any.”

Mr. Ball stated and I quote: “It’s done with an independent process that’s been established by Chief Justice Green here.”

On November 5, 2018, in the House of Assembly in *Hansard*, former Premier Ball stated: “Somewhere along the line, of course, the

processes had changed and Members made a decision, which was certainly up to them and I certainly encourage and support all of that, but Members took a different route to actually get the allegations dealt with and investigated.

“So, that was my only involvement in all of this ...”

Bruce Chaulk response “Yes, very much so.”

Mr. Speaker, Dwight Ball and the Commissioner for Legislative Standards misled the House of Assembly and there was political interference by Dwight Ball.

I was informed on August 6, 2018, that both reports would be coming out together. Just over two weeks later that occurred. One day after the by-election in Windsor Lake.

After writing Dwight Ball on many occasions, which he refused to respond, if he was in contact with the Commissioner for Legislative Standards during the process, I threatened to release the names of those who were in contact with the Commissioner on his behalf during the investigation. After public denials of no interference and in the House of Assembly stating that he had not been in contact with the Commissioner for Legislative Standards, I received a letter from Dwight Ball on May 31, 2019. I quote: “I can confirm there were limited occasions whereby my office contacted the Office of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards.” I quote again, Mr. Speaker, from Dwight Ball, his own signature: “I can confirm there were limited occasions whereby my office contacted the Office of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards.”

Dwight Ball and the Commissioner both denied any involvement, and this was clearly misleading to the general public and to the House of Assembly who voted on the reports against myself and Dale Kirby when there was clearly political interference. Dwight Ball interfered with the process and the independence of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards was breached.

Mr. Speaker, I read from *Hansard*, November 5, 2018, Mr. Lane: “... if you’ve said that there was no bullying and harassment that has taken

place, and therefore a breach of the Code of Conduct, I can only assume that Rubin Thomlinson said the same thing, there is no bullying and harassment.”

Mr. Chaulk: “Without getting into the report – without getting into any of the reports and saying anything, but if someone goes through the effort of hiring an investigator to investigate a particular situation, I think the person would be a fool to overturn or dispute what the investigator is telling them.”

Mr. Chaulk: “That’s what those reports look like, and that’s what the report looked like when I received them from Rubin Thomlinson. They looked exactly like that. Of course, I put a section in the front which deals with the chronology and the legislative authority and my executive summary; but, for the most part, you’re reading the Rubin Thomlinson report,” where there was no bullying and harassment.

What changed from the Rubin Thomlinson report of no bullying and harassment to filing a false report on this? Political interference by Premier Dwight Ball: I can confirm that there were limited occasions whereby my office contacted the Commissioner for Legislative Standards on May 31, 2019, signed by Dwight Ball. These interactions were never disclosed, but publicly Dwight Ball and the Commissioner denied any contact with each other.

I would like to point out also that the Commissioner for Legislative Standards is also the ethics Commissioner for this House of Assembly. My reputation was damaged by this political interference, secret discussions and the tabling of the false reports of October 18, 2018. Mr. Speaker, this is clearly a prima facie case where a Member’s reputation was damaged and the quickest and speediest remedy to bring this back to the House of Assembly so a debate can occur with all the information presented.

On March 22, 1983, Madam Sauvé, in a ruling, stated on a point of privilege: While it is before the court “I have therefore decided, in spite of the reservations I have expressed, that this complaint should be given precedence as a prima facie case of privilege in order to provide the Hon. Member with the speediest possible route toward the re-establishment of his

reputation. I am prepared to entertain a motion to refer this matter to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.”

Mr. Speaker, you have to decide if this is a *prima facie* case. If my rights as a Member have been violated, you must bring it back to the House for this House of Assembly to make their decision.

This ruling is precedence that does allow an issue before the courts to get the speediest possible remedy to re-establish my reputation, as Madam Sauvé stated. Any decision in this House is bound by parliamentary privilege and it has no bearing on court decisions. Mr. Speaker, if you make a decision that this is a *prima facie* case, I will bring a motion to bring *The Joyce Report* of October 18, 2018 back to the House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, Bosc and O’Brien states: “It is impossible to codify all incidents which might be interpreted as matters of obstruction, interference, molestation or intimidation and as such constitute *prima facie* cases of privilege. However, some matters found to be *prima facie* include the damaging of a Member’s reputation, the usurpation of the title of Member of Parliament, the intimidation of Members and their staff and of witnesses before committees, and the provision of misleading information.”

I refer to page 141 in O’Brien and Bosc, where Members include privileges before the House of Assembly are treated with the utmost seriousness. As you outlined, there is a formal process to be followed, I followed the process, notified the Speaker of my intentions to raise the point of privilege at his earliest possible convenience.

Mr. Speaker, with the pleasure of the House and consent of the House, I will table every document to prove everything I said here: written correspondence by every person that I mentioned in this.

SPEAKER: Are there any other speakers to the point of privilege?

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

P. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I’m not going to make any big, long commentary on this but as someone who was here at the time, I have to be honest, when all this came down – I wasn’t there. Some of us could have been here, I’m not sure. I wasn’t here when any of this allegedly took place, but I have to say, Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned on a couple of matters.

One thing I am very concerned about is the fact that our Commissioner for Legislative Standards would state in this House of Assembly, which he did – we tried to ask him questions. He wouldn’t answer hardly anything, anyway. I can remember trying to ask him questions and you’d get non-answers. It reminded me of Question Period.

I would say this, though, that he has stated on the one hand in this House of Assembly as part of the charge against our colleague here that it was because it was between government employees. He said that; that’s there. Then he goes ahead in a couple of court proceedings – one with the Privacy Commissioner and another one involving former colleague Dale Kirby – and indicates that they’re not government employees.

So there’s either an issue of competence or there’s an issue of misleading this House of Assembly. Regardless of the report, regardless of what went on or didn’t go on in terms of *The Joyce Report*, *The Kirby Report*, the fact of the matter is that if the Commissioner – who is an independent Officer of this House, who reports to this House. Now we have another instance. We’ve been going through all the issues that went on with the last provincial general election and a lot of questionable decisions. And now this comes to light. I think that this House needs to take that matter very, very seriously. I ask you to do so when you’re considering, Mr. Speaker.

Whether or not you go forward with a review of *The Joyce Report* or not, whether that happens or not, I think that the matter concerning potential misleading of the House by the Commissioner for Legislative Standards – on a standalone basis, if nothing else – needs to be addressed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: Any further speakers?

If not, this House will recess to review the point of privilege.

Recess

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I took some time to review the point of privilege; however, I do need a little more time to review the full documents and I will be making a ruling in very short order.

The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

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

I just wanted to, for the record of *Hansard* and this House of Assembly, indicate that I will be recusing myself from any deliberations, either in my role as the Deputy Chair of Committees or as an MHA, as we work through this matter, given I'm involved in an application with this gentleman before the courts. I'll leave it there.

Thank you.

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

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

I also will be recusing myself from any deliberation on the floor as it pertains to this matter, and I will stand by the October 18 report.

Thank you very much.

Statements by Members

SPEAKER: Today we will hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Topsail - Paradise, Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans, Placentia - St. Mary's, Humber - Bay of Islands and Mount Pearl - Southlands.

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

P. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It appears summer has arrived, and many like-minded individuals and groups from communities across the province have come together to remove litter and work to keep our beautiful province clean.

May month was Community Clean-up Month for Topsail - Paradise, and many groups and volunteers had taken the time out of their busy lives to get outside and help the environment while cleaning up neighbourhoods, school grounds, open spaces, trails and business locations.

Groups such as 1st Topsail Scouting and 1st Paradise Scout Troop collected hundreds of pounds of garbage from Peter Barry Duff Memorial Park. MUNHOPE collected five bags of garbage from Topsail Beach. And the Town of CBS just recently held its 3-Hour Challenge this past weekend. Many other groups and individuals of all ages have volunteered and participated in community cleanups.

Mr. Speaker, it is nice to see such wonderful community spirit from all groups and volunteers of all ages stepping forward to clean up our beautiful neighbourhoods and communities. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have participated.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

This past Friday marked the launch of a public fundraising campaign for the Lionel Kelland Hospice in Grand Falls-Windsor. Titled Every Moment Matters, this initiative will set out to raise the remaining 35 per cent of the estimated capital cost of \$7.6 million to finally make this dream become a reality.

The new design, unveiled Friday, will see 10 residential suites with private washrooms, along with accommodations for family members to overnight. Other features include a children's play area, an outdoor area beaming with nature and beauty and a place of spiritual reflection and

guidance for any and all faiths. The Lionel Kelland Hospice will offer quality care for loved ones nearing their end of life journey and also offering support to their families.

I ask all hon. Members to join me as we thank Board Chair Mark Griffin and the other directors, the Presentation Sisters, the community for their donations and support and special thank you to the Gift Team chaired by Shelley Woolfrey. Remember, folks, Every Moment Matters.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Colinet, St. Mary's Bay is different from most Newfoundland outports; it looked to the woods instead of the ocean for its existence. The Colinet Loggers Heritage Society was formed in 2017 to research, preserve and make available the historic and cultural heritage of Colinet.

The society acquired the former Our Lady of Grace church and recommissioned it as the Fergus & Fred Linehan Heritage Centre. The building has been developed into a splendid cultural arts centre that has hosted many of Newfoundland's finest performers. The Heritage Society continues to collect artifacts and pictures from the town's past and is working to display them.

