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*Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA*

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

I would like to begin by welcoming in our public gallery and to recognize Nathan Snow. Nathan will be the subject of a Member's statement this afternoon.

Welcome, Nathan.

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

**Statements by Members**

**SPEAKER:** Today we will hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Terra Nova, Stephenville - Port au Port, Burin - Grand Bank, St. George's - Humber, Bonavista, Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, with leave, and Baie Verte - Green Bay, with leave.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

**L. PARROTT:** Thank you, Speaker.

Volunteers continue to be the backbone of many organizations.

The Clarenville Nordic Ski Club and its volunteers are no exception and they deserve recognition. The club started in the early '70s with founding members that loved the outdoors and it has grown to a large, active club with over 400 members.

Over the last four years, four of these founding members unfortunately have passed away: Harry O'Gay, Corwin Mills, Dr. Harold Crewe and Dr. Peter Cleary. They were mentors, coaches and lifelong friends to everyone no matter their age or their skill level.

Today I would like to honour them for the foundation they laid. It is the cornerstone of this club's success. Through the years they recruited an avid group of passionate volunteers which enabled the club to grow year over year. Currently, four skiers are on the provincial ski team and two skiers were Premier's award winners in the last year. Last year they had the

highest amount of registration for their jackrabbit program with over 70 new registrants.

The pride of the four founding members and their love of the outdoors will continue to be the legacy of this club. "Every day is a great day."

Please join me in honouring and congratulating the volunteers and the Clarenville Nordic Ski Club.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Thank you, Speaker.

Eileen was born on the beautiful West Coast in the community of Port au Port East. She married Robert Hann and raised a family of three boys and three girls.

During her lifespan, to say she is active in the community would be an understatement. She is the role model of a volunteer who is active, a strong advocate for causes that promote community development and a friend and supporter to everyone she meets.

Her volunteer services began with the establishment of the Maria Regina Parish. Together with other community members she helped start a women's institute, a church community centre and a parish house. Eileen was inspired to continue her dedication for community improvement by becoming a councillor. On November 1, 1979, she was elected to council where she remains today as the deputy mayor; that's 42 years of dedicated service to her community. She has served in many positions on council, including that of mayor from November 2008 until October 2017.

When not working on council issues, Eileen wears many other hats with a number of volunteer groups. She also finds time to wear a huge sun hat when tending her vegetable garden.

Please join me in congratulating Eileen Hann on a lifetime career of public service.

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

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

**P. PIKE:** Speaker, it's a pleasure today to recognize one of the great volunteers in the District of Burin - Grand Bank.

Mr. Clem Benteau was born, raised and has spent his entire life in the community of Point May. A very dedicated family man who spent 40 years as an inland fisherman and family business owner. His passion for his community and the greater Lamaline area resulted in a lifetime of volunteering for Mr. Benteau.

Some of his volunteering included: a member of the Point May Recreation Committee and the Point May Community Centre; a member of a committee to coach and maintain softball and soccer in the community of Lamaline; a member of the Greater Lamaline Area Multi-purpose Trail Association and development of ATV trails; a member of the Point May Volunteer Fire Department for 14 years; a member of the local fisherman's committee, which saw the development of much-needed infrastructure; a member of the Greater Lamaline Area Development Association for over 40 years; and a performer on the Point May Community Centre starting at the age of 10. During COVID, Clem held a virtual concert, which had an audience from all over the world, generating \$5,000 in revenue for his community.

Loved by his community for his attitude, love of life, his acts of kindness and advocacy for the region.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in showing our appreciation for this wonderful person and volunteer.

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

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

**S. REID:** Speaker, today I would like to highlight the Remembering Our Sisters Through Community project of the Newfoundland and Labrador Aboriginal Women's Network and the work they are doing to honour the lives and legacies of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

The project activities include creating opportunities to gather and shed light on the crisis throughout community cultural events, such as youth workshops, annual marches for safe communities, Sisters in Spirit Vigils and through the design and creation of healing gardens.

The intent of the three healing gardens and gazebo created in the Bay St. George area is for families and community members to sit, reflect and remember the lives of our sisters, daughters, mothers, aunts, nieces, grandmothers, friends and neighbours who were tragically taken from us.

The MMIWG2S healing gardens include storyboards which share the lives and legacies written by the families to share stories and remember their loved ones. There are also messages of hope written by local elders.

The gardens are located at the Lions Club in Stephenville, the Siki Bennett Memorial Stadium in St. George's, at the Benoit First Nation Mi'Kmaq Centre in Degrau and on Water Street in Stephenville Crossing.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

**C. PARDY:** Thank you, Speaker.

Today I celebrate the heroism of a young man from St. John's residing on Thorburn Road who was vacationing in Sweet Bay in the District of Bonavista on Saturday August 21, 2021.

Nathan Snow's mom's hometown was Sweet Bay and Nathan was reuniting with family and friends at the family property when a desperate call for help came from the water. Nathan immediately jumped aboard his pickup and went to the boat launch site where Mr. and Mrs. Coles, along with their three-year-old grandson, were launching their boat. Mr. Coles was out of the truck when the vehicle and boat started to roll back into the bay. Mrs. Coles passed her grandson out the window to Mr. Coles who was

then chest deep in water before climbing out herself.

It was Nathan who came upon the scene first and promptly swam out to retrieve Mrs. Coles, who was unresponsive and barely visible in the water. His quick actions that day saved her life for which the family, especially Mrs. Coles, are truly thankful.

I ask the Members of the 50th House of Assembly to join me in celebrating the heroism of Nathan Snow of St. John's for his lifesaving action.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, with leave.

**E. LOVELESS:** Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Leave.

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

**E. LOVELESS:** Speaker, all Members of this House of Assembly often speak of the first responders in their districts and how proud we are of the services they provide.

Today I speak with a heavy heart of the late Anthony Casey of Harbour Breton who passed away recently at the age of 59 years.

Mr. Casey dedicated 28 years to the fire department in Harbour Breton that included the role of fire chief, a responsibility that he took very seriously, and worked hard and advocated for all departments in the Coast of Bays region. We had many chats over the years and I'm so proud to say that approval was given for a new fire truck for his department while he was there and that he worked so hard for.

He was a friend to many, and to sum up all of them that knew him: "To say Anthony was a great friend is an understatement."

I ask all hon. Members to join me in sending sincere condolences to his wife, Bernadette, sons Stephen and Dennis, extended family and

friends, the Harbour Breton Fire Department and the Town of Harbour Breton.

Rest in peace, Anthony. You will be missed.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay, with leave.

**B. WARR:** Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave to present my statement.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Leave.

**SPEAKER:** Leave is granted.

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

**B. WARR:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to recognize a resident of South Brook, Mrs. Maggie Short, who has just turned 102.

Maggie was born at Beaumont, Long Island on November 13, 1919, to Archibald and Rebecca Oake; one of five children. Married Parmenus Short in 1940 and floated the family home from Beaumont to South Brook in 1952.

Raised a family of six girls and one boy all while attending to boarders, chickens and ducks, fish and wood and her vegetable and flower gardens. In fact, she still loves her flower garden and only recently turned over tending duties to her family under her strict supervision. Never shied away from house maintenance, including painting and carpentry. No doubt working in service with the Northcott family of Lewisporte proved to be a great experience.

When told she was getting a new pair of shoes for her birthday, Maggie quickly responded: "Good, I'll wear them to the dance." As she still lives in her own home in South Brook they had quite a time celebrating 102 years young with family and friends.

I ask my hon. colleagues to join me in wishing Mrs. Maggie Short a very happy 102nd birthday.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** Before I move into Ministerial Statements, I'd like to welcome in the public gallery Wayne Harnum. Wayne, as everyone knows, is a former Sergeant-at-Arms.

Welcome, Wayne.

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

**SPEAKER:** Also in the Speaker's gallery, Chief Mi'sel Joe.

Welcome, Chief.

