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HANSARD

*Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA*

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

Before we begin, I would like to welcome some people in the public gallery. First of all, Mayor Maisie Clark from the beautiful District of Lewisporte - Twillingate, the mayor of Campbellton.

Welcome Mayor Clark.

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

**SPEAKER:** Also, in the public gallery, I would like to welcome Danielle Morin, vice-president of the Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador; and Gaël Corbineau, executive director of the Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador.

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

**SPEAKER:** They will be here for a Ministerial Statement today.

Also, I'd like to recognize one of our pages, Leisha Toory. Leisha is helping the community through Period Priority Project. She collects donations of menstrual products and delivers them to local charity groups such as the women's shelter, food banks and Indigenous groups. In just four days, from May 16 to 20, the Period Priority Project distributed more than 400 menstrual products to the various groups.

Thank you.

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

### Statements by Members

**SPEAKER:** Today we will hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Exploits, Placentia - St. Mary's, Humber - Bay of Islands, Baie Verte - Green Bay and Ferryland.

The hon. the Member for Exploits.

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

On May 26, 2022, I had the opportunity to attend a volunteer barbeque in the Town of Point Leamington in the beautiful District of Exploits.

The Town of Point Leamington held its barbeque to show appreciation to its local volunteers and volunteer associations. Some of the volunteer organizations that were honoured at this includes: the town council, fire department, recreation and heritage committee, amongst many others that serve the Point Leamington area. These volunteers are an amazing asset to this community and all throughout the Exploits District, and indeed our province.

Speaker, I would like for all Members of this House of Assembly to join me in thanking all the volunteers in the Town of Point Leamington, and all of the volunteers throughout the District of Exploits, and Newfoundland and Labrador for their hard work, dedication and contributions to our society.

Thank you.

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

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

**S. GAMBIN-WALSH:** Speaker, in 1779, the Battery was erected in St. Mary's to protect the coastal areas and the prominent fishing grounds from privateers. The Battery remained active until 1815 through the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812.

The Battery volunteer restoration committee has worked hard to restore the site, an important regional artifact. They have created a park, which attracts visitors to St. Mary's as they travel around the Irish Loop on the Southern Shore.

The park has cannons and various benches to enjoy the waterfront view. There are picnic tables, if you wish to bring a snack and lots of interpretative panels to learn more about the history of the area.

There is a copy of the *HMS Proteus*, where you can get your photo taken and a number of directional arrows of local communities and

those far away. The playground is dedicated to Sister Elizabeth Bonia. The park is also a starting point if you wish to hike the coastal trail to the Gulch Beach and Gaskiers-Point La Haye.

Join us on Saturday, August 6, as the Gulch Beach committee along with the St. Mary's Car Club hosts the annual Gulch Beach Festival, followed by a week long of Come Home Year festivities.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

**E. JOYCE:** I rise today to recognize the Templeton Tigers boy hockey team who won the double A provincial boys ball hockey tournament held this past weekend at Templeton Academy in Meadows.

Coached by Barry Park and Fabian Lovell, the Templeton boys won in the final championship round against King's Academy from Harbour Breton, nine to five.

Seven teams participated in the tournament including Fogo Island Central High, Canon Richards Memorial from Flower's Cove, J. M. Olds from Twillingate and St. Michael's Regional High from Bell Island and Labrador Straits Academy from L'Anse au Loup. All teams displayed great sportsmanship and team spirit, but the Labrador Straits Academy received the team sportsman banner.

Templeton Tiger players included Kalan Murrin; Evan Janes; Joshua Hann; Marcus Wells; Carter Burton; Curtis Murrin; Wade Mullins; David George; Reggie (RJ) Ruth; Nick Greening; Jordan Blanchard; Ben Brake, who received the sportsman award; and Ethan Janes who received the most valuable player award

I ask all Members to join with me in extending congratulations to the Templeton Tigers on their gold medal win and to all the teams for a great tournament and the great group of volunteers, coaches, referees and parents who made this

such a successful event for the seven teams and all high school students.

Thank you.

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

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

**B. WARR:** Speaker, I rise to acknowledge a constituent of Jackson's Cove, a published photographer, *Within Wild Shores: A Photographers Ode to Newfoundland* by Mr. David J. Tilley.

As portrayed in the *Ode to Newfoundland*, photographer David Tilley, captures our smiling, frozen wind-swept land; from sunrises to sunsets; from wild waves to pine-clad hills; from shortened day to starlit night; the colours of each season to the captivating sunset following a gorgeous summer's day; the lobster pots anticipating a great harvest to the stare of a bull moose showcasing his antlers.

Mr. Tilley clearly has a unique gift to capture the beauty of our glorious province, from a spider's web to the rain droplets on a maple leaf. His publication includes all aspects of our province, including weather-beaten wharfs and seafaring fishing vessels, the internationally known tablelands, to our province's uniquely named communities, including Nickey's Nose

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Dave Tilley for his remarkable undertaking and breathtaking photography of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

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

I rise today to recognize and congratulate a wonderful group of volunteers from the Town of Ferryland and surrounding area.

On Sunday, March 27, I was glad to attend a fundraiser in aid of relief for Ukraine at the Legion in Ferryland. A great show of kindness from all involved that gave so freely of their time by donating baked goods and homemade crafts and as well those who donated gift certificates and cash. Along with people who donated items, there was a great show of support from some very talented musicians that performed.

Last but not least, a big thank you to the Legion in Ferryland for providing the venue. The event raised over \$2,000 that was given to the Red Cross to help with the devastation that is happening in Ukraine.

Speaker, I ask all Members of this House to join me in congratulating the Ukraine Relief Organizing Committee in Ferryland on a job well done.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** Statements by Ministers.

#### Statements by Ministers

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs.

**S. STOODLEY:** Speaker, I'm pleased to recognize today as Provincial Francophonie Day. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has celebrated this occasion since 1999. This morning I was pleased to participate in a flag-raising event organized by the Francophone Federation of Newfoundland and Labrador. I was honoured to join students from école Rocher-du-Nord and members of the community. Similar events are taking place elsewhere today in places like Port au Port and Labrador.

Je travaille de près avec la Fédération des francophones afin de déterminer les meilleures

façons pour le gouvernement de répondre aux besoins de notre communauté francophone.

Also, the Office of French Services provided critical public health information in French throughout the pandemic.

Monsieur le Président, la semaine dernière je suis allée avec le ministre de l'Éducation ainsi qu'avec des membres de la communauté francophone visiter les nouveaux locaux de l'École Rocher-du-Nord. Nous voulons les aider à faire de ce lieu une nouvelle plaque tournante de la communauté.

Today I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating the francophone and Acadian community of Newfoundland and Labrador on this Provincial Francophonie Day.

Thank you.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, I want to thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. On behalf of the Official Opposition I join in recognizing Provincial Francophonie Day. I was honoured to attend the celebration earlier this morning and thank those who helped organize the event.

I also wish to recognize community leaders in my district for planning today's celebrations in Port au Port. Stephenville - Port au Port has a proud francophone history and culture. I am equally proud to represent an area of the province where the first language of many residents is French. These residents have taught me so much about supporting their culture and language as a way to help encourage strong and diverse communities.

I encourage all residents of the province and visitors alike to come visit the Port au Port Peninsula and celebrate the French festivals that will happen this summer in Stephenville - Port au Port. You will not be disappointed.

Thank you.

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

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

**J. BROWN:** Merci, président.

Je remercie la ministre de m'avoir fourni une copie de sa déclaration. La communauté francophone est un élément vital de cette province. Des cultures différentes nous rendent plus forts en tant que société.

My French language skills are not perfect, but I continue to try and learn. So I call upon government to ensure that immersion resources are available for French, but also for our province's Indigenous languages so that everyone has an opportunity to learn and grow in this province.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** Are there any further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

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

In the Liberal five-point plan, and again in the budget, the Minister of Finance said she was doing all she could afford to do.

Why did it take the Premier almost three months to recognize his Finance Minister was actually not doing as much as she could to help the suffering people of Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

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

Of course the Minister of Finance was doing as much as she could, with \$142 million within the

budget. As I said, and as we have said, we are always responsive to the situation, the dynamics of the world economy and the Canadian economy and then, frankly, how it impacts Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Part of this job is being dynamic; part of it is being responsive. We're listening; we're trying to absorb the financial realities of our province in the face of global turmoil and then adjusting the ship accordingly. Mr. Speaker, and I think the Minister of Finance has done a remarkable job in doing so.

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

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

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

The people of Newfoundland and Labrador have been suffering for the last three months again, with not knowing exactly how they were going to deal with the cost of living.

Will the Premier admit the only reason he directed additional measures on Thursday was because the intense public backlash over the Liberals' failure to act was becoming a political liability?

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

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

As we've said many times, we need to be flexible; we need to be dynamic. This is a changing situation, as we've seen, throughout the world. Coming out of a pandemic, who could have predicted that? Who could have predicted a war in Ukraine, Mr. Speaker? We need to be responsive, we need to be dynamic and those are real forces at play in the world economy that trickle down to the forces in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker.

We are responsive, we have listened and we continue to listen, and that subsequently added extra measures as you saw last week, Mr. Speaker. And I think the people of Newfoundland and Labrador understand that, and they appreciate it.

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

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

**D. BRAZIL:** Mr. Speaker, why did the Premier not act for nearly three months, while the Finance Minister allowed the people of the province to do without, knowing she had an extra \$80 million to work with?

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

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

I appreciate the question. I will say to the Member opposite, Newfoundland and Labrador has done more to help the people of the province on the cost of living than any other province in this country, Speaker.

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

**S. COADY:** I will say to the Member opposite that we have gone above and beyond this; we have done everything that we can do –

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

**S. COADY:** I hear the chirping across the way again, Speaker, interrupting –

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**S. COADY:** – the response, but I'll endeavour on. These are extraordinary times. We did provide \$142 million of support within the budget. As we've seen, the price of fuel continuing to rise, we acted to help the people of the province and that's why we introduced two new measures last week, including the lowering of the gas tax and a supplement in the fall for the home heat.

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

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

**D. BRAZIL:** Mr. Speaker, I guarantee you the hundreds of thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who are suffering are saying you didn't do enough.

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

**D. BRAZIL:** We don't really care too much about other provinces at this point when it comes to suffering Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

The Liberal five-point plan: strike one. The Liberal budget: strike two. With the minister now up at bat for a third time, does the Premier believe that finally this time she has done as much as she can to help the people of Newfoundland and Labrador? Or is it strike three and you're out?

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

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

I'll address that question: \$222 million we've returned to the people of the province. That is over \$4 million a week that we're returning to the people of the province. And we're holding on to our financial measures, that we know we have to put in place because, of course, we're borrowing \$351 million this year.

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**S. COADY:** I'll say to the Member opposite, we've hit it out of the ballpark and we're going to continue to work hard on behalf of the people of the province.

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

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

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

I will have to note, there is nobody in the ballpark watching you hit it out because they can't afford to be there right now.

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

**D. BRAZIL:** When the new sugar tax kicks in this year, on top of the higher carbon tax, the gas tax relief suddenly ends at Christmas –

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**D. BRAZIL:** – and the one-time heat rebate is gone, will the Premier continue to tell suffering families his Finance Minister has hit a home run?

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

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

I have to say, the Member opposite is –

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

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

**S. COADY:** The Member opposite keeps making analogies to baseball. I'll say this, Speaker, we're working hard on behalf of the people of the province. I think the people of the province understand that we are borrowing this money, \$351 million this year, and we're still going to provide support.

That is because, on this side of the House, we are strong financial managers, Speaker. We have lowered the deficit; we are going to continue to lower the deficit. We are going to continue to provide support for the people of the province. Unlike the Members opposite who gave us things like a record deficit of \$2.2 billion, as well as Muskrat Falls.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, it does nothing for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to hear the Minister of Finance stand up and talk about Muskrat Falls. They're talking about what are you going to do for them today.

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**T. WAKEHAM:** In relation to the announcement –

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

If you want to waste Question Period arguing back and forth, we can.

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** So, Speaker, I will ask the Minister of Finance: The announcement made last week, is the home heating rebate non-taxable, and when will the people be able to apply and receive their cheques?