The Colinet Logger's Car Show is a major supporter. It has developed the basement of the building into a car storage space. Concerts and dances are held throughout the year. The society gratefully receives sponsorship from local business and it applies for all provincial and federal funding available.

Potential future projects include developing the grounds into a park-like area suitable for performances, exploring the possibility of a summer theatre, installing walking trails with storyboards and welcoming visitors to Colinet.

I ask everyone to join me in congratulating the Colinet Loggers Heritage Society on their success.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

E. JOYCE: Today I'm pleased to recognize two individuals from my district who were recently awarded Ronald McDonald House Helping HAND Awards.

Tammy Maillet of Meadows has been a valued member of the McDonald's team in Corner Brook since 2013. She firmly believes in the Ronald McDonald House Charities and doing her part to help make a difference for the sick children and their families, especially families in Western Newfoundland. Her commitment and dedication to the charities has been recognized by her co-workers and this year Tammy is the recipient of the Champion McDonald's Crew Helping HAND Award.

Cindy Wells of Irishtown has been a dedicated volunteer for Ronald McDonald House and a Red Shoe Crew campaign leader since 2012. Cindy has a personal connection to Ronald McDonald House and through her fundraising initiatives and dedication, she has brought together her community every year in support of the charity and has raised over \$50,000 to date. In recognition of her continued commitment, Cindy is the recipient of the Community Engagement Volunteer Helping HAND Award. I ask all Members to join with me in extending congratulations to these two ladies and thank them for their continued dedication to such a great cause.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to rise in this hon. House to recognize several outstanding young people in my community. The Mount Pearl 31st Annual Focus on Youth Awards was a tremendous success and highlighted the great talent, athleticism and intellectual ability possessed by some very amazing youth.

These individuals included: Mount Pearl Youth of the Year, Liam Bavis; Youth Volunteer of the Year, Sara Parsons; Youth Athletes of the Year, Megan Holden and Kalan Noonan; Youth Team of the Year, the O'Donel High Senior Boys Volleyball Team; RNC Youth in Service Award winner, Sarah Bertrand; S.T.E.M. Award winner, Russell Corbett; Performing Arts Recognition, the cast and crew of O'Donel High School's *The Wedding Singer* and *The Valley*; Performing Arts Individual Award winners, Julia Bryant and Rebecca-Ann Bartlett; Visual Arts Award winners, Jade Hickey and Jordan Dawe; and Literary Arts Award winner, Jai-Lynn Francis.

These amazing young people have already accomplished so much and have fostered a wonderful sense of pride and optimism for the future of my community.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating these amazing young people on their accomplishments and wish them the very best in their future endeavours.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm pleased to speak today about exciting initiatives happening under the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund, specifically the Climate Change Challenge Fund.

Recently, I joined my federal colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources, to announce \$8.1

million in support for 13 climate action projects in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The provincial government contributed \$3.3 million in support of these initiatives to lower greenhouse gas emissions, improve fuel efficiency and help communities across the province save on energy costs.

Some of the initiatives include the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation's Furnace Replacement Project for existing housing units around the province and the Fisheries and Marine Institute's Fuel Switching Project. Details on the remaining projects will be announced in the coming weeks.

Mr. Speaker, every single action we take to lower greenhouse gas emissions matters.

By 2030, programs under this fund are anticipated to deliver 830,000 tons of cumulative greenhouse gas reductions and 650 direct person-years of employment. In addition to the projects under the Climate Change Challenge Fund, the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund supports programs for residential, provincial and industrial energy efficiency and electrification, including converting buildings such as schools from oil heat to electric heat.

Through programs like the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund, and our Climate Change Action Plan, we are working to not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but to stimulate clean innovation and growth, and build resilience to climate change impacts.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

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

I join the minister in recognizing the initiatives that fall under the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund here in this province. The world is changing, and due to the threat of climate change, collectively, we must change.

In recognition of this, any reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in this province are welcome news. These emission reductions are important steps in the right direction, but we need to do more to combat climate change.

We look forward to hearing more steps in this direction as we try to meet our Paris climate change targets.

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 the advance copy of his statement, and agree that every single action we take to lower greenhouse gas matters.

True environmental stewardship requires concrete action. While transitioning homes from fossil fuels is a good initiative, we will need an effective rate mitigation plan if this program is to meet its true potential, after all, why would homeowners switch to electricity without knowing the costs they will be facing.

We also call on government today to take true steps towards better environmental stewardship, declare a climate emergency, introduce a just transition plan from fossil fuels and establish a climate change task force.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills.

G. BYRNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we grow our province's population by attracting and retaining newcomers to live, to work and to feel a sense of belonging in our communities all while ensuring Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have the

skills and supports they need to live and work here.

Population growth is essential to our province, Mr. Speaker. We're all especially heartened by the strong endorsement of our mandate by Members of the Official Opposition and the Third Party during our budget Estimates.

Budget 2021 has us positioned to welcome 5,100 newcomers a year by 2026, with over \$3 million available to help match employers with newcomers to address emerging gaps in our labour market and support population growth. While we work to welcome people here in record numbers we will also ensure Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have the skills and supports they need with funding for training, apprenticeships, youth employment and career development.

Mr. Speaker, we launched the innovative Priority Skills immigration program in response to a growing demand for highly educated, highly skilled workers in our province. This program seeks newcomers with specialized education and experience in areas such as technology, ocean sciences and health, where demand has outpaced local training and recruitment. Since the Priority Skills launch in January, we have received some 12,000 submissions from experienced professionals, including Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador graduates.

I'm pleased to inform the House, Mr. Speaker, that the health sector has reviewed more than 2,000 applications and has identified 385 people to date who will be invited to apply for permanent residency in Newfoundland and Labrador.

At this moment, our staff is working with these potential newcomers to get them on the path to become a part of Newfoundland and Labrador's family.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to providing further updates on more job-matching success stories as we continue to review Priority Skills applications for other in-demand sectors, such as technology and aquaculture, and welcoming more newcomers to their new home, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

C. TIBBS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement today.

Mr. Speaker, I join the minister in acknowledging the Priority Skills immigration program, which aims to attract newcomers to our province with specialized education and experience in areas such as technology, ocean sciences and health, where demand has outpaced local training and recruitment.

Newfoundland and Labrador has a tremendous bounty to offer newcomers to our province: fresh air, clean water, rugged coastlines and some of the friendliest people on the planet. We have been truly blessed, Mr. Speaker; however, our province is the oldest per capita and has among the lowest birth rates in this country. Quite simply, we desperately need newcomers to our province to help bridge this gap. The PC Official Opposition looks forward to hearing more details and, ultimately, the results of this initiative and others like it.

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 the advance copy of his statement and commend him on the Priority Skills pathway for newcomers. For years, the government has been boasting about their attempts to increase immigration and retention. Over time, Memorial University and the CNA have done a tremendous job of attracting talented people and encouraging them to make this province their home. Yet the key problem is that government struggles to retain these individuals.

We call on the government today to cancel its planned cuts to education. Let our strong academic institutions continue to do what this government fails to do. Meanwhile, we also ask government to focus its efforts on creating a credible plan to retain those who are already coming to this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Are there any further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association says that the minister's comment that we are blessed with the amount of doctors and nurses working in our province doesn't tell the full story. The association says 90,000 people are without a family doctor in our province, which could get worse as doctors age and retire.

I ask the Premier: Do you agree with the Health Minister's assessment?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member opposite for that important question.

As we are all aware, the demographics across this province are changing significantly, as is the training of medical professionals. We understand that the changes need to meet the demands of the communities. This is a complex issue that is not just simply a numeric one or a ratio.

To answer the question, Mr. Speaker, we are cognizant of it and we're willing to work with all members of the medical communities – doctors, nurses, advanced care paramedics,

nurse practitioners: everybody – to come to a solution for the needs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. That’s one of the reasons that we put in place the Health Accord. We look forward to hearing their recommendations on how we look at a different vision of health care that hasn’t changed, really, since the ’60s, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Medical Association’s review says that we need 60 new physicians immediately and an additional 10 per year for the next decade.

I ask the Premier: Will the province meet these targets?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER A. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I can certainly tell you that we’re very lucky to have a medical school here in Newfoundland and Labrador. It does an incredible job in providing doctors – and premiers – to the province. We will continue to ensure that is developing and providing the needs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It’s done an incredible job since the ’70s and it continues to meet the needs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The reality is that the needs are, however, changing as the demographics change. We need to make sure that they’re being trained appropriately in a team atmosphere so that the millennials, who are now physicians, are getting the work-life balance that they require. That’s what will ultimately keep physicians in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and we, on this side of the House, also see the value and the professionalism of our medical school.

The president of the Medical Association has said: “We have to have a human resources plan. We have to plan out where do we need physicians, how many do we need and where should they be working.”

I ask the Premier: When will a human resources plan be completed? Will he table it in this hon. House?

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

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

The issue around access for primary care, particularly, is really important and very topical at the moment. It’s probably one of two comments I get in my inbox. The Health Accord really is going to redesign the way primary care is delivered through collaborative teams. Until that recommendation comes out, the health resource plan that everyone talks about needs to be considered in that light.

We have our challenges with recruitment and retention and we’re rising to meet those. We held a day recently, Dean Steele, to sound out what it would be that would help retain our excellent graduates, Mr. Speaker. We’ll continue to work on that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Medical Association has stated that we have the worst retention rate of any medical school in the country. Doctors and nurses that are trained here do not stay here. Meanwhile, the Greene report recommends cutting the number of nursing schools in our province from three to one.