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

**SPEAKER:** Statements by Ministers.

#### Statements by Ministers

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

**S. STOODLEY:** Speaker, today I recognize World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims.

This annual event honours the memory of the millions of people who have tragically and senselessly lost their lives as a result of motor vehicle accidents. This sombre day also recognizes the families and friends whose lives have been forever changed by these accidents.

Speaker, World Day of Remembrance, which is recognized on Sunday, November 21, also coincides with the start of the United Nations' Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030. The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution in September 2020 that ambitiously aims to prevent at least 50 per cent of road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030. The plan to achieve this goal was released last month and is available on the World Health Organization's website.

Newfoundland and Labrador is constantly making improvements to strengthen the *Highway Traffic Act* and will remain vigilant in

our efforts to ensure the safety of motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

Speaker, we recently made amendments to the off-road vehicle legislation to improve safety for all off-road vehicle users. These changes also align with the government's ongoing commitment to improve off- and on-road safety.

Together with law enforcement agencies and all stakeholders, we will continue to bring the importance of road safety to the forefront of community debate to reduce the likelihood that others will experience this pain and loss.

I invite all Members of this hon. House to join me on Friday, November 19, at 10 a.m. in the East Block of Confederation Building as we honour road crash victims.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Thank you, Speaker, and I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement.

On behalf of the Official Opposition, I would also like to take a moment to sombrely reflect on those who have tragically lost their lives as a result of motor vehicle collisions.

As the minister noted, Sunday will be the World Day of Remembrance to honour road crash victims and a ceremony will be held this Friday.

While reflecting on those who have been victims of these tragedies, I want to take a moment to encourage the government to take meaningful actions to help make our roads, including off-roads, safer. This means we need more enforcement on our roadways and we also need new initiatives and ways to encourage motorists to lower their speeds. We need to continue to teach children road safety and we need to make sure that our roads are safe not only for motorists, but also for pedestrians and cyclists.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Speaker, and I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement.

The Third Party offers our condolences to families affected by road accidents.

Drivers are key to highway safety. They must be properly trained, have adequate licensing and their vehicle must be registered and insured. Access to motor vehicles is keyed and this government has a responsibility to ensure that all services and training is available to all motorists.

For the motorists: Drive the speed limit, obey traffic laws and watch for moose.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** Any further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

**D. BRAZIL:** Speaker, we in the Official Opposition understand that the MEDITECH system is used to manage health information and it is at the heart of the cyberattack that is disrupting the health care systems of our province.

How old is the MEDITECH system?

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

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you, Speaker.

In terms of the recent attack on the systems, we have experts engaged. We are working with national experts to restore services as quickly as possible. We are also focusing on mitigating

against further attacks. We all must remain vigilant.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

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

We understand that the system is nearly 40 years old.

Has government been warned by MEDITECH that the software used by government is no longer being supported?

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

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you, Speaker.

Across the systems of core government and in all of our arm's-length organizations, such as the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information, we have a range of systems; some are new, some are older. We have cybersecurity programs and systems in place.

We are working with national experts to ensure that we reduce our risk as much as possible, but it's important that everyone remain vigilant, Mr. Speaker. Don't click on links in emails from unidentified sources and use long, unique passwords across your systems.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

**D. BRAZIL:** Speaker, we understand MEDITECH has warned government about a lack of support for the old software on a number of occasions over the last several years.

Does government still plan to use existing MEDITECH software in the future?

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

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you, Speaker.

I would say in terms of the attack that is affecting the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information, we have engaged national experts. Our focus is on restoring services as quickly as possible.

We are also trying to mitigate against further attacks. We're always looking to see which of our systems need to be updated and doing that on a regular basis.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

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

What that tells me is there is a lot of work that needs to be done to ensure that our IT systems are safe and keeping our information safe from hackers.

Speaker, during an interview with doctors this morning on the CBC, the Premier's office made sure to note that while the Premier has removed himself from negotiations with the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association, he is still engaged in discussions with the group.

What is the difference between a negotiation and discussions?

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

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

As I have said in this House, and publicly many times, I can't be involved in negotiations as it would be a conflict of interest. I think that's very clear. Whether it's myself or my family, I can't be involved in negotiations that would impact any potential financial remuneration to any of my family members. Certainly, everyone in this

House understands that and I have recused myself from that.

The fact remains that I can be involved – should be involved – as the Premier, in terms of how the health care system functions, how it operates. I can use and lean on my experience and expertise, having witnessed that first-hand to develop a system for the future, Mr. Speaker. That's the difference and I would have thought that the Member opposite would have appreciated that.

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

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

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

The fact that the Premier has noted that these are not negotiations, then the Premier should have no trouble discussing these conversations in public.

I ask the Premier: What specifically are you discussing with the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association?

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

**PREMIER A. FUREY:** Mr. Speaker, specifically with respect to negotiations, nothing, zero. I've not had any conversations with the NLMA or, frankly, anyone else here.

I do not know what's going on with respect to the NLMA negotiations nor should I, Mr. Speaker. That is, by definition, a conflict of interest in the primary form. I'm not going to be involved in the negotiations.

I have had conversations with the NLMA at a very high level with respect to how the system should evolve to represent the people it needs to represent and to provide the care it needs to present, not just for today but for the future, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

The people of Newfoundland and Labrador would like to know what those high-level discussions are to ensure that doctors will be available for them in the near future.

There are people who travel around the province for various appointments that had to be cancelled as a result of the cyberattack. It's essentially affected the people of Labrador who face monumental costs to make it to St. John's for appointments.

Will these people be offered total compensation for travel costs lost as a result of the attack?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation.

**L. DEMPSTER:** Thank you, Speaker, and I thank the hon. Member for the question.

If there's one area of the province that really depends on the Medical Transportation Assistance Program for assistance, it would be the people of Labrador. It's really unfortunate what has happened with the system going down.

Some people had already travelled to the city when they found out that their appointments were not going ahead. Health and Community Services and the health authority are working with those folks. I know of a number who were accommodated before they went back, but those that travelled in, each file is going to be looked at under individual circumstance and, where possible, accommodation is going to be made. I can say that I have first-hand knowledge that accommodations have already been made in a number of circumstances.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I'm not hearing that there will be total compensation for all who travelled and had their appointments cancelled.

Speaker, the December 17 deadline for mandatory vaccinations is fast approaching. We in the Official Opposition encourage everyone to get their vaccine as soon as possible, but we know not everyone will meet the deadline.

Is there a contingency plan in place should hundreds of essential-worker positions become vacant on December 17?

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

**S. COADY:** Thank you very much.

I echo what the Leader of the Opposition just said in that we encourage everyone for their safety, for the safety of their family and their friends, to please get vaccinated. It's essential that we protect one another. That is the goal that we have in asking for mandatory vaccinations.

We know that the vast majority nearing record levels of people have gone forward and been vaccinated. We are working with individuals that require any medical exemptions or anyone that may not meet the date or the requirement. At this point, we don't see any challenges.

Thank you.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Thank you, Speaker.

On behalf of some of my constituents, and considering that I myself am a former employee of a health authority, I called the 1-833 number today that has been set up for former and current employees to obtain more information. The call centre staff read back the government press release to me, had no information on credit monitoring and didn't take my name, number or current address.

I'd ask the minister: What is taking so long to provide credit-monitoring services to those affected?

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



**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you, Speaker.

As far as I'm aware, the regional health authorities are working and do plan on providing credit-monitoring services. I myself keep an eye on the website and I'm sure there will be a press release when those services are available.

Thank you very much, Speaker.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, government hasn't let us know exactly how long hackers have had access to our information; for all we know it could be months. This government has said they will be offering two years of protection, but the public doesn't even know how much of a head start the hackers have. When a breach compromised Desjardins clients a few years ago, they offered five years of credit protection while this government is only offering two.

I ask the minister: Whenever this service is finally up and running, why is it for only two years?

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

**J. HOGAN:** Thank you for the question.

Just to clarify, this government did advise the public when the information had been accessed. We advised the public of that last Tuesday and read from that again last Wednesday. On Friday, we told the public that data had been taken so we are continually updating the public.

As I said yesterday, we will continue to update the public when we have facts about what we know the hackers have done. We will not provide the public with guesses and speculation, Speaker.

