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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.

First, I'd like to welcome guests. In our Speaker's gallery today, I would like to welcome the family of the late Bill Callahan, former minister and Member of the House of Assembly. Mr. Callahan's family here today is his wife Daphne, children Maureen and Ann Marie, and Brian is up in the press gallery. Also his brother James and his wife Linda.

Welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Also in the public gallery I would like to welcome Gracie Penney. Gracie is the subject of a Member's statement this afternoon, and she is joined by her mother Kara, her father Mark, and her sister Heidi.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Also in the public gallery, I'd like to recognize the mayor of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, His Worship George Andrews.

Welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

SPEAKER: Today we will hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans, Lake Melville, Stephenville - Port au Port, Mount Pearl North, Cape St. Francis and St. John's West with leave.

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

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Speaker.

I stand to honour singer-songwriter Kellie Loder from the beautiful Town of Badger. From playing their guitar in the corner of a St. John's coffee shop, to captivating Canadians and leaving the judges in awe on the newest season

of *Canada's Got Talent*, where they are now a semi-finalist. Kellie's 2010 album *Imperfections and Directions* was nominated for a Juno, Canada's top music award, which was a catalyst for their career.

In 2021, Kellie was named the Ron Hynes Songwriter of the Year by Music NL, and won an ECMA award for their song and music video *Molded Like a Monster*. You also may have recognized their voice as part of CBC's Tokyo Olympic Games closing ceremony coverage last summer. Adding to their accolades, Kellie was recently nominated for the 2022 Songwriter of the Year and Fan's Choice Entertainer of the Year ECMA awards.

In addition to setting the music industry on fire, Kellie, who is transgender, has been a strong force in the LGBTQ community, sharing their personal journey of acceptance and bravery.

Please join me as we let Kellie know how proud we are of all their accomplishments, their amazing talent and their representation of our fine Province of Newfoundland and Labrador all across the globe.

Good luck, Kellie.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

P. TRIMPER: Thank you, Speaker.

Jolene Ashini from Sheshatshiu has just graduated from the University of Victoria with a degree in Indigenous Legal Orders and Canadian Common Law. She is the first Labrador Innu woman to receive a law degree.

Jolene's father, Daniel Ashini, was a strong Innu leader who, together with her mother, Sheila Blake, created the inspiration for this challenging career pursuit.

Jolene said: I grew up around lawsuits. I grew up around protests. I grew up around the recognition of the Innu, so it's always been instilled in my sister and I that there's such a big importance to try and revitalize our culture.

In addition to this impressive accomplishment, Jolene received a special award from the Royal Society of Canada in honour of Justice Rosalie Abella – the first Jewish woman appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada. The award recognizes law students who share a commitment for building equality and equity across Canadian society and beyond.

Jolene explained that, from a very young age, we were taught about the injustices across Canada and the colonization and assimilation of Indigenous communities.

I would ask this Legislature to congratulate Jolene Ashini on her accomplishments as a law student, and wish her well on a bright future as a lawyer.

Tshenashkumitin.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

Don (Chief) Cormier of Noel's Pond has impressed the powerlifting world for decades and, at the age of 67, he continues to compete with the best of them.

In the 1960s, Don was introduced to and competed in Olympic lifting before switching to powerlifting in the early '70s. Within two short years, he attended his first national competition. It was here that he was bitten by powerlifting bug.

Over the years, Don has competed against some of the legends of the sport and has been the recipient of numerous awards in powerlifting. Most recently, in 2019, he placed first in provincials, second in Commonwealth's and fourth in Commonwealth Powerlifting Union Nationals. In 2021, he placed first in provincials and second in the Eastern Canadians.

Don's dedication and commitment goes beyond his personal training; he continues to give back to a sport he loves by coaching and mentoring upcoming lifters. One of his proudest moments

was competing alongside his grandson Noah in a recent competition.

Presently, Don is attending the 2022 Canadian Powerlifting and Bench Press Championships in St. John's from May 9 to 14 as coach of the team from Bay St. George.

We wish Don and his team all the best in this competition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

L. STOYLES: Speaker, I rise in this House to acknowledge the life of Ms. Liz Murphy.

Liz passed away suddenly on May 4 at her home in Mount Pearl. She was known to everybody in the city, especially for her volunteer work with the Girl Guides, which was her passion in life.

You could find her serving tea at the Lieutenant-Governor's garden party, dishing up breakfast for the Frosty Festival or cooking hotdogs for the Girl Guides during City Days. She was always out in the community at every event.

She was also a loyal and dedicated public servant, as she worked here at Confederation Building at the Department of Finance for over 30 years. She retired just a few months ago.

I ask my colleagues to join me to tribute the life of Ms. Elizabeth – Liz, as we know her – Murphy.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. WALL: Speaker.

Today I recognize a young constituent, eight-year-old Gracie Penney of Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove. Like many children, Gracie's parents enrolled her into gymnastics and dance

classes, but that just wasn't the right fit for Gracie.

At the age of four, Gracie was enrolled in tae kwon do and she has not looked back. She trains three times per week and also assists with her four-year-old sister's tae kwon do class.

After four years and through her training and dedication to her sport, Gracie was presented her black belt in tae kwon do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. WALL: Speaker, only two others in the province have achieved this status by the age of eight years old – those being her trainer's two children.

Gracie is characterized as being patient, respectful and enjoys the challenge of perfecting her chosen sport. Tae kwon do has also helped Gracie to overcome the intimidation of training with older students. A team player, strong representative and ambassador for her sport, Gracie proudly wears her black belt tied around her waist, the ultimate in martial arts goals.

Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Gracie Penney on her outstanding achievement and wish her all the best.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

SPEAKER: Leave is granted.

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

S. COADY: Speaker, the province has lost a celebrated author, a renowned editor, a prominent community leader and a respected former Cabinet minister.

Bill Callahan served as MHA for Port au Port from 1966-1971 and served as minister of Mines, Agriculture and Resources. He considered the establishment of Gros Morne National Park and the Salmonier Nature Park among his most valued achievements.

An avid journalist at *The Western Star* and CJON, he served as publisher and managing editor of *The Daily News*, and managing editor of *The Evening Telegram*. In recognition of his tremendous contribution, Mr. Callahan was appointed to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission and received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Atlantic Journalism Awards.

He was also a dedicated volunteer, a long-time member of the Knights of Columbus and served as president of the Red Cross.

I ask all Members of this House to join me in recognizing and celebrating the incredible life of Bill Callahan and offer our sincerest condolences to his wife of 65 years, Daphne; children, Sean, Mark, Brian, Maureen, Sheilagh and AnnMarie; 13 grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

A. PARSONS: Speaker, I am pleased today to highlight Mining Week and the extremely positive impact of the sector in Newfoundland and Labrador.

2021 was a banner year for this industry in our province. The value of mineral shipments were the highest ever recorded, and mineral claim-staking activity reached its highest point since the Voisey's Bay claims 25 years ago.

Our province processed over 800 mineral exploration applications last year. Driven by positive exploration results, along with strong gold prices, we saw exploration expenditures nearly double from 2020, to just over \$127 million.

The talk of this industry has been the gold rush in Central Newfoundland. It was less than two months ago when I announced that the Valentine Gold Project had been approved to proceed. It will be the largest gold mine in Atlantic Canada

and a significant contributor to our economy here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Speaker, we clearly have world-class deposits that contain geology with great mineral potential. Critical minerals which are needed to grow and develop the green economy, such as our low-carbon nickel, mined in Labrador – refined at Long Harbour – is being used to develop lithium-ion batteries for the world’s ever-growing EV industry. Notable companies such as Northvolt, and just last week, Tesla, have signed agreements with Vale.

Our government works hard to develop meaningful mining opportunities, and officials within the mining branch demonstrate daily our commitment to create an environment that supports mining development. If I can just say, I have to commend the staff in that department for the work they do every day behind the scenes making sure that this industry moves forward – a big shout-out to them if they’re listening.

I’ll be speaking at the 33rd annual mining conference held by the Baie Verte Peninsula Chamber of Commerce next month to share what this industry means for local business and how it allow our province to invest in programs like infrastructure, education and health care.

Speaker, the future looks prosperous for this industry, with employment exceeding 8,000 person-years and mineral shipments reaching \$6 billion in 2021. We look forward to see what is coming for this key economic driver for this province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

There’s no doubt that the mining sector in this province is a bright spot in our economy and our communities. It is an economic engine, which we don’t often acknowledge the importance or

the benefit of. Mining Week is a chance for us, as public figures, to champion and bring attention to this industry. Whether it be Marathon Gold, Vale or the increased mineral exploration in our province, this industry has a lot to look forward.

With this being said, I encourage the minister to review the mining and mineral act to ensure that our legislative and regulatory regime are up to date and supportive of all future projects and growth.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

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

His comments prove that we can benefit greatly for the move forward towards a green economy, and the economic diversification offers us a great opportunity going forward in this province. Given that so much of the \$6 billion in last year’s mineral shipments came from Labrador, we call upon the government to invest a greater share of the wealth in services and infrastructure for the people who have generated this great wealth from the Big Land.

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: Thank you, Speaker.

Gas is now \$2.17 a litre in St. John’s, \$2.19 on the Burin Peninsula and \$2.21 in Springdale and

on the Northern Peninsula. Seniors and families are struggling to afford essentials from food to fuel to medication. Yesterday the Premier said more measures may be coming. The Liberal Premier has let people suffer with the rising costs of living for far too long.

Is today the day the Premier announces these measures?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

As we know, we can't control the price of gas. It's externalities beyond our control, the geopolitical forces at play. We saw the human face of that yesterday, Mr. Speaker, as Ukrainians arrived to the warm comfort of Newfoundland and Labrador families.

Mr. Speaker, the ripple effect, unfortunately, goes beyond the human tragedy that exists in Europe. The tyranny, the war that is being waged by Mr. Putin, not just on Ukrainians but indeed on the world through the economic crisis that has ensued. We can't control that, Mr. Speaker; those are externalities beyond our control. We're always looking, as a government, towards the cost of living – always. That is why we have taken a holistic approach and done \$142 million to address that in this budget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: I ask the Premier to look at the faces of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who are also suffering (inaudible).

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: While he can't control the global thing, he can control what is happening in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is not enough. It is just not enough in this province.

Quebec gave \$500 directly to the residents who make less than \$100,000 a year to help with the cost of living.

Will the Liberals in our province do the same?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

That initiative cost the Quebec government billions of dollars, Mr. Speaker. We have fiscal restraints within this province that we have to recognize; we can't ignore. We're always willing to look at and evaluate options –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER A. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, there you go. So we are looking at fiscally responsible, prudent avenues forward but we have to do so recognizing that the fiscal realities of this province. We are addressing electricity rates through rate mitigation.

AN HON. MEMBER: Right now.

PREMIER A. FUREY: Rate mitigation is right now.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER A. FUREY: Rate mitigation is right now, Mr. Speaker. That is something that we have done. We returned \$2,400 to the people of this province.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask the Member for Ferryland to keep his comments down.

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER A. FUREY: That's all I had to say, Mr. Speaker.

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

I will reiterate again: It is just not enough. He has a responsibility to address the issues by finding solutions.

Prince Edward Island is also sending direct payments to residents.

Why do the Liberals in this province continue to ignore the pleas of its people?

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

S. COADY: Thank you very much.

Before I get into addressing that question, I do want to welcome the Ukrainians who arrived yesterday with open arms and open hearts.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

S. COADY: I think we should recognize them.

I do want to let them know that the economy in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador is strengthening coming out of the pandemic. In fact, our employment is stronger; it is 3.9 per cent improved year-to-date this year. Retail sales are stronger at 8.4 per cent improved. We have home sales are stronger at 12 per cent improvement. Even food services are stronger with 12.2 per cent improvement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

S. COADY: So I say to the Ukrainians that are arriving, I say to the people of the province, our economy is strengthened and buoyed and I hope that we have a very continuous strength in the economy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

So the economy is strengthening, but the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are suffering, Mr. Speaker, that's not acceptable in this province.

In April, Alberta eliminated its 13 per cent gas tax. Will the Liberals in our province lower the cost of gasoline?

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

S. COADY: I'm glad the Member opposite is detailing what's happening across the country. We, too, in this province are very aware of the very, very difficult times that people are experiencing, not just in Newfoundland and Labrador but around the country. That is why we

—

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I say to the Member for Ferryland, it's the last warning. Next time, you will not be recognized anymore today.

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

S. COADY: That is why in this budget, Mr. Speaker, we provided \$142 million to address the cost of living, which is the entire amount — actually it's more than the entire amount — we collect in provincial gas tax.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

You've heard on that side, we've heard it here; the media have heard it. It's just not enough. You've got to change your approach to address the needs that people are facing in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: Ontario has also pledged to reduce the gas tax by 5.7 per cent per litre on July 1.

Will the Liberals in our province lower the cost of gasoline?

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

S. COADY: Speaker, I've addressed this. The 14.5 cents per litre that is levied by the provincial government has been returned over the amount that we actually collect in that gas tax. In the other taxes that are collected we also have made investments in health care – an additional \$400 million in the last couple of years – additional investments in education, additional investments in safety.

Speaker, these are very, very challenging times, it's not political. That's why we gave \$142 million back to the people of the province. We're continuing to see what more we can do as we continue throughout this year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

As my colleague said, it's not enough. But not one cent has come off the price of a litre of gasoline or home heating fuel at any pump in Newfoundland and Labrador. They're the people who need it. They need it to get to work. They need it to heat their homes and it's not happening right now.

Nova Scotia implemented a Heating Assistance Rebate Program to help low-income residents with the cost of living.

Will the Liberals in our province do the same?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

I think it deserves recognition that we are also giving people \$2,400 a year, families, to help control electricity rates, Mr. Speaker. That's \$500 million they don't want to talk about. That's \$500 million every year, year after year. They talk about giving cheques, we're giving direct impacts to the families of this province.

On top of that \$142 million. How much money is enough, Mr. Speaker?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

If you want to waste your Question Period arguing back and forth, I'll let you go; otherwise, I want order.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

We are living in the here and now and it's about people being able to heat their homes, people being able to get to work, people being able to sustain their jobs because it's affordable enough for them to go to work and earn a living in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Federal Intergovernmental Affairs minister says that – and I quote – this province has a whole series of tools on its own if it wanted to do something about the price at the pumps. Those are the minister's words. Our province had taken action.

Why is this Liberal government refusing to offer people relief at the pumps?

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Speaker.

The Premier is absolutely correct. Not only are we providing \$2,400 in rate mitigation, we are also providing, on average per child, \$6,300 in child care relief, that is only in the last 18 months. This government has been putting money back in the people's pockets. That's why we provided the \$142 million.

I will say to the Member opposite, a cent or two at the pumps is not going to address this global problem. It is not going to address this global problem. What we want to do is put money in people's pockets. I know the Members opposite are shouting and saying that they want more, they want different, but I will say to the Members opposite, we are doing everything we

can on this side of the House and we are prepared to do whatever is necessary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, if you are doing everything you can, you need to change your plan because it is not working for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: A home heat rebate, reducing the gas tax, deferring the carbon tax, helping find alternative fertilizers and helping food banks, these are a lot of options that the Liberals have at their fingertips.