I ask the Premier: How do cutting nursing schools help retain health care professionals?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

I think it's an important point of clarity. I believe what was insinuated in the Greene report was to amalgamate the administration of those three nursing schools, Mr. Speaker. We understand the importance of nursing schools across the province so that they provide and return to the communities where they develop.

We're continuing to commit to that, but we need to make sure that we're offering it in an efficient way, including the streamlining of corporate services and administrative costs. Surely, it doesn't make sense to have three back ends when we need a fully serviced front end, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That needs to be clarified because the need for nurses and nursing schools in Newfoundland and Labrador in different regions is very important to the people of this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: Last week, the minister stated that there are chronic issues around recruitment for nurses in our province. This government has been in place for almost six years and the chronic issue of recruitment is causing burnout with our current nursing staff.

I ask the Premier: When will chronic issues around recruitment finally be resolved?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER A. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, these issues unfortunately are not unique to Newfoundland and Labrador. We're working hard to try to come up with unique, creative models and, in fact, had a great meeting with the president of the Nurses' Union to that effect, in which we suggested – and she suggested, frankly – different models to provide care to remote and rural communities that would allow

nurses to exercise their full capacity as nurses, to meet their full training requirements and to flourish in their professional capacity.

That will involve thinking outside the box, Mr. Speaker. The traditional way of providing health care to all communities across the province – it doesn't matter if it's urban or rural – has changed. It's acutely changed with respect to the pandemic. We need to make sure that we're providing all the supports for those nurses, especially, however, in rural communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We all know that thousands of medical procedures have been backlogged because of COVID, yet the Premier's Greene report says that health care should be cut by 25 per cent over the next six years. We have a doctor and nurse shortage, 90,000 people without a family doctor and an aging population that will require more and more care.

I ask the Premier: How can a 25 per cent cut to health care spending improve these difficult numbers?

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

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

The recommendations for discussion in the Greene report are just that, Mr. Speaker. They have gone out for consultation. What the Health Accord is clearly mandated to look at is the concept of doing things more efficiently, more patient focused and allowing the savings that are generated as a result of that – the Premier has referenced back office functions, for example – to be plowed back into broader social determinants of health, which actually, over a person's life, have far more impact than any particular health care provider can do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm glad to hear that the Greene report may just be suggestions and not recommendations, because I can tell you from this side of the House, those of us that represent rural districts, and those of you on the other side that represent rural districts, when it talks about things like 25 per cent cut in health care or anything else, the report shouldn't have stopped at big reset. It probably should've been called the big resettlement. So I'm a little worried about that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: Mr. Speaker, effective July 1, 2.21 cents per litre – or 2.5 cents per litre if you include HST – will be added to our gas prices as a result of carbon tax increases.

I ask the minister: How much additional revenue will this generate?

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

An important question: The carbon tax revenue forecast for '21-'22 is \$113 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Mr. Speaker, carbon taxes are a gas tax, and higher taxes mean higher transportation costs, meaning higher costs for consumers and businesses.

I ask the minister: What is being done to protect the everyday consumer from these ever-increasing fuel prices?

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

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

As the Member opposite is aware, this is the federal carbon tax that is put on because of climate change. It's a very big concern for our country and for the globe – climate change is. The idea of the carbon tax was to help lower the amount of carbon being emitted into our atmosphere. A lot of the money that I've just spoken about that's being gleaned from the carbon tax is going towards programs to get us to net zero by 2050.

What we want to have, Mr. Speaker, is a cleaner environment. We want to ensure that climate change is addressed in our lifetime.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Mr. Speaker, this isn't the first year for a carbon tax increase. This is actually the third. In previous years, the carbon tax increase was offset by a reduction in our gas taxes.

I ask the minister: How come we didn't reduce the gas tax by the same amount this year to give the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and keep them whole?

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

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

The question, I think, is an important one in that carbon tax will continue to increase. This is a federal government initiative to address climate change.

There is a gas tax that is administered by the provincial government. We have done a scan across the country. Previously, we were a little high on our gas tax, Mr. Speaker. We are now middle of the road with regard to the imposition of gas tax. In fact, we are really in the middle of the pack across the country; therefore, there was

no room for us to move lower. We were very competitive in our gas tax and we felt that was where we needed to be.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Mr. Speaker, the reality of it is this budget, again, is focused on revenue generation. This new carbon tax increase will generate, as the minister just said, another \$130 million in revenue to the province, at the same time having a negative impact on the people of the province.

I would ask the minister, again: On the issue of job creation, you had mentioned there were no mass layoffs. Is there going to be any job losses as a result of actions taken in this year's budget?

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

S. COADY: Thank you very much.

Let me correct the Member opposite in an erroneous statement he just made, Mr. Speaker. He indicated that the carbon tax was going to be an increase of \$113 million. It is not, that is what the total revenue is going to be for carbon tax this year.

With regard to the question, Mr. Speaker, I can say it is not the goal of this government, we do not think it is a wise thing to do to have mass layoffs at all. That is not our goal, as I have said consistently in the House. Actually, government is actually actively recruiting for 500 people at current, Mr. Speaker. So, no, I can say to the Member opposite: It is not the goal of this government to have mass layoffs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Mr. Speaker, I have to go back and correct the minister again because obviously she never heard my question when she

answered with \$130 million. I asked what additional revenue would be collected by the province from the carbon tax increase so it's not \$113 million, if that's the total amount. I was referring to the 2.5 cents that will be added this year.

How much does that actually increase revenue by?

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to do math really quickly on the top of my head and say approximately \$60 million.

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: No, I'm done.

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have had many calls and emails over the last little while, especially the weekend, as I'm sure many have, from constituents and we've seen it on social media and on radio call-in shows about the confusion the changing of the vaccination schedule has caused. We're hearing of people who were able to book their second dose but now the appointments are further away than their first appointment.

I ask the minister: What is being done to stop this confusion and ensure that second doses are scheduled sooner rather than later.

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

J. HAGGIE: Excellent question, Mr. Speaker.

The RHAs are in the process of adding additional clinics as we speak, we are expecting an additional 150,000 doses of Moderna vaccine

this week alone and into the beginning of next. We will see that amount continue over the course of the summer. Whereas, before, it used to be Pfizer we could rely on, now there is a prevalence or predominance of Moderna.

It's great to see the enthusiasm for second doses. I would encourage people to keep an eye on their local health authority websites as new clinics are literally being added by the hour.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: It's not really encouraging to hear that in matters of health, you're planning as you go. This probably should have been all in place before the announcement was made.

But speaking of the supply of Moderna, which is coming, we welcome that. We understand there are little to no appointments available for the Pfizer vaccine. The Pfizer vaccine is the only vaccine currently approved for use with youth 12 to 18. This means young people face an extra barrier to getting protection from COVID-19.

I ask the minister: What are our children supposed to do?

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

J. HAGGIE: I'm really glad the Member opposite asked that question, Mr. Speaker. It gives me an opportunity to highlight the fact that, as of tomorrow, clinics will simply be advertised as MRNA clinics. Each of the regional health authorities will inspect the appointments for the following day and make sure that anybody under the age of 16 who has an appointment will have a Pfizer dose waiting for them when they turn up.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: That's good to know but the youth that we're talking about are 12 to 18. Those over 16 are going to still have the same issue.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier's Greene report said "The Provincial Government should: Institute a moratorium on building new long term care facilities" In March 2020, there were 310 people waiting for long-term placement.

Will there be a freeze on adding more long-term beds in this province?

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

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

Moderna is actually licensed down to the age of 16. The difference is 12 to 15, Mr. Speaker. That's Pfizer only, currently.

Having corrected that, in terms of long-term care, our aim is aging at home, aging in place and we have had significant success over the last year and half now, nearly two, in repatriating seniors from long-term care back into the community. The first time this has ever happened. I'm pleased to say Central Health led the way.

We will continue to assess the number of long-term care beds from a residential point of view as we go. If we need more, we'll get more.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the vice-president of Suncor said there will be a lot of work done in Bull Arm on the Terra Nova.

Can the minister outline the value of the work? How many jobs will be created at the Bull Arm site?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Indeed, the local vice-president did say there would be work done at Bull Arm but I believe later on said that the scope of work is still something that's being identified. I'm not sure actually what that number would be. We do know that there will be some work done out there, and we do realize that the refit will happen in Spain as previously planned as well.

The big thing that we were concerned about was that any money from Newfoundland and Labrador that went in had to be spent in Newfoundland and Labrador and on Newfoundland and Labrador workers, so we continue to work on the details. We know we're still waiting to see the deal get struck within the next number of weeks and we'll hopefully be able to report more to this House as soon as possible.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: I'm glad to hear the minister say that they're pushing to get the work done by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and I urge him to continue that push.

Bull Arm was the home of Hibernia, Hebron and now it will be home to upgrades on the Terra Nova, once again proving its worth as a world-class facility in the oil and gas industry.

I ask the minister: Does he agree with the Premier's Greene report and its recommendations to sell off the Bull Arm site?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There's certainly no doubt as to the value of Bull Arm to this province and we've seen a lot of work done there in the past and hopefully we're

going to see some work there in the future, whether it's with the Terra Nova FPSO or hopefully future work as it relates to a lot of the potential projects that we have here in this province.