With regard to counselling, the credit monitoring will be provided for a period of five years for employees and former employees of the health authorities, and for two years for patients and people in this province.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Speaker, after many years of sound fiscal management and success by the 911 Bureau, I ask the Minister of Justice and Public Safety: Why is government looking to take this over now?

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

**J. HOGAN:** Thank you for the question.

Speaker, we've told the public in the last budget that we will be taking 911 into core government. The reason we're doing that is to find efficiencies for – certainly financial efficiencies we will have.

We think it's a good idea to make sure the government doesn't waste money and has enough money to spend on services such as education, health and policing service in this province. This is one of the ways we're going to do that.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Speaker, the 911 Bureau saved approximately \$14 million in surplus. That's certainly proven success in savings, isn't it?

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

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Speaker, I'm hearing from fire chiefs across this province who are also worried that the elimination of the 911 Bureau and bringing 911 into core government will result in delay or cancellation of the planned implementation of Next Generation 911.

I ask the minister: Does his department have a plan to implement Next Generation 911 and what is his target implementation date?

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

**J. HOGAN:** Thank you for the question.

Yes, that money that has been – quote, unquote – saved by 911 will be used for future generation 911 service to ensure the service is modern and up to date as possible to ensure people do have access to 911 services in this province, Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** Speaker, yesterday the NLTA spoke out about the crowded classrooms, poor resourcing and crisis in our schools.

Speaker, we have student assistant shortage positions and are not being replaced when the individual is sick. This must be backfilled by a teacher or an IRT who's taken away from teaching the curriculum and supporting our children.

Will the minister put more student assistant resources into the classroom to deal with this crisis?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**T. OSBORNE:** Thank you, Speaker.

As I'd indicated yesterday, Speaker, we have put over the last three years – as a result of the Premier's Task Force on Education – 350 positions into the education system. Over that corresponding period of time we've had a decline in student population as well.

What we have seen is a commitment from this government to put resources into education. The student assistant issue, Mr. Speaker, yes, we are feeling it more this year as a result of 300 additional hours a day that were funded last year

when the regulations and the priorities were different with COVID.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** Thank you, Speaker.

The issue is still out there. With a serious shortage of student assistants, it's a simple question. The minister can throw all the other numbers out, but that's what people are asking – teachers, students and children.

Speaker, teachers and parents can't wait for the long-promised review of the teacher allocation formula. The complex mental health needs in the classroom are not being addressed today. My office was contacted by a teacher with three children with exceptionalities, only one student assistant, and that individual is off sick.

So I ask the minister: Is this not failing those children?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**T. OSBORNE:** Thank you, Speaker.

We can have an individual off sick in any department, in any agency, whether it's a nurse, a social worker, an educator or a student assistant.

Yes, we understand and we recognize the pressures. This has been an exceptionally stressful year on front-line workers especially, whether it's a nurse, a social worker or an educator. I commend the educators who have certainly risen to the task; student assistants the same, Speaker. We recognize there are pressures; we are working to deal with those. We've had discussions with the NLESD on where the priority and the pressure points are and we are looking to focus on those.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

**C. PARDY:** Thank you, Speaker.

The 2012 Senate committee study on sustainable management of seal populations looking at a path to the recovery of the ground fish stocks found there is evidence to show that a decrease in the seal population could assist fish recovery.

The question: What substantive measures has the minister undertaken to ensure that we harvest more than a mere 10 per cent of the provincial allocated annual quota of 425,000 seals?

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

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

It's a great question. It's of grave concern to my district as well, the seal population. As we all know, as someone said long before me, seals don't go through the drive-through. They don't eat chicken and they don't eat donuts; they eat fish. That's their mainstay, Speaker.

We want to work with our federal counterparts. Actually, I'm planning a meeting in November with the Atlantic ministers. We're going to have a conversation about many things. One of those things on our agenda will be the seals.

It's a concern throughout Atlantic Canada. It's a concern on the West Coast of Canada, seals. Seals are a problem throughout the northern part of this hemisphere, Mr. Speaker. They are eating our fish; they are sometimes getting in our salmon rivers. They need to be somewhat controlled, and we'll do whatever we can in coordination and co-operation with our provincial counterparts and the federal government.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

**C. PARDY:** Speaker, I'd ask for substantive measures, but I acknowledge that the minister does realize what a situation we have with an excess seal population. Research would state that they consume 10 pounds of fish per day. That, total herd, would be 34,000 metric tons a day. Six days would be the equivalent to our commercial fishery of over 210,000 metric tons.

In conversations with the federal minister and the minister's counterparts in Atlantic Canada, has there been any initiatives undertaken to address seal predation? Was it discussed with the new federal minister?

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

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

I thought I was clear in my answer the last time. The meeting is proposed, so proposed means it's going to be soon in the future. It's hoping to be done in December, Mr. Speaker. That is our plan. The new minister had to get in. I actually have a meeting later this week with the minister here in the province, with the federal minister.

I will put it on the agenda to have a conversation at that time, but I want a more in-depth conversation in the future because this a problem that's not going to go away. It's not going to be solved in 10 minutes. This has to do with world markets for fish. Everything is related to this.

We need to take a serious approach to the seal fishery and we need to get it done; get it done sooner rather than later, Mr. Speaker. I hope I can be a part of that process. I did take part in the seal fishery. I did my part 20 years ago. I'd like to do my part now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

**L. PARROTT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The seals probably don't eat doughnuts because they're afraid they'll be taxed.

Speaker, the PC Party believes that our offshore resources should be developed as soon as possible with the maximum benefits for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. This means more local jobs and as much work as possible to be completed right here in this province.

Will the minister commit that any changes to the framework agreement for Bay du Nord –

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Oh, oh!

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**L. PARROTT:** – only be made if greater benefits and a greater number of jobs are carried out here in this province?

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

**A. PARSONS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize, I missed the first part of that question, hearing about doughnuts and seals and stuff like that, so I apologize.

But I think I got the gist of it, which is talking about Equinor and the potential and the possibility that exists there. Again, things have changed in scope since the last negotiation or discussions occurred with government. So, obviously, there will have to be further conversations.

What I can point out is that I don't think this is any surprise to this answer: Absolutely anything that we do, when it comes to this deal or any other, is going to be in the best interests of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We're going to do whatever we can to ensure that the resource that belongs to this people, that we get the most benefit here.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

**L. PARROTT:** Speaker, in the last 10 months there have been seven doctors that have left the District of Terra Nova. One of the departing physicians offered to provide short-term relief for six months via virtual appointments but it was turned down.

The CEO of Central Health is able to live and work remotely from New Brunswick but doctors are being denied the ability to provide virtual care in the Terra Nova District.

Given our current health care crisis, I ask the minister: How is this acceptable?

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

**J. HOGAN:** Thank you for the question, Speaker.

I do want to say I'm proud to be part of a government that recognized that health care was an issue well in advance of other provinces in this country. As the Premier said on numerous times in this House, he did strike the Health Accord to deal with long-term solutions for health care in this province.

We do recognize that there is an issue, as well, with the shortage of doctors in this province and critical short-term care. That's why, not too long ago, \$30 million was invested to deal with short-term solutions.

So it's very clear, short-term, medium-term and long-term solutions are priorities of this government and we're working towards them for the safety and health of the people in this province.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Exploits.

**P. FORSEY:** Speaker, a 92-year-old senior living in the District of Exploits recently had her home support hours cut and increased the amount that she had to pay.

I ask the minister: Why is his department forcing seniors out of their own homes?

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

**J. HOGAN:** Thank you for the question.

It's not something that I'm aware of right now, but we'll certainly ask officials in the Department of Health and Community Services to get an answer and get back to the Member.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Exploits.

**P. FORSEY:** The seniors would certainly love to have an answer on that, they really would.

This example of a 92-year-old individual in the Exploits District is one of many of the heartbreaking stories we are hearing about seniors who are struggling with high cost of living in this province.

I ask the minister: What is this Liberal government going to do to help seniors with the high cost of living?