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

**S. COADY:** Finally, a reasonable and responsible question on behalf of the people of the province.

I will say to the Member opposite, we –

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**S. COADY:** – have to discuss with the Revenue Agency of Canada. Speaker, they will give the final ruling. But we understand the \$500 that we'll be providing to families, who earn a family income of under \$100,000, will not be taxable. That's what we understand; it will not be taxable.

In the coming weeks, we will set up a portal as well as a telephone line to allow people to apply. The cheques that will be provided will be provided likely the end of September, early October of this fall.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, we're glad that the government and the minister have finally realized that the people need a home heating

rebate. But I ask, again: Why do we have to wait until October? They really need that money back in their pockets now.

So again I ask: What does it take so long to process this and can people start applying? How quickly can we make this happen?

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

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

I will remind the Member opposite, as I've reminded him in this House, the home heat rebate is rolled into the Income Supplement and the Seniors' Benefit. We are giving a one-time supplementary payment for those that heat their homes with oil. It will be provided in September.

This is not the time of the year when oil heat is utilized greatly. We are going to wait until September when we know people will be filling their tanks, getting ready for the fall. It does take a number of weeks, of course, to get the information that we need from the Canada Revenue Agency, as this is income tested.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, I appreciate the response from the minister again, but I would suggest that the pocketbooks and the chequebooks and the bank accounts of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador have already been emptied by the high cost that they've already paid for fuel over the past heating season. So let's not talk about next heating season. Let's reimburse them for what they've already spent so far to date.

Speaker, the gas tax relief is scheduled to end on New Year's Day. The House will be closed, but gas prices might still be up.

So I ask the minister: Will you remove the automatic sunset clause on this tax relief so the relief stays in place as long as it's needed?

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

**S. COADY:** First of all, Speaker, we have provided relief for the people of the province. We increased the Income Supplement by 10 per cent. We increased the Seniors' Benefit by 10 per cent.

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**S. COADY:** We provided a special payment this spring to those that are on income support. We provided them up to \$400 for their family. So we have been providing supports.

We also reduced, by 50 per cent, the cost of registering your vehicles and we also removed the retail sales tax on your home insurance. Speaker, so we have already been providing support. This is additional support.

There is a sunset clause, January 1, 2023; this is an important measure that we have to put in place. We'll review this in the fall.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, of everything that the minister just said, the one thing she failed to say was that the Premier and the minister both acknowledge that what they had done in the budget was not enough. If it wasn't for this side of the House arguing for those additional measures, we'd never have them.

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** So I go back and ask the minister again: Inflation has no sunset clause so we need to know will you eliminate that particular date and keep it until the people need it, as long as prices stay up?

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

**S. COADY:** These are extraordinary measures and extraordinary times. This government has



worked very, very hard on behalf of the people. We've provided \$142 million and the price of inflation continues to rise. We're concerned about that. This is happening all across Canada; it's happening all around the world. We've responded to what we heard. We responded to the increasing costs and we'll continue to respond.

That's \$222 million, Speaker, that we have been able to provide back to the people of the province. We're working very hard to make sure that we recognize and respond to people's requirements, because of the high cost of living. We'll continue to do so.

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

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

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

Last week, the province learned of the tragic story of Ashley Molloy, a vibrant young mother of two living in Harbour Breton.

Speaker, I spoke with her mother. She can see the local hospital from their front step, but, tragically, the emergency room was closed. If this emergency room wasn't closed due to the failure of this government, Ashley might be tucking her kids to bed tonight.

I ask the Premier: What does he say to this family?

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

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

These situations are very difficult and I extend our condolences to the family. I cannot, beyond that, speak to the specifics of any individual case.

We, like every other jurisdiction in Canada, have been faced with staffing and recruitment challenges. We have announced in October, a \$30-million package to deal with that. We have an assistant deputy minister responsible for health professional recruitment starting imminently. We have, in the meantime,

instituted a whole raft of measures included in the budget and outside the budget to support primary care and virtual ER.

For the benefit of the Member opposite, for the information of this House, this weekend there were six rural emergencies departments closed in BC. We are not alone and we are better than managing with the others.

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

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

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

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

Maybe the minister is better sent out in BC.

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

**P. DINN:** The one thing I'll agree: It is a difficult situation but very preventable. Five hours – five hours, Premier. This is important. This is very important.

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

Get to your question.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** It's shocking.

**P. DINN:** It took five hours for Ashley to be transported to Grand Falls-Windsor. This young mother was failed by our health care system. The long-term mental health supports were not there. The emergency room was shut down when she tragically needed it.

I ask the Premier: Will he take responsibility for the failures of his government in health care and apologize?

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

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

Again, it is a very tragic situation when things like this happen. The mental health system in this province has undergone a significant transformation. Services are accessible via a whole variety of means including telephone, face to face, no appointments are required and you can even self refer to the FACT teams – the Flexible Assertive Community Treatment teams.

These are difficult situations. I cannot and will not, in this House, respond to the specifics of any case. Myself and predecessors from all sides of the House have adopted that view and that policy in the interest of privacy and respect for families.

There are improvements in the health care system. This is an unfortunate situation and we are certainly looking to learn from it. My sympathies go to the family.

Thank you.

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

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

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

We hear every day the shortcomings of the systems that are put in place. Speaker, Dr. Wendy House, a general internist in Central has responded to this case. Without physicians in place, like Harbour Breton, she says – and I quote – this is probably going to be the norm.

I ask the Premier: Will health care system failures like the Molloy family, that they have tragically faced, continue to be the norm under his government?

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

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

I did see the interview with Dr. House on the media last week. It is difficult when you have professionals who are tired and frustrated and burnt out, airing their views in public. We need

to hear them and we certainly worked very closely with the NLMA on these issues in the past.

That is why, having recognized that, we have brought in an ADM for recruitment and retention. We have a work in progress with the NLMA to analyze those factors that would make working in rural centres attractive and sustainable. The Health Accord will provide us with further support to do that, and I look forward to the blueprint report which I expect hopefully in the next week or so.

Thank you.

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

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

**J. WALL:** Speaker, today we celebrate and recognize Provincial Francophonie Day. Ironically, my office has heard from a number of parents who have registered for French immersion in September at Holy Trinity Elementary in Torbay, but they are getting a runaround. Thirty-eight families have registered for French immersion, but the school district has capped the class size to 27 – 27 in Kindergarten.

Speaker: Why are the 11 other students being denied access to a French immersion education?

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

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

I am aware of the situation in the Member's district and the number of people that are enrolled. The operations for these issues are generally handled by the NLESD; however, myself and my staff have been looking at this issue, the executive within the Department of Education. We've been looking at the issue, Mr. Speaker. It's still under review.

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

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

**J. WALL:** Speaker, looking at the issue and under review is not the answer that's being given to the parents. This decision will only force the 11 wait-listed students into the English stream, expanding the class sizes there.

If this government is really serious about promoting French immersion education in our province, why not split the full registration of 38 families into two classes of 19, a much more reasonable number than one class of 27?

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

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

I do recognize the points being raised by the Member opposite. Again, the issue as it stands at the moment, the NLESD are looking at enrolment numbers, Mr. Speaker. In French, the class cap is higher than it is under the general English stream, but I do recognize the point that the Member is saying and I do believe that it is important for students in our province to have an opportunity for French.

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

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

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

I'd remind the minister that it's important for the students to have equal opportunities right across the province.

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

**L. PARROTT:** With the pending announcement on the resumption of work at West White Rose, much of which is being done in other countries, will the minister commit to ensuring that all work that can be done on the Bay du Nord Project will be right here by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians?

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

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

I'm happy to answer this question and speak to the successes that we've been having as it relates

to the oil industry as of late. When it comes to Bay du Nord, what I can say is that there was a framework agreement in place in 2018. And I can point out that this government has always gone out of its way to ensure that we get as much work here as possible.

As we move forward into the Bay du Nord negotiations, we'll continue to do that. I think everybody on all sides of the House – well, most people on all sides of the House want to see as much done on the oil sector here. So that is a commitment that we'll make and we'll try our best to ensure that we have as many person-hours here and as much of the work done here.

Thank you.

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

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

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

We have seen the giveaways before and now is the time that we have to stop them. Bay du Nord could be as much as five times bigger than we originally thought and the commitment for 5,000 metric tons of work just isn't enough.

When this agreement is reopened, what assurances can you give industry and workers that this province will be the primary beneficiaries from not only operations but also construction?

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

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

I can't speak to agreements that were sanctioned before our time or certainly before my time. I can only speak to what has been done since I have been in this chair. I'd like to think that we have gone out of our way to show support for the industry, but at the same time realizing that the resources belong to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

So the best I can say is that the assurance that I give is that at the end of the day, I live here in this province. I have neighbours and friends, the

same as we all do, that work on these projects and we want to see as many of them gainfully employed on this as possible. At the same time, dealing with the circumstances we face when we look at these global companies and operators, there is always going to be that pressure but we all want to see as many people working here as possible.

Thank you.

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

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

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

The Fish Processing Licensing Board, a group with a combined over 200 years of experience in fisheries matters – 200 years – spent over a year meeting with DFO scientists and industry representatives before they made their recommendation to the minister on the addition of licences.

In overruling the board, what research was his decision based on?

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

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

I take the duties of the board very seriously as they take their duties very seriously. They took some time to deliberate; they give me six recommendations about a month ago. I took some time to think that over and talk it through with my staff and we came upon a decision where four of the six recommendations were accepted immediately and a decision on the other two were not in favour of the board but it is definitely in the favour of this province and I stand behind that decision, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**C. PARDY:** Mr. Speaker, the board had done over one year of research. I'm not sure what research was done in the short time the minister

is referring to for him to be informed on his decision.

The minister writes in his decision that DFO states: The outlook on the snow crab fishery is only projected to remain positive in most areas up to two to four years. The board writes in their decision: Overall, the outlook on the snow crab fishery is positive in most areas during the next four years and beyond.

Did the minister consult with DFO and is the board mistaken?

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

**D. BRAGG:** Great question, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I wish I had that report at my fingertips. It's on my desk; I would gladly share that with the Member opposite, in which the DFO actually said the next two to four years, but with year one being done now puts us down one to three years.

So I would gladly share that report with the Member opposite and he can see who was actually clear in their deliberations and who is clear in the information. It didn't take me a year to read it, Mr. Speaker. It took me a couple of days to read that and that is the actual report.

Again, I thank the board for what they did. The Member opposite was a little misleading when he said they were a year deliberating; they were not. They were two days in the process of a decision – two days – in April.

Thank you.

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

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

**C. PARDY:** I think the minister reads his report and revisits; he'll find that it's clearly stated in the board report that over one year they were analyzing the situation. But he'll revisit that in the report.

The minister states in his decision that more crab licences in 3L, Bay Roberts and O'Donnells, will likely take workers or crab away from what

is already there, and you did not want to set somebody up for failure – quote.

The board states that the total allowable catch has increased by 46 million in the past two years and felt that based on economic considerations for the company, it would be approved. They were seeking an allocation of 15 per cent of the increase.

Is the board wrong?

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

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

I would like to ask the Member opposite what the members in his district told him of their concerns of losing employment in their current fish plants. Just reach out and see what they told him.

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**D. BRAGG:** There's quite a bit of chirping going on there, Mr. Speaker, so I must be hitting a nerve.

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

I heard the question; I want to hear the response.

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

**D. BRAGG:** Thank you again, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the hon. Member to take his seat. It's not my place to do that, but since you asked me for the response, I'd see him standing.

I was answering the question that I know struck a nerve on the other side there, Mr. Speaker. That's very unfortunate they weren't ready for the answer, but the answer is quite obvious. I ask the Member, who is about to ask another question, just get up and stand on his feet and tell me how his members in the Bonavista fish

plant felt and what he told those people at a protest of how he felt about more fish plants.

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

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

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

**C. PARDY:** I want to inform the minister that I never had another question but I want to answer his.

The only thing being, if the people in the Bonavista plant were worried and they looked at that as an increase in \$46 million in the allocation and it's expected to be more in the following years. By allocating 15 per cent of it, I think they would have been okay with that. Fifteen per cent of it, not the total allocation of \$111 million, but 15 per cent of the \$46 million increase. That is what the board decided.