What I would say about the Greene report is that it's recommendations. The big thing that I've noticed in this portfolio, whether it's the divestiture of assets, whether it's Bull Arm or whether it's our stake in projects, is that we need to explore everything. We have a number of investments; is it the time to monetize them or not monetize them? We haven't had that assessment done, but anything that belongs to the people of this province we'll make sure that we protect it in the best interests of the people of the province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, the minister said that the department is doing an analysis on the Premier's Greene report recommendations.

Will the minister commit to releasing this analysis once it is complete?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think what we've shown over the last number of months, certainly since I've been in this role, is that I think it's incumbent on us to release what we can to the people of this province, where available. What we've also seen here as well is that we will not disclose anything that would be not just commercially sensitive but places us in a difficult position as it relates to negotiations.

I mean, we want to get information out there, but not to the detriment of the people that we're actively working for. So while I can't say I have any issue with releasing information, of course we want to put it out there for people, what I

will say is the only caveat would be putting out anything that would hurt us as a province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, we've missed the boat on opportunity with Bull Arm with regard to a long-term plan.

I'd like to ask the minister: What exactly is the plan for the future of Bull Arm and how will we continue to create jobs out there for decades to come?

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

A. PARSONS: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I don't agree with the assessment that we've missed the opportunity. I think that the province has done what we can during trying times. Right now it's being managed by OilCo and we know that there is a lease, extending up into next year, with DF Barnes. There's work that's happening in there, but not to the extent that anyone would like to see. It's not because opportunities are missed; it's just the opportunities in many cases just have not been there.

What I will say is that I do see optimism; I do see potential. In fact, I've had people reach out to me over the last number of months to talk about ideas for Bull Arm. We're open to absolutely anything, but we are keeping an eye on, right now, the work for the Terra Nova happening in Bull Arm.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: I would think some of those people reaching out with ideas are the same people that reached out in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Mr. Speaker, the Come By Chance oil refinery shut down last year. Consumers are paying an extra five cents per litre on gasoline. It remains shut down and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are still paying through the nose for gasoline.

I ask the minister: Why haven't you asked the PUB to review the gas prices?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll take the first one on this, although I do believe the Minister of Service NL will get an opportunity as well, given that the PUB actually falls under her mandate.

What I can say is that, yes, there has been a request by a company, but usually we do not interfere with quasi-judicial bodies as it relates to their work. Anybody is free to make the application. We have the Consumer Advocate, an independent office, in place to advocate on behalf of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Right now, the information is not there. While we have spoken to the PUB, if you touch this, then we're basically concerning ourselves with a number of things where it becomes a very slippery slope down the road.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Regardless of whose department it is, Mr. Speaker, when people go to the pumps, they pay carbon tax, harmonized sales tax, excise tax and, to make things worse, tax is paid on tax.

Why hasn't the minister stepped in and mandated that the PUB find a solution to high gasoline prices which are negatively impacting families in this province?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The *Petroleum Products Act* outlines the role of the Public Utilities Board, which is an extremely important, independent role, and they monitor gas prices. They monitor fuel price and supply, as well as review the marketplace changes. They would be the body that I would encourage any residents or constituents to reach out to in regard to concerns around gas prices.

Thank very much, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We know this year's tourism season is going to be critical for the future of our province and that staycations are an important part of the plan. An inflated price of gas will keep people from travelling across the province.

I ask the minister: Why are we hindering our tourism industry by keeping gas prices so high?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't think the Member understands how this process works. Government is not making the price high. That's absolutely not how this works. God bless him; I wish George Murphy was around because there's nobody that could explain this process better than George, rest in peace.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. PARSONS: But this is a good segue, perhaps, to talk about tourism. I know my colleague in front would love to have an opportunity. I can say that this budget, we're seeing about \$30 million invested in tourism across the province through a very simple, easy-to-use process. In fact, the reviews that we got last year from this industry were absolutely positive. In fact, we've taken that, we've doubled down and we're doing more.

Just listen to the comments from operators that have reached out to us, and Brenda O'Reilly talking about the minister, I think we've done a pretty good job helping tourism in this province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It was only last week I was asking the question why \$12 million of that \$30 million went unspent when we lost 10.8 per cent of our businesses in the tourism industry. We do have control of taxation on gas. I'm fully aware that we can't control the price of gas, but the amount of taxation that we have on gas can certainly incentivize travel if we reduce it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. PARDY: We're excited to see the airline industry slowly returning routes into our province, but with the reopening around the corner we need more capacity to maximize this year's critical tourism season.

The minister stated in Question Period previously that HNL has a plan and it now rests with government to increase the number of daily flights in and out of the province.

Is government fully endorsing this plan, and why hasn't it occurred yet?

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

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

We've had great conversations with HNL and our airport partners with this. We're continuing to have conversations with airlines. I have a meeting tomorrow with PAL to also bring these conversations further. We're seeing the movement from Air Canada and WestJet and PAL. PAL is now expanding as far as Ottawa. It's great to see.

We're going to work with the airlines and make sure that we're getting the necessary routes back in place as quickly as possible, Mr. Speaker. As you would've seen or heard in the budget when the Minister of Finance delivered said budget, there is a commitment to air access in that budget.

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.

Mr. Speaker, funeral homes in the metro St. John's area are owed well over \$200,000 by the provincial government for funeral services for recipients of income support. Funeral homes have attempted to resolve this issue since 2016 without success, forcing them to change the way they provide services. I've heard that this has become such an issue that a long-term storage cooling truck has been placed at the Health Sciences Centre to handle the remains of loved ones.

I ask the Premier why the Liberal government has allowed this to continue for five years while grieving families are caught in the middle at a time when they need comfort, and the deceased be treated with dignity and respect. More importantly, what action is being planned to address this issue?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills.

G. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for the question.

This is something which is a reflection of myself. I was approached when I was minister responsible for Income Support by members of the profession to help them provide supports for those families that could not afford to provide funeral services for their family members.

One of the things that we did at that point in time – this was some time ago, Mr. Speaker; you may learn this through conversations with the funeral directors – is that we authorized an

expedited program whereby information can be provided to funeral home directors as to exact costs that the income support program would provide. Annually, we provide over \$1 million to families in Newfoundland and Labrador that cannot afford funeral services for their loved ones, whether they be on income support or otherwise. Mr. Speaker, that program is very effective.

SPEAKER: The Member's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would suggest to the minister that the program is failing and that government is basically allowing funeral homes to do the work it's supposed to be doing.

Last week in this House I presented the climate emergency declaration petition signed by some 590 people, and more are coming.

I ask the Premier: Will his government, as called for in the petition, declare a climate emergency and establish a task force on decreasing the effects of the climate change crisis?

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

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. Member for the question and bringing up issues with respect to climate change and making it a front-of-mind issue, as it should be for each and every one of us.

As I said in the petitions numerous times last week, we have set a course to work with our plan that we have in place with respect to 43 of the 45 recommendations in process or completed. That plan, it is a five-year plan. We are only partway through that plan. It is going to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, stimulate clean innovation and growth in the economy. It's an opportunity for us to work with many partners, with the federal government, municipalities and communities all across our province to reach the goals we want to by 2050.

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.

While there has been substantial progress in providing mental health support in recent years, the financial hurdle for long-term counselling remains.

Could this government update the Legislature as to steps to make it count – i.e., that important counselling – as a medical expense for those that can pay privately and/or cover it entirely for those who require extended assistance but cannot afford to participate, such as under the MCP?

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, our province cannot afford to not provide this help.

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the Member opposite and the people of the province are aware, mental health services are provided under MCP and, lots of times, through additional private services as well.

Mr. Speaker, there is a non-refundable tax credit to the lesser of \$23,097 or 3 per cent, I believe, of net income for those that qualify or for those that need it. This is for costs associated with therapy for someone with a physical or a mental impairment, including services, for example, provided by a psychologist. This is a non-refundable tax credit offered through the federal. I believe the Member opposite may be aware of that.

I think the question is whether or not we could add additional supports to that. That is something we'll take under advisement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

P. TRIMPER: Thank you, and I thank the minister for that.

I do hope we can make progress.

My second question, Mr. Speaker: I've been asking questions and reading petitions as to the needed repairs on Route 520 throughout this session of the Legislature. While there have been strong statements to address this highway under the current Premier going back to last year, the people of Sheshatshiu and North West River still have no update on this critical situation.

Seeing as we are now in the summer season, when will the tender be issued for repairs on Route 520?

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

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

On Route 520 there have been repairs that have started, as he's aware of, on the Goose River Bridge, which is important, on Route 520. I will say to the Member that I'm certainly committed to work with him in terms of discussing the necessary work that's required on Route 520.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In accordance with section 56 of the *Automobile Insurance Act*, I'm pleased to submit the 2020-2021 *Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities on Operations Carried Out under the Automobile Insurance Act*.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Further tabling of documents?