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

**J. ABBOTT:** Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the question.

We have been and are monitoring all facets of cost of living here in the province, particularly as it relates to seniors.

We are working towards a new poverty reduction strategy, again, looking at seniors as a priority area within that strategy. And when we have our recommendations, we'll be presenting those to government and then to the House.

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

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

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Speaker.

People are waiting to go to work on the Valentine project up around Buchans there, Speaker. The people of my district are anxiously waiting for this to go ahead and construction to begin.

We now have the highest unemployment rate in the country – double the national average. That's another milestone for this Premier at this point. The department will have 70 days to review this information when submitted.

I ask the minister: Will he commit to expediting this process so people can get back to work?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and Minister Responsible for Labour.

**B. DAVIS:** I thank the hon. Member for the question.

It's very important. Obviously, we want to make sure due process is put in place. We're still going through the EA process, both provincially and federally, on this project. We've advised, through our department, that there are deficiencies in some of the areas. We're working through them with the proponent. We look forward to a decision in the time frame that the Member outlined, and there will be no skipping any queues on this one.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**P. DINN:** Thank you, Speaker.

Almost four weeks ago now government announced a plan to hire more doctors.

I ask the minister: How many new doctors are practising in the province as a result of this announcement?

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

**J. HOGAN:** Thank you for the question, Speaker.

I don't have that information here right now, but we'll commit to the Member that we'll get that for him and get back to him as soon as possible.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

**P. DINN:** Thank you, Speaker.

I look forward to that. Thank you.

Speaker, safety around our schools should be paramount. Route 60 in Topsail passes through a number of school zones and with limited traffic

calming measures creating some dangerous situations for students, parents and staff.

Will the minister commit to measures to increase safety in these school areas with increased traffic calming and reduced speed limits?

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

**E. LOVELESS:** Thank you, Speaker.

A very important question, as safety is always paramount whether it's around our schools or on our highways. In answer to that question, I will certainly take it back to the department for further discussion because it is a very important issue. If the Member wishes to discuss it with me, I'd be more than happy to meet with him.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

When the nurse practitioner at the Shamrock Medical clinic in Ferryland is away there are a lack of casual nurse practitioners who can backfill the position.

I ask the minister: Will you create another position at this clinic or will you continue to let this happen?

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

**J. HOGAN:** Thank you for the question.

As I have said before to a few other questions, we will get that information from the Department of Health and Community Services and get back to the Member as soon as possible.

Thank you.

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

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

**P. DINN:** Thank you, Speaker.

Not too long ago this government announced three new ambulances and looking at recruiting for those.

Can I ask the minister for an update on whether those have been recruited or filled and where they're coming from?

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

**J. HOGAN:** Thank you for the question.

Absolutely, we will take that question under advisement with the rest and get back the Member as soon as possible.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Exploits.

**P. FORSEY:** Speaker, I am still hearing two to five years for approval of Crown lands applications.

What is the government doing to improve the approvals of Crown lands applications?

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

**D. BRAGG:** I want to say: What? I'm not aware of anything that is taking two to five years right now, currently, Mr. Speaker.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Oh, oh!

**D. BRAGG:** Wait, you didn't hear me out – currently, Mr. Speaker. Are there some long-standing ones? Certainly, because in lots of cases, Mr. Speaker, they are very complex. It is family issues; it is municipal issues; it is all types of issues, Mr. Speaker.

If the Member opposite has a case or two, I ask him to table one for this House today.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Speaker.

The Public Utility Board does not have a mechanism to consider the environmental cost in its rulings. The plan for a new diesel plant in Labrador is currently the least cost building option, even though it has long-term environmental costs that are not part of the PUB review.

I ask the Premier: Fresh back from COP26, will he direct the ministers to start working on the mandate for the PUB to include environmental long-term costs in its rulings?

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

**PREMIER A. FUREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that question; it's an important one.

We're currently evaluating a review, potentially, of the PUB and we'll certainly take that, consider that and the long-term implications and environmental concerns under due considerations. Certainly times have changed since the 1990s when the last time this was looked at, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Speaker.

High school students from Labrador have been reaching out and they're very disappointed by this government on the continued lack of funding for travel for varsity sports within Labrador high schools.

Since the dissolving of the Labrador School Board and now the rolling of the school board directly into government, I ask the minister: Will he commit to making sure equitable funding is available to Labradorians so they're no longer excluded based on where they live?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**T. OSBORNE:** Thank you, Speaker. I think we were fighting to answer the question. I thank the Member for his question.

Certainly, regardless of where you live in the province, Mr. Speaker, students should have equitable access to services. We'll certainly look into the issue. I know that bringing the English School District into the department, Mr. Speaker, is under way and planning for that is under way and I'll make sure that that is on the agenda.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Speaker.

The cost of goods is exploding upwards, the cost for heating your home with oil is going up and now Newfoundland Power is asking for an increase to rates so they have returns to their stakeholders.

I ask the Premier: What is his plan to protect residents so they don't have to choose between food and heat this winter?

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

**A. PARSONS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy to speak to this question as it relates to power rates. Absolutely happy to speak to power rates in this province.

The reality is that this is a pressure that's being felt certainly in Labrador, but I think it's one that's being felt everywhere. We're working very closely with Hydro to ensure that people still do not face rate shocks, whether again they're in Labrador or anywhere else. This is truly a fully provincial issue. One of the things that you'll notice recently is we've made changes to the mandate. We've made changes to salary and to the number of positions at Hydro. We're showing leadership at the top there.

I would mention this other thing that may be affecting rates throughout the entire province, but I'm afraid if I do so the crowd on the other side might get upset. So, Mr. Speaker, I'll leave it alone.

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

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Oh, oh!

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**E. JOYCE:** Thank you, Speaker.

I'll just let you know that I voted against Muskrat Falls.

Mr. Premier, you stated at your address to the Liberal Party that people know we have to make tough decisions and people are ready for those decisions. True leadership leads by example, not by words.

With a bloated Cabinet, two of which don't even have a subhead, it's still under the Executive Council, will the Premier show true leadership and decrease the size of your Cabinet and share in some of the hardships you say people are ready for in this province?

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

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

The size of the Cabinet and the content of the Cabinet are appropriate for the times we face. These are challenging times. The expertise are reflective of the diversity and necessity of the skills that we require at the table to make the important decisions, in combination with Members of this House, to set the agenda and the vision for the future of this province, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**E. JOYCE:** Mr. Premier, I understand that the cyberattack has been very difficult for all people involved, including health care workers. Many residents had surgeries cancelled, some of which were cancer surgery. Residents on the West Coast have a difficult time in obtaining information, like surgery dates and status of their surgery, and anxiety is extremely high.

I ask the Premier: Can you please put a system in place where individuals who need serious surgery can be contacted and updated on their surgery date to alleviate the anxiety they are facing.

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

**PREMIER A. FUREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that important question.

There's probably no one in this House knows more importantly how difficult it is to deliver the news about cancelled surgeries and long wait-lists than me, Mr. Speaker. I understand the stress, strain and anxiety that causes in people's lives. I've seen it first-hand. I've seen patients cry on the other end in delivering that news.

The issue is that this is still an acute issue. We're trying to do an inventory of what's involved and how many people have been impacted and affected. We will certainly work with them closely, with the regional health authorities, to ensure they get the proper services they need in the timeliest fashion, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands for a quick question. No preamble, please.

**E. JOYCE:** Thank you, Premier.

Premier, the concern is that most of the surgeries are in St. John's. They would just like to have someone they can call or just get a callback so they can get a little update on it.

Is there any way to set up a system that way so at least they'll know they're not lost in the system?

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

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

Of course, individual patients always have the opportunity to contact their medical providers. In addition, as I understand it, there have been 1-800 numbers set up. If there's not, we'll look at furthering that, as it's not a bad suggestion. But



let me check with the regional health authorities and I'll certainly get back to the Member opposite.