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

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

**D. BRAGG:** I thank the Member for answering my question, Speaker. I thank him very much.

I guess what the Member is saying is he is supporting 15 per cent of reduction for the workforce for the plant in his district. I guess that's what he's mentioning, Mr. Speaker. So they won't be looking for any support from us once people no longer qualify for their EI income.

Thank you very much, Speaker.

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

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

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

In April of 2021, the *All Hands on Deck* report on post-secondary education was released. The overwhelming feedback from apprentices to the review committee called for a review of our

trades and apprenticeship system in this province.

Speaker, it's been over a year since the report. Why hasn't the minister acted on this recommendation?

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

**G. BYRNE:** Thank you very much, Speaker.

I'm very pleased to inform the hon. Member that action is indeed being taken. There is a review that is underway of the apprenticeship system. We've asked for additional outside expertise, as well as expertise within the department, and also asking those with the Apprenticeship and Certification Board to provide input into this exercise.

Our apprenticeship system is one of the best in the entire country; we're going to keep it that way. We're going to do so by constant improvement; ever, ever improving.

Thank you very much, Speaker.

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

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

**J. BROWN:** Speaker, we're supposed to be part of the Atlantic harmonization for trades, but the feedback I constantly hear from apprentices and educators in this province is that we are behind.

I ask the minister: Will he listen to the tradespeople of this province and review how apprentice training, including how block training is carried out in this province?

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

**G. BYRNE:** I can inform the hon. Member, Speaker, that we are indeed a member of the Atlantic Apprenticeship Harmonization Project. It's an initiative that went underway to be able to create seamless capacities within the Atlantic region, to be able to foster increased strengths. I can say that I am very pleased to report that the

Maritime provinces use our province as their gold standard in many of their initiatives.

So we'll keep on doing this, Mr. Speaker, we will indeed improve our education, our block system. I would like to thank the employers from Lab West who participated in some very novel, some very innovative training programs to be able to create block training at home in Labrador West. The hon. Member may not necessarily be aware of those programs.

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

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

Speaker, it's positive to see that government is increasing the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, as recommended by the Minimum Wage Review Committee report.

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

**J. DINN:** Don't get ahead of yourselves yet.

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

**J. DINN:** Though 16 months is a long time for people facing record inflation.

Will government also adjust the minimum wage by the percentage change in the provincial CPI plus 1 per cent on April 1, 2024 and April 1 for each year thereafter until the next review is completed, as also recommended by the committee?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for Labour.

**B. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. Member for a question.

I agree with him, it is important to use minimum wage as an opportunity to improve the lives of those individuals that are most vulnerable in this province, and that's absolutely what we decided to do as a government last week. It came as a recommendation from the Minimum Wage Review Committee – a unanimous recommendation. There are five recommendations; we're working through the process on the others.

I look forward to making some announcements with my colleagues on those recommendations in the coming weeks and months. But we wanted to give employers and employees as much notice as we possibly can about the changes to minimum wage and include a stipend for small businesses that are under 20 to help them make this transition as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**J. DINN:** That's fine to hear, but in many ways people are drowning now. Waiting several years to throw them the life preserver is not going to help them.

The authors of the report note that full-time minimum wage earners should receive an income that exceeds the poverty line and that the CPI recommendation is necessary to achieve this.

I ask the minister: Why did he ignore this recommendation which would've stabilized this and future increases in this province against inflation?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for Labour.

**B. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's categorically untrue; I never ignored anything. We've said that we're going to take those recommendations. I've met with the Minimum Wage Review Committee, which represented employers and employees – two on each side and an independent chair. We took their recommendations, we moved on the ones we could move quickest on, which is what we've done. We didn't want to hold them back waiting to evaluate some of the other recommendations that are there that are very recommendations as well.

We're working through that with departments that were involved and we're going to continue to do that. I look forward to making some

announcements in the coming weeks and months.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**J. DINN:** Considering the fact that the committee recognized that poverty reduction demands a holistic approach, will government immediately strike the All-Party Committee on guaranteed basic income, as called for in our unanimously approved private Member's resolution?

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

**J. ABBOTT:** Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to respond, and excuse my voice.

I know we have discussed this in the past in terms of the All-Party Committee and we are waiting for the final report from the Health Accord NL and the blueprint because in it, it talks about basic income. When we have that final recommendation, I think we will be in the position, through our Government House Leader, to talk to yourself and to the Opposition House Leader as to the formation of that committee.

**SPEAKER:** Time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

#### **Tabling of Documents**

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

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

As outlined in section 56(1) of the *Automobile Insurance Act*, I would like to table the Board of

Commissioner of Public Utilities 2021-2022 annual automobile insurance report. We have provided six copies to the Clerk's Office.

Thank you.

**SPEAKER:** Further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

### **Notices of Motion**

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

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

Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 6. (Bill 64)

**SPEAKER:** Any further notices of motion?

The hon. the Member for Burin - Grand Bank.

**P. PIKE:** Speaker, I give notice of the following private Member's resolution, which will be seconded by the Member for Windsor Lake.

WHEREAS rates of firearm-related violent crimes are on the rise in Canada; and

WHEREAS according to Statistics Canada 59 per cent of firearm-related violent crimes in Canada involve the use of handguns; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada outlined that it would work with the provinces and territories to ban handguns outright; and

WHEREAS rates of firearm-related violent crime were higher in rural areas than in urban centres in most provinces and were notably high in the Northern rural regions;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House declare its support for the Government of Canada's efforts to reduce violent crime and further restrict access to handguns.

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

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

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

In accordance of Standing Order 63(3) the private Member's motion referred to by the Member from Burin - Grand Bank will be the private Member's motion to be debated this Wednesday, June 1, 2022.

**SPEAKER:** Are there any further notices of motion?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I give notice that on tomorrow I will move in accordance with Standing Order 11(1) that this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 31, 2022.

**SPEAKER:** Are there any further notices of motion?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**S. CROCKER:** Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move the following motion, that notwithstanding Standing Order 63, this House shall not proceed with Private Members' Day on Wednesday, June 1, 2022, but shall instead meet at 2 p.m. on the day for Routine Proceedings and to conduct Government Business and that, if not adjourned earlier, the Speaker shall adjourn the House at midnight.

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

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

Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move the following notice: That notwithstanding Standing Order 9, this House shall not adjourn at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, June 1, 2022, but shall continue to sit to conduct government business



and if not adjourned earlier, the Speaker shall adjourn the House at midnight.

**SPEAKER:** Are there any further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### Petitions

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

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

WHEREAS there are no current major operations happening in Bull Arm – I've been presenting this petition since 2019. There are people on here from Thornlea, Bellevue, Sunnyside and Fair Haven. It affects us all in the isthmus area. I want to put it out where the Bay du Nord Project is going, and probably an update on the expansion of what's happening for the implementation of getting the infrastructure ready for Bay du Nord and –

**SPEAKER:** You have to read the full petition into the record.

**J. DWYER:** Okay, no problem.

WHEREAS the site is world-class facility with the potential to rejuvenate the local economy; and

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

WHEREAS the operation of this facility would encourage employment for the area and create economic spinoffs for the local businesses; and

WHEREAS the site is an asset of the province, built to benefit the province and a long-term tenant for this site would attract gainful business opportunities; and

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

THEREFORE we, the residents of the area near the Bull Arm Fabrication Site, petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to expedite the process to get the Bull Arm Fabrication Site back in operation. We request that this process include a vision for a long-term, viable plan that is beneficial to all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador first;

FURTHERMORE we request that government place an emphasis on all supply, maintenance, fabrication and offshore workover for existing offshore platforms as well as new construction of any platforms whether they be GBS or FPSO in nature.

We have the assets here, not only the infrastructure in places like Bull Arm and the Kiewit facility in Marystown, but we want to ask the minister to make sure that if there's any work that can be done here, it is done here and we get that guarantee for our people. Right now, we're doing a lot of reports that are looking at fees, taxes and how to save money, but I think that if we address the economy and we make sure that we get our people back working, there will be money in the coffers to take care of all these initiatives.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

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

I am happy to answer this. The Member certainly does bring this issue to the forefront and it is an important issue. What I can say is that I agree with the statement that we should not see this as a site that is not in operation. I guess on the flip side of that is that it is an important provincial asset and one that we certainly do not want to give away or not see full value for.

I can give some update as to what has recently gone on there and sort of where we see this going in the future. Most recently, Bull Arm was utilized for the quayside campaign when we had the Terra Nova FPSO there. That started last September, went until December until it was moved. At peak times, there were about 250 people working there on that campaign. DF Barnes currently has a portion of the site leased; they continue to do some work there, as well as rig upgrade work. So we're seeing some activity there as it relates to that.

What I will say is there is a lot of interest as it relates to Bull Arm and the possibilities of parties working there to advance Bay du Nord; that is a conversation that is ongoing. Thankfully, we have a number of sites in this province that are seeing increased activity. So what I would say as it relates to Bull Arm is that we will continue to do what we can. We know the value of having increased activity there.

What I will say is that, overall, it is a much different conversation than it was even a year ago in that there is more possibilities there, so we'll continue to work towards those.

Thank you.

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

**J. DINN:** (Inaudible.)

**P. DINN:** (Inaudible.)

**J. DINN:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to on a point of privilege for unparliamentarily language towards his older brother.

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

**J. DINN:** Speaker, this is a petition to keep senior couples together in long-term care. It is a petition that was, basically, organized by Gavin Will, whose parents have recently gone through this and he is in the House of Assembly today.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled:

WHEREAS senior couples should have the right to live together as they age; and

WHEREAS seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador have worked hard to build this province and deserve dignity in care; and

WHEREAS separating couples has a detrimental effect on their health and well-being; and

WHEREAS the province has a rapidly aging population, which is one of the most important challenges confronting government;

We, the undersigned, your petitioners, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to change its current policy of separating couples due to their differing levels of care in a publicly funded universal long-term care system, and direct regional health boards to do the same and pass legislation to this effect.

Speaker, there are a few things that stand out here. Certainly about separating couples and having a detrimental effect on their health and well-being. One thing that's very clear in the Health Accord was the importance of the social determinants of health: the importance of family, of community, of allowing seniors to age in place through that continuum of care. And when you look at it, for some couples at this stage, they've been married 30, 40, 50, 60 years in some cases. So to be separated at that time is a significant stressor and probably even detrimental to their physical well-being and certainly their mental health.

We also recognize that we have a rapidly aging population and that's one of the things that the Health Accord looks at is that we have to change our model. So in this case here it's a simple thing. It may be administratively challenging, but certainly to the couples themselves it's going to be significant in making sure that they age well, that health care costs are minimized and that in their last final years that they are able to spend their time with the one they love and ones that they have committed to and that family are there with support for them.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

Speaker, approximately 100,000 people in Newfoundland and Labrador live with mental illness.

Only about 40 per cent of people affected by mental illness and addictions seek help.

Seventy per cent of mental illness is developed during childhood and adolescence, and most go undiagnosed.

And less than 20 per cent receive appropriate treatment.

Emergency and short-term care isn't enough and it is essential more long-term treatment options are made readily available.

Therefore we petition the House of Assembly as follows: To urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to provide access to long-term mental health care that ensures continuity of care, beginning with psychiatric and neuropsychological assessments being more accessible to the public so they can access proper mental health treatment and supports on a regular and continuous basis.

Mental health has become a huge, huge issue in this province and everywhere, really. It's only the situation I alluded to earlier in Oral Questions around the young mother, 27 years old, mother of two, young Ashley Molloy who had mental health challenges throughout her life and committed suicide.

This is tragic. But these are stories that are so common, individuals who find themselves in a mental health crisis and are looking for help. I know there are supports in line, like the 811 call line, but I still get people calling me and saying that line's not working. They call the line, they get quality assurance recordings; they get put on elevator music for three to four minutes before a health care navigator comes online. So we really have to start taking mental health more seriously here in terms of looking at long-term continuity of care measures.