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

J. ABBOTT: Mr. Speaker, in response to recommendation 33 of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate's report *A Long Wait for Change: Independent Review of Child Protection Services to Inuit Children in Newfoundland and Labrador*, 2019, I'm pleased to table the *Report on Child Welfare Services to Indigenous Children, Youth and Families, 2019-20*.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Any other tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The maintenance and upkeep of the roadway through the community Cold Brook is the responsibility of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure. Sections of the roadway have been in deplorable condition for the last five years and need repair and resurfacing. Children are required to ride school buses twice daily over roadways where sections of the paved road are actually missing. There have been a number of close calls where vehicles have to swerve in order to avoid driving

over a section of that roadway. The residents of Cold Brook deserve better.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to consider repairing, upgrading and maintaining the paved road through the community of Cold Brook in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I've presented this petition on at least one other occasion in the House and, actually, to three different ministers now. I'm third time lucky or third time charming; I'm not sure which it is. It is an issue that – and I'm beginning to learn more and more about it. Apparently, the road to Cold Brook was actually started to be paved some years ago. We ran into one of those unfortunate situations where a hurricane came our way and some of the funds that were allocated for the refinishing of that section of road had to be diverted to some bridge repairs in the district as it was back then.

In actual fact, when you drive into Cold Brook, the first section of road, you can see, has been resurfaced, but it's the last kilometre that never got resurfaced. It has continued to deteriorate. I am hoping that with the season started and a kilometre of pavement to be done, that as the paving machines roll out to the West Coast and contracts are let, this particular road can be finished once and for all.

I look forward to hearing from the minister.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure for a response.

E. LOVELESS: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

Yes, I have heard the Member mention this road over and over and over, no doubt. Today I can tell him I'm not going to say yes and I'm not going to say no. I'm looking at ways to see if I can get it done for the Member.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DWYER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I present my petition today and the background is as follows:

WHEREAS there are no current long-term operations at the Bull Arm Fabrication site;

WHEREAS it's a world-class facility with the potential to rejuvenate the local economy and the provincial economy;

WHEREAS residents are troubled with the lack of local employment in today's economy;

We would like the facility to encourage employment for the area and create the economic spinoffs for local businesses. This is an asset of the province. I don't think that the recommendation to sell it off, obviously, is to the benefit of our province because I think a more long-term tenant, Mr. Speaker, would be more attractive for gainful business opportunities.

WHEREAS the continued idling and not being up to the full potential are not in the best interests of the province;

THEREFORE we, the residents of the area near the 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 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.

I want to say that it's nice to see that the minister is here to hear my petition. I really do appreciate that. We're here to work together with the government for a long-term benefit to this great asset. The petition I present today is signed by people in Sunnyside this time, Mr. Speaker, and one of those is actually the mayor of Sunnyside, Mayor Gerald Snook. Like I said, it's very important to this area because the spinoffs are so great.

I'm going to stop there and just ask the minister, I guess: Are we exploring all potential operators to take over the Bull Arm site?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the petition from the Member and his constituents.

I wish I had more to report, but the reality is we do not at this time.

The one thing to remember, though, just a couple of principles, I guess, that sort of guide certainly me but I think all the Members of this side are that, (a), we have recognition of the fact that we have a tremendous asset there and that we are very lucky to have that. The second part is that I am not compelled by a Greene report or anything to do one thing or the other. It's nice though to have input, the same way that we have this report. Again, there's a lot of work that went into it. But no different than I speak to local mayors, no different than you speak to advocacy groups. All that forms a basis of information for the department to take to try to figure out what is the best step.

While I am certainly not opposed to examining to see if it can be divested for a good reason, at the same time, I certainly wouldn't want to see anything happen for the sake of doing the same.

Right now we do know that DF Barnes is there, as I said, but we also know that it is underutilized. There's no doubt that we don't have as much out there. But if you had asked me six months ago, maybe I would have been a little more pessimistic. With the way things have gone recently, I'm certainly seeing a lot more optimism and I think hopefully we'll see more going on in that area.

Thank you.

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

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's hard competing with these bunch here.

I'm presenting a petition for gender-affirming surgeries, Mr. Speaker.

In November of 2019, the province announced that transgender persons would be able to access chest surgeries through the provincial MCP system;

The province quietly imposed punitive and restrictive regulations for trans women. Trans women must be taking hormone replacement drugs for 18 months; the world standard is 12. These women must have no breast development at all. The world standard on transgender health care states that "The medical procedures attendant to gender affirming/confirming surgeries are not 'cosmetic' or 'elective' or 'for the mere convenience of the patient.' These reconstructive procedures are not optional in any meaningful sense, but are understood to be medically necessary for the treatment of the diagnosed condition";

THEREFORE we, the undersigned, call for the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to: Remove the restrictive and punitive regulations regarding breast augmentation for transgender women; and to allow medical decisions regarding transgender health care to be decided by the patient and their doctor or medical team.

I have here, Mr. Speaker, a petition signed by some 200 people. This is the second time I presented a petition on this. Considering, when we look at it, we are at end of Pride Month. We've passed legislation here regarding birth certificates and the ability to not have your gender identified. We look at the incidents in Mount Pearl with the burning or the theft of the Pride flags, I think it's important that as a government we're sending a clear message that people who undergo these surgeries are given the full benefit so that they can live the lives that they wish to live and to be identified in the way that they wish to be identified.

I do call upon the minister, again, to remove the restrictive and punitive regulations and to allow any such decisions to be decided by the patient, Mr. Speaker, and their doctor or medical team.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

The background to this petition is as follows: The Public Utilities Board has approved a licence for an ambulance owner to operate in the area from Bay Bulls to Bauline. This area is one of the fastest growing areas of the province; there have been many concerns from residents, municipalities, councils and emergency responders regarding response times.

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 support the position of this service provider and ensure that residents of Ferryland District meet national standards for response times.

Mr. Speaker, I presented this petition on a couple of other occasions, I would think, and it's a growing concern in our area. Between Bay Bulls to Bauline there are roughly about 5,000 residents and right now residents have to wait, I'm going to say, 45 minutes for an ambulance and that's on a good day. We have incidents where constituents have to wait upwards of two hours. Sometimes that happens and it happens way too often and it's something that we should definitely look at.

There's an operator willing and able to step forward and operate this service, and I ask the government again: What is the hold up on it? We have two ambulances that are based in Cape Broyle that typically only have enough for one crew and so the ambulance is sitting there in the yard. It's just not something that's acceptable. If they go on an alert and an ambulance from Cape Broyle could possibly respond in the area of Bay Bulls and they might get a call to go to Trepassey, their ambulance is gone out so they could go to Trepassey and that means we have a longer wait time coming from St. John's. If they happen to be in a red alert, where do we stand then? So it's just something that I bring to the minister and hopefully consider and have a look at.

Thank you very much.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

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

Labrador has a rate of sexual assault of nearly four times the national average according to the RCMP and the RNC. While this region only makes up five per cent of the province's total population, Labrador has 25 per cent of the police-reported sexual assaults. In 2020, Statistics Canada reported that there were some 449 police-reported sexual assaults on average for every 100,000 people in Canada, while in Labrador we had about 681.

Many of the sexual assault survivors are Innu or Inuit, living in communities where support services are lacking. It is crucial that the victims of sexual assault receive proper care, as to not be further traumatized. It is also important for the people administering the care to be culturally aware and to have the proper education in these matters. The nearest professionally trained support is based in St. John's.

THEREFORE we, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to establish a sexual assault nurse examiner in Labrador that can support survivors and provide awareness/education regarding these terrible crimes.

Mr. Speaker, I have reported this petition before, and I'm very pleased to say and I thank the minister for her co-operation and her own initiative and enthusiasm. I understand that the department is looking to move not just a single person, but, in fact, to have many persons trained in these procedures across Labrador to provide that counselling, provide that support. I thank her very much for that and I just encourage her to move as quickly as possible for what is a very serious matter affecting Labrador and my district.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I brought this petition a few times now. This is the last one for this sitting here now. It's 160 signatures. It's a petition to increase the support for Labrador West seniors.

The reason for the petition: The need for senior accessible housing and home-care services in Labrador West is steadily increasing. Lifelong residents of the region are facing the possibility of needing to leave their home in order to afford to live or receive adequate care. Additional housing options, including assisted-living care facilities, like those found throughout the rest of the province, for seniors have become a requirement for Labrador West. That requirement is not currently being met.

WHEREAS the seniors of our province are entitled to peace and comfort in their own homes where they have spent a lifetime contributing to its prosperity and growth;

WHEREAS the means for the increasing number of senior residents of 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 their community by providing affordable housing options for seniors and assisted-living care facilities for those requiring care.

Mr. Speaker, I have brought this (inaudible) and the minister has responded a couple of times to it. I'm happy to hear that he's open to the idea of looking at what seniors need in Labrador West. Like I've said many times before, these people have built their entire lives in building a community in Labrador West. It's a relatively new community. When you talk about the age of Newfoundland and Labrador, it's one of the newest communities there. It was never designed for seniors, but now seniors want to stay and watch their grandchildren enjoy the community that they've built.

I ask the House to take a serious consideration at looking at the needs and stuff of seniors in the area when it comes to adequate housing and other options like that, and different levels of care that are required in the area, so we can

continue to grow and build as a community and also watch our parents and grandparents continue to enjoy the community that they've built.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality to respond to the previous petition.

P. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I want to also commend my hon. colleague, of course, for bringing this very important matter. As we all know, it certainly is a priority and the Member is certainly accurate when he says that this certainly is in the works.

Just to say again on record that an additional \$425,000 in funding to advance the work of the Office of Women and Gender Equality and the Premier's Roundtable on Gender Equity, as well as the expansion of the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program. Again, to confirm to the Member this certainly is a priority. I really appreciate that and I thank him for bringing up this important matter, because we need to keep these conversations at the forefront and that is exactly what our government will do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call Motion 3.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that notwithstanding Standing Order 63 this House shall not proceed with Private Members' Day on Wednesday, June 23, 2021, but shall instead meet at 2 p.m. on that day for Routine Proceedings and to conduct

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

SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

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, second reading of Bill 7.