Why don't the Liberals have the political will to help the people of this province?

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

S. COADY: Speaker, we have been helping the people of this province. I have just gone through a number of things that we are doing on this side of the House. I can tell you what the Members opposite are talking about when they talk about getting rid of jobs within government and taking that money and giving it back to the people. That doesn't help our economy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask the Member for Ferryland not to rise anymore; you will not be recognized anymore today.

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Speaker.

I have lost my train of thought, but I will say on the carbon tax – deferring the carbon tax would mean that the federal government will come into

the province, not only would they take the money out of the province for the carbon tax but they would also levy an additional fee, additional carbon tax on home heat. Is that what the Members opposite want?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

What the Premier and the minister have failed to tell the people of the province is that every time the price of fuel goes up, they bring in additional revenue. Their bank accounts get larger, while the people of the province, their bank accounts get smaller.

I ask the Premier: After hearing what other provinces have done, after hearing about all the hardships of all the people of the province who are suffering right now, does the Premier feel that his cost-of-living plan does enough?

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

S. COADY: Again, I have to say that the Member is misinformed or he is misinforming. And I'll say that again and again, Mr. Speaker, because clearly he either doesn't understand or he doesn't want to understand.

I will say that we are doing everything that we can to address the cost of living in this province. We can't – we don't have the levers on carbon tax, I just explained why. We are getting a modicum more on the HST. The carbon tax is a tax per litre and so is the tax per litre that we put on with the provincial gas tax. On the HST we are, and I've said it repeatedly, we are considering what we can do in the fall as we move through the summer and looking at the overall economy.

I will say to the Members opposite, Speaker, we are doing everything that we can and will continue to do so.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, I can assure you I'm not misinformed and I'm not misinforming.

I would simply ask the minister: Will you confirm that every time the price of gas goes up, every time the cost of a product goes up, that you get additional revenue in HST. Yes or no?

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

S. COADY: The Member understands how HST works. It is a harmonized tax across the country. It is defined under the federal *Excise Act*. We all know that it's a federally controlled tax. Yes, as prices go up, we get a modicum more; we will collect about \$60 million in HST this year, Speaker, and we are considering what more we can do.

But we have provided \$142 million. We have provided \$2,400 for rate mitigation. We have provided for every child, \$6,300. Speaker, I'm sure if we added up everything that the Members opposite ask for, it would be well over \$500 million. Add that to the \$500 million we have to pay because of Muskrat Falls, we're well over a \$1-billion deficit.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, I think it's important to understand that it's the people of Newfoundland and Labrador who are suffering. It's the people in Newfoundland and Labrador who are telling us it's just not enough.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: Mr. Speaker, a single mom with two children told me she's working for \$14 an hour and she has to drive 58 kilometres per day to work. She is struggling. The money that was provided to her, as part of the original plan, is long gone, and it wasn't enough.

What does the minister say to that single mom?

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

S. COADY: I would say to that single mom, things are difficult. I respect that, I know it is difficult and we're hopeful that with improvements globally that the price will come down. But with two children, Speaker, she's also benefiting from the investments that we've made in child care. She also should have received the Income Supplement that we've increased, and that's quarterly. We increased that by 10 per cent. She would have also now not had her home heat double. Electric rates double in this province.

Speaker, we are doing everything that we can. We have provided \$142 million back. That single mom that was just talked about, she would have gotten some fees back from motor vehicle registration. She may have a home that she has insured. All those things are money in her pocket.

SPEAKER: The minister's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll remind the minister that it was the single mom who said it wasn't enough, and that she can't afford to it. So it isn't enough.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Motorists in this province on the Liberal watch are forced to pay an additional five cents per litre of gasoline because of the Come Bay Chance Refinery shutdown.

Can the minister explain why he continues to allow motorists to be charged this extra five cents, even though Come By Chance is now under new ownership?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Happy to answer the question, even though I guess some of it falls under the Public Utilities Board, as the Member knows.

I guess the first thing I'd say, I'm very happy that we're actually standing here, or sitting here answering questions about a refinery that continues to be open and employing hundreds and hundreds of people in this area –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. PARSONS: – as opposed to the questions we were answering last year, which were what was the future of that industry and the hundreds of people that were out of work. I'm very happy that we've at least satisfied that.

The reality is, though, that now that it's moved to a biodiesel renewable facility, North Atlantic has been forced to import fuel into this province. They made application to the Public Utilities Board some time ago talking about the extra cost. The Public Utilities Board then made a decision that their costs were valid and has put that there, but again, I think the other minister will have something to say about that shortly.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

While it's great that hundreds and hundreds are working, the minister misses the fact that thousands and thousands are choosing between gasoline and groceries – thousands. It sounds like they are content with the temporary increase and that it will stay here.

When will the minister step in and ask the PUB to remove it?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I've been around long enough to see the Public Utilities Board and how they operate, and

there's certainly nothing about contentment here. We have issues with the Public Utilities Board. That's why we're bringing in legislative changes, so I look forward to that debate. But what I can say is that the Member opposite knows full well – now he knows this, but the reality is that you cannot direct them to do this. The implications of that are well beyond something that we're prepared to see.

In fact, I think by the Member doing something that he thinks is right, he would probably cause more harm to those citizens that he's talking about. We have the same desires, but doing that is not as easy as the Member thinks.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: The desire is to get people to the grocery stores and give them an affordable way to live.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: On 60 litres of gas, it's five cents per litre and that's \$3 for which, some families, could mean hundreds of dollars each year.

Is the minister refusing to provide this relief to the people who now need to choose between gasoline and groceries?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The premise of the question is ridiculous. That's the reality here. The premise of the question is ridiculous – is the minister refusing. The reality is we're living in a market right now that has seen more volatility than we have ever seen before. The reality is that the Eastern Seaboard is basically running out of diesel. Levels that we've never seen before – gas is gone extremely high in every single province in this country and every single state in the United States.

So the reality is that we cope with the challenges and we try to do what we can, but as a province the reality is that we have to try to live within our fiscal means, something that is challenging given the fact that we are currently subsidizing electricity, currently subsidizing so many other things. This is another challenge that we must try to persevere through.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: I remind the minister that the refineries always ship goods in, but I'll also remind him that they've often said they can do things with tax breaks versus money out of people's pockets.

So I'll ask the minister: Why doesn't he give the refinery a five-cent tax break instead of taking the five cents out of people's pockets?

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

A. PARSONS: So the Member wants us to give North Atlantic a subsidy? Is that what the Member is saying he wants us to do? He wants to give this company a break – you're talking about giving citizens a break; now he wants to talk about giving them a break.

Now I'll remind you, last year we sat here with \$320 million from the feds, and I'll tell you what, I said it then and I'll say it now: They had that spent the minute that it came out. Spend it on West White Rose, spend it on Baie du Nord and spend it on Come By Chance. The fact is that this crowd over there is going to keep asking for something but they absolutely know that what they're promising is not something that they would ever deliver in government, God help us.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

All the situations that we express in the House over the past couple of weeks have been genuine and authentic from people who are experiencing hardships.

Mr. Speaker, a woman who reached out to us just this morning to express her frustrations with the rising cost of gas in our province told us that her husband makes \$1,600 in two weeks and, during that time, he spends \$700 on gas to get back and forth to work.

How does the Liberal government expect this family to afford to live here?

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

S. COADY: Thank you very much, Speaker.

We're hearing similar stories of people who are finding it very, very difficult, not just all around the province, Speaker, but indeed all across the country and around the world. This is very, very challenging times, and we recognize that. That is, again, why we are doing absolutely everything that we can do to provide for this particular family, this particular couple, and that is why we have done things like increased the Income Supplement. That's why we're doing all the things that we're doing, to ensure that they have money in their pockets.

Can I control the international markets and bring down the price of oil? I can't, but I can certainly work with my colleagues here and do whatever we can to support families.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Speaker, the residents in the District of Bonavista would question as to whether everything is being done that they possibly can do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. PARDY: I'm sure it is in the government districts as well. The Liberal cost-of-living plan,

the budget, isn't enough. The people in the District of Bonavista repeatedly state that it just isn't enough.

Does the minister realize that people who want to avail of Oil to Electric Rebate Program cannot afford the upfront costs to do so?

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

S. COADY: Speaker, \$142 million is a lot of money. I will say to the Members opposite and I'd say to anyone in this province: We had to borrow that money to put it back in people's pockets. It is going to cost our children and our grandchildren to pay for that. We have to think about those things.

While it may not be satisfying everybody in the province, it is what we can do. We are looking at what more we can do as we move through this year. I would say to the Member opposite, please, we are willing to work with that family, with the families of this province. CSSD is providing bus passes. We're working with others to provide supports. We are doing everything we can. I just wish the Opposition would work with us.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: There are no bus passes in the District of Bonavista; there are none.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. PARDY: Mr. Speaker, \$1.2 billion being collected in personal income tax; \$260 million thereof in gas tax, carbon tax. The cost-of-living plan doesn't help with the cost of food or fuel.

Why did the Liberals feel it necessary to subsidize electric vehicles at this time but not reduce the price of gasoline?

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

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm very happy to speak to this question, it's very important that we transition to electric vehicles. We're talking about many of the issues here today, and the hon. colleague that used to sell vehicles would understand how important it is to move in this direction as well.

One of our things is we put a pilot project in place to allow electric vehicles or individuals moving to that direction to receive a rebate of \$2,500 as well as a plug-in electric vehicle as well, that we could give a rebate of \$1,500 for a hybrid vehicle as well.

That's what we think is going to be the answer and it's going to help in a bunch of different ways to put money back in the pockets of individuals, but also to help your resident that you talked about earlier, that costs \$700 every two weeks.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

I'd like to get real here, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

P. DINN: That's a lovely intro to a real issue here.

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

P. DINN: Mr. Speaker, just this morning an individual reached out to both us and the Minister of Health stating that the MTAP program covers 20 cents per kilometre but the price of gas has now reached \$2.17 per litre. This individual states that he has two small children and requires at least 10 visits to the Dr. H. Bliss Murphy Cancer Care Centre for treatment. This individual writes in his email: Please share until we get the minister's attention, because privately reaching out to government lately has yielded us nothing.

I ask the minister: What do you tell this individual who's forced to choose between going to chemo treatments and taking care of his two small children?

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

We have a Medical Transportation Assistance Program, which is not means tested, and is available to everybody. We have broadened the criteria. We have lowered the deductible mileage. We have now allowed expense claims for staying with family. We've provided per diems for escorts and we continue to work within our fiscal realities to expand the benefits that we have. For people on Income Support, we have a complete reimbursement program, again, criteria driven.

As we get more money back and our balance of payments improves we will be able to do more. We have a very competitive program compared with other jurisdictions.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Teachers in schools where children of newcomer families attend are concerned about the lack of translation services that would allow them to communicate with parents of their students.

I ask the Minister of Education: What is government doing to ensure that sufficient translators are in our schools so that parents and teachers are able to speak to each other?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Speaker, and I thank the Member for his question.

As we had seen with the Afghanistan refugees to the province, Mr. Speaker, the needs for the placement of those students in our province's

schools were identified by the school district. We responded based on the needs that were identified and provided the resources that were requested.

We'll see what the needs are of the Ukrainian newcomers to the province as the assessments are done and if there are needs identified we will meet those needs.

I will remind the Member that in this year's budget we have over \$3 million identified for increased population in our schools.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm hearing that schools are paying for translation services out of their own funds, in some cases using money from their own fundraising events.

Will the minister assure us that translators are fully funded by government and schools will not have to rely on their own limited resources to pay for these translation services?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If the Member wishes to share with me these instances I would be happy to discuss those with our school districts based on the schools that he identifies.

I know that the Member identified yesterday that there was a primary grade with over 30 students. We spoke to the school district and the school district is not aware of that situation so I would invite him to tell me which primary class that is as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: I think the minister is misquoting me. I said there are classes in the primary up to 29, almost 30. Nothing over 30, yet.

Does the Minister of Education agree that the teaching conditions of teachers are the learning conditions of students?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

T. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker.

We have, through the Education Action Plan, provided over 380 new resources in our schools. We recognize that the success of our students is paramount and we have responded based on the Education Action Plan, Mr. Speaker.

Most of the items that were identified as actionable in the Education Action Plan have been fulfilled. We are now undergoing a teacher allocation review. We will see what that review provides us, Mr. Speaker, but there is nobody who can dispute that this government has responded to the needs of our schools, our educators in a way that no other government has in the past.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

E. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I've been receiving calls from many seniors who need cataract surgery in Western Newfoundland, including the Premier's district.

The Minister of Health and Community Services said in a letter dated April 19, 2022, and I quote: Ophthalmologists may also take advantage of unused time at the Sir Thomas Roddick Hospital, which has been fully functional since late August 2021.

Mr. Speaker, in an email from Western Health on March 28, 2022, and I quote: There has been no cataract procedures performed at the Sir Thomas Roddick Hospital since January 2021.

I ask the minister, I implore upon the minister: With this discrepancy in the information, will you please meet with the three professionals in Western Newfoundland and Western Health so

we can get the cataract surgeries done for the seniors of this province?

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker

I was reading the other day a report from CIHI, the Canadian Institute for Health Improvement, that Western Region has 97 per cent of its cataracts for first eye done within the national benchmark – the best in the province. If the issue is the refusal of ophthalmologists to utilize operating time at Sir Thomas Roddick, we'd be happy to look into that.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

E. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, it's sad that he won't look at the wait-list. He knows the wait-list is what I'm referring to. It's sad. Premier, you need to do something. It's sad.

Mr. Speaker, in the same letter from the minister, he states: The cost to providing cataract surgery at Western Memorial Hospital is to be \$655.60 per surgery. That cost does not include overhead or consumables, just the labour cost. The Grant Thornton report, which, Minister, your office was a part of, states: A fully burdened cost figure of operating costs, expenses and capital equipment costs is approximately \$1,105 per surgery. When you add the \$100 for the lens, the cataract cost is \$1,205 per surgery.

Minister, it is obvious that you are not party to the correct information. Will you convene a meeting to get the facts on the table and help the 800 seniors who are wait-listed, which you are aware of, to get their eyes done so they have a dignity and their way of life back again?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

One of the elements of the proposal to provide cataract surgery outside of regional health authority facilities was in actual fact the collation and organizing and validating provincially of cataract wait-lists. I would be delighted if any ophthalmologist wished to contribute their wait-list data, in terms of patients, demographics, details and that kind of thing to a provincial wait-list and would love to hear from them.

Thank you very much, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The time for Question Period is expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

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

D. BRAGG: Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to table the 2021 annual report for the Chicken Farmers of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Minister, actually that goes under Tabling of Documents, next one. You're a little premature.

Any presenting reports by standing and select committees?

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

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

D. BRAGG: So we press replay, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

I rise in this hon. House today to table the 2021 annual report for the Chicken Farmers of Newfoundland and Labrador, times two.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: Any further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I give notice of the following resolution:

THAT in accordance with Standing Order 8(8), notwithstanding the Parliamentary Calendar issued by the Clerk for 2022 or any Standing Order to the contrary, the Parliamentary Calendar for the fall of 2022 sitting of the House of Assembly shall be modified as follows:

AND THAT this House will meet in accordance with the daily schedule prescribed in the *Standing Orders*, as follows:

From October 3, 2022, to October 20, 2022, inclusive; and from October 31, 2022, to November 10, 2022, inclusive;

AND THAT the week of October 24, 2022, shall be a constituency week.