This is not a band-aid solution, when you look at people dealing with mental health. It's not an easy solution because everybody's situation is different. Protocols in general are probably just the first phase, but each individual has to be treated like an individual and the seriousness of mental health in this province really needs to have more, longer-term continuity care measures in place, as well as the staffing, the psychologists, the psychiatrists and the like, to help deal with it.

Thank you.

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

**C. PARDY:** Well said, my colleague from Topsail - Paradise.

These are the reasons for this petition:

We acknowledge that as a society we need to curb our intake of sugar but strongly feel that the provincial government's sugar tax is not the best way of effecting change. After reviewing the literature and studies in relation to the proposed tax, realizing that we are the only jurisdiction in Canada to implement and find merit in its existence, and realizing that taxing a population during an already significant time of inflation is unacceptable, we strongly disagree with the implementation of a sugar tax in our province.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to spare the residents of the province another tax by immediately cancelling the implementation of the sugar tax this fall, leaving over \$5 million in the pockets of struggling residents.

In the couple of minutes I have to speak to it, I just want to cite the winter issue of *The Taxpayer*. The editor wrote in an editorial, the head of his column was: Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Andrew Furey is coming for your pop. In the article it says that it's the wrong move.

It says in the article that to add a 20-cent surtax to any litre of sugar-sweetened beverage sold in the province, one of the biggest problems with these types of taxes is that they hit the poor

families hardest. It's not the editor that we're going to reference; he references the Quebec National Institute for Public Health. He quotes: "It is the tax's regressive nature that makes it effective, most notably amongst the less well-off or, in other words, the poor people should be thankful that government wants to take them back to health."

Then he cites the jurisdictions that did it. Mexico did it and found that it did not affect the obesity of their population. He references other countries like Denmark, France and Hungary have tried it. When, in our debate, we mention Northwest Territories did an extensive study and said: not going there. The only province or territory with a sugar tax will be Newfoundland and Labrador.

We just went through a budget process to find that and we both agreed that the people couldn't afford it. The only thing being, Mr. Speaker, we should debate the sugar tax. We did it once and I thought that we had a good understanding, but to know now that we're in extraordinary times and we're going to tax our population again – unconscionable.

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

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

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

Speaker, once again the reason for this petition:

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

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

WHEREAS the means are increasing the number of senior residents in Labrador West to happily age in place are currently not 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 of Labrador West to age in place by providing affordable options for seniors in assisted living care facilities.

Once again, I bring this petition again to the House because once again the people of Labrador West are asking for the ability to retire and live in comfort in Labrador West.

It's interesting because I seen recently a senior couple living in a home that they could no longer maintain, but they have nowhere else to go. They were desperately looking for an apartment to downsize because they just can't physically keep up their home anymore. They do not have the ability; they need extra help. They can't clear the snow, they can't paint; they can't maintain their home. They were desperately looking for an apartment because they just can't do it anymore.

This is the thing with Labrador West, there's nowhere for seniors to move into; there's nowhere for them to downsize, there's no ability. They are trying to stay in their community that they helped build and they just don't have the ability to do it anymore. We've been asking and asking, and, like I said, we can go back to the early 2000s, when there was a study done saying this needs to be done in this community because you're going to get a big slot of seniors.

Even the study underestimated how many people decided to stay after they retired and after they aged. So even at that point, we just do not have the ability anymore for our seniors to live in peace and comfort when they retire. I know the minister has said he's spoken with the community and stuff like this.

I'll continue to bring this petition forward because it's something that needs to be talked about, something that needs to be in the forefront, seniors do need the ability to be able

to age in place, live in comfort and enjoy the communities that they helped build.

By sending them off to Corner Brook or Goose Bay or anything like that is just doing a disservice to those people, because they just want to be surrounded by their family. Sending them five to 1,000 kilometres away is not doing them service, it's not showing appreciation for what they've contributed to this community and this province.

With that, Speaker, thank you.

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

**J. ABBOTT:** Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this.

I just want to let the Member know that the prayer of the petition is certainly resonating with me as Minister Responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation. We're working with the community, working with the pioneers, working with advocates and we see a path forward that will help address the affordable housing needs of seniors in Labrador West in the very near future.

**SPEAKER:** Orders of the Day.

#### Orders of the Day

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

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

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 1.

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

Oh, sorry, the hon. the Government House Leader.

**S. CROCKER:** Sorry, Tony, wrong one. Just give me a second.

**SPEAKER:** My apologies.

**S. CROCKER:** Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

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

**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.'

Motion carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that this House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 60.

**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.'

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 (Warr):** Order, please!

We are now debating a resolution and Bill 60, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act.

#### Resolution

"That it is expedient to bring in a measure respecting the imposition of taxes on carbon products."

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

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

It's a pleasure once again to stand in the House representing the District of Stephenville - Port au Port and to once again be talking about a tax, which I think is not appropriate at this time. We will certainly be voting against this increase in carbon tax. I think that the inflation alone has put enough pressure on the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, with rising prices for gasoline, that the imposition of carbon tax is no longer needed and, certainly, to turn around and increase it is simply a slap in the face to people who are struggling to pay for their gasoline prices right now.

I would argue that, at the end of the day, this province has probably paid more towards reducing the footprint of carbon in this country than anywhere else in Canada. The Members opposite have reminded us on many occasions about the cost of the electrical project, which, in fact, was a project, not only for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador but for the country. The federal government provided a loan guarantee to the project so that it would help the Province of Nova Scotia reduce their carbon emissions. Yet, it is the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador who will bare the brunt of the cost of a project to make Canada a more carbon-neutral country and will go significantly, when the project starts, to reduce the carbon footprint of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador by, if not eliminating, then certainly reducing the amount of carbon footprint coming out of the Holyrood generating station.

So I would argue that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador have contributed their fair share. In actual fact, more than their fair share in terms of the billions of dollars that they will pay for the project. In funding that project, the federal government, despite its assistance in providing rate mitigation, failed to take an equity stake in a project which was of benefit to the country, not just the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

They turn around and talk about the project as part of an Atlantic Loop, yet we receive no

benefit from a carbon reduction point of view for what we have undertaken as the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, what we will pay for as the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and a significant, as I said, reduction in the carbon footprint that will be eliminated when the project comes on stream.

So, again, for the federal government to simply – and I don't know if it wasn't negotiated or talked about but the bottom line is why are we seeing, as a Province of Newfoundland and Labrador – I would argue, why do we even have to introduce a carbon tax in Newfoundland and Labrador, considering what we have already invested in turning this country into a green energy and moving forward.

Secondly, I would argue why are we talking about a tax increase on carbon tax the very same day that the Minister of Finance brings in notice that we're going to introduce changes to the finance act to lower the gas tax in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador? We are standing here in the House getting ready to approve another tax increase on gasoline. How ironic is that? On the one hand we give it and on the other hand we take it away. And that's exactly what we're doing by supporting a carbon tax increase.

For the longest time we heard that we could do nothing with our own gas tax because the federal government would not allow us to do it. We could not do anything with our own gas tax because the federal government wouldn't allow us to do it.

We seem to have overcome that hurdle with the announcement that was made last week. I'm not sure, as has been pointed out in Question Period today and by others, as to why it took so long to come to that conclusion. Why couldn't we have done this six months ago? Why couldn't we have done it three months ago? But nobody seems to have the answer to that. But at the very same time, as we now introduce a bill to reduce our sales tax, we're going to stand in the House today and talk about approving an increase to carbon tax. It does not make sense.

I would go back and also argue that for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and perhaps others the high cost of inflation, the fact

that the price of gasoline has almost doubled is more than enough deterrent for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to try and reduce their consumption of gasoline. Unfortunately, many people do not have the ability.

We all know that carbon tax is not suited to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. We do not have the infrastructure in place to support significant public transportation. We have it in the capital city and some of the surrounding areas, but outside of that we do not have public transportation.

Some would argue you have taxis and buses. Well, guess what? They also burn fuel and they increase their prices. And when you're trying to get to and from work on a daily basis and you commute more than an hour back and forth five days a week, you simply can't not use your vehicle. That's the reality of what people face in Newfoundland and Labrador, especially in areas that I represent.

Government has introduced some measures about buses and gave money to different towns and communities to organize a bus program. The only problem with that is the bus only runs one day a week. And why does it only run one day a week? Because there's no money for the operation of it. There's no money for the drivers. It's very difficult, as the minister would know, and others, to get volunteers and so the bus relies on volunteer drivers.

That was a great announcement, I thought it was a great announcement, it was there, but the fact of the matter is, it's now because we don't have the operating funds to be able to keep it going on a daily basis; it operates one day a week.

So, again, there are things that we can look at doing, but I firmly believe, as I have said, that the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador – we should be fighting Ottawa about carbon tax. We should be standing up and saying no to this increase. We have done enough. We have done more than our fair share. We have paid the price. We are going to continue to pay the price.

So at the end of the day, think about what we are going to give back to the country of Canada; think about what we are going to give back in terms of what help Nova Scotia will get when

their electricity comes online, how they eliminate their coal; think about what will happen if Atlantic Loop ever happens and the potential that this province has. That's why the people in Newfoundland and Labrador, in my opinion, do not deserve another carbon tax increase.

My colleague alluded to another tax in his petition called the sugar tax. Again, I simply argue, how ironic is it, on the day that you announce that you are going to help the people of Newfoundland and Labrador with a home heat rebate program, with a reduction in gas prices, we sit here knowing full well that there is another \$5 million to come out of their pockets in the budget for sugar tax.

Surely, given these times, this is not the time for that sugar tax to be implemented. It is scheduled to come into effect in September. Surely that could be pushed out. And when it comes to finding that \$5 million, I am sure there are lots of ways we can do that. I would gladly make some suggestions on it when I stand up again to speak on this particular carbon tax bill.

Thank you so much for your attention and I will take my seat, Chair,

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

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

**E. JOYCE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am going to stand and have a few words on this and support the Opposition in not going with the carbon tax. I tell you, Mr. Chair, and *Hansard* will reflect this, if you go back on my words and I said it numerous times when we said we should reduce the gas tax. If we never heard 50 times the Members from government saying we can't because if we reduce the gas tax here the federal government is going to backstop it. If I never heard that 50 times – whoever wrote your notes you should fire them. Because I knew the difference. I knew the difference and to stand here for two to three weeks and tell the people out there who are suffering that we can't do it

because the federal government is going to add on more carbon tax was just false. It was just false.

What do we do? What did the government do? Decreased the provincial sales tax, which we've been asking for, for the last three or four or five weeks. It's just false. When you have people struggling, Mr. Chair, and there are people struggling, trust me. I know the government Members hears it also, I know that. I know the Liberal government Members hear that, I know for a fact. But to stand here in this House for week upon week upon week upon week and say we can't do it because the federal government, what they'll do, they'll just backstop it, is just false.

You wonder why people don't believe sometimes what ministers says in this government and Members say, because someone hands you something, you'll stand up and read it, and you stand up and read it when there's no validity to it, absolutely no validity to it.

I said on numerous occasions – I was a part of that carbon tax – you could do it. You can do it. One of the ministers – I won't say who – he's shaking his head. You just did it. It's introduced today. Shaking your head – it's just introduce b'y.

Mr. Chair, the other part about it, you can reduce the income tax for people. There are numerous ways to help out people; it was done on numerous occasions. We hear on a regular basis here is that this is unprecedented times. These are challenging times. Why don't we step up if these are challenging times?

COVID was challenging for everybody. A lot people lost their jobs because of COVID. The war in Ukraine, that is challenging for the whole world, Mr. Chair, so what do we do? Put our heads in the sand and say we already gave the people \$142 million.

Something I have to put on the record: You gave the people of Newfoundland and Labrador – it is their money. It is their money. So this idea of saying we already gave back, gave you a certain amount – it's their money. They need help. They need assistance.

I hear on numerous occasions they were talking about the youth, the minister talking about the youth, how we can't put it on our grandkids. I can tell you right now, I'm dealing with it. There are a lot of youth, a lot of children, a lot of grandchildren, who are helping out their senior grandparents and parents as we speak. A lot of them right now are filling up their oil tank. A lot of them right now are paying for their medication. So this idea, this foolishness of saying that we can't help anymore because we have to worry about our children and grandchildren. They are stepping up to the plate right now as we speak.