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, that An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009, Bill 7, now be read a second time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 7, An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009 do now be read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009." (Bill 7)

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It has been a big week or two weeks for the Vital Statistics Act; this is our second change. It is very exciting; very important piece of legislation

that protects some of the administration around residents of our province.

Today, the changes we are proposing will do three things. The first is introduce an important piece of consumer protection, which I'll explain. We're going to make it easier to get documents processed when a loved one has passed away. Thirdly, we are making an administrative change to increase the responsiveness upon processing death registrations.

I'll just walk through that now, Mr. Speaker. The first change around an important piece of consumer protection has to do with when one applies for a birth, marriage or death certificate. I had a baby in October and I had to do this. I went online and I googled birth certificate NL or apply for a birth certificate Newfoundland and Labrador so that I could apply for a birth certificate for my little boy.

When one googles that or looks online for that, whether it's a birth certificate, marriage certificate or death certificate, our government website comes up and there's an easy process to fill out your birth certificate. It could be better, but we're working on it. What also comes up in search results are third party sites, and through a third party you could apply for a Newfoundland and Labrador birth certificate, among other certificates. Mr. Speaker, there's nothing wrong with that at the moment. There's nothing illegal about that, but that's certainly something that we're proposing to change in this amendment today.

Currently, there are third parties who operate websites. They're not located in Newfoundland and Labrador, but they allow residents to put in the same information they provide the provincial government and they can apply for a birth certificate, for example, through these websites. You submit all the information you have to do to submit a birth certificate and one might think that they are actually applying with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador when they are not. Sure, if you could read the fine print and the terms and conditions, it's very clear that they're not the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. I'm involved in some of the baby Facebook groups and a lot of the comments that I see there around people applying for birth certificates for their children

makes me believe that there are many, many people applying for certificates through one of these third party websites.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, we get 200 to 500, per year, requests that come in from these third party websites. Again, there's nothing illegal at the moment about this, Mr. Speaker. But some of the kind of negative elements, I guess, is that residents often pay a lot more. It costs \$30 to \$35; \$30 if you do it online with us and \$35 if you apply in person for a birth certificate, for example. Where some of these websites are charging \$60, \$75 to \$100 for the same certificate. They're just collecting the information and giving it to us. It's really using the fact that people google these things and they can get a really high Google ranking. In a way they're kind of taking advantage of residents, Mr. Speaker. Again, there's nothing illegal at the moment, but that's what we're proposing to change.

For us to remedy this, Mr. Speaker, we are introducing a revised definition of a designated agent, because right now these third parties are acting as designated agents. The changes we're proposing: In order to apply for a certificate on someone's behalf as a designated agent you will need to know the person for one year and the registrar would also have discretion around this. So if there was a unique situation, then the registrar could handle it, or you would have to provide authorization in writing that someone could apply for this on your behalf.

Essentially, these third party organizations who are currently applying for certificates on people's behalf – in most cases, I would imagine unbeknownst to the person applying – they will no longer be able to do this practice. We've seen this across other provinces and other provinces have had to enact similar legislation to protect their consumers.

The other element I'll add, Mr. Speaker, is the protection of personal information. These are third party organizations, but the information you have to submit to apply for a birth certificate, a death certificate or a marriage certificate, this is quite a high level of sensitive information. There are many residents of the province putting these into these third party websites at the moment. Yes, they transmit it to

us, but that's kind of an extra, unnecessary layer. You're giving your information – your most sensitive information – to an additional company that you don't need to give it to them. You just give it to us and we'll take appropriate care of your personal information. That's the first and very important change that we're proposing today around consumer protection.

There are two other changes, Mr. Speaker. The first is when someone applies for a marriage certificate and one party to the marriage certificate cannot be reached or is incapacitated, it's difficult for a family who's maybe doing some administrative things to reach a resolution around that. We're proposing changes, Mr. Speaker, so that children, parents, siblings of deceased can apply for a marriage certificate. We anticipate this is going to be very helpful in some matters of estate resolution or when one party to a marriage certificate cannot be located. We have all of our normal checks and balances in place, but there is kind of a unique situation here that we're trying to remedy.

Mr. Speaker, the third change we're proposing today is an administrative issue around releasing death registrations. Currently, in order for the registrar to release a death registration, written authorization is required from myself, the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL. I see a lot of these. I review the documentation and sign off, saying: I agree that the registrar can release the death registration. This is kind of an unnecessary burden, so we're going to change this process to make it more appropriate so that they don't have to wait for my signature. We're going to reduce the time required to process that change, Mr. Speaker.

I'm very pleased to introduce these changes today. As I mentioned, for the first change particularly, it impacts – between 200 to 500 people every year are paying more than they need to and giving up more information than they need to. We're very happy with these proposed changes and look forward to debate and discussion in Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

Again, it's a privilege and an honour to represent the District of Ferryland in this hon. House.

First of all, I'd like to start off by thanking the minister and her staff for the briefing that we had on this legislation. It's something that we'll be supporting and something that we'll certainly endorse. I'll just go over a couple of things that the minister did go over, but there are a couple of points I would touch on. Basically, there are three changes, as she had said.

Currently, the current legislation does not prevent it. There are online companies who offer to help you get a copy of your own vital statistic documents, like a birth certificate. These companies charge well above the government fees. For example, a company will charge \$100 for a birth certificate, which is actually only \$30 on the government website. These companies do not deliver the documents any faster than the Government of NL website, and in the process, they're getting access to personal information. This is happening because they ask the customer to give them written consent through an online form.

To fix this to protect consumers, this legislation is narrowing who can ask for a birth certificate, a marriage certificate or a death certificate on behalf of someone else. People who can obtain documents on someone else's behalf will be called designated agents – is what they're saying. A designated agent will be a person who is 19 years of age or older and is designated by the individual and, one of, has known the person for at least a year; is a lawyer representing that person; or is working for an aid giving non-profit.

That was the first one. The second piece of legislation: There is no restriction who can apply for a copy of a marriage licence when one of the parties to the marriage is deceased. This causes trouble when one of the parties is deceased and their family cannot track down the other party to the marriage. Think about marriages that were dissolved or divorces many years ago.

To fix this, this legislation allows a child, a parent or an executor of a deceased party to obtain the marriage certificate. This will also

assist in situations where one party has deceased and the other party is elderly, ill or will be troubled for applying for a marriage certificate. This legislation can and will put the province in line with most other Canadian provinces.

The third change again is just something that when they apply for – really, it's government red tape right now. Currently, the registrar of Vital Statistics has to get written authorization from the minister to release a death certificate. So, I'm going to say, they're taking the minister out of the equation and putting it on to someone in the office who can help, I'm going to say, make it happen a little quicker, rather than have to wait for the minister to sign off.

I think they're three good pieces of legislation and I do have a few questions when we get to Committee.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Any other speakers?

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's great to see that we're getting in line with our Canadian cousins again with a few of these, especially in Digital Government and Service NL. It seems every now and then, every sitting, we get a bill on the tweaks here and tweaks there. I'm glad to see that.

It's good, especially when it comes to a lot of the stuff like a lot of these sites, like the minister referenced and talked about her parental groups that they talked about. There are a lot of predatory sites on the Internet, especially when it comes to your personal information. They'll use every trick in the book to try and get your personal information because they want to sell you something or scam you in some shape or form. I am glad to see that we are taking action on a lot of those stuff and it is good.

At the same time, we are also amending it to make it easier for parents and spouses and people who have elderly parents and things like that to actually gain access to documentation,

especially when you have family members who are deceased and you are trying to situate their estate or you're trying to situate their final stuff like that. It is good that we are bringing ourselves in line but, at the same time, also keeping the predators away at the door that are trying to get our personal information.

I know the Department of Digital Government and Service NL, they are the keepers of everyone in this room's personal information. They have a very daunting task and a very important task to keep that protected on our behalf. I am glad to see that we are going to get these predatory sites away from us.

We look at disclosing death certificates from 50 years ago. A growing thing in this province is people are trying to collect information from their deceased parents and things like that and trying to gather all that together and make sure we have people who execute final wills and testaments, and they need this information to gather all this stuff. We're going to make it a little bit easier for people, but we're also moving towards the digital world as well.

You also have the same thing. The Member for Ferryland did mention marriages that have dissolved years ago and people are trying to clue up final things from their parents and things like that. I'm glad to see this and I'm glad to see we're doing more housekeeping in this department. As someone always says it is Digital Government and Service NL, the department of everything else. We always have one of these here and I am glad to see this and I look forward to the Member's closing remarks.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Seeing no other speakers, if the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL speaks now she will close debate.

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to thank the MHA for Ferryland and the MHA for Labrador West for your comments and I thank everyone and I look forward to hopefully unanimous approval of this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 7 now be read a second time.

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009. (Bill 7)

SPEAKER: The bill has now been read a second time.

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

S. CROCKER: Presently.

SPEAKER: Presently.

On motion, a bill, “An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009,” read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 7)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call from the Order Paper, second reading of Bill 11.

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

J. ABBOTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I’m certainly pleased to be here today to introduce some amendments to a very important piece of legislation, the *Children, Youth and Families Act*. The act was proclaimed in June 2019, and since that time, it has been determined that some areas could be strengthened to benefit the people that it serves.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

We need a mover and seconder to the motion.

