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HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

Wednesday

June 23, 2021

The House met at 10 a.m.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Are the House Leaders ready?

Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Orders of the Day

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call from the Order Paper, third reading of Bill 7, An Act To Amend – sorry, go ahead.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I was skipping your part.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, that Bill 7, An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009, 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 (Barnes): A bill, An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009. (Bill 7)

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,” read a third time, ordered

passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 7)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call Order 3, Bill 11.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology, that Bill 11, An Act To Amend The Children, Youth and Families Act, be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

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

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 Children, Youth and Families Act,” read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 11)

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 now recess until 2 p.m.

SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do recess until 2 p.m. this afternoon.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

This House do stand recessed until 2 p.m. this afternoon.

Recess

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Are the House Leaders ready?

Admit strangers.

Order, please!

Before we begin, I would like to thank all Members for joining us in the Chamber before proceeding to start today to recognize the Moose Hide Campaign.

As Members know, the Moose Hide Campaign is an Indigenous-led initiative that stands up against violence towards women and children. I would like to say a big thank you to Inuk elder Emma Reelis and Stacey Howse, Executive Director of First Light, for joining us this morning.

I think all Members are wearing their moose-hide pins as a pledge to act on the issue. I thank each and every one of you for participating this morning.

I would like to take the time now to rule now on a point of privilege raised by the MHA for Humber - Bay of Islands on Tuesday, June 22, 2021.

Following a thorough examination of the Member's point of privilege, I find that no prima facie point of privilege has been established.

In the text *Parliamentary Immunity in Canada*, 2016, Joseph Maingot provides a practical definition of parliamentary privilege: "If someone improperly interferes with the parliamentary work of a member of parliament – i.e. any of the member's activities that have a connection with a proceeding in parliament – ... that is a matter involving parliamentary privilege."

The Member has not shown how his individual parliamentary privileges have been affected in the execution of his parliamentary duties, nor how he has been obstructed, impeded or in any way interfered with in his parliamentary duties in the 48th, 49th or 50th General Assemblies. He has continued at all times to participate vigorously in debate, to hold government to account in Question Period and through petitions and in debate he has capably represented his constituents' interests in this House.

In his point of privilege, MHA Humber - Bay of Islands asserts that his parliamentary privilege has been violated because of the way in which the Commissioner interpreted Principle 10 of the Code of Conduct.

I note that the Commissioner made findings other than those based on Principle 10. These relate to the commitments section which apply in the Code of Conduct as a whole. These commitments are contained in the Code and were ascribed to by the Member.

In the Executive Summary and on page 36 of the report, the Commissioner found that "the manner in which he dealt with the Complainant, and particularly during the call on April 8th, I do not think that MHA Joyce met the expectations of the Code of Conduct, that he perform his duties with '...accountability, courtesy, honesty and integrity.'"

This language repeats exactly the language of the Code of Conduct preamble. A violation of these commitments would result in a violation of the Code of Conduct, generally, without the need to refer to a particular Principle.

Justice Knickle, in the decision upon which the Member relies in his point of privilege, describes the Code of Conduct of Members in paragraphs 79 and 80, generally, as follows: “The kinds of conduct that might result in a violation of the Code of Conduct are broad.”

“The Code of Conduct is not only broad in the obligations it establishes for members, it is an aspirational statement for how members should conduct themselves. This is supported by section 35 of the HAAIA which establishes the Code of Conduct.”

In the case of *The Joyce Report*, October 18, 2018, the 48th General Assembly of this House decided by a majority vote to accept the recommendations of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards that the Member apologize to this House and added to the recommendations to require individualized respectful workplace training by the Member. The Member apologized and completed this training.

That was the determination of the House. I would point out Standing Order 49 which states: “No Member may reflect upon any vote of the House except for the purpose of moving that such vote be rescinded.”

Subsequently, this is not a matter of privilege, it is a matter of procedure. Therefore, any Member who wishes to reflect on this vote of the 48th General Assembly may do so by way of a motion that the vote be rescinded and the report be re-examined. However, while matters are ongoing in the courts, any such motion will have to be considered in light of the sub-judice convention.

The Member also makes comments alleging certain actions by former Premier Ball. As those are currently before the court, I will not comment on them except to note that at the time the matter was being considered by the Commissioner, section 36 of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act* contains a provision that provides authority for any premier to make a request of opinion under the Code of Conduct by any Member.

This concludes my ruling on the matter.

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

E. JOYCE: I’m not questioning your ruling, but there were a few points. There was a letter there where the former Speaker asked me not to sit in this House while this was on the go. That impeded my rights; that letter’s in front of you. The whole point is Principle 10, where a certain person was classified.

So I’m not questioning your ruling, but I’m just saying –

SPEAKER: Okay, you are questioning the ruling.

E. JOYCE: – you should read what I wrote.

SPEAKER: I did take a thorough look at all your papers that you provided and your point of privilege and a determination has been made.

Statements by Members

SPEAKER: Today, we will hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Ferryland, Cape St. Francis, Terra Nova, Conception Bay South, Burin - Grand Bank and St. John’s West with leave.

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

I rise today to recognize all volunteer fire departments in the Ferryland District and the members who have served in the past and serve today. These include Goulds, Witless Bay, Ferryland, Fermeuse - Port Kirwan, Portugal Cove South, St. Shott’s and Trepassey

I want to acknowledge and say thank you to our many volunteers as well as all those over the years who have given so much to the regions protection and well-being. The hours that each firefighter volunteer gives peace of mind to the residents of our communities and ensures them they have someone to rely on in the event of a fire or of any type emergency.

The volunteer firefighters have performed many heroic and life-saving acts over the years and are to be commended for their dedication and

commitment. There are many challenges that first responders face today in carrying out their duties; however, our firefighters continue to do remarkable work and have lived up to that challenge. I want to also recognize the partners, spouses and families of the members for their continued support.

I ask all Members in this House to join me in recognizing our volunteer fire departments on the amazing job they do.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. WALL: Mr. Speaker, today I recognize an annual event in my district as well the neighbouring District of Conception Bay East - Bell Island. Since 2006, the Killick Coast Games are scheduled for one week in August and is a fun-filled, spirited week of friendly competition for children between the ages of 11 and 17.

The first games were held in the Town of Torbay 15 years ago with approximately 200 participants. Hosting of the games rotate between municipalities and is supported by many of the athletes' family and friends.

The last games were held in 2019 in Portugal Cove-St. Philip's with over 600 young athletes competing in 5 different sports. This year, the Town of Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove will host from August 15 to 28 to ensure that the COVID-19 safety plan is followed.

As a parent of two former Killick Coast athletes, I can attest to the importance of such an event to a young person's well-being and social development in taking part in organized sports.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to volunteering at this year's Killick Coast Games and ask that all hon. Members join me in wishing great success to this year's host town of Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove and, of course, all the athletes.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, June is Recreation Month and I would like to recognize the efforts of Glovertown and its recreation department. Glovertown takes recreation seriously and has a keen interest in getting their 2,000-plus residents active and living healthy lifestyles.

Perhaps the most successful and longest running activities are their biking programs, Sprockids and adventure biking. Three hundred and fifty-plus kids from Glovertown and surrounding communities across the region register yearly. These programs focus on bike safety, riding a variety of terrains, survival and cooking skills, team-building exercises and most importantly, having fun.

Over the past 6 years, their biking programs have been recognized provincially and nationally, featured in the provincial Guide to Biking and the *Canadian Cycling Magazine* and asked to present at the annual Atlantic Recreation & Facilities Conference. Their model is used by Bicycle NL and School Sports throughout the province. Special thanks go to Pam Thornhill, the town's recreation director and Andy Poole, along with a complement of volunteers that ensure their success.

During this month I would like to recommend that everybody run, bike, dance, walk, skateboard, swim, do some yoga or tai chi, cut a cord of wood, play hopscotch, kayak or even thumb wrestle: the possibilities are endless.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the Conception Bay South Fire Department. Founded in 1973, it has evolved from a volunteer-only organization to a composite fire department that operates 24/7 with almost 50

volunteer and career firefighters who respond on average to 1,000 emergency calls per year.

The department has achieved many firsts in the province over the last number of years specific to the mental health of its members. In partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Conception Bay South Fire Department will be the first in the province to deliver the Resilient Minds program. Resilient minds is an evidence-informed, peer-to-peer, skill-building program designed by firefighters across Canada to develop strategies to mitigate and better manage occupational health and stress and enhance personal resilience, resulting in informed and healthier teams.