SPEAKER: Any further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given?

Petitions.

Petitions

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, the province's population has aged much more rapidly than any other province in the country over the last 50 years.

The number of persons 65 years of age and older has more than doubled in the past 30 years.

Many aging couples have been assessed and deemed eligible for placement in a long-term care facility and require different levels of care and are separated into different facilities in order to get the care they require in a timely manner.

Having support and assistance as close to their home and community as possible should be a key objective in developing and providing services to our seniors. As well, individuals want a choice in living in a place that maximizes their independence.

Couples who have supported each other should not have to face being separated when they enter long-term care. Keeping them together ensures a better quality of life.

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 enact legislation that allows couples to stay together, even as they age, even at the highest level of care.

Speaker, during COVID, the plight of our seniors was ever magnified. We all had many calls when there was isolation and homes that were shut down and visitors weren't allowed. We've heard stories of seniors, grandparents, parents who have died or passed away over COVID, alone. COVID highlighted that, but there are still seniors now dealing with that. Seniors need to be treated with dignity, respect and have choice.

We're not getting any younger, none of us, and we're becoming an older population. They need to have the choice whether to live and age in their own home or take other choices like long-term care. But they have to have that choice and they have to be treated with dignity and respect. Nobody wants to die alone. Nobody wants to die without their family next to them. It is really, really troubling when you hear from families that call you in tears and they cannot get their loved ones in the proper care, nor can they get in to be with them.

Again, we are not getting any younger, but we really need to start dealing with how we treat our seniors and their families. We are all going to be there, so the sooner we start looking at

legislation and other steps to ensure they have dignity, respect and choice, well, the sooner the better.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DWYER: Thank you, Speaker.

The reasons for this petition and the background of this petition are as follows:

The rising cost of fuel is having a dramatic effect on the truck drivers in our province. Drivers are finding it increasingly difficult to pay their bills, maintain their machines and pay for ever-increasing fuel costs. This means, for many, that they must spend more time on the road with smaller margins of survival and, for those with families, more time away from home.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: To urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to consider a fuel rebate for truckers so that they can continue to supply those essential services to many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that depend on them each day.

This one here is signed by people in Terrenceville. This is not something that's just affecting one sector. It's the truck drivers that are coming forward and saying that there's no other way for them to make any margin whatsoever. In the minute it is going to be useless for them to even fuel up their truck to go on a trip.

Just this morning I got another email. I explained here in the House before that April 25 last year, the price of filling up a truck was \$1,973. On January 25, it was \$3,986 –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

It's hard to hear the Member speak.

The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

J. DWYER: Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate that.

Like I said, the other side, they're always asking us for ideas and stuff like that, if they'd mind to listen for five minutes, I think they'd understand that we are here to bring forward the plight of the people. It's not about us and it shouldn't be about them, but apparently it is. Like I said, change is in the air; it's just that there's no dollars in the air – that's the problem.

Mr. Speaker, what I would like to say is that it's the truck drivers that kept our economy going for so long when COVID first hit. We expected so much of them, especially with no vaccinations and anything like that. But the thing is that there's a trickle-down effect. If we start now, it's like the old saying goes: The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. But now we're faced with something different, so to plant that tree today, it's going to be very important.

But what we need to do is we need to address the people of the province. It's not about the people inside this Chamber; it's about us making sure that we look out for the 520,000 people collectively and give them all a break. It's not about giving a pittance. It's about taking something off the fuel surcharges so that everybody gets a break.

This has been unbelievable. This interruption clause from the PUB is supposed to be to our benefit. It hasn't been utilized to our benefit at this point, so therefore I would hope that this government would have a look at their budget and realize that they need to help the people of the province today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Speaker.

When the new bridge was constructed in Plate Cove West in 2012 to replace the bridge that was damaged by Hurricane Igor, concrete and rebar remains from the previous structure in the

waterway adjacent. In addition to being an eyesore, it is one factor preventing local boats from accessing the inner harbour reservoir to secure shelter in adverse weather.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to remove the construction debris remaining in the waters around the Plate Cove West Bridge and in so doing allow the local boats to access the inner harbour.

If anybody travelled the District of Bonavista, which I'm sure most have. I know the minister certainly has and enjoyed his experience. Many travel 230 on the Trinity Bay side down the peninsula and travel coming back up on 235, which is on the Bonavista Bay side. One of the more picturesque communities on the 235 side of the peninsula is Plate Cove West.

Plate Cove West is a fishing community, still many boats fish out of Plate Cove West. This bridge that was replaced when Hurricane Igor hit. Prior to Hurricane Igor, the boats would travel underneath that bridge to an inner sanctuary harbour which would give them great reprieve from adverse weather. Much the same as the inner harbour in historic Bonavista.

Since the construction and, of course, Igor, you will find that they're unable to get underneath this bridge. But if you look from the waterway and from the bridge to look down you'll still see concrete with rebar that is in the water that is close to the bridge. I think that's rather uncommon for bridge construction that you would see that. And whether that was covered up and erosion or the wave action has really now exposed it, but it is an eyesore. It is something in scenic, historic Bonavista District that we certainly do not wish for the residents and, at minimum, the tourists to see.

So this petition here is in good spirits. I think they realize that there is much work to be called upon and to be done. But this is one in Plate Cove West that we would like for the department to have a look at and see as to whether they can remove that debris that's adjacent to the bridge.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

A petition to increase support for Labrador West seniors.

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

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

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

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

Speaker, certainly not issues that are facing Labrador West but certainly accentuated there; some of the issues that I've faced in my own district. My neighbour, Dr. Simms, he was in his 90s, late 90s, and he was still living on his own. More importantly, he and his brother, who was also a nonagenarian at the time, would go out fishing in South River quite a bit. That was our connection.

I always had an admiration for the fact that if that's age, that's where I want to be. But the fact is, and I do believe this, that we do our best to keep people in their homes as long as they can and to put the supports in place. That's where

they're healthiest, that's where they're happiest and where they can maintain their independence.

Japan is probably the oldest country in the world right now; one out of four people are over the age of 65. Newfoundland and Labrador are probably not much behind them. They've put in strategies, even such a thing as long-term care insurance, but we've got to start dealing with this as well. I would argue, Speaker, it's not just Newfoundland and Labrador that's responsible, this has got to be part of an overall strategy with the federal government as well.

We've got to be able to deal with this, it's across Canada, but here in Newfoundland and Labrador we have a rapidly aging problem and we really need the input of the federal government in this as well. This cannot be on our own; it's a problem that needs to be solved nationally.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, the residents of 13 Mile Crossing on route 350 near Bishop's Falls are concerned with speeding through the area. This is a bus route and due to high speeds in the area residents feel it is a safety issue for students boarding and exiting the bus.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to install a digital traffic sign in this area to help reduce speed and increase safety for both students and residents of the area.

Speaker, this is an area that leaves Bishop's Falls on route 350 towards Botwood. It's controlled by the Department of Transportation. In that area there is signage there for 40 kilometres, but what's happening is when you come in from Botwood, northeast into Bishop's Falls, that area is 80-kilometre zone, so you come down to a dip there and you are going direct from 80 right into a 40-kilometre zone. People have a tendency to keep their speeds up and don't adhere, basically, to the signage that's there.

I know it is wrong. I really do. But people feel there is more housing in that area in the last few years and people feel that with the new bus stops, more children in that area that they would like to have a digital sign there to at least acknowledge, to get people's attention to slow them down so that something doesn't happen in that area.

So it's something that needs attention, to reduce the speed in that area and we would certainly like to see a digital sign in that area to help with the safety aspects in that area.

Thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 7.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that under Standing Order 11(1), this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. today, Tuesday, May 10, 2022.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 8.

SPEAKER: Oh, sorry. I forgot to vote on the last one.

As per the first motion regarding the late sitting this afternoon.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 8.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that notwithstanding Standing Order 63, this House shall not proceed with Private Members' Day on Wednesday, May 11, 2022, but shall instead meet at 2 p.m. on that day for Routine Proceedings and to conduct Government Business and that, if not adjourned, the Speaker shall then adjourn the House at midnight.

SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call from the Order Paper, second reading of a bill, An Act To Amend The Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Act, 2015, Bill 59.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 59, An Act To Amend The Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Act, 2015, be now read a second time.

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Government House Leader, that Bill 59, An Act To Amend The Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Act, 2015, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, “An Act To Amend The Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Act, 2015.” (Bill 59)

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

On April 29, 2022, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Innu Nation formerly announced the launch of the Inquiry into the Treatment, Experiences and Outcomes of Innu in the Child Protection System as a Part II Inquiry under the *Public Inquiries Act, 2006*.

Public bodies are subject to the ATIPPA 2015 and must comply with access to information requests. Public bodies listed in Schedule B of ATIPPA 2015 are exempt from access provisions. Section 4 of ATIPPA 2015 outlines the process by which a body maybe included in Schedule B. Without listing under Schedule B, ATIPPA 2015 would apply to information collected and used by the Innu inquiry.

It is anticipated that processing access requests would negatively effect the work of the Innu inquiry. It is also anticipated that the Innu inquiry would generate a substantial amount of records.

Previously, both the Muskrat Falls inquiry and the Ground Search and Rescue inquiry were listed in Schedule B on the grounds that ATIPPA obligations would unreasonably interfere with the inquiry’s work and singular focus.

Listing the Innu inquiry under Schedule B would be consistent with past practices for previous Part II inquiries.

This direction is also consistent with the recommendations of the 2020 statutory review

of ATIPPA 2015. The OIPC has been consulted and agrees with this approach.

Thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Speaker.

I’m pleased to stand today to speak to Bill 59, An Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015.

Speaker, as has been noted, this bill, in essence, what it will do, it will exempt the inquiry respecting the Treatment, Experiences and Outcomes of Innu in the Child Protection System from the ATIPPA legislation.

Really, in essence, the general rule is all public bodies are subject to this act, to the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. So all public bodies are subject to it, which means it allows researchers, it allows private citizens, businesses and others to file a request for records or information. What this legislation will do is it will provide an exemption. It will provide an exemption with respect to the inquiry respecting the Treatment, Experiences and Outcomes of Innu in the Child Protection System. So this inquiry will be exempt.

Why is that important? Well, first of all, the rationale is that it’s going to be consistent. It will be consistent and in line with previous inquiries who have also been exempt from the following ATIPPA legislation. So that is important to note.

Another rationale as well is that we know when there is an inquiry they collect a lot of information. Much of it is personal, much of it is emotional; much of it is sensitive. So much of the information would be redacted if the inquiry were subjected to ATIPPA. So these documents, in essence, will now not be ATIPP-able, as they are not of a public body. So removing this inquiry, as we’ve done with other inquiries, from ATIPPA, it prevents the inquiry, in essence, essentially from being bogged down in requests for information.

Now, I know there's always that concern that when we restrict information and the disclosure of information, but, in this particular case, I would submit and argue that it is appropriate.

At the end of the inquiry, Mr. Speaker, the commissioner will have the opportunity to file a report and make a report public. So the commissioner is ultimately entrusted to include in this report any information which he, in this case, feels should be public. So, Mr. Speaker, by the very nature of a commission of inquiry, information through exhibits and testimony is made public.

I think it's also important to note that the commissioner will assess and will look at and examine which exhibits can be made public and which will remain confidential. That will be within the authority of the commissioner and his acting ability. The commissioner is ultimately acting in the public interest, Mr. Speaker, by virtue of his position. It is also true that the commissioner will make such a determination always with the public interest in mind. What does that mean? It means he will always consider what is in the best interest of the public and the public's best interest.

Also, it's important to note that the Ground Search and Rescue inquiry and the Muskrat Falls inquiry were both exempt from access to information requests. So this is no different. It's just consistent. It's legislation which is necessary to be in line with previous legislation. Therefore, we, as the Opposition and me as the shadow minister for Justice and Public Safety, take no issue with this legislation.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

First of all, I want to say the importance of this inquiry and its importance for the Innu people, but also for everyone in Labrador, as this is a long time coming. It's important that we are following consistency in allowing the inquiry to go through the same way as the previous two

inquiries, through the exemption through ATIPPA.

But this is a very solemn and important inquiry that needs to proceed with all the resources and everything that is required, but also at the same time follow consistency and to be able to be open and transparent for all the people presenting and the people that are inquiring.

So I do say that we do support this wholeheartedly. We support the inquiry wholeheartedly and all of its outcomes and its needs, because it's a place of solemnness and it's important that we do what we do.

With that, I'll take my seat, but we are supporting this wholeheartedly.

Thank you.

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

P. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not going to take long. I, too, for the record just want to say that I will be supporting this bill. I guess the rationale has kind of been explained, but I know I've stood up in this House on numerous occasions speaking to the issues around ATIPPA and the Privacy Commissioner and the fact that Nalcor does – not Nalcor, but NL Hydro, OilCo, should fall under ATIPPA.

And the reason why I do so is because at least then you have an independent arbitrator who can look at that information, in the case of ATIPPA, the Privacy Commissioner, who is an independent Officer of the House, and determine what information should be disclosed, what information shouldn't be disclosed, have that ability for people to force government and force government entities to be open and transparent with information and to share all information that should be shared with the public and not to hide any information.

In this case, we're asking for an exemption, which one might, on the face of it, think flies in the face of that concept, that principle, but it really doesn't. Because, in this case, while it may not be the Privacy Commissioner, there is a

commissioner who heads up these inquiries. I would submit that this commissioner, basically as an independent individual, would follow a similar process that the Privacy Commissioner would follow. Throughout the entire inquiry, the commissioner that's heading up any given inquiry is going to determine and he will hear, or she, arguments from all parties involved in the inquiry as to what information is sensitive and should not be shared.

This particular inquiry that we're talking about here is a very, very sensitive one, as we all understand. There are some very personal stories, very personal information there and so on involving children and other parties that ought not to be shared.

So the commissioner, in overseeing this whole process, any information – because it's a public inquiry anyone from the public will be able to – I would assume like any other inquiry – go there in person, watch it online, whatever, the media will be there, and any information that the commissioner deems relevant and in the public interest to have it disclosed, he or she will ensure that that happens. Any information that he or she deems to be of a sensitive nature, that's not necessary in painting the picture that the inquiry is seeking out and protecting certain personal rights and privacy, then the commissioner will make sure that information is not disclosed, similar to what the Privacy Commissioner would do in a typical ATIPPA situation.

Of course, as the Member for Harbour Main said, at the end of the process, after all the information has been heard by the general public, all the relevant information, the commissioner is going to issue a report. That report is going to contain within it all the background of what happened, why it happened and there are going to be a series of recommendations, hopefully, to make sure that these type of things never happen again. That will all be made public and open to scrutiny by the general public, by the media and so on.

So I see it as a very transparent process, but also bearing in mind that there is some information – no different than information contained within government, information contained within OilCo or anywhere else, we all recognize there is some

information that cannot be disclosed for certain reasons. But my problem has always been, when I've talked about OilCo and Hydro and before that Nalcor, the fact that we didn't have that independent arbitrator, that this entity could just outright refuse the public information without any scrutiny by an outside party, i.e., the Privacy Commissioner.