I can name the people who went down and filled up their mother and father's oil tank. I can name the people who paid for their medication. I can name the people who helped them on their city taxes. I can name people right now who are driving back and forth because they don't want mom or dad to spend their gas. I can name them.

What I'm trying to say to the government, let's not say it's us against you. I said it and I made the suggestion on numerous occasions, get the Government House Leader and the Minister of Finance, sit down with the Opposition Finance critic, the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port, sit down with the Leader of the Third Party and come up with something you could bring back to the House. That is a fair solution.

We always hear about bipartisan; we all have to work together. I made that suggestion here on numerous occasions. The Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, I even said on his behalf that what three of them agree with, we would support. Because I know it would be hamming out a fair deal.

Guess what? For three weeks, four weeks since I made that suggestion: we can't do anything. The federal government will backstop the carbon tax, they will add more on to it; they will stop the program.

I'm willing to bet, Mr. Chair, I'm willing to bet my bottom dollar you will not see the federal government come in now and say, oh, by the way, Newfoundland, you just reneged on your deal so we're going to impose our own carbon tax. Not going to happen. Not going to happen.



For the last four weeks we've been listening to that rhetoric.

I'm suggesting again what the government put in, I think, unless I'm wrong – if I'm wrong, I'd like for someone just to correct me – what the Premier put in with the eight cents that they're going to get, people are going to save \$100 a year; eight cents on the gas reduction, I think that was in his press release, \$100 a year and then if people are going to get \$500.

Just to let you know: an average tank these days is what, 400 litres? That's an average tank and a larger one is 800 litres. Just take this: what it's going to cost to fill up a senior's tank today will not cover what they just put in. It won't even cover a tank of oil, won't cover it. And then the people who have to drive back and forth to work on a regular basis who had to commute a bit further, what you're going to save is \$100 over the year on your gas tax.

These are unprecedented times. That's what this is. Mr. Chair, when you get a situation like this, when there's a crisis, we should come together. I'm confident that if the Minister of Finance sat down with the Opposition critic and the Leader of the Third Party and they hammered something out, wouldn't it be nice that next year's budget say, yeah, we have a bit higher deficit or we never knocked down the deficit as much. But have everybody in this House stand up and say we support that because we helped people in need.

Wouldn't that be reassuring to the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador? Wouldn't that be reassuring that the 40 people in this Legislature came together and worked something out? Because when you banter back and forth – I've been on both sides, several times actually. I understand, but there are times when the House of Assembly came together as one. There are many times when that happened. When you do that people have confidence in the Legislature, they have confidence in the government and they have confidence in their MHA that we're doing work for them.

There are people still suffering. I said to the minister before, you can reduce the gas tax. Guess what? The gas tax is reduced. When you start hearing excuses why you can't do other

things, that's our role, as Opposition, to question it, especially when you know the difference; especially when you're a part of the solution with the carbon tax; especially when there are other ways that you can help, definitely other ways, that has nothing to do with the gas tax. There's an income tax that we can help out. There's a subsidy we can help out for low-income earners. There are ways that we can help out.

So when you hear the government stand up and say there's nothing else we can do. Don't take it; take it on face value. Because this is a prime example – and I give the Opposition and I give the Third Party and I give myself and the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, we stuck together. We got something. There could be more done. There could be more done, but we stuck together and said we're getting something. The government said okay, here's what we can do and this is all we can do. Do I believe that? No. Because when you look at this debate in the last month, we've been saying you can't do this, but we could, and we did.

I don't know what the plans are to push this further, but I can tell you when you have people filling up their mother and father's tanks, when you have grandkids helping out their grandparents and you want to stand in this House and say we have to worry about the grandkids; when they're saying, worry about mom and dad, worry about grandfather and grandmother right now, because they can't get their medication.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm sure I'm going to be back again to have another few words.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

The Chair is recognizing the hon. the Member for Exploits.

**P. FORSEY:** Thank you, Chair.

It's always a pleasure to represent the District of Exploits. Over the weekend, I did have a chat with some of my constituents again with regard to the cost of living and those sorts of things.

I would just like to acknowledge one of those constituents; actually she said she would be

watching today, so I would just like to say good afternoon to Doreen Carter. Thank you for some of the advice she gave me over the weekend. I appreciate that.

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

**P. FORSEY:** So it continues again that I've been hearing stories with regard to the high cost of living. People just can't afford it and to introduce a carbon tax right now, it's just unacceptable. People are not ready; they don't want a carbon tax. There is no way that they can afford it. I think the government needs to draw back on the carbon tax at this time. People just don't need it.

I know my colleague for Stephenville - Port au Port just mentioned it, you're giving eight cents back and you're going to grab 11 cents on the other side. That's not what people want. Everybody out in my district is saying that this just doesn't go far enough with regards to the eight cents tax because they're not gaining. They're going to have to pay 11 now, so it just doesn't add up.

The high cost of living certainly is driving up the fuels; it is driving up foods at the grocery stores. As the fuels go up the meats and groceries, everything goes up in the grocery stores and people just can't absorb anymore of the tax increases, especially something like carbon tax.

We have paid for our carbon tax. I know it has been mentioned here numbers of times that we have paid for our carbon tax - we've paid it through Muskrat Falls. I know it is a sore spot for the governing party but it is there. It has been proven that it's going to be a greener future for our province and that's already been there. Our province right now will be a leader in green energy; we already know that. So people just can't understand another carbon tax at this moment.

With regard to fuels, Mr. Chair, not only is health care out there bad enough now in the Central region, health care is deplorable, it's causing people right now tremendous pressure, tremendous stress. Every emergency department in Central has been closed at one time or another, sometimes all of them at one time, which is causing long drives for patients, long

drives for ambulances, especially from Harbour Breton up to Grand Falls-Windsor, you're looking at over a two-hour drive. That's on a good day. Now they're going to put a carbon tax on that.

Don't get sick in the middle of the night down that way. Don't get sick down in Leading Tickles or Fortune Harbour and Botwood in the middle of the night down that way, you fellas got a two-hour drive as well. Not only that, we're going to put another 11-cent carbon tax on you guys so that you mightn't be able to get your mother to the hospital, or you mightn't be able to get your son to the hospital. We're going to give you more taxes so you can't afford the fuels to get there.

That is ridiculous. That is outrageous. We should not be imposing this carbon tax on those individuals right now. We've got people already missing appointments right here in the city, from the Central area. They're already missing appointments; they're turning down appointments. They can't afford to come in here. They really can't. What it's costing them now on a daily run to come in from Central Newfoundland into the Health Sciences Centre is probably \$150 worth of gas, one way. Now to come in on a day and go back again, that's \$300 worth of gas just to see a specialist, and we're going to throw in a carbon tax.

No, b'ys, I certainly can't vote for a carbon tax at this moment. Not for what's happening just in the health care system alone. Because people have to drive, it's an emergency situation, it's really needed and to force people with the fuels and the high cost of living to have to come to St. John's, a burden like that, we don't need to do this. We've got to stop this. Again, like I say, with regard to the long drives themselves to get to the hospitals from the emergency units and from long distances, it's just not right.

So this is just tax after tax and that's all people see. They see tax after tax. They can't absorb it anymore. They're frustrated. They're at their wit's end. To say another tax, we're just going through a tax, you're going to take a small amount off here and give us another tax. People just don't want it. They really don't. So we need to go to Ottawa, contact Ottawa and say, look, we don't need this carbon tax. We can't do this

carbon tax at this time. We have to draw back on this carbon tax.

The taxes: again, I mentioned the fuels. Healthy living: people can't afford to buy milk anymore in the stores for their children. You want to push a sugar tax, that's another tax that's going to come the fall. Now you want the children to be buying milk, buying good drinking quality supplies, healthier living. We're all the time pressing for healthier living. People just can't live healthy anymore. It's just not there. This is rubbing off on the health care system. We can't afford to do this. It's causing people to be sicker because they can't afford to eat healthier. I don't know what kind of plan you're going to bring in for that, I don't know, because now they can't eat healthier.

We already said about the emergency units being closed. People can't get there. Now we have more people added to that again because of the high cost of living, that they can't eat healthier – sugar tax being put in there. It's causing more stress. The health care system alone, because of the carbon tax and the taxes that you're putting on there, it's causing people not to be able to eat healthier. They can't get to a hospital. They can't get to appointments.

The health care alone, because of those carbon taxes, because of the taxes that they're paying, is causing people stress. It's causing them stress and they're worried. They don't know what to do anymore. Once health becomes a big issue, then the mental health becomes worse. Then people get worried about themselves. They wonder what we're going to do. Will I lose my home? Where am I going to get my next cheque? How am I getting my fuel to put in my oil tank on a cold February night? That causes stress on people, it really does. By causing stress on the people, we're causing more stress on the health care system.

If we're going to implore tax after tax after tax on people's lives, on their well-being, then that's not the way to do it. We have to find better ways of addressing the taxes that people have to pay, and carbon tax is certainly not the one to do so.

I implore the government to draw back down on the carbon tax. I certainly won't be voting for it; it's not a tax that we can absorb right now, it's

not a tax that the residents of the province can absorb. It's certainly not a tax that my constituents can absorb in my district.

Like I said, I just mentioned the health care system alone; we don't have an adequate health care system in Central Newfoundland. We have to go to St. John's for most of our specialists, that sort of stuff. We have to come to St. John's or elsewhere to see a specialist, which costs more money, which causes more stress on the people of the Central area.

We have to find better ways; carbon tax is not doing it, it just drives up the cost of eating healthy, just drives up the cost of being able to live comfortably and to be able to do what you want to do, which causes, like I say, more stress on people and patients from everywhere in the Central district.

Mr. Chair, I'll finish off my time here now and just say that, again, I can't support this motion on the carbon tax.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

**B. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd just like to say thank you for the opportunity to speak again today. I've got to start off first by just correcting the record for my hon. colleague for Exploits, who talked about the sugar tax being placed on milk. I don't know which piece of legislation you looked at, but that's categorically untrue. Maybe it was just a mistake, but it's categorically untrue.

So in addition to that, we're talking about –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**B. DAVIS:** – carbon tax. I like how he tied things together in a nice bow from many conversations, but I can't let it pass when we

talk about a sugar tax. We have every question period in this House for the last – since 2015, since I've been here – there's been multiple questions about health care and health outcomes – multiple. I think there was one day since 2015 that the Minister of Health and Community Services never had one question. I think there's been one day.

So I can appreciate why the Opposition cares so deeply about health care, because we all do. And this is important. When we have a province that has the worst outcomes and we're trying to make changes that will improve the outcomes – sugar tax on regular pop – this is what we're talking about here, we're talking about regular Pepsi. Diet Pepsi is not included in that. So if we want to actually tell full truths in this House, this is where we have got to be. We are not putting tax on diet drinks. We are not putting tax on milk.

It's all about being open and transparent – fair. That's why I had to correct that statement because I do think the hon. Member did not mean to be untruthful. I don't believe that and he is nodding, which is great, because I definitely thought he didn't mean to be because I know him to be an upstanding individual.

I'm actually going to try to stay focused on the actual conversation about carbon tax. I know other Members on the opposite side do not like the fact that I talk about carbon tax with the intention that is what it was built for. Carbon tax was pushed onto the provinces, not just our own, by the federal government. They made a decision. It was a policy decision that stood the test of court challenges from other provinces, not ours. But other provinces have challenged it and lost that the federal government had the ability to exercise that option to put carbon tax in there to make a movement for people to move away from their dependence on fossil fuels.

Now, I understand that is hard for people to understand and people to get behind. I completely get it, but one thing that a hon. Member mentioned earlier – that they were involved in the process, and this is true.

**B. PETTEN:** (Inaudible.)

**B. DAVIS:** The hon. Member for CBS is going to get his opportunity to speak, too. I can't wait to hear him because I always love to hear him.

All I can say is that it is really, really important for us to understand that this government here believed that if we were going down the road of climate change, which we all know we are, if we are going down that road of climate change and the effects of climate change, then we have got to do something about it.

Now, the hon. Member that was involved in the process before had said that there are lots of things that we argued for and were very successful. Previous Ministers of Environment argued with the federal colleagues about what we could have exempt from carbon tax.