This program has already begun its delivery in Conception Bay South through department member, fire captain, Richard Hynes, who is a certified instructor through the Canadian Mental Health Association in this program. This training will continue over the next couple of weeks to include all members of the Conception Bay South Fire Department.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating fire chief, John Heffernan, for his dedication to the Conception Bay South Fire Department members and raising mental health awareness with all its members.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. PIKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today, I would like to recognize in this House, Mr. William Butt, who was born in 1937 in Grand Bank, but now resides in Fortune with his wife of 65 years, Hattie. Mr. Butt worked with CN for 50 years as an engineer on the *MV Atlantic Freighter*. It was during this time that his ship made many trips through the Persian Gulf carrying supplies during the Gulf War.

In April of this year, Mr. Butt was recognized for his efforts and achievements for the role he played in defence of Canada, and was presented with a Department of Defence Challenge Coin

given to him by the minister of National Defence. He received an Expeditionary Award from the United States Merchant Marines for his contributions supporting American and international coalition military forces in operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in the waters of Southwest Asia.

We thank you, Mr. William Butt, for your sacrifice and the role you have made and played in advancing peace for our country, Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join with me in thanking Mr. William Butt for his service.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's West, with leave?

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

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

Today, I pay tribute to the life of the late Gerald Thompson of Grand Falls-Windsor. Gerald was born in Botwood in 1943 to Lloyd and Lillian Thompson. It was there that his sense of community service and helping others began.

Gerald was husband to Ruth; father to Wayne, Peter, Kellie and Jim; grandfather to 15; and great-grandfather to seven. He was also a good friend and an exceptional community leader.

Winston Churchill once said: You make a living by what you get; you make a life by what you give. Gerald's community service, leadership and volunteerism have had a profound effect on his community and his province.

Gerald's career spanned many years. He worked for CJON, Beothuck Ford and Dicks and Company. Most recently, he served as executive director of the Exploits Regional Chamber of Commerce. He worked diligently to support his community and to promote and improve its economic prosperity.

As a community leader, Gerald gave tirelessly of his time and his talents. He was a member of the Memorial United Church and served the Masonic Lodge Northcliffe for over 40 years.

His other passions included writing poems, painting, cooking and local politics.

I ask all Members to join me in celebrating the life of Gerald Thompson.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture.

D. BRAGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I recently visited the Centre for Agriculture and Forestry Development at Wooddale, where our fantastic team are using cutting-edge technology to advance our province's agriculture sector and food self-sufficiency goals.

We launched a Vegetable Transplant Program in 2018, to provide high-quality, affordable vegetable transplants to commercial farmers, with the aim to increase the amount and variety of produce they grow. In the first year, we distributed a quarter-million vegetable transplants to 25 farmers. This year, our staff went above and beyond, preparing more than four million high-quality, ready-to-plant vegetable transplants for 110 farmers.

Mr. Speaker, farmers report these transplants improve yields by up to 40 per cent per acre. Transplants grow faster and stronger in a short season compared to direct seeding, and offer a more diverse variety of produce. Our farmers are not just growing Jiggs' dinner vegetables – non-traditional crops, such as leeks, broccoli, lettuce, onions and asparagus are also on the menu.

Community gardening is also contributing to food self-sustainability, Mr. Speaker. This year, increased funding to the Community Gardens Support Program will see friends and neighbors in more than 130 communities gardening, working together to grow fresh food for their families.

Mr. Speaker, we made a commitment to increase food self-sustainability in fruit and vegetables from 10 per cent to 20 per cent by 2022. So far, we have seen a steady increase to 17.3 per cent. With the recent addition of more Crown land for more large-scale potato production, the expanded Vegetable Transplant Program and a passionate group of farmers and backyard growers growing fresh, nutritious food on farms, at home and in the community gardens, we expect to exceed the 20 per cent food self-sufficiency – God, I can't roll that off my lips today, Mr. Speaker – target come harvest time.

From the smallest vegetable patch to the largest farms, I wish all growers a bountiful harvest.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to recognize the Centre for Agriculture and Forestry Development at Wooddale in the wonderful District of Exploits. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff and the farmers who go above and beyond to ensure this program is a success. We call on the government to invest more in Vegetable Transplant and Community Garden programs to support farmers and their families at the grassroots, so that we can continue to improve food self-sufficiency to 20 per cent by 2022.

Mr. Speaker, growing our own vegetables has been part of our livelihoods for many years and the Community Garden Support Program allows communities to come together and grow fresh food for their families. We must do more to further expand this program to increase the interest in the agricultural industry.

I am looking forward to seeing the process of both the Vegetable Transplant Program and the Community Garden Support Program, and, hopefully, by 2022 we can exceed our food self-sufficiency goals.

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, and I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

It's certainly good news. Local community gardens and commercial farms contribute greatly to the vitality of our economy, strengthen our communities and provide us with nutritious meals. Last year, it was the Tessier Park group in my district that planted a number of fruit trees and berry bushes, so it's certainly productive.

While these measures also strengthen our food security, they only do so imperfectly. I can say that in my district, especially, the problem is not the availability of food, but it's the affordability. When faced with an increase in rent, heating and electricity costs many people choose to cut the more flexible part of the family budget: grocery bills.

This is why I'm calling on this House today to re-establish the Select Committee on basic income that we unanimously voted on to form last year and to fix the other half of the food-insecurity equation: income.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation, and Labrador Affairs.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some people say: Some women are born leaders. I like to say: Some leaders are born women.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. DEMPSTER: I wish inform my colleagues today of two women who are making aviation history.

Captain Allison Rumbolt and Captain Zoe Webb recently earned the distinction as the first all-female crew to fly a helicopter for Cougar Helicopters to the offshore.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. DEMPSTER: This is a groundbreaking event that was made even more special as both pilots are from Labrador and are long-time friends.

The moment wasn't lost on Captain Rumbolt, who made a comment to the media after the flight, humbly stating: "At the end of the flight you kind of look at each other and [say], 'Wow, we have come a long way in the past number of years.'"

Allison Rumbolt, who hails from Mary's Harbour, is the first woman to captain the Sikorsky S-92 helicopter for Cougar Helicopters. Zoe Webb, who comes from Nain, on Labrador's North Coast, became the first woman captain for Cougar Helicopters a few years ago when she piloted the Super Puma.

Women are marking their presence in non-traditional areas, but the field of helicopter aviation haven't had the same growth. Captain Rumbolt offers encouragement to women and girls to follow their dreams. That's what she did when she met Zoe Webb as a young girl. They are friends and share a common bond.

Please join me in congratulating helicopter pilots Allison Rumbolt and Zoe Webb. These high-achieving professionals stand tall as role models for women and Labradorians. We are immensely proud of those two Indigenous daughters of Labrador who are leading the way, breaking down barriers and inspiring others to succeed. We wish them both long and successful careers and always a safe landing back at home base.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement.

Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to be given this opportunity to join the minister and recognize these two pioneer women of Labrador. Captain Allison Rumbolt and Captain Zoe Webb demonstrated that women are leaders. They've shattered the glass ceiling in aviation history in this province by becoming the first all-women crew to fly the helicopter for Cougar Helicopters to the offshore.

This is another first for Zoe Webb of Nain, Nunatsiavut. Zoe began flying Cougar back in 2004, piloting the Puma and becoming their first female captain. At the time, Zoe was the only woman in Canada and one of only a handful of women in the world who was flying offshore.

Things have changed a lot since then thanks to the leadership of women like Zoe Webb who paved the way for others.

Captain Allison Rumbolt you, too, are truly an inspiration to all women and young girls. Being named in 2019 as the top 20 under 40 in Canadian aerospace, you are only one of five women to make that list that year. This year, you've already made history twice as Cougar Helicopter's first female captain to fly a Sikorsky-92 helicopter and now flying their first all-female crew offshore. The world is your oyster and the record books await your skill and leadership. Not bad for a young woman from Mary's Harbour, Labrador.

Captain Allison Rumbolt and Captain Zoe Webb, I wish to you congratulate you both for being an inspiration to the many women who inspire to walk or fly in your footsteps.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement.

The Third Party caucus would like to congratulate Captain Rumbolt and Captain Webb on their professional success and their historic flights. Events like these are great to witness, but we have to keep working towards making this a common occurrence rather than just one historic event.

Government can help with this by implementing pay equity legislation and increasing the minimum wage. Roughly, 60 per cent of minimum-wage earners are women and that really needs to change. If we want to help women enter non-traditional industries, we need to stop underpaying them and forcing them to live with their struggles to make ends meet. That will help women achieve their dreams and realize their full potential. Therefore, I call upon the government to increase the minimum wage and implement pay equity legislation to continue to build on this success.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Are there any further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This year's budget announced a review that would determine the fate of Nalcor Energy. In the press conference today, the minister said initial analysis has been completed to support today's decision to merge Nalcor Energy into Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro.

I ask the Premier: Will you direct the minister to table all analysis that informed today's decision?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

Of course, we will provide the analysis that's available, including the PUB report from February of 2020, which had this very recommendation in it. We think conceptually this makes sense, to have Nalcor folded into Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro.