That doesn't happen in this process. That doesn't happen in a process of an inquiry, such as this and such as other inquiries we've had in the past. So we have that protection built in by virtue of having that independent commissioner who will see it through from the beginning to the end, a final report. He or she will ensure that all information that ought to be released to the public will be released to the public.

I'm confident in that process and for that reason I will support this amendment under Bill 59.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

P. TRIMPER: Thank you, Speaker.

It's a very important, while a very straightforward matter, having this particular inquiry included under the Schedule B of the ATIPPA legislation. I can tell you from personal experience, and from so many of the constituents of Lake Melville and across Labrador, how important getting this inquiry finally going, and with the right structures and supports is so important.

This is going to be a very challenging period of time for our province. There are going to be situations that will be tough to hear, they're going to be tough to bring forward. I think for the ability, too, as my colleague from Mount Pearl - Southlands just very well said, it's important to be able to give people the feeling of full disclosure and confidence that so many matters of highly personal, highly difficult to just explain and talk about, matters will be able to be brought before a very well selected group of commissioners.

I just wanted to highlight those commissioners, because I know two of the three of them very

well. The hon. James Igloliorte, a retired Provincial Court judge, has just completed, I think, I would have to say a very well-received inquiry into search and rescue. The ability to take a lot of personal information, again from so many people in Labrador, who were involved in events around the loss of Burton Winters, but also very many other issues around search and rescue, and his ability to bring that forward in the form of clear recommendations to government; some of which have already been implemented and I compliment him on that. I've stood on my feet before and spoken to it. So, Jim, I'm really glad you're back on board as the chief commissioner.

Anastasia Qupee, she's going to be a co-commissioner working with the judge. For those of you who don't know, Anastasia is the former grand chief of the Innu Nation, former chief of Sheshatshiu. She now sits as the director of Social Health for the community of Sheshatshiu. So she is very well versed and very familiar – she is a passionate leader. I feel she is going to bring so much to the table.

Also, she served on the board of directors for Labrador-Grenfell Health. So you have a great background that she will also bring to the table from the Innu perspective and the Innu leadership perspective, but also as someone who lives in Sheshatshiu and cares a lot about these youngest of generations that are coming in society.

Then finally, Dr. Mike Devine, who I don't know personally, I know about him. I know he is a retired professor at the School of Social Work. I was just having a little read of his background, certainly a long history of community involvement and community activism.

I thought I would conclude my remarks, Speaker, just to roll them into the record because I think it is a very important quote from the current Grand Chief Etienne Rich and I would just like to read this into the record.

“The announcement of the Inquiry into the treatment of Innu children and youth in care has been long awaited in our communities of Sheshatshiu and Natuashish. We have known for many years that the child protection system has not been working for Innu people and that it has

not operated in the best interests of our children. We hope that the Inquiry will help us better understand where the system has failed Innu and how we can work together to make the right changes for better outcomes for our children. We are confident in the people we have selected as Commissioners and we are grateful to them for their interest in and commitment to the Inquiry.” That was written and stated by the Grand Chief of the Innu Nation, Mr. Etienne Rich.

With that, Speaker, I will wholeheartedly endorse this bill here today. I look forward to the inquiry getting off to very important work.

Thank you very much.

Tshenashkumitin.

SPEAKER: Seeing no other speakers, if the Minister of Justice and Public Safety speaks now he will close debate.

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

I want to thank the Members from Harbour Main, Labrador West, Mount Pearl - Southlands and Lake Melville for speaking to this bill and certainly for their support on this bill. Particularly the Members from Labrador who spoke about the issues regarding the Innu and why this inquiry was called in the first place. I do appreciate their comments.

It is obviously more personal and more touching to people from Labrador so it means a lot to have them speak here today. I do appreciate those comments from both of them representing their districts in Labrador.

Thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 59 be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, An Act To Amend The Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Act, 2015. (Bill 59)

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

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

S. CROCKER: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Act, 2015," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole presently, by leave. (Bill 59)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety that this House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 59.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 59.

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.'

Motion carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Trimper): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 59, An Act To Amend The Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Act, 2015.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Act, 2015." (Bill 59)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Clause 1.

Shall clause 1 carry?

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Chair.

Has the minister spoken to the Newfoundland and Labrador provincial Information and Privacy Commissioner in regard to this act?

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you for the question, Chair, and the OIPC has been consulted on this amendment and does agree with this approach.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

Can you please advise whether he intends to publicly post or make available the exhibits which he relies on throughout the inquiry?

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

J. HOGAN: I assume that means whether the commissioner will provide that information to the public, as opposed to the Privacy Commissioner. The three commissioners will decide what records will be released publicly as the inquiry moves forward.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

Has the Privacy Commissioner given an opinion on this amendment, and if so, what is it? Can you table it?

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

J. HOGAN: So I don't know if an opinion has been given, other than he does agree with the approach.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: This inquiry is very personal in nature and will rely on the testimony of family members. How will their personal information be treated by the inquiry?

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

J. HOGAN: That will be within the purview of the three commissioners as this inquiry moves forward. Certainly this inquiry, I would suggest, is a bit different than the last few that we've seen in this province, because there are certainly emotion components of this that didn't exist for other fact-finding inquiries and investigations.

So I do believe and I do have the utmost faith that the three commissioners will respect that process, and I've had a conversation with the three of them very recently about that and certainly discussed with them that it's all within their purview of how they want this inquiry to run and operate. I know they will respect the feelings and emotions of individuals and families as they move forward with this very important inquiry.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

Yes, and we understand it's within their purview, but are you aware of if there are going to be any supports that will be made available to volunteers or family members throughout the inquiry?

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

J. HOGAN: Yes, there will be supports provided to family members as they come forward to talk about these difficult situations that they faced.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: What kind of supports would that be?

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

J. HOGAN: I don't have the details on those supports right now and I would suggest that, as they go forward, it will probably reveal what sort of supports these individuals need. If the commissioners do need anything for it, certainly they can come to the Department of Justice, but it would also all fall within the budget that the commission has been given by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: And that's all the questions I have.

CHAIR: No further questions, I recognize the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

Just a couple of questions there to the minister. The timing of this inquiry – could the minister give an idea of when it will be started and

roughly how much time will be given to the inquiry to do its work?

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

J. HOGAN: So work is ongoing on the inquiry already. I know they're addressing issues right at the forefront, the structure of it, staffing issues, how it's all going to look. Certainly document gathering is under way as well. Timing, I do believe – I stand to be corrected – they hope to have this done by next fall.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

With the structural makeup of the committee, how will that look going forward and compared to similar inquiries?

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

J. HOGAN: Right off the start, it is a bit different than the previous inquiries in that we have three commissioners as opposed to one, which were GSAR and the Muskrat Falls. In terms of the structure of the commission itself, that is something else that is within the purview of the commission.

I did meet with them to discuss that a couple of weeks ago and the discussion we did have was the commission does have to be independent of government. And whatever structure they see necessary, however many staff or employees or whatever they need going forward, they will set up that structure independent of government.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thanks again, Chair.

What space has been allocated to the inquiry and will it be able to meet the needs, especially for individuals travelling and things like that?

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

J. HOGAN: So the budget is sufficient to meet all those needs. Obviously, travel is a different issue for this inquiry as opposed to other ones. I anticipate they will move through different communities and have different meetings and hearings or however they want to conduct it.

As I said, it will be different in a lot of respects in how it looks and how it feels, but again those are decisions that the commissioners can make and the budget has been provided for them to be independent of government and make those decisions as they see most appropriate.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

Will there be sufficient interpretation and translation services made available to the committee?

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

J. HOGAN: I am sure that if interpretation services are needed, the commissioners will have the necessary translators there to deal with that. Obviously, it wouldn't serve much purpose if people can't give their evidence and can't be heard.

I do remember when I was at the Muskrat Falls inquiry that was an issue with one of the Indigenous individuals who came to testify and he didn't want to participate any further because he wasn't able to speak in his first language. So there were adjustments made for that and even heightened the sensitivities around this now, given the nature of this inquiry.

CHAIR: Thank you.

No further questions? No further speakers to the bill?

Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Act, 2015.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill carried without amendment?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 59.

CHAIR: It is moved that the Committee rise and report Bill 59.

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

Thank you.

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

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Lake Melville and Deputy Chair of Committees.

P. TRIMPER: Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and directed me to report Bill 59 carried without amendment.

SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee has considered the matters to them referred and directed that Bill 59 be passed without amendment.

When shall the bill be received?

S. CROCKER: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

S. CROCKER: Tomorrow.

SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

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

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 3.

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Government House Leader, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Ways and Means to consider certain resolutions and a bill relating to the raising of loans by the province, Bill 47.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Trimper): Order, please!

We are now debating the related resolution and Bill 49, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2023 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

CLERK: No, wrong bill. It is 47; I gave you 49.

CHAIR: Wow, the Clerk made a mistake.

CLERK: I made a mistake.

CHAIR: The Clerk made a mistake.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

My apologies to Hansard. This doesn't happen very often.

We are now debating the related resolution and Bill 47, An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province.

Resolution

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

"That it is expedient to bring in a measure to authorize the raising from time to time by way of loan on the credit of the province a sum of money not exceeding \$2,700,000,000."

CHAIR: Shall the resolution carry?

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

S. COADY: Thank you very much, Chair.

Thank you for the opportunity today. As Members in this House realize under *Budget 2022*, when it was tabled in the House of Assembly on April 7, 2022, it identified a borrowing requirement of \$2.7 billion for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023.

Today we are introducing the bill, the *Loan Act, 2022* and it is under this authority of the *Loan Act, 2022* and section 38 of the *Financial Administration Act* that we will raise by way of loans not exceeding \$2.7 billion. So like all Canadian provinces, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador borrows in the provincial bond market. We issue publicly traded debentures through a syndicate of investment dealers. These bonds then trade freely in the secondary market and are available for purchase by any retail or institutional investor.

The province may meet its borrowing requirements through the issuance of long-term and short-term debt in the domestic and international capital markets. Borrowing requirements of most provinces are satisfied primarily through domestic debt issuance, and some provinces also address their borrowing requirements through the international debt issuance.

Now, the primary source of funding for Newfoundland and Labrador has typically been domestic fixed-rate term debt with a standard maturities of five, 10 and 30 years. The province also relies on short-term borrowing – happens on Wednesdays – through weekly issuance of 91-day Treasury bills and other cash-management bills as required. And investors of the domestic fixed- and floating-rate debentures typically include insurance companies, pension funds, corporate investors and Canadian governments and agencies.

Now, the province can also issue debt internationally, but it does not currently have an active international debt issuance program. As you've heard recently, interest rates are rising and that is a cause of concern for all of us. As I've said many, many times in this House of Assembly, the cost of borrowing is approximately a billion dollars, just under a billion dollars each year.

So it is a significant amount of money, and there is a concern about these rising rates. But we are rolling over, for example, debt that had a higher interest rate. Sometimes we actually do a little better. I'll just use an example; we do have one particular loan that's rolling over that was significantly higher. I think it was around 8.65 per cent interest. So when we roll it over, hopefully we'll get somewhere in the 3 per cent to 4 per cent range. I understand that, as of budget day, rates varied from about 1.31 per cent – which is decent for a five-year term – to just over 3 per cent for a 30-year term. Just to give the people that are paying attention some ideas.

Of the \$2.7 billion that we will need to borrow this year, approximately \$1.7 billion are maturities. As I said, we're seeing some of that global instability being seen now in rising interest rates. So that is obviously a concern.

The province may borrow without further statutory authority under two acts. Section 42 of the *Financial Administration Act* provides a statutory authority to borrow in the capital markets for the purpose of redeeming or retiring existing loans, making statutory sinking fund contributions over the retirement of unfunded pension liabilities.

The secondary act is under the Canada Pension Plan and it's borrowing from CPP that are authorized under *The Loan (Canada Pension Plan Investment Fund) Act, 1966*. There have been no surplus CPP funds available for loans to the province since 2002 so it is predominantly under the *Financial Administration Act*.

So the Loan Act will come into full force and effect until the \$2.7 billion limit is reached or is replaced by a subsequent Loan Act. So what happens once you give authority, we have a Treasury team within the Department of Finance that will start to place the money in the markets at opportune times to get the best rates possible.

The last Loan Act passed by the Legislature was the *Loan Act, 2021*, which provided long-term borrowing authorities of up to \$1.5 billion. As of March 31, 2022, the province had borrow \$1.35 billion in long-term borrowing; \$50 million of which was pre-borrowed against 2022-23 and that was because we saw interest rates going up so we took the lower interest rate amount.

The *Financial Administration Act* authorizes the new borrowings for the purpose of redeeming or retiring debt, as I mentioned, making sinking fund contributions and for retiring unfunded pension liabilities. The *Loan Act, 2022*, is required in order to provide specific long-term borrowing authority to meet the 2022-23 budgetary requirements.

As you can appreciate and we talked a little bit during Question Period, we do anticipate the \$351-million deficit this year so you have to add that to our borrowings. We have to add to our borrowings any maturities that are coming and any other monies that are required to ensure effective operations. So the borrowing activity is necessary in order to allow the province to meet its day-to-day financial commitments.

So I turn to the House and say this is a requirement for the House to review the Loan Act. I can appreciate when you're borrowing this amount of money, trust me, you want to get the best rates in the market. We have strengthened our team within the Department of Finance and we have a very stellar team now – we always had a good team, I am not saying that. But we have strengthened our team in the Department of Finance to really make sure that we are maximizing our efforts of ensuring our cost of borrowing is lowered.

I also said, and I have said it in the House before, we do have a strategic kind of overview plan to ensure that we are addressing the concerns of both the bond markets and institutional investors to make sure that they understand that we do have a strategic plan on improved and better financial management and on debt management. As you can appreciate, when you have \$17 billion in borrowings, you want to make sure that we have a good eye to ensuring the lowest deficit as possible in that and a plan to get to balanced budgets as well as a plan to reduce our cost of borrowings.

So things like the balanced budget legislation, the future fund, we have made some changes in the House, for example, to sinking funds, recently made changes to the *Financial Administration Act* to allow different ability for the sinking funds. All of this is part of the bigger view on ensuring that strong, financial and debt management.

I would also say it was very helpful that we have addressed the concerns arising from Muskrat Falls and addressing the financing of Muskrat Falls and improving the province's ability to ensure we can rate mitigate. That was another big concern of the institutional investors in the bond-rating agencies.

So I always think of it as a triangle, really, focussing on improved financial management and that is why it was so critical to hold the line on expenditures in departments and making sure that we have a balanced budget. Our balanced budget forecast is to get to balance, making sure that we have a future fund. Also making sure that we are making the modernizations and improvements that are required to government to

free up more funds that we can invest rather than borrow.

Then on the debt management side things like I have indicated on improving the way we invest our sinking funds so that we can pay down on our borrowings.

So a lot is happening to ensure that we address the cost of borrowing and lower our cost of debt. That is critically important, I think. As I said, we spend a billion dollars a year. Imagine if we could free up some of that money to invest in other things that we all want to invest in in this province. It would be certainly advantageous to all.