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

**SPEAKER:** The time for Question Period has expired. I think that might be a record number of questions, actually.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### Petitions

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

WHEREAS individual residents and municipal leaders have spoken of the deplorable road conditions in the District of Harbour Main; and

WHEREAS the district is made up of many smaller communities and towns, like Holyrood, Upper Gullies, Seal Cove, Cupids, Colliers, South River, North River, Roaches Line and Makinsons, who have roads in desperate need of repair and paving; and

WHEREAS these roads see high-volume traffic flows every day and drivers can expect potholes, severe rutting, limited shoulders and many washed out areas along the way.

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 immediately take the necessary steps to repair and repave these important roadways to ensure

the safety of the driving public who use them on a regular basis.

Speaker, this is a petition that I have presented to the House of Assembly on numerous occasions, and I raise it again with much frustration on behalf of the constituents in the District of Harbour Main. It is probably, Speaker, one of the biggest issues – for sure – that I hear about from the people who live in this district. The people are beyond frustrated. They're concerned with the level of disrepair that the roads have resulted in in many areas.

I cite two areas in particular, Speaker. In South River, from the top of South River Hill down it's an embarrassment, to say the least. We see potholes, severe rutting and limited shoulders. As well, washouts occur along the way. As well, the area in Holyrood is of concern. The area of Makinsons, as well, has very bad roads there.

Speaker, I also have heard from councils in the area who as well express, on behalf of the people that they represent, the concern. This is beyond safety. It is of such concern that we're concerned that it is a hazard to the people that are on these roads.

Speaker, I must say individual citizens, councillors, mayors –

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Oh, oh!

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** – all have written the minister. We implore the minister to please take action.

When can you tell the people that there is a commitment to improve the roads?

**SPEAKER:** The Member's time has expired.

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

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

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Speaker.

These are the reasons for this petition, Speaker: The interior of Central Newfoundland and Labrador has been used by hunters, loggers, cabin owners, hikers, tourists and, especially now, mining. These roads, both resource and municipal, are being used every day by logging trucks doing the regular damage logging trucks would do.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to restore and repair our roads that are constantly being damaged by logging trucks.

Speaker, I am all for businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador creating economic development. We love to see this taking place. We love to see businesses getting ahead, employing people, but there has to be some sort of offset for the cabin owners, the hikers and tourists that use these roads to get to their cabins and do what they have to do on a daily basis. These roads are being tore up day after day after day. It's just not fair to the cabin owners.

Speaker, we serve the public, we don't serve ourselves. The public that we do serve right now are asking that 30 kilometres – just 30 kilometres; it's not pavement, it's 30 kilometres – behind the mill in Grand Falls-Windsor be graded before the snow falls.

There are potholes there and, again, there are trucks coming and going all day long. We're only happy to see business being done in Central Newfoundland and Labrador, but whether it's the trucking companies or the government that opened up these roads for it to happen, somebody needs to start paying to have minimum damage on these roads as possible. The maintenance needs to be done. Buchans and Millertown the same way.

We need to ensure that we keep these roads up to par so vehicles don't get damaged. It just can't be a simple answer of, well, we don't grade for cabin owners. That answer is not good enough. These cabin owners have used these roads way before logging trucks got in there – and to ensure that they do have the maintenance on them now.

So I'd ask the minister – who I've talked to before about this and I know that he wants to help as much as he can – if he could at least sit down with me, talk about it with me and ensure that these cabin owners, hikers, tourists and whatnot get the maintenance that they need on these roads.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Thank you, Speaker.

These are the reasons for this petition: The long-term care facility in Bay St. George and Stephenville Crossing is 45 years old. It is one of the older long-term care facilities in our province. It was not designed for the level of care it is now providing residents. The building has substandard bathrooms, which cannot accommodate lifts, and rooms are antiquated and small in size in terms of length and width. There is a need for a new long-term care facility for the people of the Bay St. George region and its current residents.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: To urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to replace the Bay St. George Long-Term Care facility so our seniors can receive the care they deserve.

Speaker, there are lots of reasons why providing the seniors with the best possible elderly care – they are your parents. They love you, they made sacrifices for you but, quite simply, it's the right thing to do. As a human being, it's just right that you care for your elders and show them the humanity and simply do what is right.

In this particular case, our seniors need a new place to live. This home, as I've said, has outlived its useful life. It was never designed for the type of care that is actually being provided there now. It's nothing to do with the staff; it's simply to do with the physical structure and layout of the building.

For all of the people that are currently residents of that facility, for their families and for

everyone else that visits that centre, it's time. It's time for the planning to start; it's time for work to start. It's something that we know will take time, but it should be started. If we don't start, we'll never finish.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

**L. EVANS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador who urge our leaders to ensure that fairer electricity rates be provided to residents in the Northern Labrador Innu and Inuit communities of Nain, Natuashish, Hopedale, Makkovik, Postville, and Rigolet.

The high rates charged are cost prohibitive to using electric heat and therefore are cost prohibitive to adequately heating their homes. The rationale for this petition is to bring electricity rates more in line with what our neighbouring residents of Lake Melville region pay.

For the first 1,000-kilowatt hours, Torngat Mountains residents are charged the same rate as their neighbouring residents in Lake Melville region; however, above this ceiling, the rate jumps six times, up to 18.968 cents a kilowatt-hour. 18.968 cents a kilowatt-hour prevents most residents from being able to afford to heat their homes with electric heat. It is the low-income families and households that suffer the greatest from this financial barrier.

Poorly heated homes often result in damage, creating expensive repairs of frozen pipes, moisture damage and mould. Poorly heated houses also create social and mental health issues that can be long lasting. We strongly believe that changes to electricity rates are needed to improve quality of life for Northern Labrador residents.

Speaker, I've read this petition many times and I read it quite quickly because I want to have some time at the end. Nineteen cents a kilowatt-hour is the highest in the province. Even with

rate mitigation in actual fact the rest of the province is not going to come anywhere near to that. These are diesel generators, greenhouse gases creating increases in temperatures, extreme weather. It's huge costs. Carbon taxes, cost to our economy; environmental damage, cost to our economy; food insecurity, cost to our economy; insurance rates, cost to our economy that impacts people.

That's not what I want to talk about with the last few minutes. I actually searched around to all the petitions that I could have presented and, Mr. Speaker, on this petition there are three signatures and not a single one of them is from Labrador. In actual fact, I had to try and remember who signed this petition. In actual fact, these are some people that I met that's involved in social justice for the province. They said they wanted to sign my petition to help out the Indigenous people in Northern Labrador because the whole province should be concerned.

I don't think it should be identified who's signing petitions if it's actually about improving quality of life. I want to say the hydro project on the Southern Coast that's diesel generating; it's the same as on the North Coast – super diesel, \$70 million thrown away to basically create more greenhouse gas.

The MP for Labrador is opposed to it. The mayor from Mary's Harbour was on talking about it last week. The thing about it is whoever signs the petitions that are going to help us I support them. I am so proud to represent every petition.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**E. JOYCE:** Thank you, Speaker.

I'm going to read a petition today on the Motor Registration offices again, to try to get them open and urge government to reconsider their decision of closing the offices by appointment only. The petitions that I am presenting today are from the St. George's - Humber region. They

asked me to present them because they never heard their Member speak on it yet. They asked me to present these petitions on their behalf, which I'm doing.

I heard the minister yesterday. I'm not sure if the full government – because I know a lot of Members are hearing this also. When you stand in this House and say in the 50 per cent, it takes a week to get an appointment and the other 50 per cent, up to three to four weeks – and you say the system is working.

There are people now, seniors, who are arranging their medical appointments around Wednesday mornings to try to get in to the Motor Registration. So some of them, if they forget, if they go past the Wednesday morning, they would have to go and do the whole test over. There's something fundamentally wrong.

I'm urging the government once again, because I know a lot of government Members are getting calls on it. I know they are getting a lot of people who are upset with it. That's obvious by this petition here. Every person is from St. George's - Humber – every one, St. George's - Humber. It's not just the Humber - Bay of Islands or the Opposition side, it's the government side also, Speaker.