There's no sense, after the Muskrat Falls Project is complete, having two utility companies, Mr. Speaker. We believe this is the type of efficiency that we are bringing forward to make sure that we're responsibly using taxpayers' dollars.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We look forward to getting that analysis and doing a review of it. At today's press conference, the Premier and minister would not provide any estimates on money saved or job cuts as a result of the merger.

I ask the Premier: If this is an evidence-based decision, where is the evidence?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

The evidence lies mainly in the fact that there are significant duplications within those two corporations, Mr. Speaker. The corporation's governance structure is complex and cumbersome. We can be streamlined, especially as Muskrat Falls is being completed.

After Muskrat Falls is complete, I'm not sure what the purpose of Nalcor is. We have a utility company in Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro. OilCo is no longer with Nalcor, so what is the purpose, Mr. Speaker?

We're not prepared to continue to waste money on corporations that don't have any more purpose. We believe that there are significant synergies to be exercised, while maintaining the

expertise that has built up over a time within that corporation. They can be better housed under Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We look forward to seeing where these savings really are. In 2019, Consumer Advocate, Dennis Browne, estimated by merging two divisions of Nalcor into Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, the province could save \$20 million annually.

I ask the Premier: Why couldn't you provide any estimates for money saved when the Consumer Advocate has estimates that are two years old?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

These are all things that we considered, but we didn't say we didn't have – we said that whatever number we would provide would likely be inaccurate. We're still doing a fulsome analysis of the exact savings. Likely, there will never be an exact determination, prior to folding in, of exactly what these savings will be. We'll have an estimate, of course, and that number was one we used to help guide our analysis in going forward.

But we recognize there is significant duplication within those two corporations right now and there's frankly no need of it. We're unsure of the conceptual design of Nalcor after the completion of Muskrat Falls, Mr. Speaker, so it makes sense. Sometimes you have to do what makes sense.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My understanding is that analysis is normally evidence based to make a determination on any decision that you would make in the future. I would have thought that would have been done here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: The minister said that the province will need the current employees of Nalcor for future hydroelectric development.

I ask the Premier: Does this mean a deal on Gull Island is imminent?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER A. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, as I've said here many times in this session of the House – and the Member opposite knows – there are no current discussions with respect to Gull Island. It's an incredible asset; we recognize the value of the asset. It's a really important asset now, more than ever before, as the world transitions to a green energy source. We're very lucky to have it.

The most important thing is to make sure we have the expertise and the appropriate people in place that when – if we do, and we should consider doing a deal on Gull Island, that it is the right one that returns the maximum value to the people of this province. We've lived through two other failed hydroelectric projects in the past. We have to get this one right, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So am I understanding that you may keep employees for something that may or may not happen in the future? Not a good way to govern, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: The Premier said there is still analysis and consultation happening on all 78 recommendations of the Greene report.

I ask the Premier: Why did you make the decision to eliminate Nalcor before finishing the consultation and analysis of the Greene report?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

As we've said many times, the Greene report was just recommendations. There were many things that we had been thinking about, operating with and moving towards operationalizing in the past that just happened to be in the Greene report. That just means other smart people agreed with us, Mr. Speaker.

We are happy to move forward and do further analysis on some of the other items of the Greene report, but, again, they're just recommendations. These were ones that the minister and I – our government – had discussions on for about a year or so. These are already things that we had conceptualized and thought they made sense, especially as Muskrat Falls comes to completion. That's one we were going to exercise, regardless of what was said in the Greene report, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So let's review: A major decision on a key Greene report recommendation, zero evidence presented, zero public consultation and zero transparency.

I ask the Premier: Is this what the public can expect from your approach to the Greene report in the future?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER A. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I'm a bit baffled. This is a corporation that, frankly, required almost a \$30-million investigation with respect to the project that the Member opposite was part of implementing. We are taking a proactive approach and being transparent.

Today's announcement was a strategic visionary approach. I said – and the minister and I said, granted, the operational and logistical details aren't there, they can't be there, Mr. Speaker. We're being open on step one, not on step 20 that will require an inquiry after to sort it all out.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I still would think that the corporate world and the citizens of this province would have liked the analysis and the business plan, the business argument to make this a reality here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: There are people's lives at stake here and the future of our hydroelectric could potentially be at stake by not making the right move. A Nalcor by any other name still has the same functions and lines of work as Nalcor.

Are you simply renaming the corporation that exists?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy to finally get a chance to answer some questions on this. What I will say is that the point that's been raised by the Member opposite is just not sensible. This is absolutely a move to streamline two corporations into one fully functional Crown corporation, which has an emphasis on the provision of safe, reliable electricity, while at the same time trying to do it in the most cost-affordable way possible.

What I can tell you is that we've just made this announcement today, but I'm sure there will be other commentary publicly about – I think the general populace is going to think that this is a move in the right direction.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I reiterate that it's not about the announcement; it's about the evidence used to make the announcement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: Mr. Speaker, it's been 48 days now since the release of the Greene report and it's still unclear how many of the 78 recommendations will be enacted.

Since the government claims to be open and transparent, I ask the minister: Will she release the full analysis done that resulted in the Greene report recommendations?

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

S. COADY: Thank you very much.

I think it's really interesting when we're talking about Nalcor. In the rate mitigation plan that the Members opposite endorsed called the CHEAP, if you recall, Mr. Speaker, there was \$30 million – and I'll quote from it – for cuts and restructuring at Nalcor. They understood that there were requirements of cuts and restructuring at Nalcor as well, so it's an interesting line of questions.

With regard to the Greene report, I'm pleased to –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

S. COADY: – report to the House that some 1,500 people have already participated in the process by submitting either suggestions or ideas, making phone calls. As I've indicated in this House, we had community discussions, Mr. Speaker, and over 200 people participated and we're now going to have stakeholder discussions as well. There's a lot of discussion going on about the many, many recommendations in the Greene report.

SPEAKER: Your time has expired.

S. COADY: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for her answer, but we're still no further ahead on what analysis was used to actually come up with the recommendations that are actually in the Greene report, which is what the people on this side of the House and the people of the province would like to know.

Some of the actions in the '20-'21 budget are laying the groundwork for recommendations from the Greene report, namely selling off the Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation, the abolishment of the English School District and today's news about Nalcor Energy. These decisions are being made while public consultations are still ongoing.

I ask the minister: What other Greene report recommendations will be implemented before these discussions are finished?

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I've been quite transparent and, as a matter of fact, as soon as the Greene report came out I said there is going to be some crossover because we're speaking to the same stakeholders, we have the same financial information, Mr. Speaker, and we were already in the process of the budget. As a matter of fact, I think the Greene report didn't come until the end of the first week in May and, as the Member opposite should know, the budget would have been fully enforce or fully in function by that point in time.

There has been a lot of discussion with stakeholders in the community as to how we can move forward. We presented some of the action items, full disclosure, of what we're planning to implement. We are in discussions now with the communities and with individuals as to what

more from the Greene report or what pieces of the Greene report should be implemented.

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.

Again, you had a report that came out with 78 recommendations and nothing that indicates how they came up with the recommendations. The analysis that was used, the information that was used or provided to form those recommendations, that's all we're asking for. Give us an example. Table it in the House. Let everybody in the province know exactly what they're based on.

Mr. Speaker, today's Nalcor announcement, again, reminds me of the budget: aspirations without any details about how we get there. The minister continues to refuse to release government's five-year budget projections.

I ask the minister: Will you release the five-year budget projections that you outlined in your speech?

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

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

As the Member opposite well knows, the budget is the detail for the fiscal year in which it's presented. We have provided all the details. As a matter of fact, the Member opposite sat through multiple evenings of Estimates and multiple Estimates processes, Mr. Speaker.

I will say to the Member opposite there's plenty of detail in the Greene report, in the report of the Premier's Economic Recovery task force and I invite him to participate in the discussions that are currently taking place. There are 78 recommendations, Mr. Speaker, and we will be looking at those 78 recommendations to determine how best to move forward for this province.

We have a tremendous debt in this province –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

S. COADY: – and I believe the Greene report indicated somewhere around \$46 billion. Mr. Speaker, that is a concern for all of us in this House and all of us in this province, and we'll be working to address it.

SPEAKER: Your time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the school year draws to a close, on behalf of the PC Opposition, I would like to wish all students, parents, teachers and staff a safe and happy summer vacation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: There is no doubt that it has been an exceptionally stressful year with all the COVID-19 challenges.

The complexity of integrating the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District into the Department of Education is one challenge, but my question is: What's the plan for the French school board?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would say to all administrators, educators, staff of the schools and as well as parents and students that it has been a year full of anxiety because of the pandemic and the changes in health protocols and I wish to thank them for getting us through the school year and doing it successfully.

Mr. Speaker, at present we have had discussions with the francophone school district, we've asked them to identify operational efficiencies, as well as fiscal efficiencies. There is some

question as to the constitutionality of folding the district in, so before we even look at that or go down that road, if we can achieve for their 350 students the efficiencies that need to be achieved, Mr. Speaker, that's what we'll focus on.