So I want to talk a little bit about why carbon tax and the urgency that is related to climate change is such an issue. We can tie it to anything we want, but this is the actual bill we are talking about and I am going to try to stay as relevant as I possibly can to that.

We all know that every impact that we do, whether it be individual, government, industry, company, right down to municipalities, the way the trucks are driving, the investments they put into their infrastructure, all of those things impact climate, impact greenhouse gas emissions, impact what we do.

So the federal government recognized this as an issue. They needed urgent changes on that, so they put things in place whether it be the Climate Change Action Plan from our standpoint, or whether it be the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund that they put in place to help transition people to much better ways of doing things.

What we need to do and what I've always said about this bill, it may not be something that we're all excited about, but it's something that's going to help us in the longer term. Now there are things that we can do. The Premier has had the ability to work with relationships that he's built in Ottawa to try to move so that we could make changes to gas tax to allow us to lower

that without implementing the backstop, which is an impressive piece because we haven't been able to do that. We haven't been able to get by that and we have been able to identify that now as an opportunity.

Every decision that we make on this side has ramifications. I have no issue with supporting a carbon tax based on how we're going to be moving as a people, not just in this province, not just in this country, but in the global community. That's where we have to be. Now, what we've been able to try to do is find that balance of the reinvestment of the infrastructure, that money into infrastructure to mitigation, adaptation and help people transition. Those are things that we're moving towards. Every opportunity we do that removes another barrier for some individual to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, which is what each and everyone us needs to be trying to do.

So we can try to move the issue and talk about things other than what this is intended to do, this piece of legislation, which is reduce carbon tax. When we get to another bill, where we've talked about things we've made to help offset costs for individuals in this province, that's when I'll talk about that portion, but it's not where this is focused right now.

This is focused on the betterment of future generations, ensuring what the federal government has pushed on us is not taken in the wrong vein so that we lose exemptions that we have. One of those exemptions is the exemption on home heating oil, which is something that was negotiated by a previous minister – I won't take credit for that. It was negotiated by previous ministers that worked with the federal government to ensure that those individuals that have home heating oil do not get hit with those carbon tax. That was an exemption.

If we do not follow the rules of the federal government, like some other individuals may want us to, that's where we get the backstop, which is where we get those things taxed, whether it be in our fishing enterprises, our forestry enterprises, those things that we need to do that will instill a lot of jobs in this province for prosperity, we don't want those things to falter.

One of the things we've done is trying to maintain the exemption. This is why this bill is before the House of Assembly, it's a directive of the federal government. We're going to continue to move forward with it because it's good policy decision to ensure that those individuals make those transitions.

All I can say is that I'm very supportive of what we're doing with respect to the carbon tax. I think it gets us to where we need to be for individuals to make those choices that will come from.

One of the good things that we do have is we have other pieces of legislation that we can do. The Minister of Finance has talked at great length about the \$222 million that we put in place to help alleviate some of those costs. I might add that that's the single biggest investment right across this country, per capita.

So one of the things is that I'm pleased that we can do that. I could go on about carbon tax and the fact that we need to do everything we can to combat climate change, but I'm sure I'll get another opportunity, seeing how the other individuals in the House of Assembly may or may not agree with me, but I'm sure that some do. I can't wait to have this implemented so we get through this process now.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

The Chair is recognizing the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

Always wonderful to get up and speak on behalf of the wonderful residents of Topsail - Paradise. I think something we realized or recognized since we started the debate on this bill is that nobody's debating climate change. I think it's all been agreed upon, it's all been said by many in terms of climate change. We recognize that it's happening. What the focus of the debate has been on is another tax – a tax.

Now, we understand carbon tax, we understand why it's there, but we also understand the situation residents of Newfoundland and Labrador are in currently. Like I said, any tax, whether it's a gas tax, whether it's an income tax, tax is placing a burden or an unnecessary strain on individuals. I mean, that's what a tax is. That's what tax does. And here in the cost of living, we see the price of gas, the price of home heating fuel; it's driving prices through the roof for everything and people are making serious decisions.

Part of that whole gas tax or price per litre is, of course, the carbon tax. That plays into it. We've used this debate to bring to the forefront and to bring what residents are telling us about the struggles they're going through and to look for some action to help ease the burden or strain on residents of the province. Government is starting to hear that. They've made some changes: an eight-cent-per-litre reduction and a one-time subsidy. You're not going to please everyone, there's no doubt about it, but you have to do something.

So that's a step, but there are some issues there as well. You look at the timing of this; the eight-cent decrease is in effect until December 31, 2022. Now, I can't predict – in fact, I say most economists can't predict – where the price of gas will be at that date. You can look at trends, I mean that's what you do, you look at trends, but you won't know exactly where it's going to be. But what I can tell you, with some certainty, is that date is just prior to the coldest months of the year. The coldest months of the year here in the province: January, February and March. So we give a break to our residents up until December 31.

Not only that, but for residents who can afford it, and I suspect it will be less this year, who can go out and purchase Christmas gifts and the like for their loved ones and their kids and even make donations to Christmas hampers and the like, those are all bills that come due after December 31. So you see an attempt here in terms of lessening the gas strain – the tax on people – but you put a date on it.

In my mind, that's perhaps the worst date you can put on it. When people come out of Christmas with their bills and Visa bills to pay.

We know, from those calling us now today, that they have delved into their savings to pay for medications, to pay for food, to pay for heat, to pay for gas. So the strain on them is going to be even more. So you see this gas tax easement gone, you see them inundated with huge bills to pay, you see them going into the coldest months of the year, I just question the logic around it, in terms of that.

I keep going back to the theme of Mental Health Week, which was "This is empathy. Before you weigh in, tune in." And that's a bit of what should be done here. When putting this together, I don't think the channels were finely tuned in terms of looking at, okay, how does this date affect individuals? How does this date affect the public out there? It's going to affect them hugely – hugely.

When we talk about seniors who are on fixed incomes, we've heard it, who're paying more on their home heating fuel and we talk about the one-time subsidy. We haven't been given a definitive time, other than it will be soon, in terms of how we can access that subsidy. But that will be long gone and utilized prior to December 31.

But when you look at what's involved in a litre of gas in terms of taxation; I think I looked at it and taking in HST, carbon tax and this tax, I think the tax is somewhere around 60-odd cents per litre, give or take. That's a lot to ease off in terms of taxes. But you look at what it does to help. Okay, well you might say, well, if we take off the taxes, what does that do to us in terms of revenue? But what does it do if you don't do it?

I have residents calling me now: single parents supporting their kids on a single income – and this is not an exaggeration – who have come to me and asked how can I apply for income support? Because it's not worth it to me now to continue to work, to continue and try to get back and forth to work and support my kids. They would be better off on income support. That's what they're saying.

So the benefit of what we do with our tax relief is going to have long-term effects. So a little bit more relief in terms of taxes here will certainly make life more bearable for those in the future and those who – because I'm telling you, once

you're out and you're on income support – and I worked in the department – it's a hard cycle to get out of. But that's just one example. We have to look at the cost, the opportunity costs, when we put in any kind of tax, or we look at tax relief.

Again, I don't know the reason for a definitive end date. I don't know the reason for a definitive end date that's, in my mind, the worst time of the year for these individuals. But I think we really have to look at this and say, okay, is there more we could be doing, or if we could tweak this to be more effective. There are a few things to do there. The carbon tax, of course, is one part of that whole equation. If government has the relationship they claim to have with the federal government, then maybe we should be able to get the four or five or six month break on carbon tax. We're all going through this, the cost of living, and it's all affected by the cost of diesel and gas.

If we really have that relationship, and we're all hearing it in all our districts, then we should be up there and talking to the prime minister and saying we need this break. We're not looking for a hand out; we're looking for a hand up. Let's give them a break that works, keeps people in the workforce and keeps people from becoming sicker because they can't afford medications. We just have to do a little bit more here, a little bit more to ensure that people live a proper life.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

**J. DWYER:** Thank you, Chair.

The carbon tax is up for debate today and I think that we've kind of jumped into it a little bit, kind of with blinders on I guess kind of thing, because I'm going to take it from a perspective of the department that I service as a shadow Cabinet minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development; Status of Persons with Disabilities; the Community Sector; Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Income Support.

We on this side on the House, Chair, do understand that we have to be stewards of our

environment and we do understand that it's our responsibility to pass on a world to, let's say, our kids and grandkids that is viable and that they can peacefully enjoy. But when the Environment Minister speaks about the carbon tax and going into a green economy and all of this kind of stuff, I do understand that and I know that is the direction we are headed. But I don't think we should be pushed as abruptly into it as I see that is happening.

If we want to be stewards of our own environment and make sure that we are passing on a good environment to people, I would suggest that we tackle the 200 communities in our municipalities in our province that are on a boil order for more than 10 years. I think that is the lifeblood. That is the lifeblood of survival. I mean, to not address that and offer people a stipend on buying an electric car or switching over their house or anything like that, there are a lot of people that struggle and they are not in that position right now – currently, they are spending extra money on having to boil their water because it is not potable.

I would recommend that maybe people listen as opposed to chirping across the floor in order to get some ideas of how we can move forward. Instead of driving a carbon tax, we can talk about helping people in our municipalities that have been on a boil order for more than 10 years, because it's really not giving us an opportunity to succeed as a community.

From the children's side of it, for the department that I represent, you know, children suffer from poverty as well and it impacts their lives. The Health Accord is telling us this and it is very plain to see that one of the biggest social determinants of unhealthy outcomes is poverty and another carbon tax on top of the taxes and fees that are already being paid with the increase in the price of fuel and everything like that, then raising taxes and prices is only going to reduce family incomes, which impacts the quality of life for children.

I had a lady approach my office and she said that with all of the new taxes and fees they are not even able to take the kids out for a treat – like a scattered bit of McDonald's or an ice cream or a

bag of chips even for this matter because (a) they can't go for that Sunday drive anymore as a family and (b) the prices are so out of reach that they are not able to do it. The income at the end of the day is just not there for them to enjoy some of the creature comforts, I guess you would say, in life. And children deserve those because that gives them that little piece of mind to know that their family is probably not doing too bad. But once you take away those little creature comforts, it starts to sink in to the children; they realize also the financial strains that are on the parents and the financial strains that are on the family, the financial strains that are on their community and the financial strains that are on their province.

That is why I think this government needs to talk to our federal counterparts. We're not asking them to cancel the carbon tax; we know that we have to be stewards of our environment. We are asking that it be postponed for now, because we are dealing with another economic outcome that's really not going to help anybody, and that's the rising price of fuel already. Putting more taxes and more fees on fuel is only marginalizing us just a little bit further down the road, which is very disconcerting to me. Because at the end of the day what we're here for is to make sure that people get to peacefully enjoy the province they live in, no matter if that's in the metro area or if it's on the West Coast or on the North Coast of Labrador.

We have to treat people with dignity and respect. We have to stand up for them and make sure that they're not overtaxed. Right now, we're the most taxed in the whole country, so to talk about what other provinces are doing and stuff like that, that's fine, but they're also dealing with a different economy than us. They're also dealing with a different population than us. They're also dealing with a different demographic than us. Because we're so spread out, we have to travel to get certain services.

Another one for me is our seniors. Our seniors are being further marginalized because they suffer enormously. They're usually living on low or fixed incomes and cannot bear any cost increases. They have higher costs due to their frailty and illness that often come with age. But many are already dividing their medicines;

they're not eating well and they're keeping their thermostats at unhealthy levels when they need to stay warm.

In their golden years, seniors are being forgotten. That's just not good enough, just for the simple fact that by having these increase in taxes, especially around fuel, with the state of the health care right now, a lot of our seniors are having to travel further distances to get the services they require. Increasing those taxes are further marginalizing them in their daily life. They're having to rob Peter, we'll say, to pay Paul. I think they deserve better, to be quite honest. They blazed a trail for us and we need to make sure that trail stays clear for them to peacefully enjoy their retirement years.

Again, a lot are outside the overpass, I'll say. A lot of our seniors and a lot of our communities are aged, which with carbon tax, all the sugar tax and all this kind of stuff is further marginalizing these communities, which doesn't make any sense. We're here to represent them and give them that opportunity to succeed; therefore, I think that we should be better stewards in looking at the fact of taking off as much as we can.