I asked the minister on numerous occasions: Explain the logic. When something was working well, when people can go – I'll give you a good example. If people leave Cox's Cove, they take an hour to drive up. They have to go and sit on one side. Hopefully someone will cancel so they can get in line – hopefully.

We're supposed to be serving the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, not causing anxiety and stress. It's a simple fix. The staff want the simple fix. Open the doors. Let the public in. It's a public place; open the doors.

I'll be the first one to stand in this House and congratulate the minister and the government for making that decision. Let's get back to serving the people that we were elected to and stop giving people stress, undue stress, in this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I urge the government to change that decision. Open the doors of Motor Registration.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL for a response.

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you, Speaker, and I thank the Member and the constituents on the West Coast for their feedback on the Motor Registration Division.

I would like to say that we are open; doors are open. You can make an appointment. You can also walk in. I've said that on numerous occasions.

Across the province, we have a 26 per cent walk-in on average. In Corner Brook it's 33 per cent. In Stephenville it's 36 per cent of people that we're serving are walking in. So if someone has an urgent issue and they would prefer or they cannot wait for an appointment, they can walk in at any time that our offices are open.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** Orders of the Day.

### Orders of the Day

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

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

Speaker, I call Order 2, third reading of Bill 42.

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

**S. CROCKER:** Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that Bill 42, An Act To Amend The Law Society Act, be now read a third time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**SPEAKER:** All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

**CLERK (Barnes):** A Bill, An Act To Amend The Law Society Act, 1999. (Bill 42)

**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 Law Society Act, 1999,” read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 42)

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

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

We’re just waiting for the Lieutenant-Governor.

**SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** All rise.

Admit Her Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor.

(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:** May it please Your Honour, the General Assembly of the province at its present session passed certain bills, to which, in the name of and on behalf of the Assembly, I respectfully ask your Royal Assent.

**CLERK:** A bill, “An Act To Amend The Securities Act.” (Bill 16)

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Lotteries Act.” (Bill 18)

A bill, “An Act Respecting Off-Road Vehicles.” (Bill 22)

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Automobile Insurance Act.” (Bill 23)

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Corporations Act.” (Bill 24)

A bill, “An Act Respecting The Protection Of Adults.” (Bill 40)

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Law Society Act, 1999.” (Bill 42)

**HER HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR (Judy Foote, PC, ONL):** In Her Majesty’s name, I assent to these bills.

Well, thank you for all of your hard work in this first session of the 50th Assembly. I commend all of you for dealing with the challenges that have been put before you, not of your choosing, of course. Whether it was a pandemic or whether it was a cyberattack, I can only imagine how difficult it has been. I also know how difficult it is to be away from your families when you’re trying to deal with challenges of this magnitude and wondering how they’re being impacted.

Thank you for all that you’ve done during this session. I wish all of you a good return to your constituencies. I know some of you are closer than others. Being away from your children, I know, being a mom, how difficult that can be. But thank you so much for hanging in there, for doing what is needed to be done to protect Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and our province.

I know we’re all looking forward to a celebration next year. Let’s hope that the challenges of the past year, of this year, something that will be behind us then, or at least we can return to some sort of normalcy as we celebrate Come Home Year 2022.

I can only imagine those Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who are away, who have not been able to be with their loved ones back in our province for a period of time, how much they’re going to be looking forward to coming back and celebrating. Let’s pray that everyone stays safe,

that nothing happens between now and then to interfere with those celebrations.

Again, I thank you so much for all of your hard work. I sincerely appreciate what you do on behalf of Her Majesty.

Thank you.

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

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

**SPEAKER:** Please be seated.

As per tradition, we will ask upon the leaders to have a few closing remarks. We will start off with the Leader of the Official Opposition.

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

It is indeed an honour, as we partake in the 50th General Assembly of the House of Assembly and through our fall session – which for those at home who may be watching is normally a legislative sitting where we debate and modify pieces of legislation that have been put forward to best represent the needs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It has been an honour to be part of the Official Opposition and I know, speaking on behalf of my colleagues over here, to have been able to move some legislation to the next level that will enhance people's lives and protect them in our society.

I want to thank you, Speaker, for your guidance and overview of keeping the House of Assembly on track and moving us in the right direction. The Table Officers for their professionalism and ensuring that the information that we have is professional, relevant and timely so that we can do our jobs in the best interest of the people of the province

To our Pages, welcome back; it has been a year and a half that we have gone without your company, your expertise and your support and we appreciate that, and we look forward to hopefully getting back to normality and having full-fledged Pages in the House again helping work with us to move the agenda of the people forward.

To our new Sergeant-at-Arms, thank you. Welcome aboard. You've passed your probation; you'll be kept on.

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

**D. BRAZIL:** To our Commissionaires for servicing here – and I know it's been a different set-up now with the gallery just opening, but they've so professionally ensured that people are taking care of and that the rules and regulations are followed to keep everybody safe here.

To our security in the building itself, to ensure that we're all kept safe and the best interests of the people are what this House is all about.

Also, to Hansard – people may not know everything gets transcribed in the House of Assembly. So this is information that we can go back and have a better understanding of exactly what the discussion was and what the agreements; very important part of it.

The Broadcast Centre, so those at home can see exactly what the House of Assembly is debating and what the discussions are. And hopefully that we're addressing the issues that the people of this province bring forward at any given time.

To the civil servants – none of this happens without the civil service. The tens of thousands that we have scattered all over this great province of ours who drive from a grassroots level the policies and the programs that are implemented, and the services that are so important to the people of the province. So on behalf of the Official Opposition, we thank you for your service. And we know it's been trying times and we would hope that we've done our part in here to try to make those trying times less impactful on you in a negative way, and hopefully that you do understand how grateful we are for the great work that you've been doing.

On a personal note, I want to thank our Opposition staff who've been guiding us, who've been ensuring that the information we get is accurate, giving us a better understanding of representing the people in this House, and helping guide us when we ask questions that would represent the needs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. So on behalf of

my colleagues in the Opposition, I want to thank our staff for that opportunity and their professionalism to ensure that we do a very diligent job and represent the people in a way and a manner we should.

I also personally would like to thank our House Leader, the Member for CBS, for his ability to negotiate and ensure that our role is fluent with all Members of the House of Assembly. And his right hand, our Deputy House Leader, the Member for Harbour Main, who again helps drive the agendas here and ensure that the information that we put out there is relevant to the people, and that we do make decisions that benefit people.

I want to thank our caucus chair, the Member for Bonavista, for ensuring our caucus stays to agenda items and that the issues that we bring are relevant. Also, our party whip, the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans, for ensuring that, in a timely fashion, we do our jobs. I know everybody has to be equal on both sides but everybody has an equal role here.

I also want to thank our shadow Cabinet ministers over here for ensuring that they work with the ministers on the other side and they work with the civil service and they bring the issues relevant under their portfolio to ensure that the best is done for the people of this province. I do thank all of them for their professionalism, their due diligence but particularly for their heartfelt empathy for the people of this province in ensuring that we do the right things here and that people are better off when we leave the House of Assembly after each General Assembly.

Also to my colleagues here in the House of Assembly, on both sides, I know we may not always agree on policy. We may not always agree on approach. We may sometimes have to challenge you on questions, but it's all done in the intent that we all come for the same perspective here: that we want to improve people's lives in Newfoundland and Labrador. We may take different approaches to it. We may prioritize different things, but I'm convinced everybody here comes with the intent of improving not only their constituents' lives, but the lives of everybody in Newfoundland and

Labrador. I thank everybody for that and I do respect everybody's role here.

I also would like to acknowledge the fact that the people of this province who've entrusted us to represent them in the House of Assembly have given us the opportunity to be in this historic House and speak on their behalf. We do understand and we do thank them for what they've been through. The fact that their due diligence and their respect to keep everybody safe over the last year and a half speaks volumes of the resilience of the people of this province. I want to acknowledge that there.