SPEAKER: The minister's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, does the government plan to ignore collective agreements to change school opening and closing hours to an eight-hour day for teachers as proposed in the Premier's Greene report?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

T. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, that's not a priority at the moment for the department or for government. The priority is looking at the English School District and bringing that into the department, the changes that we've announced for Memorial University, Mr. Speaker, and getting us to \$10-a-day early learning and child care.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. PETTEN: Thank you.

Do the changes planned in the Premier's Greene report for the K-to-12 system this year include removing principals, vice-principals and supervisory staff from the NLTA?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

T. OSBORNE: Again, Mr. Speaker, that's not a priority at this time for the department or for government.

Again, the priorities are bringing the English School District into the department, the changes that we've announced in the budget for

Memorial University and getting us to \$10-a-day early learning and child care. Those are very ambitious goals, Mr. Speaker, and they will take up the time of the department at the moment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. PETTEN: Mr. Speaker, bus contractors who stepped up last September to save government from the mess when thousands of schoolchildren were left without school busing are now scrambling as contracts expire and no direction has been provided for the coming school year.

Mr. Speaker, are buses returning to full capacity this fall?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

T. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I'd like to thank our busing contractors who did step up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. OSBORNE: We had some 121 additional busing routes added because of the COVID pandemic, Mr. Speaker, and they did step up and provide the transportation to our students.

Mr. Speaker, I was very clear, as far back as a month ago I've done several media interviews, including one just yesterday, where I indicated that school will get very much back to normal this year, including busing, and at this stage for ages 12 and older who are currently eligible for vaccination.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. PETTEN: Mr. Speaker, contractors who incurred significant financial liabilities are now without contracts for September and are liquidating fleets.

Given the unique opportunity with surplus buses in the province, I ask the minister: Will he review the 1.6-kilometre busing policy?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

T. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, there are two issues there. I will say that while the additional buses were brought on, they were funded through the safe return to school by the federal government, not the provincial government. The average cost of a run for the 121 runs was 62 per cent higher than traditional runs. The average cost was almost \$97,000 for the year. The average cost on regular runs, not the COVID runs, Mr. Speaker, was less than \$60,000. We did pay a premium for these runs, understanding that it was a one-year contract.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, the funding was provided by the federal government, not the provincial government. We are not currently looking at the 1.6-kilometre radius.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's unfortunate. The 1.6-kilometre busing is big in a lot of district, but obviously it's not enough.

Mr. Speaker, because of what the minister described as a mess last September with busing, government allowed contractors to use buses older than the 12-year age limit.

Again, given we have a surplus of newer buses in the province, many only one or two years old, will the minister meet with operators to see if we can improve upon it for the safety of our children?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

T. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, I'm absolutely looking forward to meeting with our busing contractors. I heard one on the radio yesterday saying that they wanted to form an association. I look forward to meeting with that association should they form it and, if not, I'm looking forward to meeting with independent contractors.

Mr. Speaker, we did make an exception and allowed 13- and 14-year-old buses on the road last year because of the pandemic and the need for additional buses, but this year busing should return very much to normal.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The annual capelin fishery is ongoing. DFO science that dates back over 50 years shows that massive volumes of capelin are being consumed by seal predation. This year our fish harvesters are only allowed to catch 14,533 tons of capelin for human food. On the other hand, seals in 2019 consumed over 1.7 million tons of capelin and the seal population has grown exponentially since.

What action has been taken on this critical issue, one that affects the livelihood of thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, I ask the minister?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture.

D. BRAGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think there were two questions in there: One was on the quota for capelin and the other one would have been on the seals.

As everyone is aware in this province, the quota for capelin is set based on the science by our federal counterparts. We pay attention to that. We understand that seals do eat capelin. They eat codfish; they eat crab; they eat any number of things. I'm hoping to work with my Atlantic partners to discuss the seal herd population, our problem with that and the other problems coming forward, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Mr. Speaker, if seals consume 200,000 metric tons in six days, I would impress upon the minister that time is of the essence.

Mr. Speaker, just a few weeks ago a Newfoundland fisherman, Jason Branton of Winterton, reported a patch of seals 60 miles out from Baccalieu Island in Conception Bay that was estimated to be about five miles in length. I'm assuming that many of us saw the video that he had posted.

Bob Hardy, a fishing industry consultant, stated that he feels the seals were causing a lot of destruction and a successful seal harvest is vital to addressing the increasing seal population.

For the record today, I ask the minister: What efforts has he made to help strengthen the market for seal products so that a sustainable seal hunt can take place?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture.

D. BRAGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, a great question. I'll be happy to report to this House that I took part in the seal fishery. I went to the ice about 15 years ago. When you would look at the seals on the ice 15 years ago, I would compare it to getting the biggest bottle of pepper you could ever get, putting a sheet of paper on your desk and dumping it out. That's how thick the seals were 15 years ago, Mr. Speaker. There has not been a cull or a good harvest since that time.

If you look at our pressures from the UK and the US, those are our main markets when it comes to our crab and our cod fishery. We cannot destroy these markets. I understand where we're to with the fishery. There is no easy answer, Mr. Speaker, to get clear of the seal population. There are many people with many videos. I for one feel strongly that we need to do something with the seal population and I would hope we would get the co-operation of our federal counterparts.

SPEAKER: The Member's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

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

Six years, three ministers and two premiers later, and this current government still has not opened a Family Violence Intervention Court in Labrador or Central.

Will the minister admit that six years is too long to be working on this without results?

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question.

As I have said in this House several times, these specialty courts are very important and they do help the individuals that are before the courts. They help in all kinds of way, not just for criminal issues, but societal issues and family issues. There have been announcements in this provincial budget and in the federal budget and we'll work with our federal government to get funds to make sure as many of these specialty courts can be opened, not only here in St. John's, but throughout the province and in Labrador as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Mr. Speaker, six years is way too long. We should be able to see courts expanded by this time.

Also, Mr. Speaker, there is no Drug Treatment Court in Central Newfoundland. In fact, the only Drug Treatment Court is in St. John's. Several ministers have promised to create more Drug Treatment Courts, but it has not happened.

When will another Drug Treatment Court be opened in this province?

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member for the question.

Just for the record, too, these specialty courts are fairly new. They're opened up one at a time to see if they work, to see what the pros are and what the cons are. As we find out that they are working, that's when we expand them throughout the province.

With regard to the Drug Treatment Court in particular, there was an announcement in the federal budget this latest time around that there will be funds for that. We are working with the federal government and we are currently doing feasibility studies to see where and when these Drug Treatment Courts can be spread throughout the province, particularly in Central and in Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Mr. Speaker, this is a call to action. We need to see action on these critical courts. For years, this current government has been aware of this issue. One previous minister kept stalling when he couldn't pick a town in Central. Another previous minister blamed the lack of wraparound services. There is no Family Violence Court in Central or Labrador; there is no Drug Treatment Court outside of St. John's.

Will the minister give us a commitment today to give priority to the expansion of these important courts to other regions of our province?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I had no choice but to step over my colleague, the current Attorney General, to jump in on this one because I believe the Member is referencing me.

I'll point out that when I took over in 2015, we had a bit of work to do to clean up. The reason

we couldn't pick a spot in Central is that the PC administration had said that Clarenville was the central location, not Gander and not Grand Falls. They wanted to put it in Clarenville and we had some issues with that. What we did do is we did expand it to the West Coast.

I'll point out the Drug Treatment Court – there was actually money sitting in the budget from the feds for five years and the administration before me wouldn't take advantage of it, wouldn't apply for it. What did we do? We took it and we created a court and we are going to expand it.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The caribou population continues to be endangered in this province. Over the last few years, we've seen increased pressures on the herd's recovery: habitat loss, illegal hunting activities, as well as other challenges.

In the spirit of collaboration in this House, I ask the minister: Will he strike an all-party Committee, including an independent Member, as soon as possible to work to protect and build recovery of endangered caribou and lobby Quebec and the federal government to assist in addressing these issues? Let them carry their weight, too.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture.

D. BRAGG: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

A great question, a couple of great questions today, actually, one on the seals and then one on the caribou. Vitaly important to this province, both of them.

The caribou, as we know, in Labrador are endangered. They're on the endangered species list, Mr. Speaker. We're going to work with our federal counterparts, with our – I have a stutter

going on this morning; I can't get it out fast enough. I can't get it out fast enough because I have so much I want to say.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAGG: We're going to work with everybody to work on these caribou. We need to protect the caribou. We need to start with the people we need to involve, everyone involved. I'll accept any and all comers into the conversation because we need to do it and get it done sooner rather than later, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We've seen some extra funds for the MTAP program in this current budget, but we haven't seen any policy changes that would improve the lives of Labradorians seeking medical service.