So, again, this Loan Act is \$2.7 billion, most of it is debt maturities and the rest is requirements for improved operations and day-to-day financial commitments of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

With that, Chair, I'll listen to the debate.

CHAIR: Thank you.

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Chair.

I'll take some time to speak to Bill 47 and the *Loan Act, 2022*, and the requirement to borrow up to \$2.7 billion in long-term borrowings.

Before I do, I want to acknowledge as well the dedicated staff and the highly competent staff that exists in the Department of Finance, particularly around this particular issue. In our Estimates, we had an opportunity to hear from them, and to listen to what they had to say to us about how they manage the long-term debt of the province and look to take advantage of opportunities to reduce that interest expense by finding ways to borrow at a much lower interest rate.

That is exactly what this bill is doing. The government doesn't need \$2.7 billion in its budget this year in borrowings, but it does need to take out of circulation \$1.7 billion in old debt and retire it, or roll it over. So what that essentially is going to be able to do, as we heard

from the minister, is we're actually going to be able to take debt, in one particular case, as high as 8.65 per cent interest and reduce it down to somewhere between 3 and 4 per cent. Except for the high inflation rate, we probably might have even done better.

But that's the sign of good management on behalf of the people, on behalf of the Department of Finance, the officials that work there because that's exactly what we want to see happen. Any time that we can look at old debt and find a way to reduce the interest rate on it that, in itself, is a good thing. We all support that and will continue to support it.

Some people will question why government needs to borrow a billion dollars if its projected deficit is only \$351 million, and I think the minister has spoken to that. It's a combination of the amount needed for the deficit, as well as for the cash flow requirements of the government through the year. And that was very well explained again in the Estimate process to us.

I will agree that significant borrowing, it's still a borrowing; it's still a debt. We continue to add to our debt, unfortunately, but if every time in doing these things we can find a way to lower our interest costs, those are always good measures to take.

We will argue back and forth across this House about how we spend our money and what priorities would we give to some over others. Obviously, we've been spending a lot of time in this House talking about the impacts on the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, about this particular time that we find ourselves in of high inflation, high cost of living, high cost of just about everything that you can purchase, whether it's food or gas or oil for your home heating fuel. So there are a significant pressures on individuals in our province and significant pressures to be able to find different ways of doing things to help the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. That exactly is what a budget is supposed to do. It's suppose to be about how we manage the people's finances and how we help them in their time of need.

I would suggest right now there is a lot of need in Newfoundland and Labrador. We applaud the measures that were taken. We have spoke to

them before. We don't disagree with those – well, maybe we disagree with a couple of them in terms of how effective they will be in terms of electric vehicles and home heat rebates, if people can't afford to take advantage of them.

But on the other side of that, there is an opportunity and there still exists an opportunity for government to really step in and help out and help the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. We will continue to bring those issues forward. We will continue to tell you their stories, because I think that's exactly why we're here. Politics shouldn't be about politicians; it should be about people – more particularly, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Today, during this Loan Act, obviously, it just gives us an opportunity to remind ourselves of why we're here, why we're about to borrow an extra billion dollars and why we're going to borrow an extra \$2.7 billion. We can all surmise on how we got to where we are, whose fault it is or whose fault it isn't, but at the end of the day it's up to us that are seated in this Chamber now to make the changes; to make things better for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador; to provide help where we can, help on the ground, help with their fuel prices, help with their food prices and find a way to do that. I think that's what we've all been talking about. That's what we all want to see.

I commend the government on moving – I think the minister had talked about the international markets as well and traditionally our province has borrowed in the domestic market only, but we are now again – it was explained in Estimates – moving into the international market, which is again another good step, another bright spot. It's good to hear, and I think that's the way of the future. I commend it for doing that.

Again, as we say, they use a lot of different measures when they borrow the 91-day Treasury bills – they try and find different ways of managing our money to provide us with the best possible outcome as a province. These are people working behind the scenes. They're not sitting here in the House of Assembly; they're working diligently behind the scenes to make this happen. Again, I want to thank them for the

work they do and continue to do, and I look forward to more debt being rolled over from 8 per cent interest rates to 3 or 4 per cent interest rates.

With, Mr. Chair, I'll stop.

Thank you.

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Chair.

I think my colleague has spoken to the benefits of this bill and the lower interest rates in terms of rolling over some of the debt and borrowing. I'm going to try and keep it real here, as I mentioned earlier. I think about the Mental Health Week theme: This is empathy. Before you weigh in, tune in.

When I first spoke to the budget a little while back, I was talking about the supports and there was a lot of debate and questions on whether the five-point plan was good enough or dealing with enough. And no one is complaining that those five points weren't needed, but there was a lot of discussion on what more was needed.

There were numbers tossed around in terms of the number of individuals that would benefit from those five points – I think it was over 100,000; it might've been 140,000. I stand to be corrected. But what's become evident over the last weeks, months is the price of fuel going up is having a huge effect on our residents and on our constituents and on the economy.

I talked about some of these programs having a threshold where you do an income or a means test on them. If you make just under this much, you can avail of this program or that program. Then those who are just above that threshold don't have the luck or don't fit the bill in terms of applying for those programs or accessing those programs. A lot of those are hard-working Newfoundlanders and Labradorians – in fact, not a lot of them; all of them are. I spoke to them as being the working poor. In fact, it's not me putting that label of them. Some have called me and said that.

So what's been happening over the last weeks as the cost and the price of fuel goes up, that threshold stays the same, but there are more and more people above that threshold who are feeling the pinch in the cost of living. It's interesting, every week we're all getting calls; we all get calls on making difficult choices. Those who are rationing their medication, to make it go longer. Those who are going outside to the mall to be warm during the day so they don't have to have their heat on. Seniors who've seen their fuel bill go from \$600 to fill their tank up to over \$1,000. Individuals who drive back and forth for treatments at the Health Sciences, whether chemo or cancer treatments. The amount of money they're paying to go back and forth.

I can't make this up; these are real calls that we get. Individuals, our residents and our constituents are all calling now. I've seen a huge increase since the price went up last evening in the price of gas. It's really jumped now. So it's really starting to affect those that had a little bit of a buffer. You have individuals out there who have savings; they've delved into those. I've known individuals who have delved into their retirement plans. I've heard from individuals with pensions who got nowhere to go but make decisions.

I mentioned today in Oral Questions about a young family, two young kids, husband and wife who come into the cancer treatment centre here in town. Because of the price of gas, they're making some difficult decisions. Coming in to get that needed treatment for their health is taking away from the ability to look after their children and provide their children with what they need.

The minister, in response, listed off a bunch of programs and different things to do, and I'm not questioning that. I'm not questioning the programs that are available. Similar to mental health, there's many programs out there. But the point being is individuals are coming to us and they're obviously falling through the cracks, they're obviously not being able to utilize those programs, or those programs are not doing enough to alleviate the stress they're going through.

This is where we need to start looking – I say we, collectively, this House, all 40 Members. This is where we really have to – and I don't mean just words and rhetoric. We're not here getting up and making up stories. We're bringing forth what's happening out there, what's happening in the public, what individuals are going through, real stories. So, yes, I understand we're probably not going to be able to help everyone. But there's some out there with some – and we've mentioned some solutions that we need to explore to make it easier on some of these individuals.

Because we made some of these decisions at a point in time when revenue and taxes and that were a little different, and how much we got was a little different. We've progressed to another point in time now where income and revenue is different again. In fact, it's probably gone up. So we need to look at that and say: Can we use that money? Where can we use that money?

It's not a question of if we can use that money; we certainly can use that money. But looking at what's happening out there in the public and the real, real, true-to-life situations that people are facing. People are facing huge decisions. When you have people calling you, and those decisions of whether you have shelter over your head, you have food, or you have heat and light, those are serious questions that affect people. But when people are actually calling now and they add their health into that scenario, they talk about treatments in that scenario and trying to get back and forth to get those treatments, how that affects their full budget, their household budget, that becomes a major issue. That's a major issue for people

I applaud moving to electric vehicles and trying to initiate that, but, realistically, in this day in age, right now at this moment in time, we need to help those who need the help. That number has increased, that threshold has gone up. There are more and more people that are falling into that category that they are making difficult decisions around their budgets and how they allocate their funds that they get on a regular basis, because it's affecting everything. It's affecting our food bill, our heat bill and our transportation bill. I suspect it's affecting medication that gets shipped in here.

So, I mean, we can discuss this bill, and it's not going to be an issue with approving this bill. Most people look out there and look at the sum of money we're talking about – it's good. It's prudent to do what they're doing. Any government would do the same. In fact, you run it just like a household. If you had an opportunity to take something out of higher interest rate account and get a cheaper rate somewhere else, you're going to do that. That's just good financial management.

But when it comes to our individual households, they are in a hole and more are falling into that hole, and more are clamouring to get out. As I said before, it's probably an overused term, but you hear it a lot, it's so true, they're not asking for a handout. They're just asking for a hand up. Help these people get out of that hole and give them an opportunity to stay out of it. That's all we're asking for here. I say we, but we are representing our constituents. We are speaking for our constituents.

So when they speak to us, when they phone us and they look for answers – and some of them suggest answers – then we have to come and bring it here to the floor, because we have an elected government with elected Members who are in portfolios with a mandate, with a responsibility, and we want to hear from them on solutions.

CHAIR: Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Further speakers?

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

P. LANE: Thank you, Chair.

It's great to have an opportunity to speak again today. Right now, as has been referenced, we're speaking about the loan bill, \$2.7 billion loan. It is good that the minister did clarify the fact that even though we're getting a loan of \$2.7 billion, the deficit is actually around \$350 million.

So we are just renewing loans, getting better interest rates on money we owe and so on. As it has been said, that is a positive thing. I,

obviously, support that. I'm sure every Member of the House of Assembly supports that. There will be nobody that would be opposed to that I'm sure.

But I think it is important, Mr. Chair, once again, that we still be cognizant of the fact that even though we only have a deficit – I say only – \$300-and-some-odd million this year, which is substantially lower than was predicted. And thankfully for the good fortune, I guess, of additional revenues that came in the door and so on from the province's point of view. Not so much on consumers, but from the province's point of view, additional revenue from oil and gas and different things that we are in a position that our deficit is much lower than what was originally anticipated.

But we have to be cognizant of the fact always in this House of Assembly that we still have a provincial debt of over, I think, \$15.2 billion – I think that's the number; \$15.2 billion sounds right. Over \$15 billion anyway. That is net debt and we also have a lot of unfunded liabilities and so on. The actual debt is probably more like, I think I have heard \$40 billion or something is a number I heard thrown around.

So we are in a huge hole, financially, as a province. So we have to be cognizant about that at all times when we are standing in this House of Assembly and we are asking for more money for this and more money for that and so on. So I do understand the balance that government is trying to create here – being cognizant of that. But I also understand how the average person is feeling right now in trying to balance their budgets and that's the other side.

So, again, government has taken some measures to keep – the Premier keeps talking about the \$142 million, which is basically the provincial gas tax portion of the tax on gas, a little better than that actually. And the people who benefit from that, I'm sure they are appreciative, but again there's this group – and, once again, I am not going to harp on people who are making big salaries or significant salaries, although everybody would like a break, no doubt about it. We would all love a break.

As I said last night, it turns my stomach every time I go to the pumps and you watch the

numbers just rolling up. It's absolutely insane where the prices have gone, but at the end of the day I do have the financial flexibility to be able to absorb that.

Again, I want to keep going back to that group of people – a lot of the ones who I'm hearing from and other Members are hearing from – seniors who are not in receipt of the supplement, low-income working people who are not in receipt of any kind of supplement. Those are the people that we continue to hear from; those are the people that are really, really, really struggling. I know everyone in this House knows that. The government knows that. I know they do.

I know it would be great if we had a billion-dollar surplus this year, as opposed to a deficit of \$300 and some-odd million dollars. How great it would be if the biggest problem we had is how do we spend the money? That's why sometimes when we make comparisons between what we're doing and what Alberta is doing, you've got to realize – I think we have to be realistic on what Quebec is doing – how much money they've got coming in through the door compared to where we're to financially.

As other Members have said and I will say as well, Ottawa is getting off the hook. Part of the solution should be Ottawa. Not blaming everything on Ottawa, but part of the solution should be Ottawa. I think we need to be fighting harder to get our fair share. When you look at Quebec as an example and you look at how well they're doing, yet there are billions of dollars in transfer payments going to Quebec and you look at where we're to, and what we're receiving, which is a mere pittance.

Basically we receive the basics of what we're entitled to. Sometimes, like when we see our – and I'm not trying to knock anything that our federal MPs have done with the rate mitigation and so on. But still, when you see federal MPs as an example, and they're here and they're doing an announcement on the West Coast, an announcement on the East Coast and announcement in Labrador – money for this program, that program, whatever – that's only what we're entitled to. That's only some federal government program – if the feds come out with an infrastructure program and we are entitled to

our share, whatever that is, or if they come out with some kind of a healthy living initiative and Newfoundland is entitled to a certain percentage of that and they announce some projects, that's all we're getting. There's nobody giving us anything over and above.

So when we see these announcements saying, oh look, they're going to put some money in Gros Morne, they're going to do this, they're going to do that, that's only our share of a program. We don't deserve that. That's not a back-patting opportunity. It's only pittance and a photo op. It's only a pittance compared to what we need and compared to what, I would argue, we deserve. Because as we all know, the equalization formula is not taking into account our circumstance in this province.

The health care transfers are not taking into account our geography and our demographics. It's not taking it into account; it's on a per capita basis. Obviously, if you're looking at a place like, say, Toronto or whatever and you have millions of people and there's population density and so on and all those dollars are coming in on a per capita basis, naturally they can do an awful lot more with it than we can do based on the geography, the demographics, the health of our population and the age of our population. We're just simply not getting our rightful due. We're not. Former Premier Williams wasn't wrong.

Now, should we have torn down the Canadian flag and start referring to the prime minister as Steve and all that kind of stuff? I said in this House before, at the time when it happened it felt good. I was calling him Steve too. I know a lot of Newfoundlanders were, absolutely, but we paid a price.

Right now, we have a situation where our provincial government and our federal government are supposedly aligned, same political stripe; they say that there's this great relationship. We've seen some things come to Newfoundland. Not denying that we haven't seen anything, we've seen some things, but most of it has only been federal programs that we're just getting our share.

Now, was there some work done on rate mitigation that we're all glad it happened? Absolutely. But even if you look at that really,

considering the fact that they signed off on both loan guarantees and they were clearly partners in all this, when you look at the actual cash – the Hibernia shares are something we've been after forever – we have to pay some of that back. We're getting some of the money over the next I forget how many years. On the end years of that money we have to pay, I don't know but about a third of it back to the federal government.

We're not getting a whole lot in terms of actual cash investment by the feds on this and they were party to it. They had their auditors review all the numbers and they thought it was a good project, just the same as the province did.

AN HON. MEMBER: They sanctioned it.

P. LANE: They sanctioned it but they don't have to take responsibility. So we need to do more, as far as I am concerned, to be lobbying Ottawa to get our fair share to help get us out of this mess. I encourage the government to do so.

CHAIR: Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Chair.

A great opportunity to have some brief comments in the 10-minute allocation that I have. Again, great to be able to speak and represent the wonderful District of Bonavista. I want to make a few – I seem like I am doing that quite often now – confessions to know that I misrepresented some figures.