I also want to acknowledge our families. I think everybody knows, and the Lieutenant-Governor eloquently even noted that, I have so much respect for those who have to travel to come into the House of Assembly and leave their constituents, but particularly leave their families. I know there are people here who have missed particular events in the families' time of need and something that would be of importance from a milestone perspective, but that's what we sign on for. It's unfortunate that sometimes the general public doesn't understand some of the sacrifices. I do say that not belittling the people's understanding of what politicians are all about, but we're individuals too. We have families. We have respect. We have volunteer responsibilities. We enjoy being part of different organizations and that. We have to give up a lot of that when we sit in this House.

I do acknowledge particularly those who have to travel and spend – when they leave on a Thursday evening, if they're lucky, or maybe a Friday morning, to get back to the district to have to leave again Sunday to get back in here and the sacrifices there. I acknowledge that. I'm fortunate enough that I'm closer that I don't have those challenges but for those who do, I respect that.

Also, I want to acknowledge that we're coming in closer to the Christmas season and it's a time, I would hope this year, for people to really reflect on what we've gone through. We've had more than our fair share of, I guess, sucker punches that have given us black eyes. But that doesn't mean we're out, because the people of this province have shown for 500 years how resilient we are and we will continue to be

resilient. We will continue to focus on what's good for the people of this province and we will prosper; no doubt, we will prosper.

But we'd do that better if we work collectively together, the people of this House of Assembly, the people in every district and the people of this province working with those in this confederation to ensure our lives are better.

As I end, I want to wish everybody a Merry Christmas in whatever way you celebrate the festive season. I do wish everybody stays safe and I do hope to see as many people as possible over the Christmas season.

I do thank my constituents – particularly since I've taken on this new role – for being supportive and understanding that I don't have the same time to be able to put into my district, I do appreciate that.

I will end, more to my colleagues, that I hope to see you all at McNiven's some evening on political night, and on political night the one thing we will not talk about is politics.

Have a Merry Christmas and thanks to everybody.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

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

I've said this before in the year and a half or so that we've been here: It's been one wild ride. When you look at how, in 2019, from an election to a budget to learning the ropes, which I still haven't learned, really, but, nevertheless, I'm getting there; to COVID; to the outbreak and declaration of a pandemic; to trying to see how we could make the House of Assembly work in a COVID world; to making decisions, in many ways, which have and will impact the lives of many people immediately; and some very tough decisions. So it's been an interesting time in many ways.

I don't know if it's the introduction I had envisioned when I first got elected, but, nevertheless, here we are. Despite the different

sides of the House that we're on, the political parties, we have managed to pull that off so far. Yes, there are going to be some tough questions and some tough decisions, but we've managed to do that.

I do want to thank you – a number of expressions of gratitude here. Certainly to the Speaker for keeping, I must say, a tight rein on things and keeping watch with the stopwatch up there, making sure that people are relevant and not repeating themselves and so on and so forth, although that can be a tougher challenge than most, and having been a teacher, I certainly appreciate where you're coming from.

To the Table Officers, to the House of Assembly staff: Thank you for keeping us in order. I know, in many cases, they are a great resource. I know I have gone to both the Clerk and the Law Clerk a number of times to find out the ins and outs as to what I could and couldn't say or what I should or shouldn't do.

To the Speaker whose door has always been open – by the way, not only the Table Officers, but the staff who work behind here, we don't give them credit as well but they are behind the scenes working on our behalf as well. To the Pages as well: I'd like to welcome them. It's great to see the Pages back in the first time in a long while.

To our new Sergeant-at-Arms: You can't go wrong with a Holy Cross and Brother Rice boy – no doubt about it. Although, I do see that the former Sergeant-at-Arms is up in the public gallery, I guess, making sure that he has passed the final test as to whether he is going to stay on. It is good to see that you are watching over him and monitoring him – that's the main thing.

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

**J. DINN:** I understood from commentary yesterday that the mace is not quite the shine that it should be, so that might be something you might need to work on.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** The stand.

**J. DINN:** Oh yeah, the stand, that's right. Wayne, you might have to say a few words to him.



To the Commissionaires: Yesterday, I visited the gallery so I actually got – regardless of whether I sit in the House or not, I still had to go through security. I will commend them on their diligence and, rightly so, they should screen me.

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

**J. DINN:** Everyone should.

To the recording and to the Broadcast Centre: Thank you so much. I tell you, I hear the Member for Bonavista talk about the people who do tune in. So there are people who actually watch the proceedings. Sometimes watching the progress of bills, it can be like watching paint dry, but, nevertheless, the fact is that there are people who are very interested in the work that is going on here. We discuss issues that really are academic in many ways but they are going to have direct effect on the people of the province.

To the public servants who work in this Confederation Building and all public buildings throughout the province: Thank you for the work you do as well.

To my colleagues in the House, on both sides – a friend of mine who was in the House yesterday in the gallery, the one thing that amazed her was: So you get into a debate with each other and then I see people from the Opposition over talking to the ministers. How does that happen? I said: Usually, there is a little bit of theatrics here, but, nevertheless, the fact is both sides of the House do want to work towards getting an issue. We have a different way of doing it but we're all working towards the same goal. That's important to recognize.

To my colleague, and the other half of my caucus, Jordan Brown, also the House Leader. We don't have a Deputy House Leader, but we're working on it.

To our former –

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Oh, oh!

**J. DINN:** That could happen.

To our former Leader, Alison Coffin, even though she wasn't in the House, she was there with us for most of this year.

To our caucus staff: I cannot say enough about our caucus staff, and I'm sure that's the same thing for all of our staff, Speaker. They do the research, they help prepare, when it comes to the press releases, you name it. I think the job would be very different if we didn't have them. We're blessed.

To my constituents – and I would say this is for all of here as well – for the support, not only in the election, but I will guarantee you that at any point along the way many constituents have called up to give me their piece of mind or their encouragement or to tell me where I went wrong, I think that's something that's important. That input keeps me grounded, I know.

Thanks to the ministers I've spoken to who've helped out.

I do want to echo the Official Opposition Leader's comments: To my family, you cannot do the job without the support of family, even down to colour coordinating a tie and shirt. I can tell you, if I was left to my own devices, it would not look pretty. That's my wife, my children –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** And your brother.

**J. DINN:** – and my – well, no, okay.

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

**J. DINN:** There are some limits, but nevertheless.

All the friends who've provided supports – and you all know the people who got you elected. That's really the essence of it.

At this point, I do want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and happy holidays, however you celebrate the holidays, and a safe and a happy new year.

I'm blessed; I can walk home if I want to, but for many of us here who travel, safe travels, seriously. I truly appreciate the sacrifice you make when you come away from your family for, sometimes weeks on end and getting back on the weekend, especially if you have young children, it's important. I think it's a well-deserved rest and guaranteed that March, when

we come back, we'll be back at it again. We'll be ready with even more pointed questions.

Thank you very much.

Stay safe, folks.

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

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

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

Certainly, the fall sitting has been quite a whirlwind session. I'm proud of the work that we have all accomplished together on behalf of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I want to first thank my hon. colleagues on the other side of the House for bringing forth some great debate on legislation presented and issues we face together collectively as a province. Unfortunately, we continue to face mountain after mountain, but I'm always encouraged and, frankly, humbled by the quality of the debate and the motivation that drives each and every one of us in these chairs all towards a brighter future and a sustainable future for Newfoundland and Labrador. Standing on the shoulders of those before us, we can see past the mountains and into a path that will create a bright opportunity for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

As we continue to navigate the pandemic and the recent cyberattack, once again it brought another challenge to our health care system. My utmost thanks to all the incredibly dedicated health care professionals who truly go above, time and time again, to care for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, despite the challenges, Mr. Speaker. In the face of adversity they never give up, they never quit. No matter how hard it seems, no matter how high the mountain seems, no matter how hard the challenge is, they always show up to look after the people we love.

I have the honour of working alongside many of them and I know it has been a challenge. We can't thank them enough. I'm sure the whole House and the people of the province thank them in unison.

I also wanted to thank all the experts working behind the scenes – the departments, ministers, federal ministers, prime minister and the federal agencies involved in the cyberattack specifically. I've had great conversations with many of them, including the minister of National Defence, minister of Public Safety, minister of Emergency Preparedness, minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister of Labour and on and on it goes. The federal government is there to help us through this.