I ask the minister: Will he commit to eliminating upfront costs for Labradorians having to fly to get medical treatment on the Island?

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

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

The Member opposite and his predecessors and colleagues from Labrador have been quite vocal on the issue of medical transportation. We do, for income support medical transportation, completely cover the cost of travel and escorts and accommodation, be it in a registered accommodation or be it in private accommodation, as well as per diems.

We have also a reimbursement program for medical transportation, which is not means tested. We advance up to 50 per cent of the cost of airfare and will cover a flat rate of \$1,000 for airfare, which is different than we would do for non-Labradorians in this province, Mr. Speaker.

We'll continue to look at ways of being –

SPEAKER: The minister's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West, for a quick question, no preamble.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Minister of Health: Will he eliminate the upfront costs 100 per cent for Labradorians having to seek medical travel?

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

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

Income support medical transportation is a complete payment program. The Medical Transportation Assistance Program is that, it is meant to defray costs. Some of these are tax allowable. There is a deductible. That deductible has been reduced significantly for Labradorians. There is now only a 500-kilometre deductible.

They are allowed to claim for accommodation with relatives. They are allowed escorts who can do the same. They are allowed a per diem for food. In general, this has been very positively received.

It is the position of us that we will do what we can within our fiscal envelope, Mr. Speaker, and continue to work with the Member opposite and other Labradorian representatives to see what –

SPEAKER: The minister's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

E. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, climate change is real. The minister stated yesterday that the carbon tax was going to have a revenue of \$60 million this year. The carbon tax was set up to be revenue neutral. My understanding yesterday is that the revenue was put in general funds used for government services, not solely for environmental carbon emission projects.

I ask the minister: Is that correct?

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

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

As the Member opposite would know, any funds that – the majority of funds that come into the government would go to general revenue, but we do allocate them through to departments. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change would certainly be making use of those funds, Mr. Speaker, when he talks about the Low Carbon Economy Fund and other approaches that he's taking this year, including a new program to assist those families who want to move from oil heat to electricity or for those who are now purchasing electric cars. We've allocated money to that as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

E. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, the fund was solely going to be used for carbon emissions, I say to the minister.

Now that the tax was set up and used for general revenues for this province – which it wasn't supposed to be; it was supposed to be revenue neutral for the cost – I ask the minister: Now that you stated that the money would be going to the Minister of Environment for environmentally friendly projects, carbon emission projects, will you table the \$60 million worth of projects that are going to be used this year for carbon emissions in this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador? If the government is living up to the commitment of carbon emissions and the carbon tax to be neutral and to be used just for carbon emissions reduction.

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

B. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question. I thank the hon. Member for a very good question.

As the Minister of Finance mentioned, we do collect revenue through general revenue. It comes over to departments through the Estimates process that all Members would be familiar with. We've set out an action plan. We've moved on 43 of the 45 recommendations that will have a meaningful change in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and stimulate clean innovation and growth in the economy.

We're also moving to, as the Minister of Finance also alluded to, clean energy with respect to electric vehicle purchase and adoption initiatives and rebates; also, for movement from oil-heated homes to electric homes. We're going to move in that direction and we're continuing to do that. There are many, many more things we've partnered with the federal government on to utilize that revenue that's coming in so we can get the best value for the people of the province, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given

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

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

On reviewing *Hansard* yesterday, I fear I may have misspoken in response to a question from the Member for Topsail. Moderna is actually only licensed from age 18 up; however, Pfizer is available for those 12 to 17. The principle I elaborated in the rest of the my answer still holds, that anybody who is in that age group

who attends an mRNA clinic will be accommodated with the Pfizer vaccine.

I apologize if there was any confusion, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Any further answers to questions for which notice has been given?

Petitions.

Petitions

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate it.

We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador who urge our leaders to return affordable air travel to the region of Northern Labrador through subsidization of the cost of airfare to the Northern Labrador communities.

Our Northern Labrador communities are totally isolated with no road access and marine transportation is limited to summer months only. With the provincial government cancellation of the Lewisporte freight boat to our communities, families are now struggling with increased costs of basic needs, including food security. Our only means of transportation is marine or air. Our marine transportation service is once a week, running July to October. Our air transportation service is provided by a single monopoly airline, Air Borealis.

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 provide an air transportation subsidy to reduce the cost of travel between Happy Valley-Goose Bay and the Northern Labrador communities.

Mr. Speaker, I actually don't expect anything to come of this petition. I don't expect the government to actually step up and help the residents in my communities that are trapped in their communities by the high cost. But I have to

say, the North Coast communities of Labrador are in a transportation crisis, not only for passenger travel but for freight, which impacts the cost of food, building materials and all household goods.

Technically, the reason why I'm reading out this petition – again, which will fall on deaf ears – is because my constituents are prisoners in their communities. We rely on the summer months to travel by marine because the airline cost is too expensive. For one person, a return ticket from Goose Bay to Nain is \$1,000. If you have four people in your family, two adults and two children, that's \$4,000, and as my sister says, that only gets you as far as Goose Bay return.

The reason why I'm actually talking about this petition is because the ferry that we have that services the North Coast, affordable transportation, is restricted to 83 passengers. That's by Transport Canada for the COVID regulations. In six Indigenous communities the ferry sails once a week, so your only chance to travel anywhere is to get on that boat. Now, Labrador Marine, by trying to help out the residents on the North Coast to access those limited number of seats, they've restricted the travel to only residents of the North Coast, Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Black Tickle. Mr. Speaker, that's unacceptable. That's not acceptable.

The Minister of Transportation at one point was talking to one of my fellow MHAs and said you choose where you live. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Indigenous people in my community, the Innu and the Inuit, did not choose to live there. They were there first. Europeans chose to come over, chose to actually enact laws and regulations that took away the land and now –

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.

This petition concerns the transition to land-based aquaculture. The background of this petition is as follows:

The Newfoundland and Labrador Government wants to expand open-net Atlantic salmon farm pens into Placentia Bay and further west along the South Coast of the Island of Newfoundland.

There is evidence that these pens affect the wild salmon stocks by exposing them to pollutants, disease, sea lice, et cetera. Also salmon from these pens and interbred with the wild Atlantic salmon the effects can be devastating.

If these pens are expended across the waters of the South Coast we will see wild runs of salmon diminish as they have at Conne River and Little River likely hurting the businesses of established outfitters and possibly leading to serious reductions in runs of wild Atlantic salmon.

The best solution to this problem is the use of land-based pens instead of open-net pens in the ocean.

Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to create a plan for the replacement of existing open-net aquaculture operations with land-based pens.

Mr. Speaker, this petition was started by a young junior high student from Gander, Ashton Goodyear. He had an online petition of some 3,587 signatures. On this petition – the start of many – we have 32 and that was over the last few days he got these, more will come.

It indicates that there is a lack of confidence in the regulations, the legislation around open-sea pen aquaculture in this province. There is a concern for the future of these stocks, Mr. Speaker, and the future of the Atlantic salmon. Despite the assurances that Newfoundland and Labrador has some of the most stringent aquaculture regulations in the country, people are not buying it.

We know that in 2019 there was the loss of some 2.6 million salmon. Recent escape of 80,000 fish in the Hermitage area in Long Pond, the extension of runs in Little River and potential extension in Conne River, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that it takes to get a full environmental assessment of salmon aquaculture projects requires court case after court case and, even now, we have no clear direction in the most

recent court case whether the government will follow the direction of the court and institute a full environmental assessment of the Indian Head Salmon Hatchery expansion in Stephenville.

Mr. Speaker, it's very clear here that either government needs to do more to instill confidence or indeed start the plan to move to land based where there is definitely a lot more security and protection of the environment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Aquaculture for a response.

D. BRAGG: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member opposite for the petition.

The Member Opposite would be happy to know, we are now working with the federal government on a new Aquaculture Act for the East Coast of Canada. Plus, we've signed a memorandum of understand with the Atlantic provinces fisheries ministers on aquaculture. We want to learn from each other, we want to make this industry the best it can be, Mr. Speaker, and we aim to please.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: We're going to conclude here now, the Lieutenant-Governor is here to give Royal Assent.

This House will recess for just a couple of minutes. People can stay in their chairs, but Broadcast will shut down the intercom.

Recess

SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

SPEAKER: Admit Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise.

(The Speaker leaves the Chair.)

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

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

SPEAKER: It is my agreeable duty on behalf of Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, Her Faithful Commons in Newfoundland and Labrador, to present to Your Honour a bill for the appropriation of Supply granted in the present session.

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2022 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 8)

HER HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR (Judy May Foote, PC, ONL): In Her Majesty's name, I thank her loyal subjects, I accept their benevolence, and I assent to this bill.