Again, we're not here to say that it's not a step in the right direction; it just doesn't go far enough. That's the issue. What about the five cents? How come we haven't lobbied the PUB about the five cents that went on during the refinery sale? That should never have gone in there. It shouldn't have been approved in the first place. As soon as it got approved, that's when we should've been approaching the PUB to make sure that the checks and balances were in place to make sure that was okay to do.

From my understanding it was only one company that got on board with this extra five cents; the other two companies weren't even consulted. So from my understanding it has to be a concerted effort in order for the PUB to move forward. Therefore I think that lobbying the PUB at this time, it might be too little too late, but again, on behalf of the people of our province we must do so, there are no two ways about that.

With saying that, I have other headers that I'm certainly going to address. I wouldn't want to do



that in the minute and 20 seconds that I have left because I'm not here to further marginalize anybody that I look after or that needs my help. I'm here to represent the people of the beautiful District of Placentia West - Bellevue and that's what I'll do. Like I said, with the increase in fuel, I think our federal government needs to recognize the actual situation that Newfoundland and Labrador is in right now, as opposed to comparing us to a blanket over the whole country, which has a whole different demographic and population density compared to us in certain metro areas.

With that being said, Chair, I'm going to take my seat. Like I said, I would ask the government that they would talk to their counterparts at the federal level to make sure that we can postpone the carbon tax. We're not saying get rid of it or eliminate it, we're saying just postpone it because we just can't take that hit right now.

Thank you, Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

The Chair is recognizing the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

**P. LANE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's great to have an opportunity to say a few words again.

Mr. Chair, we're talking about carbon tax again today. I know a lot of my colleagues have been raising the concerns that they're hearing from their constituents. I know I'm hearing the same issues from my constituents as it relates to the high cost of living. Of course, this is about actually making it even worse on people by raising the carbon tax.

I understand it's a federal program, no doubt, but the province is the one who reaps the benefits in terms of that's where all the revenue goes in this particular deal; it goes into provincial coffers, not into federal coffers. It's important we're clear on that. That while the initiative itself may have been federally driven, the money is not going to Ottawa; it's going to Newfoundland and Labrador. It's going in our bank account here.

That's not necessarily a bad thing, by the way, in the sense that if the money is going to go somewhere, it's better for it to go here than to go in Ottawa, from my perspective at least. But it also means that if the revenue is coming here, that means we have more control over what we do with that revenue as opposed to the federal government.

I have to say that there are a couple of things, Mr. Chair, when we talk about carbon tax. I've stood in this House of Assembly on numerous occasions and –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**P. LANE:** – spoke to the fact that I'm certainly not –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**P. LANE:** – a proponent of the carbon tax in general. I really believe that if we want to deal with climate change that we should be going after the big polluters. If we want people to drive electric cars, then we need – and I understand from the minister, I think last time I spoke, Ottawa does have a plan in that regard, and that's where we need to go. To say to car manufacturers that by a particular date there will be no more combustion engine vehicles, that it will be electric vehicles and force them to act, to pivot and change their business model, that's what needs to happen.

Simply charging me extra money at the tank is doing nothing only taking money out of my pockets and other Newfoundlanders' and Labradorians' pockets. Just it's another tax going into the government. If people need to drive to work, drive to doctor's appointments and so on, they're going to do it anyway. If you want people to buy electric vehicles, then there has to be an option – there has to be a comparable option – for people to do so. Right now, at this point in time, we don't have this comparable option because of the cost of an electric vehicle and the fact that we just don't have that infrastructure across the province at this point in time, really, to accommodate

electric vehicles, not to mention the costs of the vehicle.

Now, I understand the government brought out a program – a \$2,500 rebate and I think the feds have a similar program, and that's all to help, but, at the end of the day, the cost of electric vehicles is out of reach for the average Newfoundlander and Labradorian. Once we reach a point in time where the infrastructure is in place and the vehicles are readily available at a price point that the average consumer can afford, then I would submit you penalize somebody at that point if they choose to continue on driving a combustion engine vehicle. But at this point in time they really don't have a choice; they don't have an option. So you are penalizing them for something that they really have no control over and, at that point, it just becomes nothing more than a tax grab. That would be my position on the carbon tax – always have been; always will be.

Then you look at, well, the money that is coming in, what are we doing with the money, and that is the other thing. I don't know about other Members, but I had a number of people contact me over the weekend and I have certainly seen a lot of postings on social media and everything else. People weren't too happy with the announcement, as an example, that \$250,000 went to Labatt Brewery.

Now, I got nothing against Labatt Brewery; I drink Michelob Ultra. So I have no issue and this tank here can hold a few litres, I can tell you. So it is no issue with Labatt, no issue with beer, no problem there –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** You're a sponsor.

**P. LANE:** Yeah, I'm a sponsor.

No problem there, but the reality of it is that \$250,000 of provincial money that, I guess, came from the carbon tax goes to a private corporation that is doing quite well, part of a larger corporation that is making huge profits – billions.

We take \$250,000 of the money that the average person is paying every time they go and they fill up and the price of gas is through the roof, a portion of that money, being the carbon tax.

Instead of taking that money and investing it back into the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, we give \$250,000 of it to Labatt Brewery. And then the federal government comes in and they throws in another \$250,000 for a profitable corporation that could easily afford to do it on their own. They didn't need the money.

Do I blame them for taking the money? Of course not. Anyone who operates any kind of a business, you'd be a fool to say, no, b'y, I don't want it. Of course they're going to take it. The question becomes one of: Is that the best use for that money? That's the question.

I think if you were to poll the average Newfoundlander and Labradorian, right now, they would say: No, that's not the best use of that money. I would prefer to see that go back to the consumer in the form of additional rebates or whatever the case might be, or to help the people on the lower end of the income scale and so on. And that's not to diminish the 144 – jeez, I should know the number off by heart; I heard it so many times. I am not sure if it's 144 or 142.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** 142.

**P. LANE:** The \$142 million that the Minister of Finance keeps talking about. I'm not diminishing that. That helped a segment of people, and this latest announcement is going to help a broader group of people, and I appreciate that. I'm sure the people of Newfoundland and Labrador appreciate anything you can do. I understand also that it has to be weighed out against the fact that we are up to our necks in debt. We can never lose sight of that, of where we're in terms of our provincial debt and our year-over-year deficits.

Now, thankfully, my understanding – I could be wrong – is that because of the additional revenue coming in on the price of a barrel of oil, our projected budget will remain the same. It's not going to increase our projected deficit. Now granted, our projected deficit could have been lower had they not taken this additional action. So there's a balancing act; I get it.

Some of the commentary I heard from some people – to do what some people have suggested, we'd have to be prepared to go, like,

\$2 billion in debt this year to actually do what some people are requesting. We know we can't do that. That would be irresponsible to do that. So it's this balancing act of how much can government do to alleviate the pain, much of which, in fairness, is the result of world events, geopolitical events. You can't blame the war in Ukraine on this government. Some people might like to try to twist it that way somehow, if they could, but you can't do that, and much of the problem that we're having is also being felt throughout the country, throughout the globe. That's the reality, and it's important that we acknowledge that.

It comes down to what can the government do with the parts that it controls, i.e., gas tax, carbon tax, so on. What can it do and what's a reasonable balance of how much money they can use to offset the cost of living for the average person? I'm cognizant of the time there, Mr. Chair. They have done some, then they did some more, and the question is could they do even more.

But when you see money, as an example, once again, going into a corporation instead of going into reducing the pain even more, it is difficult for the public to swallow.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

I remind the hon. Member his speaking time is expired.

**P. LANE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** The Chair is recognizing the hon. the Member for Bonavista.

**C. PARDY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm not ergonomically situated for your neck, am I, but you watch the screen and you can hear me from there.

I was representing the community in George's Brook-Milton back in 2016 and I went to a budget briefing at that point in time from the same government in power now, and it was the incumbent that I ran against that had the briefing. So I, along with the deputy mayor, attended. The meeting was in Lethbridge, and

when we sat in Lethbridge, the Member for the district started to talk about the budget.

I think conservatively I can say he probably got seven seconds in before everything unravelled. The people were upset about the amount of taxation. That was a fact: They were upset about the amount of taxation. The only thing is that the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board – and we all agree, it came down to balance. And I think everything we have we have to play the balance. I think probably even government may be aware that back in 2016 we didn't have that balance. At least it wasn't perceived by those that would be in my district.

I'm thinking where we are in this particular budget then we are trying to find that balance. We're talking about a carbon tax, and right now for the benefit of those in the District of Bonavista and other districts, 11 cents is on as carbon tax on our gas. What a lot don't know is that by 2030, that 11 cents on carbon tax is going to 37 cents. Some would say looking at it where we are now with the inflationary pressures in our society, that is a pretty daunting aspect to know that we are going to 37 cents. That's huge.

I've been out in my district and we've talked about it. Do they agree with climate change, that we've got a concern? Absolutely. In this House, I think we're all on board to know that climate change is a real issue. It is something that we've got to do; we've got to get a handle on. We have to reduce our carbon emissions. But how you go about it is part of an integrate plan that we do.

We're going to tax people enough with carbon that we'll stop them from driving: drive less, reduce your carbon footprint. That's the genesis of a tax. That's it. We did the same with tobacco. I'm not sure how successful we were with the tobacco and where we are with our smoking population, but I don't think taxation led to cessation of smoking. That's what the government is going to do now with sugar, we're going to do the sugar tax.

Now, I have to clarify, my hon. friend from Exploits when he spoke earlier about the sugar tax, he had stated milkshakes, because he was thinking the added sugar in milkshakes was

within that pop – if it's not, the minister just left off the word shake or that part.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** No, he did.

**C. PARDY:** He left it off?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Yes.

**C. PARDY:** Okay. I misunderstood, but *Hansard* will indicate my learned friend.

The only thing is that in my district they'll often talk about rural Newfoundland versus urban and I hear that more and more. I know that when I was going through school, lots of time they referenced the overpass: inside the overpass, outside the overpass. As I got a little bit wiser, with age, I realized that there is a significant discrepancy between living in rural Newfoundland and living in urban. All those representing urban districts would say we know that there is a big difference. You have bigger competition in urban. Bigger competition means that your prices are going to be lower. What you're going to pay for what you would have would mean that greater competition, prices are lower. The more rural you get, you would know that's not the case.

Then comes the fact on health care. You live in urban: the tertiary care at the Health Sciences complex is top notch. If you have a medical emergency and what you need and you get into the Health Science complex, you're in a good place. Rural Newfoundland – we have heard examples.

So when we are talking about rural and urban there is something that should instill in us the ability or the desire to make a plan. And one plan that I often look at that we had good success with in this province was the Poverty Reduction Strategy. It was a plan. I know that's in the works, but keep in mind now for any government that took power in 2015 – you know that you have been in since 2015 and we are in 2022 – the only thing being is that in that number of years we don't have the plan yet, but we are working towards it. Good. But there comes a point in time that, with a significant portion of our population experiencing poverty, I

would say there is no time like – it ought to have been yesterday and not today.

Another thing I want to mention – and I agree with the Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation, and Labrador Affairs – she mentioned in her address probably a couple of weeks ago – a wonderful address by the way – she had stated that you wouldn't be borrowing on your credit card and that is the balance that we look at. We don't borrow on our credit cards.

The only thing I would think that would be a little bit misaligned on what is said by the government side is that whenever we look at spending, we default right back to Muskrat Falls and everything we go back in Muskrat Falls. So at one session I had – and if I do misrepresent now someone is going to speak up later on and correct me like the milkshake but anyway I'm sure it was milkshake he had stated. But when it came down to being accurate, I stated at a meeting, well this government had spent, recently in the past few years, \$1.5 billion on infrastructure and it was all through the P3s. The P3 concept, which they knew nothing of, but in an explanation that was a partnership, and I think it probably had some good success with that, but he said where is the \$1.5 million? They are in agreements, I would assume, for future years with the private sector that we will have or accumulate debt going forward or in our deficit in order to pay off this infrastructure in the following years.