Everyone is doing their best here and in Ottawa and around the country, frankly, on a premier's call last night to ensure that we have the services that we need to get the system restored to provide for a better situation for the patients of this province. It's great to see most of our services are returning and up and running. I can't thank you all in this House and outside this House for your patience in the process.

We all bring different perspectives and different ideas in this House, but we are all here to share the same common goal – a more prosperous, brighter Newfoundland and Labrador filled with hope and opportunity for our children and our children's children. We also want that bright future for all the newcomers to Newfoundland and Labrador. I was frankly humbled this morning to join the Immigration Minister in officially welcoming 157 Afghans to our beautiful province.

The generosity of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians was on full display with the amount of donations not only occupying the parish hall of St. Pius X, but four more buildings of similar size. That should fill us all with pride as Members of this Legislature to recognize and see the generosity that we know is the true spirit of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our government has been presenting legislation the entire sitting that we hope will build a brighter future for all Newfoundland and Labrador. The sugar-sweetened beverage tax will improve outcomes for residents. This is just one tool towards the goal of making Newfoundland and Labrador one of the healthiest places to live in this country.

Updating the *Coat Of Arms Act* so it reflects a better, more fulsome, true understanding of our

province's history is another step forward towards reconciliation. Making changes with the Schools Act to bring the English School District into the Department of Education so that education can be delivered in a more efficient, responsible way, directly to the students of this province. A new *Municipal Conduct Act* that creates a safer work environment for our municipalities. A new *Accessibility Act* that is removing barriers affecting persons with disabilities and improving accessibility throughout our province.

Of course, announcing Come Home Year 2022. A boost for the provincial tourism industry and an opportunity to showcase yet again our beautiful province to the people who used to live here and indeed to those around the world. I'm looking forward to welcoming everyone back home.

Of course, to make all these changes, there are a lot of people working behind the scenes to make it happen. I will need to thank all the public servants for their dedication and hard work on the many pieces of legislation and the day-to-day function of government, the behind-the-scenes work that the public doesn't always understand. Your work is truly to be commended and I appreciate every single thing you do. I've had the opportunity to meet many but not all. For those who I haven't met, a heartfelt thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank the entire staff in your office, you personally, and the entire staff of the House of Assembly. Many nights when we are sitting here late, you are here with us. You have families too and it is a sacrifice that you all make on behalf of the people of the province. Thank you to the Clerk and the staff at the Clerk's Office, the Legislative Library, Hansard, the Broadcast team, the Table Officers and the new Sergeant-at-Arms – well proclaimed Sergeant-at-Arms for all that you do. To our security guards who are here round the clock – and, believe me, I'm in here early and I know many of you are as well; they are a dedicated staff. To our security: Thank you.

Now that our public gallery is open, Mr. Speaker, it's wonderful to see our Commissionaires in the halls of the House of Assembly again and, of course, our Pages, who

I've been fortunate enough to work with for the first time since being elected to this House of Assembly. Thank you for your dedication.

To our political staff in our constituencies and elsewhere: Thank you for your continued support. We would not be able to do this work without your support. To my caucus, your dedication and hard work knows no bounds and I'm continually motivated and inspired by each and every one of you. Thank you for allowing me to serve.

Speaker, as this is the last time we sit before the holiday season, I'd be remiss if I didn't take the time to wish all of my hon. colleagues and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador a very Merry Christmas and a safe and happy holiday season.

Let's take the time this season to reflect on the many things that we have to be thankful for. Let us also reflect on the immense opportunity that we all stepped up for, got elected for and will serve the people of the province for in front of us in the upcoming year because being there for one another is what we are all about, regardless of political stripe. Regardless of the tenor of the debate, we all want what is best for this province. And that's what the beauty of this Legislature represents, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** As we conclude the fall session, I'm just going to say a few words to recognize all the people that assist in the smooth operations of this House of Assembly. There's so much work goes on behind the scenes day and night and I'd just like to recognize them also.

I would like to take a few minutes to recognize our staff, which includes the Corporate and Members' Services, the Legislative Library, our Information Management team, our Hansard team and also our Broadcast team. These are the people that make sure what is happening in the House of Assembly gets out to the public and to all of our constituents throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

I'd like to take a few seconds to thank our Transportation and Infrastructure staff that have supported us throughout the pandemic by helping to make sure that we are able to operate here safely and make sure that all Members can be present in the House of Assembly throughout COVID-19. We are blessed to have a fairly large Chamber that many other jurisdictions throughout the country weren't blessed so much and they had to work both virtually and in person. So I want to thank them for their service.

Also, the new lighting system that they were very supportive to get through. It took a few days to get adjusted, but I think everybody is quite pleased with it, especially our Broadcast team and our television team that has commented so greatly on the visibility of the House of Assembly.

I'd like to recognize two people in the Clerk's office that has helped with the day-to-day operations and they are Yvonne Power and Maureen Dooley. And I will note that Maureen will be retiring this year after 20 years of service with the House of Assembly, so I just wanted to wish Maureen all the best and happy retirement as she moves into the next phase of her life.

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

**SPEAKER:** In our Chamber, also as recognized, I'd like to acknowledge our new Sergeant-at-Arms, Robert Escott. I've got to say, there's no happier person to come to work every morning. He is always happy-go-lucky and more than willing to help in every way he can, so I do appreciate everything you do, Robert.

To our Pages, as the Premier said, this is the first time as Speaker that I had the opportunity to work with Pages and I have to say that the five members that we took on this year have done an exceptional job. They have shown great leadership and initiative.

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

**SPEAKER:** I thank you kindly and I wish you all the best in your future studies.

Also our security that keep the House of Assembly safe and our Commissionaires that is

good to see back in the House of Assembly, I thank you for your service.

To our Table Officers, there is so much work that they do behind the scenes, not only to keep this House of Assembly running smoothly and make sure that we follow the guidelines and regulations and the legislative procedures of the House of Assembly, they also provide great support to me and my team, our Deputy Speaker and also the Deputy Chair of Committees. I do thank the two of you for your loyal service and for filling in during the times when needed.

Our Table Officers: our Clerk, Sandra Barnes; our Law Clerk, Kim Hawley George; as well as Bobbi Russell, Kim Hammond, Mark Jerrett and Evan Beazley who also helped with day-to-day operations.

I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge my executive assistant, Kala Noel, who is always there to help and support me and also there to help any Member with their Ministerial Statements or their Member's statements throughout the day. I do thank her for her loyal support.

I would also like to take an opportunity to thank the Government House Leaders and all the Members of the House of Assembly for your cooperation and understanding throughout this troubling time. It is a true honour to sit in this Chair and I am sure that I can speak for the Deputy Speaker and the Deputy Chair of Committee. At times, it is very challenging, but I have to commend you for civility and, during our session, it has been an enjoyable experience and I have to say a great thank you for keeping civil. I think, as I first sat in the Chair as Speaker, I made a commitment to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that I wanted this House of Assembly to be a respectful place where each Member treats each other with respect, and I do commend you for doing that and I thank you. I look forward to continuing working with you over the future.

As mentioned, as this is moving into the festive season, I do wish everybody a Merry Christmas and a very happy and prosperous new year. Being a rural MHA, like so many here, I wish everyone safe travels throughout your district and continue to do the great work that you do

with all your constituents. I just want to say thank you again and wish you all the best.

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

**SPEAKER:** Before we call upon adjournment, the last sitting I did start a tradition that we would ask all Members to rise and sing the first and last verse of the “Ode to Newfoundland.” This year I ask the Member for Cape St. Francis to lead us in that.

Will all Members please rise?

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

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Speaker.

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.

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

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

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

Thank you to the Opposition House Leaders and the unaffiliated Members for their co-operation over the last four weeks here in the House.

Mr. Speaker, I won't belabour the point; I've got to catch a ride with the Leader of the Opposition to McNiven's.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Premier, that this House do now adjourn to the call of the Chair.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

This House do stand adjourned until the call of the Chair.

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