J. ABBOTT: Oh, sorry.

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

J. ABBOTT: I move the discussion of the bill. I need a seconder and it will be the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: It is moved that Bill 11, An Act To Amend The Children, Youth and Families Act, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, “An Act To Amend The Children, Youth and Families Act.” (Bill 11)

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

J. ABBOTT: Mr. Speaker, I won’t roll back and I do apologize.

In preparing these amendments, we’ve consulted with key stakeholders, particularly the Indigenous governments and organizations, the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, the Child Death Review Committee, the Newfoundland and Labrador College of Social Workers and the Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association, all of whom are supportive of the proposed changes. I’ll briefly walk through these here now.

The first amendment concerns the definition of “foster parent.” This amendment is necessary given the enactment of the new federal Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis

children, youth and families. The federal legislation was proclaimed in January 2020 and includes many provisions related to the well-being of Indigenous children and youth. For example, federal legislation grants party status in child protection court hearings to care providers as a way to ensure that Indigenous families and community members can fully participate in court matters related to an Indigenous child or youth in their care.

We're certainly supportive of the federal legislation; however, the definition of "care provider" in the federal legislation is very similar to our own. As a result, it could be interpreted that foster parents have equal standing with the child's parent in court matters. Since this is not the intention of the federal legislation, amending the definition of "foster parent" in the *Children, Youth and Families Act* will help distinguish this role from the "care provider" definition in the federal legislation. This has been discussed with our key stakeholder, the Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association, and they are supportive of this change.

Our department right now has 12 managers throughout the province with decision-making responsibility for children and youth, and this concerns the second set of amendments. The amendments here clarify that any manager will be able to assume the responsibilities of another manager, when required, for operational reasons. This could include managers taking leave, on call or when a child or family moves to another location temporarily. This change confirms in the legislation the practice currently in place within the department.

There are also times when it becomes necessary to formally transfer custody from one manager to another; for example, when the child or family moves permanently to another location in the province. Allowing transfers of custody between managers by filing notices with the court, instead of requiring an amended order by the court, will allow this action to be taken through an administrative approach, rather than a court proceeding. These amendments will reduce administrative requirements for the department, alleviate unnecessary pressures on court time and ultimately, and most importantly,

support more timely decisions for children in care.

The next set of amendments deal with Indigenous representatives. The act now explicitly recognizes the importance of preserving Indigenous cultural identity, especially for children in care, and helps to maintain connections to their culture and community. These amendments further acknowledge that the best interests of Indigenous children and youth are best addressed through involvement of their Indigenous community in decisions relating to their care and protection.

One of the ways our act does this is by requiring us to notify Indigenous governments and organizations when there is a court hearing related to the custody or supervision of a child or youth from their community. We do this through Indigenous representatives who are designated by their Indigenous government or organization. This ensures their representatives are aware of matters affecting Indigenous children and youth so they can participate in case planning and allows them to act on their right to apply to be heard in court on these important matters.

While the involvement of Indigenous representatives is critically important, we are also aware that the operational demands for Indigenous representatives can be significant; therefore, they have asked if more than one representative can be appointed to provide additional support. We are certainly supportive of this approach. They're recommending change to the language in the act to allow for more than one Indigenous representative to be appointed.

The next amendment will support the least intrusive approach for children requiring protection. In most cases, families with children in need of protection willingly accept services from the department to ensure the best interests of their children are met. However, there are also times when matters related to child protection must be dealt with through the court system.

For example, there are times when the department may have concerns for the well-being of a child and these concerns could be resolved by providing supports and services to

the family; however, the family at times may not accept these services. In these cases, the social worker would like to make an application to the court seeking an interim order that requires the family to participate in the services that are being recommended by the department while the case is making its way through the court system.

This will be an important option for the court, as it may reduce the need to take more intrusive court action, including removing the child from the home if their safety cannot be maintained. There is currently no judicial authority in the legislation which allows the judge to issue an interim order prior to the conclusion of the hearing. Allowing judges to issue an interim order in these situations may keep children safe in their family homes by requiring supports or services in the home while the matter is being heard in court.

We are also proposing an amendment to the manner in which Indigenous representatives are served with notices of court matters related to children and youth from their communities. Currently, these notices must be served to them in person; however, this sometimes presents logistical challenges that Indigenous governments and organizations have asked us to address. The change that is being proposed will allow for more flexibility so that in addition to the current methods of service, we will also be able to serve notice via secure email or by leaving a paper copy of the notice in a sealed envelope at their office. We agree that this approach will make serving notices more efficient for all involved.

Another change we're proposing is to support Indigenous governments and organizations in the Schedules to the legislation that list the Indigenous governments and organizations who may appoint Indigenous representatives to receive notification of court hearings and participate in case planning related to Indigenous children and youth.

When the *Children, Youth and Families Act* was proclaimed in 2019, the Schedule included those organizations with whom the department had a formalized working relationship. At that time, they included the Miawpukek First Nation, Mushuau Innu First Nation, Nunatsiavut Government and Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation.

The NunatuKavut Community Council has asked to be added to the Schedule. We are pleased to do so and the Schedule has been amended effective May 12, 2021. We continue our relationship with the Qalipu First Nation, and they are aware that they can also be added to the Schedule should they choose so in the future.

Some of the amendments we are proposing here today pertain to the processes that our social workers and their managers follow in the day-to-day execution of their duties. This relates to sharing of information. Currently, the *Children, Youth and Families Act* requires the department to establish an information sharing agreement with the Office of Child and Youth Advocate, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and the Child Death Review for the purpose of disclosing information to those offices. However, these entities have statutory authority to receive the information and are governed by the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015* – ATIPPA.

We are proposing amendments that will confirm the ability of departmental staff to continue to share information with these entities, such as the Child and Youth Advocate, the chief medical examiner and the Child Death Review without needing to establish an information sharing agreement. These changes will not result in any change in the manner in which CSSD, my department, shares information with these bodies as they are already covered by the ATIPPA legislation.

We are also proposing an amendment that will allow for similar information sharing between my department and the Newfoundland and Labrador College of Social Workers for the purposes of an investigation or hearing under the *Social Workers Act*. In this case, however, an information sharing agreement may be required as the college is not governed by ATIPPA, and the department is required to ensure that every precaution is taken to protect the privacy of the individuals we serve. We are confident that the amendments being presented today will continue to support the child and youth-centred, family-focused and culturally responsive direction of the *Children, Youth and Families Act*.

This concludes the overview of the amendments that are being proposed in the bill. I trust you

will agree that these changes will help us strengthen the act that governs the safety, protection and well-being of vulnerable children and youth in our province, while responding to the needs of our Indigenous and community partners.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

J. DWYER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for bringing these important amendments to the House of Assembly. It gives me great honour to be in this House and represent the people of Placentia West - Bellevue. It is my honour to represent those people.

On behalf of those people that I represent, I would like to acknowledge yesterday as National Indigenous Peoples Day. It is a very important day to acknowledge. One of the big initiatives for Indigenous peoples is that Every Child Matters.

This bill does impact Indigenous children in foster care. These amendments are really administrative, I think, in their meaning, but they also streamline a little bit more of the services to help protect the children. I really do believe that with the presentation today of tabling the new document about turning over the social services to the Nunatsiavut Government, I think it's very important they have that autonomy to know what's best for the children in care and to keep them in their ancestral and native communities, to not lose any of their heritage or anything like that, but most of all – and I stress it most of all – it's to protect the children.

Like I said, that's something that we all take seriously. Both the minister and I have had lengthy discussions, not only in Estimates, but in a private meeting at his office with his EA and my assistant. We really had a fulsome discussion on how we can make this system better. Some of these amendments will certainly reach out to that.

There's nothing really here to pick apart or anything like that, because like I said, it's about protecting the children. Each one of these amendments does put extra protections in place for the children, especially to give the judge an opportunity, if he or she deems fit that a child needs to be removed until the hearing is completed, then that's something that is going to protect the child. We here in the Official Opposition do certainly agree with that.

We agree with these amendments and we'll be supporting these amendments, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to asking the minister some questions once we get to Committee.

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.

Certainly, we'll be supporting these amendments as well. Mainly, as my colleague from Placentia West - Bellevue has said, it's about the protection of the children.

As you look through the changes, in many cases it's about streamlining the process. We know when we hear the term "streamlining" it can mean many things, but here it's about cutting down on the time to do things, to take actions and to move a case along. In that situation, protection of children, Mr. Speaker, time is of the essence.

We can see here that this law has been in place for two years, as noted, and there have been consultations with the various stakeholders as to where the act might be tightened up or relaxed. That's a significant indication of the attempt by government to make sure this is successful.

We have heard that Indigenous governments and organizations can appoint more than one representative. It allows governments and organizations to deal with cases more flexibly. We can see that the NunatuKavut Community Council is added as an Indigenous government or organization covered by the act.

We can see here that amendments will also allow a judge to issue an interim order prior to the conclusion, Mr. Speaker, of a protective intervention hearing. Considering a preliminary hearing can take up to 10 days and the final hearing up to another 30 days, this allows for a much more expedited intervention.

The legislation also allows for a zone manager to assume the responsibilities for another zone manager. Again, this allows for more rapid intervention in cases. It allows zone managers to transfer custody or supervision of a child to another zone manager without having to file an amended order to the court in most cases; two to three days that would take to do that. When you're dealing with the health and well-being of a child, time matters.