SPEAKER: May it please Your Honour, the General Assembly of the province has at its present session passed certain bills, to which, in the name and on behalf of the General Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

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

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

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act." (Bill 13)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000." (Bill 14)

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

A bill, "An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province." (Bill 17)

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

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 2.” (Bill 21)

HER HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR: In Her Majesty’s name, I assent to these bills.

I’m caught up in someone’s comfort chair here.

Thank you so much for all your work, on behalf of Her Majesty.

I get that sense – and I know what it’s like because I’ve been here before – it’s like school is out. But thank you for all that you’ve done and that you will continue to do as you return to your constituencies and to the people who made it possible for you to be here. I appreciate your hard work and I know that they do, too. But it will also give you an opportunity to be with your families, and I know how important that is to continuing your work, to have the support of your families behind you.

Thank you so much, stay safe over the summer, take time for yourselves and enjoy what life has to offer.

I want to applaud you for your hard work. You’ve been really, really busy. I’m especially interested in the amendments to the *Children, Youth and Families Act*. As I read those amendments I thought that’s what being a Member of government is all about: making a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable. You have done that with the amendments to that particular act. Of course, all your other work is very important as well, especially when you’re talking money bills, but I get particularly interested in the different policy direction that the government is going in, so thank you – all of you – for making that possible.

Again, have a wonderful break. Look forward to coming back because we need you here to continue the good work that you’ve been doing and I look forward to continuing to watch what you’re doing.

Stay safe and take care of yourselves.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise.

(Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor leaves the Chamber. The Speaker returns to the Chair.)

SPEAKER: Please be seated.

Order, please!

I’m just going to make a few quick remarks and I’ll have a few other remarks before we conclude today. But before we conclude today, it has been our custom that we recognize employees of the House of Assembly Service who are retiring soon or who have retired in the past few months.

Ms. Armored Tucker retired after 21 years of service as a Hansard parliamentary trans-editor, and Ms. Debbie Dwyer after 28 years of service as a parliamentary trans-editor and editor of legislative debates.

Ms. Dayna Wicks, manager of the Human Resources Services and Payroll Administration in Corporate and Members’ Services, retired at the end of November following 33 years of service with the provincial government, and the last 11 of which were with the Legislature. Dayna returned for several months after retirement to assist with the HR processing associated with the election and just recently stepped back to a retirement mode.

Last but not least, a familiar face in this Chamber each day and a familiar face that I see every morning after I make coffee, our Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Wayne Harnum.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: I can’t see him. I have a feeling he’s back there crying.

Wayne, who has only been in the role for seven years and was appointed by the Legislature in 2014, joined the House of Assembly Service following a 32-year career with the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary.

I ask all Members to join me in wishing each and every one of these individuals a happy and

healthy retirement, and extend our utmost appreciation for their diligent and faithful service to our Legislature.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Our work as elected officials and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are truly grateful.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: I would like now to give the floor over to the Leader of the Official Opposition.

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Indeed, it's an honour to address the House again, I guess for the last time during this sitting, our spring sitting of the House of Assembly. We're getting closer and closer back to normality in the operations of the House of Assembly.

No doubt, I don't think there is one Member in this House who isn't looking forward to the day when we get back sitting in the normal process and doing the normal things. Particularly, when we can no longer wear the mask so we're not mumbling under our breath and we're having a good conversation with everybody. I'm looking forward to that also. I do want to start by congratulating and particularly thanking those retirees who have so diligently served us in the House of Assembly and in government, as we try to do the will of the people in this hon. House and serve the people to the best of our abilities.

To the Sergeant-at-Arms, a heartfelt congratulations and thank you for your years of services. I was fortunate enough to be around when you came in. You've added a very high sense of professionalism and commitment to the House of Assembly. The Official Opposition thanks you for that and wishes you well in your next part of retirement, wherever that may take you. We also thank you for your distinguished career with the RNC in serving the people of this province.

Thank you very much, Sir.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: There are, obviously, many to thank in any sitting of the House of Assembly for those who make this all possible. Before I get to that, I just want to talk a little bit to our viewers about what this sitting was all about.

We came in very trying times, in very challenging times for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, to put together a budget; work with government on a budget that was presented. We, in the Official Opposition, the Third Party and the independents have a responsibility to ensure that the monies and the revenues that are generated and expended in Newfoundland and Labrador are done in the best interests of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I'm confident to say we had a very robust debate. We spent more than 100 hours debating various components of this budget through Estimates and through the various bills that were debated in this House of Assembly. We, in the Official Opposition, asked over 300 questions in Question Period and, for the most part, we got answers. We may not always agree with the answers, but we got answers and we appreciate that. That's the democratic process that we have in the House of Assembly.

I do also want to note, for those who are watching, sometimes it might look like there's heavy bantering here, or we don't get along, or we're not on the same page. But I can reassure everybody at home, every person in this House of Assembly and everyone who has come before us – and I suspect those after – come for the right reason and come for the one reason: to serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and do the best of their ability, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: I'm proud to say I don't feel I saw anything different from that philosophy in this sitting of the House of Assembly. I'm looking forward to the next number of sittings in the House of Assembly with our colleagues here and, again, particularly as we get back to some sense of normality.

I do want to also acknowledge to the general public who may be watching here, the role of an

MHA is very challenging. People may not see it. You may see what they would call the glory part of it – if there are any glory parts of it – but the glory parts are when you get to do some of the public things. You get to be able to acknowledge the good people who do good work in your districts as a part of that. But people don't see the sacrifices that are made in this room, that are made in districts and that are made when people are travelling 500 or 600 kilometres in their vehicle to get to their district, to attend an event or to deal with a particular individual.

I'm fortunate to have a district where pretty well on a moment's notice I can get to my district, can attend an event and can deal with a crisis, if it's necessary, and not be that hindered or that disrupted with dealing with my own personal issues, or life or family. But there are a number of people in this House who have to travel enormous kilometres and take all kinds of modes of transportation to be able to get to serve their people. When they're doing that, they're sacrificing other things: they're sacrificing their health, they're sacrificing time with their family and they're sacrificing their own well-being as a part of that.

I just want to make people aware that at the end of the day there are a lot of things that go on behind the scenes for an MHA and what they commit that the general public may not need to know. At the end of the day, we don't look for acknowledgement for any of that, but I guarantee you there are people in this room who have gone well beyond the call of duty to service their constituents.

I, personally, want to thank those who have more challenging districts when it comes to being able to access their individuals and what they do for them. I appreciate that and I would hope their constituents do the same. Obviously, when you sit here you get an acknowledgement that they do appreciate it. That's why they elect you or they re-elect you. That's hats off to the people in this room.

I do want to also thank the multitude of people who were involved in making this a reality in the House of Assembly. To, Mr. Speaker, yourself, the Deputy Speaker and the Deputy Chair of Committees for very professionally and diligently keeping us on the right track and

ensuring that we get in and out on a timely fashion and deal with the agenda items that are put forward. So I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker, for you and your staff.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: To the Table Officers, who are the guiding lights here at the end of the day, there are a multitude of things that go on in front of us, but behind the scenes also, that direct exactly how we operate professionally in this House. It's very important, one, to keep the decorum going, but, two, to ensure that what we're setting here – the policies and the regulatory process here – is done in a manner that it should not and cannot be challenged and that the people of this province know at the end of the day everything that was done was done in accordance to the laws. We have to live by laws in our society, Mr. Speaker, or we will not have a just society.

I thank the Table Officers for their diligent work, and all those behind the scenes of the Table Officers for ensuring that we can operate in a very professional manner in this House. Thank you for that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: To all the other support staff that we have – there's security here, there are all the other people who are responsible for the House itself and the operations there. I do miss the days when the Pages were here, because you could have a collaboration. You got to know some of the younger people and what they're up to and what their aspirations are. Hopefully, we will get back to that normality in the very near future. I want to thank those as part of the whole –

J. WALL: (Inaudible.)

D. BRAZIL: Yes.

I'm glad my hon. Member for Cape St. Francis reminded me – and I said it at the beginning, the unique circumstance that we're under – the cleaners, the people here who have ensured that we've stayed safe every day we've come in here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: I very much thank them for that.

We all have unique operations within our own organizations that keep us fluent and keep us above board, but, more importantly, keep us professional. That's a testament to our own caucuses and the people who support us there. Personally, from our perspective – and I speak on behalf of the Official Opposition – I want to thank our chief of staff. I want to thank all of our staff that works to ensure every day that we're prepared for the House of Assembly; that when we're out on issues, we have the facts and we speak to them; that we have opportunities to serve our constituents and we get to do that.

I know on behalf of each one of us here as MHAs, we want to thank our constituency assistants for the work they do in our offices. We may go weeks at a time, particularly, Members who come in here for the House and, if there's a storm or if there's an event in here, don't get home or back to their district for a particular period of time. That falls back on their constituency assistants to keep things afloat. We thank them for that and the great work they do to ensure our constituents are taken care of. To all of those who support what we do behind the scenes, another special thank you.