In a public meeting in Bonavista last week, when myself and my colleague were sitting there, one question that came up from the group was how much are we spending on Come Home Year. Well, what I stated at that forum was I believe \$4 million to \$5 million, but I know since the budget I just want to correct. For those viewers listening now in Bonavista, which I am sure there are many, \$16 million. So \$16 million is what we're contributing.

I stated today in Question Period in personal income tax I thought the province was collecting \$1.2 billion. Well, it is \$1.666 billion. So \$1.666 billion is what that correct figure would be.

Before I move on to the budget – and I don't want to be redundant because I think the speakers before me commented on the \$2.7 billion – I, too, agree with my colleagues that have spoken before me that we see a whole lot of value in rolling over old debt to new debt. So that is as much as I'll say on that.

I would like to just take a minute or two to discuss Muskrat Falls. You'll say that's pretty bold of you to discuss Muskrat Falls but let me say this: The federal government, as my hon. friend and colleague for Mount Pearl - Southlands just said, were equal partners in Muskrat Falls. The Minister of Education said he was duped. We had four people in the House – the Minister of Education, he was duped. That seemed to be the trend line of a lot of people saying that they were duped with Muskrat Falls.

Was the federal government duped with Muskrat Falls? Is that conceivable? I don't know. Did they see merit in Muskrat Falls that maybe we weren't seeing, or those people who were questioning Muskrat Falls? Good question.

We're going to have power supplied to the Island. I can recall being in Clarendville – well, really, in George's Brook-Milton, but I taught in Clarendville. We looked at replacing the refinery out in Come By Chance. But the thing was we could never replace that refinery. Why we could never replace that refinery was that we never had the power. We didn't have the grid. Well, one thing Muskrat has done for us is that it's given us power. So one would hope that in the future years we'll see some development that will occur as a result of this transmission down that we will get some good revenue from as a result of this expenditure.

The Minister of Health and Community Services in the response for one question mentioned one time, in the answer to a question that was posed to him said we're going to pay \$500 million in perpetuity. We're going to pay \$500 million every year.

I reference my colleague from Mount Pearl - Southlands on a briefing for the rate mitigation and he had asked a question: Will any money be coming from taxpayers in this budget and future budgets to pay for Muskrat Falls? And the answer from the IET officials at that briefing –

and you can watch the conference – to my hon. Member was no. Those were the two from the briefing saying there will be no money coming from Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in this budget and future budgets. And I said: Wow, I scribbled that on a note. I called my hon. friend to say: Is that what I just heard? And he confirmed: Yes, it sure was.

In talking with the Minister of Finance recently, and I just asked for an explanation and she was gracious in providing the explanation – they weren't going to part with Hibernia money back then. In fact, if you recall when Hibernia was happening Charles Lynch, in the *Ottawa Sun*, was writing that it was a colossal mistake; it was a sinkhole. This massive slab of concrete is not even going to be able to get out on the Grand Banks. He said the federal government ought not to be paying in.

Well, did they come in? They came in with 8 per cent. Did we try to get it back? You bet your bottom dollar we tried to get it back because it was a big revenue generator for the federal government. Well, they were partners in Muskrat Falls. So what did they do? They came in with the Hibernia share which we wanted back for years and said we're going to give you this amount of money to offset the rate mitigation.

The Minister of Health and Community Services is referring to \$500 million that we didn't have. It is not the taxpayers' money paying the \$500 million; it is just the federal government's part to say we're partners in this project. We're going to give you that Hibernia share, \$500 million each year. Now you may say, well, if we never had Muskrat, we would have that \$500 million for something else.

But let me say, and I think you will all agree, you would not have the Hibernia money to spend –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. PARDY: – because it was tied with Muskrat. And for government to say, listen, here's \$500 million; it is not coming from the taxpayers, but it is coming from Hibernia – do I believe it is ours, Newfoundland and Labrador? I sure do.

Only due to Muskrat has it come to our province, and I don't think you should be throwing that out willy-nilly to say \$500 million in perpetuity, without giving the basis of where the \$500 million is coming from. And I just think that's the issue in that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. PARDY: I don't know what happens with time – my time is quickly running out. In the House today we talked about electric vehicles. I asked a question. I am not opposed to electric vehicles, but let me frame something for you. In the District of Bonavista, they're asking me why is the government investing in electric vehicles and charging stations in Bonavista when there are no electric vehicles and when they can't afford to travel to St. John's, as was said to other speakers.

But in Estimates, I asked a question to the minister: How many people are availing of the Oil to Electric Rebate? Well, there was 100 last year, 140 this year. So I had asked the question: Do you know the household income of the recipients receiving the money for the oil to electric? The minister did not know. I've had people in the District of Bonavista who say: We can't afford it. My hon. Member for Terra Nova spoke well the other day and mentioned about the cost that was \$15,000. If it's \$1,000 more than \$5,000, you can rest assured that a lot of people in my district are not going to be able to avail of it. The minister never had the answer to say how many are availing of it.

So let me throw this out. Imagine, 90 per cent of those 140 have household incomes in excess of \$150,000. This is in the \$142 million that we are putting back in. How many can avail of it with a household income of \$40,000 to \$60,000 or less? I would say very few. The plan did not accommodate those people.

John Risley – and if you don't read the *Atlantic Business Magazine*, I suggest you do because there is some great stuff. John Risley says: "Inflation makes us poorer." I end with the quote: "It erodes savings, purchasing power and most importantly, confidence. And it has a greater effect on those segments of the population who are least able to cope with it: people on fixed incomes, those who don't own

their own homes and those unable to earn their way to a position that keeps their standard of living at a constant level."

The only thing I am saying is that much of what we have done is not reaching those people with the low household incomes.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

E. JOYCE: Chair, it was a great speech, I say to the Member from Bonavista, a lot of information in that speech.

Mr. Chair, here we are debating a bill of \$2.7 billion. People know in the last while, the last five, six or seven months, I have been bringing up cataract surgeries. The cost of cataract surgeries right now out of that \$2.7 billion –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

It's just a little difficult to hear the MHA. Thank you.

E. JOYCE: The cost out of that \$2.7 billion, I say to the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, if you want to give 800 seniors of Western Newfoundland back their dignity, back their eyesight, be able to drive, be able to read their prescriptions – do you know how much it would cost for that out of the \$2.7 billion? Zero, because it would be no cost to the hospitals in Corner Brook or Stephenville – zero, not one cent.

I read *Hansard* just then, when I asked questions today to the minister. This is such an easy fix for the government. I asked the Member for St. George's - Humber to go and visit the people – I don't know if he did or didn't – to get the right information.

I'll say to the Member for Corner Brook, whoever is there, the Premier himself, when the Minister of Health and Community Services puts in a question – after I asked him a question,

he puts in: Well, if it's a problem with Sir Thomas Roddick Hospital, we'll look into it. But I have the email that they weren't even doing the surgeries.

For the minister to put it in writing that they could have been going to Sir Thomas Roddick Hospital, like what is the problem? It's 800 seniors. Is it a personality conflict? Is it some of the people you have your two heads together, I just don't know. But here are 800 seniors. There's \$2.7 billion. You don't need a cent.

For the Minister of Health and Community Services to write me and say the cost to do cataract surgeries at a hospital, which is a study that was done, his department, his ADM, was involved with it. It was done for the Medical Association. It went across Canada; it got 12 hospitals to see how much it costs. The medium price was, I think, \$1,105 or \$1,115. When you put the lens on that, it's over \$1,200. It's right in the Grant Thornton report.

And how the minister can take a part of that and say here's the cost. That might be just the direct labour cost, but then you have the consumables, then you have the heat and light for the hospital, then you have the other staff that have to clean it. When you combine it all together, it's over \$1,200. Expect me to take that for granted and just say, oh, there's a mistake here, when you can see it in the report, the Grant Thornton report.

I am just absolutely flabbergasted by this. It's an issue that can be taken care of tomorrow – start tomorrow. When the minister stated today – and this is personal for me, this is personal. I have no family member that needs cataract surgery, but it's personal because I know a lot of the seniors that do. I have no family that's trying to get cataract surgery. So when I say it's personal, it's the people I represent, Humber - Bay of Islands and obviously now Corner Brook, St. George's - Humber, also, and the Premier's district also now.

AN HON. MEMBER: Someone has to speak up for them.

E. JOYCE: Someone has to speak up for them.

I tried to work this out quietly, gave all the information, but, no, they won't even meet with the three specialists. Can you imagine? I can't get a meeting with the Premier of the province with three specialists, health care specialists, in Western Newfoundland. When we're crying for health care specialists, crying that we need more specialists. Here are three specialists the Premier won't even meet with – won't meet.

The other thing that the minister mentioned today is that the wait-list is up 97 cent – one eye done, national standard. The minister is well aware that I'm talking about wait-list two. What the wait-list two is now, it started April 1, the people that were put on wait-list two last year, before they had a consult, are now wait-list one. The ones who were wait-list two now are the ones that they're doing the consult and because of the quota system – and the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands got residents calling him now and got one today. Wait-list two are the ones that are being consulted now and can't be done until April 2023 because of the quota – can't be done until April 2023 because of the quota.

Then the final comment I'll make on that today. There's language you can't use because it would be unparliamentary, but when you read through the *Hansard* that I just got from the minister – it's time for other people to speak up on the government side, it's time. He said: I'd be glad to get the list from the ophthalmologist on the West Coast so we can put it into a provincial list.

In other words, people from Corner Brook, start coming to St. John's; people from the Premier's district, start coming to St. John's; people from Port aux Basques, start coming to St. John's; people from St. Anthony who can't get it done in Corner Brook now, start going to St. John's.

It's just unbelievable. But that's what he put on the provincial wait-list. So if it's a provincial wait-list then you can go anywhere in the province that opens up April 1 next year. It's wrong.

My blessed Lord, where did we lose the Liberal values that I worked with 50 years? Twelve years old, carrying a sign for Joey; 12 years old, carrying election signs around. Where did we lose the values? Someone on that side stand up

and tell me. The values of the people who need the assistance to lift them up. This is what I'm talking about here. I'm talking about the Liberal values. I'm talking about values where you have seniors, 800 seniors, who gave so much of their life to this province – so much of their life.

A lot of us right here in this House right now would not be able to be here if we never had seniors to make our lives better for ourselves. We wouldn't be here, none of us. All of our families, all these seniors made life better for us and here is the chance for us to give back and we just won't do it.

If it's a personality conflict, step aside. Get someone there that is going to work this out to get this done – my blessed Lord.

When I read the comments from the minister today – I just want to explain how the wait-list two – how they derive that. The Department of Health and Community Services spent \$250,000 to hire intake workers to clear up the list. Two of those workers are at the Apex building in Corner Brook. They took the list from all over Western Newfoundland and they start calling to see how many were duplicates, how many passed on and how many moved away. They came up with the list; wait-list one, which already had a consult and wait-list two who are referred to by, say, George Colbourne, waiting for the consult with the ophthalmologist.

That is the wait-list one. The people who have that list – and my colleague for Mount Pearl - Southlands said it correct: people remember when Ed Martin – when all the consultants had this report about the downfalls about the – oh, don't give me the report. Don't give me the report because I don't want to know the downside of it.

These reports are in Western Health's hands, they are there. Western Health is trying to give it to the Department of Health and the reports are still at Western Health; the wait-list, they're at Western Health. The people who paid for the report were the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador to do the wait-list from the Department of Health was \$250,000 to put intake workers to get that done. They got the work done and they are saying, okay, we can't go ahead and justify this here because we're

going to be passed the 112-day benchmarked if they put them on wait-list two or if we get them the consult.

I'm imploring upon the minister, take a bit of water, put into your wine and let's just try to get this done. I asked the Premier in the House several times if he would meet with those three specialists and he refuses to even answer a question on it. He refuses to answer the question.

I just have to say to the Premier of this province: There are three specialists out there who want to do their work and they want a meeting with the Premier of the province. You're saying we need specialists in this province, show them the respect and show the 800 residents of Western Newfoundland – seniors – who need the respect.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you very much.

I now recognize the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

C. TIBBS: Thank you very much, Chair. I appreciate the recognition.

I join my colleague when he talks about cataract surgeries. I had an older lady in Buchans, who had one done and not the other one, and they told her she had to wait six month for the next one. Tripped up in the sidewalk up in Buchans and nearly broke herself up. It's crazy. Our seniors, we've got to try to take care of them. Sometimes we can. Sometimes there's things we can't do, but this is definitely one thing –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

C. TIBBS: Yeah, a pothole.

This is definitely one thing that can be done and should be done, and I join the Member in his passion for the people in his district as well.

Choices, choices, choices; I'm going to pick up also where my colleague from Bonavista left off and talk about Muskrat Falls. I think they should change the name of equalization. Because it's not equal, obviously. So when I look, at the end of the day, what we got back from Muskrat Falls

because of our electricity rates, and now we are getting the due which we deserve when it comes to our offshore oil revenues, well now we're just a little tiny bit closer to equal, in my opinion. And that's what the federal government have to realize.

I said it this week before: I want to know the future of our offshore oil. I truly want to know this. I'm hoping to get some answers before this session is out. I will not accept the fact that Bay du Nord is the last project in Newfoundland and Labrador. I've got too many people I know throughout this province that love working in oil and gas. So for anybody who keeps continuously saying we need to transition those workers, we need to transition those workers – no, we don't.

We need to keep those workers there for right now, because Newfoundland and Labrador has a great future when it comes to oil and gas. We should be pushing it and putting ourselves on the world stage as some of the greatest oil and gas people in the whole world.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. TIBBS: We should be proud of that. We should be embracing that, not trying to cut it off and kick it out the door. What has that done for this province? So many things, and we need to ensure that we continue to let the world know that we're proud of it. So stop trying to diminish it. That's what I say about our offshore oil and gas.

I want to talk next about, like I said, choices that are made. If I'm hearing it correctly, when it comes from the government, when it comes to our fiscal situation, and correct me if I'm wrong, you're saying there's not a whole lot of new money for different programs or whatnot.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

C. TIBBS: Right, exactly. So that's exactly what I'm saying. If there's not a lot of money for programs, and people who need it, and we'll look at, you know, the Elizabeth Fry Society – my colleague from Harbour Main brought it up now quite a few times, and the great work they do. There's another group also, the Blue Door group. I've heard it many times, I guess, the red

door shut the Blue Door. And that's not good enough.

That Blue Door Program helped survivors of sexual exploitation here in Newfoundland and Labrador. It was an important program, and I know that a lot of people that that a lot of people depended on it. I read a lot about it recently. These are programs that are being cut, are told no, there's no money for that. But, by God, there's money for a Premier's office in Grand Falls-Windsor – a brand new Premier's office that has never been needed before and is not needed now.

So you tell me, when it comes to choices, we're going to tell these women's groups, these women that depend on these things for so many things, these women's groups that depend on government funding, to ensure their safety and their survival for the future, they are told no, there's no money for you, but there's money for the Premier's office, new money in Grand Falls-Windsor.

We want to make sure that we have –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

C. TIBBS: Sorry? I hope somebody stands and speaks after me. I really do because you will have the opportunity. Chair, please, take a look over there and see who wants to speak next, because I'd love for somebody else to get up and speak.