One amendment, section 94, removes the requirement of an information sharing agreement with the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, chief medical officer and the Child Death Review Committee, as they're governed by ATIPP; certainly here, the ability of the authority to share information with the College of Social Workers for the purpose of an intervention. So privacy is protected but the well-being of children is looked after as well. The legislation is a product of ongoing discussions. It reduces red tape. In this case, it literally cuts down on the amount of time and it's primarily concerned with the well-being of children.

I will say this: As a former teacher, I can tell you that a lot of the times what we deal with is just the time to get things done, the paperwork and the information sharing. I certainly would like to also see that information – and not just looking at the College of Social Workers, but also school councillors and maybe even school administrators.

As a teacher, I don't always need to be brought in to the intimate details of a situation, but I do believe that in many cases a lot of the children who are in care are also students in the school system. It's good to streamline the process within the school system so that school councillors – those who are in that exceptional role of care and privacy – are brought into the fold.

I can tell you from talking to school councillors that is not always the case. So if there's a way of proposing – if I can make one suggestion, it would be to make sure that the school system is brought into this quickly. Keep in mind it's often teachers who will see the first signs of trouble or concern and will bring it to government or to the department. After that, they are left out of loop as to what steps are being taken.

With that in mind, certainly, we'll support this bill. It's good work. It sets a good model for the future when we deal with any legislation, but, certainly, when it comes to the protection of children, Mr. Speaker, that kind of outreach, that kind of collaboration, consultation is absolutely essential in cutting down on the amount of time so that children are in a protected space and that their health, well-being, mental health and physical health, are foremost and utmost in the minds of everyone.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

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

I don't want to speak too long, other than I do want to speak to this very important bill and the changes herein. I have to say that within my constituency office – and I would suspect most of us can feel the importance of some of the changes that we see here. I'm not going to go into the specifics of the bill, but in terms of its justification, I have to thank, again, as I did during Estimates, the staff that we get an opportunity to work with. I could say that we have literally saved lives from the support that we've needed at very critical times.

As I look down through these points, there have been several emotional situations where I've seen senior staff frustrated because they haven't been able to move forward in the best interest of the child and, frankly, of the family. I do feel that these changes are reflecting what I have heard, at least, from my non-technical but very integral interaction that we find ourselves in as

politicians representing a district and then working with people struggling with this act and changes that need to be made, all for the best interests of the child and the family.

I can't say anything else other than I'm just looking forward to its passage. Sometimes when we make changes here as legislators in this House of Assembly, years from now other MHAs probably, and their offices, may not even feel the significance of some of these changes. Things will move smoothly in a logical way; the rationale for why they were changed may never become apparent. But I can tell you, for this guy and I would suspect most of my colleagues, we get it loud and clear and I look forward to supporting this bill.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: If the minister speaks now he will close debate.

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

J. ABBOTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank my colleagues for their comments.

I think it's fair to say that based on those comments there is certainly, I believe, support for the justification for the amendments and understanding why those amendments are required at this time, after two years of operating under the current legislation, which has been quite successful. We are working closely with Indigenous representatives and governments and organizations on the ground.

I think the Member for Lake Melville certainly spoke to the recognition that the issues we're dealing with here are coming about as we've been operationalizing the act. That's really what the intent is here, to streamline the administrative processes, streamline our interaction with the courts – only be in court when we need to.

The Member for St. John's Centre talked about time is of the essence, and when we're dealing with children and their families that is certainly a critical factor. So where we can streamline our

regulatory and professional social work practices to support that, we will. That again is the intent of the act.

The fact that we have broad support by the Indigenous governments and their organizations as well as other parties speaks to the goodwill that we're experiencing when we're operationalizing the current piece of legislation. Not to say that more changes won't be in store.

I heard the Member for St. John's Centre in terms of his comments around engaging with teachers, principals and school counsellors. That's something we are doing but need to do more.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude and thank my colleagues for their support of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 11 now be read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Children, Youth And Families Act. (Bill 11)

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

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

S. CROCKER: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Children, Youth And Families Act," read a

second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole presently, by leave. (Bill 11)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that this House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bills 11 and 7.

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

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Warr): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 7, An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009.

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009.” (Bill 7)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O’DRISCOLL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just have three or four questions, pretty quick questions.

The changes in the legislation designed to protect individuals’ Vital Statistics documents and by extension their privacy while allowing the appropriate people to have access.

Has the Privacy Commissioner been consulted on these changes?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the question.

As part of the normal process, the Privacy Commissioner does provide feedback on all bills such as this one. I would anticipate that yes – yes, my team have confirmed that, yes, the Privacy Commissioner has verified that these changes are appropriate.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O’DRISCOLL: Thanks, again, Mr. Chair.

One of the changes deals with the death notifications. Has the Public Trustee who deals with the estates been consulted?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I’m not sure if the Public Trustee – if consulting them is normally part of the process. I’d be happy to respond to that in a second, when my team gets a chance to let me know.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O’DRISCOLL: Thank you.

In this legislation we are giving non-profits the ability to request Vital Statistics documents on a person’s behalf.

Are there any lists of the non-profits who are considered aid-giving, available?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

To the previous question, in terms of the Public Trustee, it is not normally part of the process to consult on someone like the Public Trustee in advance of a bill coming to the House. Unlike the Privacy Commissioner, who is built into the process, the Public Trustee is not normally a stakeholder, so, no, we haven't consulted with them at the moment.

Then in terms of the – I'm sorry, what was the second part?

L. O'DRISCOLL: The last one is for the non-profits who are considered aid-giving, is the list available?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In terms of the non-profits that could assist, there would be some within the community that could work with the registrar, for example. I'd have to get a definitive list for the Member; I can certainly provide that.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you.

CHAIR: Any further questions?

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Mr. Chair, this is the last one I have.

Will these aid-giving non-profits have to implement any procedures to protect an individual's privacy or has an assessment already been conducted on their privacy practices?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think we would engage – a resident would engage with a non-profit and the registrar on a case-by-case basis, and that process could look different and unique depending on the unique circumstances of an individual. The registrar, working with an organization, would ensure that all the proper documentation was in place and also that no unnecessary documentation was followed.

There would be some due diligence in working with them to collect the appropriate information, but no specific processes that would be – my team has mentioned that the consent of the applicant, obviously, would be very important in that as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Any further questions?

The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

J. DWYER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have a couple questions on Bill 11. I know that we're doing them concurrently.

CHAIR: Order, please!

We'll go through Bill 11 as soon as we get Bill 7 done. It's going to be part of the same process, but I just want to get Bill 7 looked after first.

J. DWYER: I understand, Sir.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Any further questions?

Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 6 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 6 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 6 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, long title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

CHAIR: Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 11, An Act To Amend The Children, Youth And Families Act.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Children, Youth And Families Act." (Bill 11)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

J. DWYER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

To the minister: Did discussions take place with councils and groups within the Indigenous community?

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

J. ABBOTT: Mr. Chair, we consulted with the representatives of all Indigenous groups and governments in the province in the preparation of the amendments.

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

J. DWYER: Did they concur with the amendments?

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

J. ABBOTT: Mr. Chair, the answer is yes on all fronts.

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

J. DWYER: Will the Indigenous governments appoint the representatives?

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

J. ABBOTT: Yes, that would be the case. It would be for each government or organization to identify their representatives under this legislation.

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

J. DWYER: Last question, Mr. Chair.

How long do you anticipate the transfer of responsibilities to the Nunatsiavut Government?

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

J. ABBOTT: Though not covered by this particular bill, as announced by the Nunatsiavut Government themselves, the minister last week, they're anticipating a three-year development of a plan. We'll be working with them to meet their goal.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Any further questions to the clause?

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just a quick question with regard to schools and that and the education system along the lines of what I brought up.

When it comes to information sharing and that – and I'm not necessarily looking at schools having standing, but it's about where do they fit in? Where does the education system fit in? Specifically school counsellors and that like?

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

J. ABBOTT: Mr. Chair, again, this bill is not going to address the Member's question. In terms of practice, if there is a child in a school needing involvement of our social workers, then we would, on a case-by-case basis, work with the school counsellors, any social workers involved or any other professional in the school

system. But that would be on a case-by-case basis.

In this legislation, the amendments are really to cover existing legislative offices that already are covered by ATIPPA. It's within the course of their official duties that we would be exchanging information, and because they're covered by the ATIPPA legislation, we feel – and certainly supported by our legal counsel and proposed in amendments – that, in fact, we do not need specific provisions for them to receive that information.

CHAIR: Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 13 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 13 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 2 through 13 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Children, Youth And Families Act.

CHAIR: Shall the long title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, long title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move that the Committee rise and report Bills 7 and 11.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bills 7 and 11.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

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

B. WARR: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bills 7 and 11 without amendment.

SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bills 7 and 11 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

S. CROCKER: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the said bills be read a third time?

S. CROCKER: Tomorrow.

SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

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

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call from the Order Paper, Order 2, third reading of Bill 15.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that Bill 15, An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000 No. 2, be read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000 No. 2. (Bill 15)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000 No. 2," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 15)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call Order 3, third reading of Bill 19.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, that Bill 19, An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009 No. 2, be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009 No. 2," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 19)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that this House do now adjourn.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

Before we adjourn, I'd just like to remind everyone that tomorrow this Legislature will be participating in the Moose Hide Campaign and we ask all Members to be present in their seats for a 9:15 start.

This House does now stand adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 10 a.m.