This is my first full sitting as the Leader of the Official Opposition. I do want to thank everybody for making it enjoyable, making it very professional and making me feel that, you know what, we're on the right path in Newfoundland and Labrador. Our government is in a good place when it comes to the Legislature. We collectively can set the direction here that gets Newfoundland and Labrador in the right path and gets us to financial stability, but, more importantly, gets us to a place where people in Newfoundland and Labrador continue to be as proud as they are and want to stay here and raise their families here and encourage others to come here.

I thank everybody in the House for giving me that opportunity and supporting me on that. Particularly here, I want to thank my fellow Members on the Opposition caucus. My fellow Member here, the Opposition House Leader, for being very supportive and very capable to negotiate with the Government House Leader in ensuring that things get done in a timely fashion and meet the needs that we're trying to propose here.

To our Deputy Opposition House Leader, a sincere thank you for being there also to support. It is 100 moving parts continuously in the House of Assembly. No matter what party you're in, no matter how big you are, the same type of work has to be done, just done by fewer people.

To our caucus Chair, I want to thank him for his support in organizing our caucus and ensuring that every day things are done in a timely fashion and the agenda items are taken care of. To our caucus Whip, for ensuring information is shared and people are knowledgeable and aware of what we're doing in a timely fashion, how important it is to do that. For all the other Members of caucus, those who have stepped up to sit on Committees, those who sat for hours in Estimates, those who sit on the Public Accounts to ensure that accountability is here for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, I sincerely thank you.

I want to end by saying I want to, on behalf of our caucus, thank our family members. These are the people who stand every day.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: They sacrifice, they sometimes have to put up with our absence at special events and sometimes they have to deal with some of the fallout from our actions as elected officials. We sincerely thank them for this. Without them, we would not be able to be politicians and do the job we do.

Finally, I want to thank the Premier and the government for engaging us in the democratic process here. We look forward to continuous collaboration, a little bit of bantering here and there, but at the end of the day seeing the benefits of the work that we do collectively for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I want to end by wishing everybody a healthy, safe holiday as we go through – and I say holiday because I say it tongue-in-cheek. The minute we leave here, every one of your constituents that you know are going to say, so you're on holidays now. They don't realize the real work begins, because now you're 24/7 into your constituency issues, you're 24/7 if you're a minister into your responsibilities there, and you're 24/7 into the

other responsibilities that people have in the Official Opposition.

I do want to ensure and ask that everybody be safe. We look forward to seeing everybody back here again for our fall sitting.

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.

The first time I engaged in this was just after the first election. I think I used the analogy that it was like riding a bike except the bike was on fire, you were on fire – everything was on fire. I don't know if the bike is no longer on fire but it's certainly still smouldering, that's for sure.

The last year and a half – it's been three years now, three June sittings; one month of the salmon season has gone by. For those who are anglers, you know how much of a sacrifice that is. This last year has been particularly challenging, and we all know it, with COVID. It's probably also the longest election that we've all been engaged in. It was a winter election. Dealing with the fiscal situation of the province, which is overwhelming. Regardless of what side of the House we're on, it's taken its toll on all of us and the people of this province as well.

We also know that if you walk into any public building, hospitals, schools – and it's hard to walk into a school but certainly for those of us who have gone to appointments, you know that you can see the tension there, just the procedures that are in place to protect people on both sides of the wicket. We know that it's certainly made life challenging, but through it all, we're getting through it.

The budget process never ceases to amaze me because we're voting on billions of dollars. If you let that sink in, it becomes almost overwhelming. It's easier just to look at it as numbers on a page and forget that we're talking about billions of dollars. I forget what I would spend – a billion in a year – if you had to spend it each day, but it would be overwhelming.

Even more overwhelming is that this money, that this budget will change the lives of many people. It will affect the people of this province of all income levels. It's also going to set the future of where we go with the province. When you sit down to analyze it, look at it and reflect on it, it's a significant piece of legislation. I used to think the NLTA voting on a budget of several million dollars was significant; this is a whole new level of reality.

I do want to thank you though, because when you look at the enormity of this, again, there are many people behind it. I guess we're sort of the front people. We sit here, we speak to the issue but behind us, there are significant numbers of people who are there keeping us together.

I'll start with my wife. In terms of being the support, encouraging me to run, I don't know if that was to give me something to do to get me out of the house or what, but obviously I was probably cramping her style in some way. Nevertheless, the fact is that I couldn't have done it without her support. I can tell you that I certainly wouldn't be that well coordinated if I didn't pass the inspection of the chief executive officer before I left the house.

To my children, who, again, also have to put up with: You're Jim Dinn's daughter? Yeah. Sometimes they even claim not to know me if it helps, or claim to know me if it helps or otherwise pretend you don't know me, whatever helps you in the situation. It does wear on family. I still go back to the fact that our mother, both of us, said: Why would you want to get involved in politics? I still remember that lecture over and over and I'll get to that in a minute.

I also want to thank my two colleagues who are here in the House with me, to our leader Alison Coffin and the Member for Labrador West, Jordan Brown. Certainly, it makes the work a lot more – even though there are just three of us, and two of us in the House here, it's good to have the support of colleagues.

To our caucus staff, you're right; they do a lot of the heavy lifting when it comes to getting the information in our hands, the media releases out, what our focus is going to be and so on and so forth. You cannot do it without them. Certainly,

they labour behind the scenes and often unrecognized.

To all those who took part in the Estimates, it's a fantastic process in terms of getting to know where the money is going and to get the information that you may not get during a Question Period. To the public servants who keep this building and all the buildings and the services to the people of the province in order and making sure that services are carried out and that we have the necessary information in our hands.

To the ministers on the other side of this House – and to the MHAs, too, but to the ministers especially – who when we bring issues to them, often in sidebars or after, we can get work done. Usually, what it comes down to is about helping to solve the individual problems that people face.

Certainly, to MHAs on both sides of this House, we talk about ourselves as a government, Official Opposition, Third Party and independents, but in the end we do try to work together. My colleague from Placentia West - Bellevue has given me a hand with regard to a constituent who is neither one of ours; nevertheless, we're working together to try to resolve the issue.

To the people of Hansard who quickly get the information out, it's amazing.

To the Speaker, to the Table Officers, to the retirees who have performed significant service to the House. Mostly, I have to argue, to our constituents who elected us and who put their faith in us. Even if they didn't elect us, they still come to us and we still have to serve them.

I'll say this, constituency work for me – and I would say for everyone in this House – is what I enjoy the most. It couldn't be done without our constituency assistants. When you are able to solve a problem at that level, to use your position to help someone, that's the reward. It's a significant reward. Why else would some MHAs take a pay cut? There are a number here that have taken a pay cut to serve in this capacity. It has to be because of the love of service and to have that sense of service to the people in their districts. Why else do we bring

petitions, ask questions or make Members' statements but to highlight concerns and issues in our district? It's also, as I said, the opportunity to work with Members on all sides of the House.

I know we're all passionate. You just have to sit back and listen to the debate at times. Although, I will have to say, folks, being a teacher I think somewhere along the line I would have had to put my foot down and say: Okay, enough is enough. Let's get on with it here.

But you know what? Summer is here. The weather is nice. Problems are still with us. There's a river calling. Problems are still with us. We're still getting through the vaccination, but I'll tell you the optimism is palpable and you can feel that we're on the track to get back to some semblance of normal, whatever normal is, what that means. I think right now people are looking to get down on the pedestrian walkway, to get together with families from other parts of the Atlantic region and the country. I think that's a good thing, because during the darkest days when people were thinking that we're not getting out of this, that this is going to destroy the economy, you can just look around and you can see the signs that there is hope.

We in this party thank you for the opportunity to work with everyone. We look forward to when we sit again and to carry on with the business of the province.

Have a good summer. Be safe. I hope to see you all again in October.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

I'd like to be able to just say ditto to the speech orated by my colleague opposite, who happens to be my MHA and slayer of potholes everywhere, far and wide.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER A. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, it has been quite a busy session for all of us here in the

House of Assembly. I want to thank all hon. Members of this House who have brought passion and vigour to debate during this session.

I have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that each of us here will continue to represent our districts to the best of our ability and with the best interest of the collective of Newfoundland and Labrador in mind. I want to personally thank the residents of Humber - Gros Morne for their continued support.

As I stated at the beginning of this session, putting this province on the right track is a journey and we must all take that journey together, regardless of political stripe. Passing *Budget 2021* was a stepping stone on this journey. The budget provides a framework for the beginning of modernizing and transforming government to meet modern needs. We have been doing a lot of the same for many years in this province, and it is time that we have to start to think outside the box for the future. It sets a path for a strong recovery, smart investments in health and education, building stronger communities and a resilient economy for the future.