Those women's groups are told no, the money isn't there. But in Grand Falls-Windsor, there's brand new money, hundreds of thousands of dollars are going to be spent by this government in Grand Falls-Windsor on an office – the Premier may never even be there.

AN HON. MEMBER: No voices.

C. TIBBS: No voices, and that's exactly what we have to deal with.

So how can the people of the province swallow such a decision that's being made? We can't help these women's groups that are truly in need.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's offered by another organization.

C. TIBBS: Offered by another organization? There are lots of organizations out there, and I guarantee you they're a lot more important than the Premier's office in Grand Falls-Windsor. Let him have his office out here. Open one in Deer Lake, absolutely. Why don't they have one out there? People need stuff out there as well.

That's exactly what I'm going to say about this government when it comes to choices like that. I understand that we are fundamentally strapped when it comes to our finances, but by God how can you make these decisions, these choices? And it might seem like small pieces, \$200,000, \$250,000 there, but when it comes to people really depending on these services that they've had for so long, how can you expect them to swallow that at the end of the day? It makes no sense whatsoever.

Also, we had a huge debate here and it was a big hoopla, what ever you want to call it, about the changing of Red Indian Lake up in Millertown. The government sent people out, the minister came out and she gave up her time and she had some great discussions with people out there – and we appreciate it; we truly do.

For years and years, the Millertown people, who have put so much into that lake – it's now Beothuk Lake – have applied for ditching. Some simple ditching at Indian Point. That's the name of it: Indian Point. This is where the Beothuks stood. This is where they made their last stand. This is where they did their hunting, their fishing. There is so much history there. There are still artifacts that they're finding there, but it's being washed over and washed over. Year after year, Indian Point is going to be wiped out soon.

For years, the people of Millertown asked this government to spend some money, some simple money – not a lot – for some ditching. They asked again this year. They haven't heard back yet. So I'm asking: Is this more smoke and mirrors? Because we went out there. We made it all feel warm and cozy, talking about how we do truly care about the Indigenous people out there, their history and the stand that they made and how important it is to this province. But, at the

end of the day, everybody packed up their suitcases and got out of town and that's the last time we heard of them, after the name change was made.

Was that the most important thing? I'm sure it was important, but it's not the most important thing. The most important thing is to ensure that the Beothuk heritage is kept alive throughout our memories and our culture and to ensure that we can look back on it and say this was a part of our history. A beautiful people were part of our history. That Indian Point now, it's going to be wiped out very soon all because we can't get a little bit of money for ditching.

So again, smoke and mirrors and I'm going to call you out for it. It's absolutely pathetic, actually. So they've applied for that; they haven't heard back yet. I'm really hoping we're going to hear back about some of that ditching funding money that we can avail of to ensure that Red Indian Lake/Beothuk Lake and Indian Point can continue and people can go down there and you can see the mamateeks; you can see all kinds of stuff. They have billboards down there. The place is getting wiped out. You almost can't even drive down there anymore. And we have Come Home Year 2022 on the go – well, by God, we better hear about that soon. I'm going to keep asking about it until we get an answer.

The Minister of –

AN HON. MEMBER: Trout?

C. TIBBS: No, not trout.

The Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology talked today about the mining, and it's absolutely fantastic. He mentioned Marathon Gold, and I do thank him. I know how hard he and his people worked on this, and we really do appreciate it. But I would really like to sit down – I think I mentioned this before – and talk about an allocation of funds when it comes from revenue of big players when they come into a certain area, of putting it directly back into that area. Whether it be road upgrades or anything else.

Right now the Buchans Highway is absolutely terrible and we want to ensure that if we're

going to do mining in there, we have some big trucks coming back and forth there. We want to ensure that it's safe, first of all – that's the most important thing to us – that it's safe for the workers that are going back and forth. You're going to have busloads of workers, lots of mining equipment. We have to ensure that that highway is safe.

So I would ask that if there's any way we could separate that revenue eventually that comes in from Marathon Gold – and we're so thankful that Marathon Gold is here – we could take some of that money and put it directly into the district or into the place that these big companies are doing business. I think that it's only fair at the end of the day.

When we're talking about logging and our forestry, exact same thing. We've got logging trucks going back and forth through my district all day long. We recognize free enterprise, all we're asking is that the damage that these trucks are doing can be taken care of from the revenue government takes in. Not all of it, obviously, but a small portion of this revenue should go directly to the district that's being affected by these large logging trucks, mining trucks, whatever else.

We welcome business. We welcome outside business; we just want to ensure that business can continue in a safe manner by taking some of that revenue and putting it back into the district to ensure these businesses can be profitable.

Anyway, Mr. Chair, I really appreciate your time. In closing, I just want to say, if you can find money for a Premier's office, you can find it to give back to those women's groups that truly need it.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you very much.

I now recognize the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: Thank you, Chair.

I'm going to start with the statement: I've been there. I remember teaching, I spent half of my career driving either down the Burin Peninsula or up the Southern Shore – Trepassey, Ferryland, you name it, back and forth. My wife taught in town, so we were basically with two cars. But I do remember debit card roulette: Is today the day that the payment will be declined? Been through it: three children and wondered then how my parents did it with seven.

I remember, also – I don't know if anyone else here does – but in the '70s we had several oil crises, the first, I guess, of many of them. 1973-1979, I'm going to come back to that, but I want to point this out: an Arab-Israeli war, I wasn't too aware of the reasons, all I knew was that in about 1979 we had embargoes, we had shortages, we had lineups at the pumps and we had prices that soared. There was rationing in some cases. This has been the roller coaster with regard to the oil industry and so on and so forth. We've been there – I've been there when salaries weren't that high.

Now, I come back to this because what we've said here is that a budget is about priorities, and I do want to pick up on the comments that the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans said, because he talked about the Premier's office in his district.

It seems, in many ways, when it is a priority, government will have no problem coming up with the money. I give you one that we haven't talked about here today: the Rothschild report, \$5 million to an outside firm, an international company, to basically determine what assets we are going to sell off – \$5 million.

And I don't know what the cost of the office is, specifically, in Grand Falls-Windsor, but I can tell you that between that and the \$5 million we can do quite a bit of good for people in this province with that money. That much I can assure you.

The other thing that I am concerned with is that a budget that does not account for inflation. We thought last year with lumber was bad but this year it's going to be significant, the increase in food prices and so on and so forth. And I say this because an awful lot of community groups and community organizations who depend on

funding from government are going to have to bear the brunt of inflation. That means the people they serve are going to suffer, are going to feel the brunt of this inflation and really they are doing yeoman's work in terms of the services they provide that don't land on the agenda of government.

The other thing is that if we want to see how government can respond quickly, and I have heard the calls for to respond quickly, we have demonstrated that we can respond quickly to an emergency situation. I would argue that, yes, we are in an emergency situation right now for a lot of people.

Think of CERB: The pandemic struck and we quickly mobilized at a provincial and a federal level with a response to this that, basically, protected people. And maybe that's the response we need to look at here as to how do we put it into effect, the short-term solution to make sure that people are protected.

I am not a big fan, necessarily, of let's start giving breaks on the rebates on taxes for this reason. We want taxes to pay for the buses. I have heard petitions being brought forward to reduce the 1.6-kilometre rule, change that for busing. We want to be able to repair roads. We want to have long-term care facilities for our seniors and for people who need it, and supports in place for them. I want to see more investment in our schools. I want to see supports for our newcomers. All of that costs money.

Do I need a break at the pump myself? No, but I do believe that there are people and businesses that do need support at this time. It's throwing people – whether it's small businesses or individuals, that's support that they need. It's throwing the life ring.

I used to volunteer at a food bank, and a food bank is not an answer to poverty. It's not an answer to hunger, but it does, at that point, a lot of people work it into their budget and it helped at that point in time. But there has to be a longer term approach to this.

We've brought forward some of these in this House. We have an aging population. We've got to find some way to attract people here, younger people. We know that we've also got to find a

way, a long-term strategy to make sure that our seniors, our elderly, are able to age in place and have a healthy and prosperous old age, which means that those who wish to work are able to work and those who can't work are also supported.

I referenced Japan this afternoon, earlier. They're actually looking at long-term strategies.

So let's take a look at this. One of the things we have to start addressing, it's been on the agenda for as long as people have been earning income, a minimum wage. We have to start looking at long-term solutions to this. We have to start looking at a basic livable income.

In the end, a person's ability to deal with spikes in inflation is going to come down to income. How about a regional transportation system so that seniors who can't afford a car, or don't have a car, have a way to get around? That people who aren't in that position, they have a way. We have no regional transportation system. You go to any other major city, and between subways and bus systems, there are ways in which people – you can basically live without having to have a car. There are ways to do that. Let's turn our attention to that. Let's use those millions of dollars for that.

What is our long-term care strategy? I know in Japan they have long-term care insurance. How do we better support our community groups so that they can provide the services to create a community and help people in there? How do we make sure that housing is affordable for people, not only people who are on income support but those who are making – I think the dividing line for housing is \$32,000? I don't know about anyone else but if you're making over \$32,000, \$32,500 you're not making a lot of money. Good luck trying to afford the necessities of life.

But I'll end with this because in the end – it was in the news earlier this week that British Petroleum in its first three months made \$11 billion in profit. That is just one company: \$11 billion in profits. That is a windfall. Maybe we need to start looking at how do we get a piece of that action, you might say.

Secondly, in the long run, we're going to have to transition to a greener economy because if anything history has shown us, starting with 1973 and before that, I think in the '60s as well, that oil itself is highly volatile. We can be energy independent here through solar, wind power, through our hydro resources but somewhere along the line – and there is chance here to make a more prosperous and a more stable economy.

But I think, short term, we have to start looking at the people who are in need right now, the seniors who can't afford to fill up that tank of oil, the people on low income and those who are working at minimum wage but we've also got to make sure that we're looking after the long term. What is our long-term strategy?

Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you very much.

Any further speakers?

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

P. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is great to have another opportunity to speak to this budget – or I should say this bill, although it is all related to the budget. Mr. Chair, I just want to take a minute to sort of reflect on what my colleague for Humber - Bay of Islands – the issue he has raised in this House on numerous occasions. An issue that he just raised a few minutes ago and one that I brought up yesterday as well. I just want to take a minute to talk about the cataract surgery. I'm not going to repeat everything that my colleague has said, but just basically to support what he's saying and, as I said yesterday, to indicate that it's not just an issue on the West Coast, it's also an issue on the East Coast.

Yesterday, when I spoke, I recounted a conversation I had yesterday with a lady about her parents. Her father is 76 and her mother is 75, and he's a cancer patient. She's the sole caregiver. She has severe cataracts and she would have to wait about a year and a half, she was told, to get her cataract surgery.

But if she wants to pay \$3,200 per eye, she can go and have it done next week. It all comes down to the fact again we're talking about quotas. The same as the capacity exists at the Apex building, the capacity exists on the West Coast as well, but the issue comes down to is the will there by government, by the minister, to allow these seniors to get the cataract surgery they require.

I just received a message about an hour ago, from a different person. I'm just going to read this. She says: Hi, I just read your article concerning cataract surgery – this was on VOXM. My mother lives in Mount Pearl and has experienced the same difficulties. She is almost 82 years old; they did one eye and she is waiting months to have her second eye done.

Currently she now has two different visions. It's making her dizzy all the time and interferes with everything such as driving, cleaning, reading and watching TV. I just want to say thank you for bringing up the issue, as it's important. We're in a sad state; please don't stop fighting for our province. It's in desperate need of fighters. It's failing us all.

Now, this came in about an hour or so ago from a lady in Mount Pearl, a different person. Again, 82-year-old mother who needs cataract surgery and she's going to have to wait months to get her cataract surgery done.

So these are just two examples, one from today and one from yesterday. I've had other people reach out; the Member here has been raising this over and over again. The minister keeps playing games about the list, who's on the list, where you can get it done and so on, but the reality of it is that the capacity exists in Western Newfoundland and the capacity exists in Eastern Newfoundland. I don't know about Central; I can't speak to Central.

But I know on the East Coast and the West Coast, for sure, capacity is there. It can be done in a private clinic. The problem is that government have a quota and they're not funding everyone who requires this procedure to be done. I understand budgetary items; I get that. Although it's going to cost us the same money because, at the end of the day, if you don't do it this year, you're going to have to do it next year.

As a matter of fact, it might cost you more money because how many people who have cataract issues that may be severe now, it may be irreversible by next year, perhaps.

In the case of this lady and her husband I talked about yesterday, if she doesn't get it, she's not going to be able to be the primary caregiver for her husband. So what does that mean? Does that mean now they're going to have to get home care that we're going to pay for? Is he going to go into a long-term care home? I don't know. I'm not saying he is, but these are implications that could cost us more. It could cost us more.

We hear Sister Elizabeth and Dr. Parfrey talking about the social determinants of health and trying to prevent people from getting sick; catching things early so that it doesn't become a bigger issue down the road. That's why when we hear Members talk about insulin pumps and so on, the importance of an insulin pump so that we're not going to be paying for amputation surgeries and so on down the road and the huge cost associated to it. No different here with cataracts. It's another example.

Again, it's happening here on the East Coast as well. We can bury our heads in the sand and we can pretend it's not happening, but it is happening. I know I'm getting the calls. I know the Member here is getting calls. I know other Members are getting the calls. It is a reality.

When we're talking about cataracts in particular, we're talking about our senior citizens, primarily. Imagine an 82-year-old lady, and now this is affecting her ability to drive, her ability to read, her ability to take care of her own personal hygiene, clean her house, everything else she needs to do. It's all impacted by this.

This other lady we talked about yesterday, it's impacting her ability to care for her husband, who is a cancer patient. This is serious stuff. I think the government, the minister, really needs to look at what we're doing here to our seniors. Imagine our seniors in the twilight of their lives – because some of us are never going to make it to be seniors and who knows how long we're going to be on this Earth. But surely goodness, you make it to the age that you're a senior and so on, you want to live with some quality, some dignity and so on.

So, imagine, here you are a senior and now you are basically house bound, totally dependent. You have someone who is independent, they are able to go out to the seniors' club and whatever, able to get their groceries, able to drive, whatever. Now, all of a sudden, we are going to say to that senior – they get cataracts – and they need their cataract surgery: Sorry, you're going to have to wait for a year or a year and a half down the road. You have to go home and stay in the house. Get someone else to pick up your groceries. Get someone else to drive you. You can't do the things you normally did. Over what? Over a few dollars. But if you have the money, the capacity is there. You could dip into your bit of savings – \$3,200 per eye. Go for it.

What if you don't have the money? Then you can't do it. No different than – this is a bigger scale, of course – the nurse practitioner in Central Newfoundland and other areas, filling a very important gap that exists with primary care, no doubt about it. But at the same time, you need health care and you have no doctor; you need some primary care. Here is an opportunity: nurse practitioner clinic, but it is going to cost you \$30 or \$35 a pop every time you go there. You need to get your prescription, no problem, go over there: \$35. You need some other services that they can provide, no problem: \$35.