Supporting our tourism industry with \$30 million for a Tourism and Hospitality Support Program to alleviate pressures experienced by COVID-19; a Physical Activity Tax Credit which will provide a refundable tax credit of up to \$2,000 per family to help families get healthy, Mr. Speaker; \$25 million over the next three years to improve connectivity through cellular and broadband services, which are essential, and we have learned that through the COVID-19 pandemic; significant investments in health care, education and so much more. The government is focused on delivering good outcomes for the people of this province.

I want to take this time to thank those who worked behind the scenes for *Budget 2021*, including the front scenes, by the Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance, and, indeed, Mr. Speaker, all public servants for the work they do. Even during the pandemic, the public service of Newfoundland and Labrador has been there for the people of this province, working day in and day out.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER A. FUREY: I'm so proud of this government, collectively, for the work we did during the negotiations for the Terra Nova FPSO, Mr. Speaker. This government took a bold stand, stood firm and it paid off for the people of this province.

All of us in this House support the women and men in our oil and gas industry, and getting a deal done for the province was critically important, as all Members know and held us to account. A deal was done, one that works for the best interest of the future of the industry and the people of this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER A. FUREY: We look forward to seeing this project sanctioned and providing jobs for many women and men in this oil patch and Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker.

We also made good strides on the path of reconciliation with our Indigenous leadership, which was evidenced in some of the legislation that we tabled in the House this session. This is just the first step of many steps on the path of reconciliation. It will be long; it will be twisted and it will be bumpy at times, but we all need to walk it together with our Indigenous leadership, Mr. Speaker, to fully recognize and reconcile the mistakes of the past but, more importantly, create a path together for the future.

Although these items take up a lot of time in this hon. House, we were also able to pass some important legislation for the people of the province. Amending the Vital Statistics Act to allow residents of Newfoundland and Labrador whose birth is not registered in this province to change their sex designation is another important step for equality. I was proud to celebrate this change with Minister Stoodley and my good friend Gemma Hickey, who has been a fierce advocate for equal rights. These changes may seem small, but it is important to the people of this province and this government, and we will continue to make the necessary changes to support continued equal rights throughout the province.

I would be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I did not thank you personally for your continued dedication to the House. Thank you for your

decorum, your rulings and your thoughtful approach that you bring every single day. I know you have staff who work behind you to support you, and I equally want to thank the staff of this honoured House.

Thank you to the Clerk and to her staff and the Clerk's office and all the staff of this House of Assembly, so many hard-working people keeping everything going and wearing many different hats during this particular, difficult, COVID-19-style Legislature. To the Legislative Library, Hansard, the Broadcast team, the Table Officers and, especially on this day, to the Sergeant-at-Arms, thank you.

To the security guards who are here day in and day out, sometimes giving tickets in parking lots, serving the building, we greet every single day. To political staff everywhere, no matter your political stripe, we know you sacrifice as well. In our constituency offices, in particular, thank you to our staff. As the Member opposite rightfully pointed out, a lot of the time we spend in here the responsibility, the tasks fall to them and it does not go unnoticed, so thank you.

I would also like to specifically congratulate, as others have, the Sergeant-at-Arms, Wayne Harnum, on his retirement from this House of Assembly. Your years of service are appreciated and I certainly hope all staff retiring enjoy having more time with their families. You, Sir, will be missed and the province owes you a debt of gratitude for your service, not only to this House, but for keeping us all safe in your past life. Have fun.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER A. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, as we close this House, I want to thank all Members, regardless of stripe, again, for their dedication to the people of this province. There is still a serious situation facing the province, we have an opportunity – not an opportunity. We have a necessity to work together to change it.

Last but not least, I wanted to thank the Members opposite for their thoughtful debate, passion and compassion when it comes to the people of this province. Questions, examinations, challenges and inquiry are not only the essential part of any democracy; they

are crucial now and essential to us in order to create the right path forward. Our side owes you a debt of gratitude for keeping us honest and fulsome on our debate.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER A. FUREY: With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to wish everyone else in our public service and beyond a happy summer. As the Member Opposite suggested, our work now is just beginning.

Have a good summer. Stay safe.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Before we conclude I would also like to say a few thank yous.

First of all, to my wife and family back home. My wife is celebrating her birthday today, alone.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: As many of the previous speakers said, they are the people that support us day and night. Times when we are down and getting knocked down, they are the ones that we rely on to bring us back up and give us the motivation to keep doing this great job that we do.

I'd like to also thank the people of my beautiful and scenic District of Lewisporte - Twillingate that had the faith to elect me in 2015 and re-elect me again in 2019 and 2021.

A couple thank yous. First of all, to the Deputy Speaker and the Deputy Chair of Committees for your support throughout this session. Being a new Speaker, it has been a steep learning curve and I do sincerely thank you for your support, co-operation and your experience.

To the Premier, the Leader of the Official Opposition and to every Member in this House of Assembly, I sincerely thank you for giving me the honour to sit in this chair. It is quite the honour and it is something that I do not take lightly. I do thank you for your co-operation, your respect and the decorum. I think we've all seen times in the past when things have gotten a

little loud or a little obnoxious and that, but I think I can honestly say that the level of decorum this year has been quite good. I do thank each and every one of you for that.

As was said earlier, this operation, this machine doesn't happen without the support of a lot of people that keep the House of Assembly moving. Although the previous speakers did identify some, I just want to make sure that we didn't miss anyone.

First of all, I'd like to thank our Corporate and Members' Services. They're the people that diligently work behind the scenes to keep us up and on track and make sure that our operations are running smoothly.

To the Legislative Library, they are our research arm and respond to all the references and questions that we all ask.

Our Information Management staff. These are the people that make sure that our information is kept appropriately and they respond to access-to-information requests.

To the staff of Hansard, who provide us with written versions of the words we speak. Every day they transcribe Question Period and are always there to assist us when we need to review excerpts from our proceedings.

To our Broadcast team, who captures our audio and visual and keeps us on the air in the public.

I'd also like to thank our Clerk's office staff: Maureen Dooley; Yvonne Power; and my executive assistant, Kala Noel, who keeps me on track and keeps us all on track in our day-to-day operations.

Our Sergeant-at-Arms, Wayne Harnum, as we said, also protects the order of the House, maintains security in the gallery – although it's been pretty quiet this session – but also makes sure that the House is and we're all protected and that. I do wish you all the best, Wayne, in your retirement. I am going to miss our 6:30, 7 o'clock conversations and coming out and having a coffee and that. I wish you and your wife all the best in your retirement.

Lastly, but definitely not last in importance, our Table Officers: our Clerk, Sandra Barnes; our Law Clerk, Kim Hawley George; as well as Bobbi Russell, Kim Hammond and Mark Jerrett.

I have to say, before coming into the Speaker role, I did – not that I questioned what they were doing and that, but I really didn't know the amount of work and time that they dedicate to this position and how serious they take this role to protect this Legislature. Any time I have reached out, day or night, 24-7, within minutes I do get a quick response. I do sincerely appreciate all your dedication, plus the service that you're providing to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In closing I'd just also like to wish everyone a very safe and enjoyable summer. Like the Member for St. John's Centre, I do hope to get a chance to tighten a line out on the rivers. It's something that I dearly enjoy, but I also look forward to being able to go safely in our communities and to visit the people in our district and the different events and functions that happen that we all enjoy so much. Because lots of times in our offices, we may get calls from our constituents, but when you get out to these events and functions, that's where the people get their opportunity to pull you aside and really address some of the concerns that they may have and that they may never call you on. So I'm looking forward to that.

Before I conclude and before we adjourn, back a couple of years ago we did take time to sing the *Ode to Newfoundland*, and I would like that to be a tradition from now on. I think it's something that we all should hold very dearly.

Since I don't have the best vocals I will ask my good friend, the MHA for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave and also the Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality to lead us.

I ask all Members to please rise as we sing the first and last verse of the "Ode to Newfoundland."

P. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Please join me in singing the "Ode to Newfoundland."

When sun rays crown thy pine clad hills,
And summer spreads her hand,
When silvern voices tune thy rills,
We love thee, smiling land.

We love thee, we love thee,
We love thee, smiling land.

As loved our fathers, so we love,
Where once they stood, we stand;
Their prayer we raise to Heaven above,
God guard thee, Newfoundland

God guard thee, God guard thee,
God guard thee, Newfoundland.

SPEAKER: And Labrador.

P. PARSONS: And Labrador.

SPEAKER: Thank you, everyone.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

Quickly before I adjourn, I want to take a quick second to recognize a constituent of mine who so happens to be the Sergeant-at-Arms.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

S. CROCKER: I look forward to seeing him either on the wharf or on Green Point rock this summer.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Premier, that this House now adjourn until the call of the Chair.

SPEAKER: The motion is that this House do now adjourn to the call of the Chair.

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.

SPEAKER: One last time, Wayne.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

On motion, the House adjourned to the call of the Chair.