What if you can't afford the \$35? Now we are into a two-tier health care system. That's what we are into. The very thing that we have all been critical as Canadians, critical of the American system. Right? We have all always been so proud of our universal health care system in this country and always been very critical of the American system: survival of the fittest, pay for service, privatization. Here in Canada, we have always prided ourselves on the fact that we have universal health care.

So here we are now in a country with universal health care, I should be able to get the same services in Newfoundland and Labrador as I am going to get in Ontario, or Quebec, or British Columbia, or Saskatchewan, or in the Northwest Territories, any other place in this country it should be equal access. But, no, here in Newfoundland and Labrador, if you are one of the 100,000 – imagine 100,000 – people who don't have a family doctor, for some of you there is an option. If you have money, if you

have cash in your pocket, you can go to a clinic and you can pay for it out of pocket. If you need your cataracts done: \$3,200 an eye, no problem. Otherwise, you're out of luck. Not good enough I would say, Mr. Chair.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The Member's time is expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: I recognize the hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to stand just to have another few words on a few other topics, but I thank the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands for bringing concerns ahead for his own area. I heard the Member today from Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans bring up concerns about cataract surgery for his own district, also. So this is not just in one area. This is a provincial thing. So this, as you can see, if we never ever discussed this – the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands got calls from his constituents, he got on Open Line about it and people started calling him.

So this is not an issue just because I'm bringing this issue up. This is an issue across the province now, people are realizing, oh, we can fix this.

What amazes me more than anything, we have three specialists in Western Newfoundland – I'm speaking on behalf of Western Newfoundland. I'm asking, I'm imploring the Premier of the province to sit down with the three specialists, bring in the Minister of Health and Community Services, bring Western Health in and get this resolved.

Is that a complicated thing to give back 800 seniors their eyesight? The Premier of this province – I remember when Clyde Wells was the MHA, Clyde Wells would go and sit down in somebody's kitchen and people would say: The premier is in there? The premier treated everybody the same. Premier Clyde Wells – if you were a resident of Newfoundland and

Labrador, especially in Humber - Bay of Islands, if you had a concern, I want to hear it.

I see the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair – there's people down there also that contacted me, they need eye surgery and some have to go to Corner Brook. So this is not just associated with Humber - Bay of Islands, this is all Western Newfoundland now, Central Newfoundland and now it's in the Mount Pearl area. How many more people can contact you to do this?

The Member for St. George's - Humber, I know I gave him the opportunity to go meet and get all the information. The Member for Corner Brook has the information. The Member for Baie Verte - Springdale has the information. The Premier has the information. So what more can a person do on behalf of the seniors then to ask people. Ask the people in government, especially the Liberal government that I was such a part of, that I helped when half the people there didn't even know what the word Liberal was, wouldn't be seen with a Liberal. I kept the Liberal banner going because I believed in the values, and I still do.

I still do believe in the values of the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador. I still do. But when you leave 800 seniors from the West Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador who can be easily taken care of, give them back their quality of life, I feel you left the Liberal values of Newfoundland and Labrador. I really feel that. I honestly, truly feel that.

When you have an easy solution and you have everybody around that wants to help and solve this, right from the intake workers, from the three specialists, from Western Health, everybody involved. The seniors are around protesting. Yet, we just can't get the government to get them all together and work out this solution.

I will make a commitment here and I'll put it on the record. If the Premier of this province and the Minister of Health sits down with Western Health and the three specialists on the West Coast and goes through the whole process, you won't hear me bring it up again.

P. LANE: And you'll even take their picture.

E. JOYCE: I'll even take their picture.

I will stay out of it, because that would be my job done. So they can get the information, because when I get the information from a minister and I have it right in front of me, this is not what the Western Health is actually saying. This is not correct. This is just not correct.

When you get the costing, you say oh, no, it costs more. When their own report, which the Department of Health has – the Department of Health has the Grant Thornton report. I just can't sit here and listen to the information saying oh, well, it's more expensive when you have a report in front of you right there that says it's not. So it's not me saying well, it's me against you or you against me. It's the information that I have in front of me.

I'm speaking to the people in Western Health. I'm speaking to the professionals in Western Newfoundland. The people at Western Health that's involved with the cataracts want this done. They know about the wait-list. They're trying to say we have a wait-list here.

So people right now who's going to be seen by an eye doctor, George Colbourne, or whoever, have to wait until next April 1 to start getting their eyes done. What we're doing now – from April 1 now – are the ones that were on wait-list two who moved up to wait-list one.

Anyway, I can't do it anymore. I can't, except to get down and beg, to ask on behalf of the seniors. If that would work, I would do it because I'm so passionate about this, yet it just won't be done.

The next time that you're in caucus, or in Cabinet, ask them how many people are getting calls about this in Western Newfoundland. Ask them how many people. Or why don't someone pick up the phone, phone Western Health and say who's on wait-list one. How many people do we have on that wait-list? The minister may be right; they can start going to Stephenville – I don't know if they can yet, but soon if they can go to Stephenville. But there's a problem with it. The machinery is outdated, and the packages that they use, you can only use half the package. When you come from Apex, you have to take their half, throw out \$300 worth of materials.

You can't use it, because it can't fit the machine, the machine is so outdated.

I mean that's facts. That's coming from Western Health to me. Why doesn't someone pick up the phone, phone Western Health and say is information correct? That's all, and you'll see it is correct. I'll keep pleading on behalf of the seniors in Western Newfoundland, but we shouldn't have to. We definitely shouldn't have to.

I implore – and I've asked the Premier personally to meet with everybody, get everybody in a room, and work out a deal of how we're going to get rid of the cataract wait-list in Western Newfoundland. Now it's for Central; now it's for the St. John's region. There got to be a way. There just has to be a way to have this matter addressed.

I'll speak again probably tomorrow. We have another few issues tomorrow on the carbon tax, when that bill is brought in, I'll have a chance to speak about money again tomorrow. But then again, I ask the Members from the West Coast, make the call to Western Health. Make the call to the Apex building. Get the information yourself. I have documentation on what it costs. I have documentation when they could have done the surgery out in Stephenville. I'll just let you know, if you do it out in Stephenville again and you can't do it as efficient and you can only do it certain days of the week, the wait-list is going to get larger and larger.

That is the reason why if you did it at the Apex building, you could do it more efficient, you could do it weekends, which you can't do in hospitals. You would get rid of the wait-list.

I'll leave that alone right now, because I want to bring up, for the last minute and a half that I have, about nurse practitioners. Once again, as I said, I would say there are close to 5,000 visits now from people in the Corner Brook-Bay of Islands area for the three nurse practitioners that set up office. I've asked the minister to meet with them, and I understand that the bargaining unit is the Nurses' Union, but they do have an association to sit down and I ask the question here. I ask the question on behalf of the people of Western Newfoundland: How long do we need to wait to negotiate when we see seniors

who can't get their prescriptions filled without doing something to fill in the gap? How long must we wait? We know what the problem is. We have a solution. All we have to do is fix the solution until negotiations are finished.

I don't think you realize how serious it is. I am sure you are getting calls or it must be just the Opposition and myself and the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands. The Opposition must be getting the same calls for sure. So that means the government must be getting the same calls. When you have seniors who can't get their prescriptions filled and you have nurse practitioners who are willing to do the work – they've got a shop set up and we are saying that we are going to go and wait for negotiations when we could put a stopgap measure in so seniors don't have to go through this pain and we won't do it, there's something fundamentally wrong with the values of the Liberal Party. It's not the Liberal Party that I knew and I have supported and been a part of for so many years.

CHAIR: Order, please!

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

I do rise to speak to this budget. I understand we are a victim of the system of ourselves and we do have obligations and stuff to make when it comes to the debt we carry and the choices we make, but sometimes the choices we make don't have to be the choices we make. We can make other choices and stuff, and we have brought solutions there. We talk about the cost of living. We also talk about debt.

And one of the things we do talk about and we brought to this place twice is a committee to look at some form of basic income or poverty reduction strategies and we have voted in this House twice on the same thing. Strike that committee to have the ability to explore different ways that we could actually help the population of this province. You know, we have the ability to rise a lot of people out of poverty by just changing some of the choices that we have made and, going forward, the choices that we make.

Sometimes, by lifting a lot of people out of poverty, you save a lot of money later down the road. That is the thing that we have to look at is, yes, things that cost us today are also the things that is going to cost us down the road.

If I am not mistaken – I am not sure if it was the hon. Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands but someone has said that the choice you make today may not have an effect today but it will have an effect 30 years down the road. And so the choices we make today do have a long-term effect and a short-term effect. By looking at what we do now today in the sense of addressing poverty and the cost of living and stuff, potentially has a positive effect 30 years down the road. And that's how far down we should be looking.

We have short-term needs that we have to address today, but also we have to look at the long game and play the long game when it comes to choices that we make. One of those was, in the early 2000s, Labrador West got together and did a study on seniors' care because they knew, at that point in time, there wasn't a lot of seniors still living in Lab West. But now, almost 22 years later, we have a surging population of seniors with no care.

So this is the thing, we have to keep looking at the long game, the game that actually plays out. That's where I think that when we do budgetary things, what's going to happen now in five years, what's going to happen in 10 years? If we change this now, what's going to happen?

We have a lot of data; we have lots of it. We collected enormous amounts of data in this province. We can project a lot of this stuff. We have reports, we have studies and we have things. And looking at the longer term effects of a lot of the things we do today is what we need to look at down the road.

So one thing, probably the best thing, is looking at, today, poverty. How do we reduce poverty? How do we lift people up? And that's one aspect. Seniors – how do we give them the proper care and the attention that they deserve? I'm here today, but it's not really that far down the future that I will be a senior, and many of us here. So we have to look what is going to be in place for when we get to that point, and many of

the other people of this province when they become seniors.

I did raise the question to the Minister of Health about our plans with pharmacare and are we talking with Ottawa about that. He did mention about the deal signed between Prince Edward Island and the feds. That's a great long-term strategy that they're ahead of the curve on when it comes to that. Because by getting as fast and efficient as we can to introduce pharmacare into this province, it will have a greater effect down the road. It's a great long-term thing. It may help some people today, but at the end of the day, as we project, it's going to help a lot more people down the road. And that's the idea of budgeting, too, are projections and long-term viability.

Same thing with a basic income. Prince Edward Island once again beat us to the punch. They're now gone to Ottawa to ask about a pilot for that in their province. And the thing is, implemented correctly it'll be a viable program long-term down the road to lift a lot more people out of poverty and give people security, especially seniors and people on fixed incomes now. Because we're riding the wild wave of inflation in this country right now. What effects will this have five, 10, 15 years when we come back to it?

So by implementing some good solutions now, gives us a lot of breathing room down the road. And it goes to all kinds of other projects and stuff here that we really need to have a serious conversation about. What are we doing tomorrow? What are we going to do for the population tomorrow? And we do have some very immediate needs, emergencies now, too, but we also have to think about maybe some solutions today will also help further down.

That's where we really need to be, is thinking about the future, about the possibility, because we're in a whole new world economically and post-pandemic. The economy and the world of 2019 is a long ways past now and what the world looks like ahead is not going to be the same as it was in 2019. Things have changed dramatically. You just look at the surging of large multinational corporations who made massive amounts of profit during the pandemic and now are making massive amounts of profit during this energy crisis.

Because they've managed to gain such an amount of power and control that they are taking us to the cleaners, to be honest, the whole population of this province and this country, these large multinational corporations. Left unchecked, the pillaging of our pockets will continue. So we have to have a conversation about how do we deal with these large multinational corporations and how do they integrate into our province and how do they operate within our province.

When it comes to gas prices, food prices and the industries go on and on, it's because these large multinational corporations have bought out every small mom-and-pop shop and everything like that over the last decade, now they have amassed a massive amount of wealth. Now, we're suffering for it, because of things we've done in the past to not keep it in check. And now, unfortunately, we're left here now in this situation. So long term down the road is a very good thing we should be looking at because a decision we make today has an effect later on.

Sometimes we don't plan with foresight, but we do collect data, we do collect the information and we do have experts in the field that we should be turning to, to find out how do we plan this, how do we find a way that we, as a population, can make sure that we're setting ourselves up for success. And that's where we should be. How do we set ourselves up for success and don't find us in the same situations over and over and over again. Because that's what we find. If you look at trajectories, it's like ups and downs like a dog's stomach. Instead, we should be on a nice plateau and have a real good vision of where we want to be.

I know we can't predict for everything. No one could predict the pandemic, but we can predict oil prices, pretty good, and we can use world data to find out ways to mitigate as much as possible. But, unfortunately, in some cases that we've been in, we were going from crisis to crisis to crisis. At some point in time, it needs to end and we need to find a way to put it to an end and have some stability around us, so that the residents of this province can find some peace of mind and comfort knowing that it might not be great, but it can't be what we're dealing with today.

I did mention to the minister some options that I thought were great options looking at taxing hydroelectricity. Why are we taxing public services when it comes to hydroelectricity? Many households, ratepayers, is there a way that we can reduce the amount of taxes that they're paying there? Maybe it a few dollars, or a couple of hundred dollars back in their pockets, to help with the energy costs. Are there other kinds of things, services that we provide that's a public service that we're taxing but we shouldn't be really taxing?

It's a small gesture of compassion to the people of this province to find these things. But, at the same time, we have to find a control on what we do tax and what we don't tax, especially when it comes to things that are public services.

But let's think long term. Let's set ourselves up for success. Let's also set ourselves up to be successful to the people of this province and to find ways that we show that we have to be compassionate and caring and think about the needs of them. But at the same time, we have to understand their needs and why some people are falling behind and why people are having trouble accessing health care. We need to look at the bigger picture of this. Maybe it's a long-term problem in the system that continues to fail them, or continues to diminish their success, and we need to find ways that we can do this. With that is good budgeting.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Any further speakers?

Shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

The resolution is carried

On motion, resolution carried.

A bill, "An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province." (Bill 47)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 6 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 6 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 6 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province.

CHAIR: Shall the long title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, long title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report Bill 47, An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province, carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 47.

CHAIR: The motion is the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 47.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

The motion is carried.

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

SPEAKER (Bennett): The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

P. TRIMPER: Thank you, Speaker.

The Committee of Ways and Means have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

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

When shall the report be received?

S. COADY: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

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

"That it is expedient to bring in a measure to authorize the raising from time to time by way

of loan on the credit of the province a sum of money not exceeding \$2,700,000,000.”

On motion, resolution read a first time.

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member for Mount Pearl North, that the resolution now be read a second time.

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

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

Motion carried.

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

“That it is expedient to bring in a measure to authorize the raising from time to time by way of loan on the credit of the province a sum of money not exceeding \$2,700,000,000.”

On motion, resolution read a second time.

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member for Placentia - St. Mary’s, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province, Bill 47, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury

Board have leave to introduce a bill, Bill 47, and that said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

Motion carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a bill, “An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province,” carried. (Bill 47)

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province. (Bill 47)

On motion, Bill 47 read a first time.

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that Bill 47 be now read a second time.

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

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

Motion carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province. (Bill 47)

On motion, Bill 47 read a second time.

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

Motion carried.

S. COADY: Thank you, Speaker.

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

I move, seconded by the Member for St. George's - Humber, that Bill 47 be now read a third time.

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

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 47 be now read a third time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province. (Bill 47)

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 Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 47)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

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

SPEAKER: 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.'