So, anyway, nothing wrong with good infrastructure, but one thing when it came down to P3s, one thing that Muskrat Falls did at the commission – and the Minister of Justice and Public Safety who got good experience with the commission – they had stated that anything over \$50 million ought to be analyzed by an independent tribunal, and I think they may have mentioned the PUB. But some independent tribunal to make sure that we're not creating any missteps going forward.

Now, if you had took \$1.5 billion, and the benchmark was \$50 million, then you're looking at 30 of those \$50 million expenditures in \$1.5

billion, and keep in mind nobody knows what the agreements are. There is no independent tribunal like the PUB or anybody that looked at that spending.

Now one would say, if we made a mistake in the past or we questioned an expense that we undertook or a project, then we ought not to be now, at a point in time where we're not transparent, that we don't know how those 30 sets of \$50 million that were spent by the government over the past number of years, that – who analyzes that? It's not the AG, because the AG is not going to see that. It's not the PUB. Who looks at it? It's government making the decision that this is good for the people, but nobody else will know exactly what the agreements are for that 30 set of \$50-million expenditures. And I would say the people in the District of Bonavista were surprised that was the case.

Imagine, 30 \$50-million expenditures that was spent and nobody knows what the agreements are.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**E. JOYCE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As we're speaking on the carbon tax, it's a money bill, I'm going to have a few words, Mr. Chair, about a few things that went on in the House for several weeks concerning myself and my family. I want to speak about that and I'm going to present it on the record.

There was a report issued, Mr. Chair, a while back, from the Commissioner for Legislative Standards about how –

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

I remind the hon. Member to stay relevant –

**E. JOYCE:** It is. We're pay –

**CHAIR:** – to the tax bill that we are now –

**E. JOYCE:** We are paying his –

**CHAIR:** I'm reminding the Member to stay relevant to the bill that we are discussing.

**E. JOYCE:** We are. We're paying his salary. So we have the right to question what he's presenting in this House, if the money from this carbon tax is paying his salary. That was ruled last week, when the Member for –

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

I'm going to remind the Member to stay relevant to the bill, Bill 60, An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act.

**E. JOYCE:** (Inaudible) money. That's what I'm discussing.

**CHAIR:** This House agreed on relevancy, and that's where it's going to stay.

**E. JOYCE:** Everybody is getting touchy now. We're not allowed to talk about the Commissioner for Legislative Standards. It's getting pretty tough.

**CHAIR:** I said it once.

**E. JOYCE:** Well, I can tell you, I'm going to say it here and I'm going to put it on the record that when the report finally came back, I did not own a company. My spouse did not own a company. I just wanted to put that on the record for you, Chair, just in case you were –

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

I'm going to ask the Member to stay relevant to Bill 60.

**E. JOYCE:** B'ys, we should have a bit of consistency in the House, because last week when the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands questioned –

**CHAIR:** I don't need to be directed by the hon. Member. I'm directing you to stay relevant to the bill.

**E. JOYCE:** I'm not directing you. I'm not. I'm just saying last week, when he spoke about it, he was allowed to speak about it. That's all I'm saying. I'll show you *Hansard* if you want to later.

But I'll respect your ruling.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

**E. JOYCE:** I'll respect your ruling, although last week was different. But anyway, I have no problem with that whatsoever.

I guess I look at the crab licence. I'm not getting into the crab licence and where they should have went or not went, Mr. Chair. But I seen the passionate speech from the owner out in Bay Roberts. It is passionate and I'm not getting into if it's right or wrong because I never seen the full reports, but I can tell you that if the Member for that area was not in Cabinet, she'd be up complaining about it. She'd be doing what she did to Dale Kirby: file a report if he never got the school. I guess she would resign if she never got that licence, the Member for Bay Roberts, but she can't.

Mr. Chair, I'm going to speak on the carbon tax again. I guess it's pretty relevant about the expenses for the people in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. It's pretty tough times for a lot of people. Again, I'm going to stand on my feet because I know, back a few weeks ago, there were people in the caucus didn't want me to be here speaking. But guess what? I'm here. I'm going to raise the concerns that I have.

I heard the Minister of Health today talk about BC closed down the clinics. This is about the funding, I guess, or the doctors needed and the funding that's needed around that. I just find it curious that the Minister of Health brings up, well, BC just closed down six emergencies or whatever. He uses information that's irrelevant, that he wants to use, for his argument. Why don't he use the argument whereby Nova Scotia just gave 2,400 patients for cataract surgery to a private clinic? Why don't he mention where Ontario just did the same thing? But here in Newfoundland and Labrador, he won't do it.

So it is convenient when you want to stand in this House and say, okay, we haven't got the money to do things for the health care; I understand that. But when you start using, well, it's done on other provinces to fit his argument. Why don't he use the same argument for the 800 seniors who don't have proper vision now? Why

don't he use the same argument for the seniors who, right now, can't read their prescriptions? Why don't he use the same argument for residents, right now, who can't drive? Why didn't you use the same argument, Minister?

So when you stand up here in this House of Assembly and you talk about something that is happening in other provinces but you won't say here are the positive things that are happening in the other provinces because he don't want it done. It is time to bring all the facts out, Mr. Chair.

I have to say to the minister that – and I say to the Premier, the Premier always says that the buck stops with him. It is time for the Premier of this province – many of the constituents are from his district. The Member for Corner Brook, many of the citizens are from his district. The Member for St. George's - Humber, many of the seniors are from his district. It is time for them to stand up; it is time for it. Because if you want to say one thing that is happening in other provinces, then let us look at the positive things that we could do in certain provinces that we can do in Newfoundland and Labrador.

This is very touching for me because I get so many calls from the seniors. I hear the minister stand up on numerous occasions: Oh, we do it within a certain amount of time, the 112 days. But I can tell you one thing; he will not address the wait-list. Every time he stands up and says: Oh, it was within – let's talk about the wait-list. Let's talk about the 800 seniors on the wait-list.

Mr. Chair, those 800 seniors, they could be done in the next three or four months. They could be done in the next three, four or five months but right now the Apex clinic in Corner Brook, when they get the quota, they got to stop. They actually have to stop surgeries while people are sitting home, in their homes, who can't read, can't drive and are isolated.

There was a report done that there's a greater chance of dementia with isolation. There's a report that I just read probably about a month ago about isolation for seniors with dementia. You can't drive, you're scared to go out, you might trip and your whole social life has been diminished. So I just want to put that there that it is part of it, yet the government across the

Province of Newfoundland and Labrador refuses to address it. There are many in the Premier's district.

I saw just the other day, Mr. Chair, that the Premier and the minister were out talking about the hip and knee surgery, that they're going to find a way to get the wait times. I agree with it. Great job. Why don't we do it for the cataracts which are in place right now? That's the question that the Premier will not answer and the Minister of Health and Community Services will not answer. We can do this tomorrow and we won't do it. That's what I find strange, that it won't be done.

So it's very, very obvious, Mr. Chair, that there's a reason, not because of finances, because it's cheaper to do it at the Apex building and the three specialists; it's not because there's a wait-list, because there is a huge wait-list; and it's not because you could do it in other facilities, because you can't. The only thing you hear on a regular basis is the people who are seeing the ophthalmologist; there are a certain amount of people in 112 days. But we're forgetting the people who won't even be on the list until next April to be done.

I'm going to continue to put this on the record, Mr. Chair, whenever I get the opportunity to do it. I know people are saying, well, you're talking about it. Here's what I say to the government and here is what I say to the Opposition: Remember the Motor Registration? They're open. Remember, you kept this open for the last two or three weeks because of the carbon tax, guess what? You got some relief. Not enough but you got some relief for the people of the province. So you can't give up on an issue when you feel strongly about it. I will continue to bring this up on a regular basis.

Mr. Chair, I'll end my speech there but I'll say one word to you: I don't mean to disrespect the Chair. I would never disrespect you or the Chair. That's just personal to me. I would never disrespect you or the Chair, so don't ever think I would. I do respect you. I do respect the Chair. I respect you as the Chair, as the Speaker and as a person. I would never try to disrespect you in any way.

Thank you.

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

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is good to be here today back in the House and represent the people of my district, and to be in Committee this afternoon and speak to Bill 60, a resolution respecting the imposition of taxes on carbon. And we'll keep it to that, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, I, like everyone else, had the opportunity for constituency week to spend time in my district and to meet with different groups in the five different towns. In each place that we met we discussed the cost of living and, of course, carbon tax.

I was fortunate enough to be with the development association in Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove and volunteering with the students of St. Francis of Assisi with their community garden. We got our hands dirty; we got into the setting of potatoes, pumpkins seeds and different things. It was important for the children to realize to grow their own food so less is trucked into the district and, of course, because of the carbon tax that has its price on everything that's brought in here.

I had the opportunity to be in Pouch Cove and the hon. minister was there for a funding announcement. It was good to have the minister there. It was with respect to the bottling of water and to use less bottled water with refilling stations. It's always good to have the minister in the district when it comes to that. This, again, was another initiative through the town to try to curb costs, and with respect to carbon tax was brought up for conversation at that location as well.

We had a community clean up in the Town of Flatrock. We had a hundred people come up and clean up the community. It was all conversations dealing with the environment and reducing our carbon footprint. This is very much on the minds of the residents in my district. It's not that they are against climate change. They agree that climate change needs to be addressed. No doubt,

it has to be addressed and I applaud the residents of my districts who are stewards of the environment and doing their part without having to pay the carbon tax. So when we look at the effects that it has, it affects many.

I had another opportunity to be in the Town of Torbay with the hon. minister for the Atlantic Mayors' Congress and I thank the minister for joining us for that. We had some good discussions with mayors from across the four Atlantic provinces. What we discussed was the cost of living, carbon tax, how it affects each and every decision and how it affects the municipalities.

I had good conversations with – since we were in this House last – the municipalities in my district and how they are struggling. They are struggling with the increased costs and they don't know how they're going to handle all of the cost increases with respect to what's coming down the pipe with carbon tax, of how goods and services and contractors in their towns are doing business. It all affects the bottom dollar. It all affects how municipalities are run and, as I said before, they cannot have the ability to change their budgets. They have to look at what they have to operate with and be within that budget and not to have any overruns.

It does have quite the affect on many people throughout the district, through many age groups and demographics. Everyone is aware, fully aware, of what's going on and want to do their part with respect to climate change.

Mr. Chair, I had the opportunity to speak with many seniors in my district with respect to housing. I know that the hon. minister is always listening when it comes to the housing needs in all the districts of the province, but it's becoming more and more unaffordable when the heating costs rise and inflation reduces people's disposable income. Of course, many people of this department, unfortunately, are some of the poorest of the province and right now they're barely making ends meet as it is.

So we have to take measures, of course, so that the toll is less on their families. What we have to look at right now that a further tax increase, on these particular individuals, is the last thing that we need right now. It has to be in the forefront

when making decisions, moreover for our seniors and our low income.

My colleague from Topsail - Paradise talked earlier with respect to income support. I'm getting calls almost daily of people who are struggling, of people who are asking questions about income support, because of the cost it's going up and up and, of course, the carbon tax is going to drive this up even further and people have less disposable income.

In addition to that, I'm having people who are trying to come off income support, but are struggling so heavily that they're going back on. As my colleague said it is a vicious circle. So there are two things here driving them back to the system and driving them to the system.

Mr. Chair, they do have the difficulty of surviving day to day, and, of course, income support would be a last resort, no doubt, when it comes to them trying to survive. It is hard to listen to; it's hard to take. I'm sure you'll agree, this is not just one district, this is all districts when we're looking at the level of income that some people have and, unfortunately, being driven to income support.

As I said earlier, Mr. Chair, I had the opportunity to discuss with the Atlantic Mayors' Congress of different tourism aspects in my district and whenever I have the opportunity I always praise the East Coast Trail. No doubt tourism is going to be impacted by carbon tax, just because of our geographic location alone.

I always support the East Coast Trail; however, people are saying to me – and, again, not only with that but with Come Home Year as well – that they want to be here, they want to take part in supporting our tourism. It's a very important thing to support and, of course, we in the Official Opposition do recognize that, but we are disadvantaged here, unfortunately, with our location. So we definitely rely on tourists coming from out of province, as well as our local tourists. That is being impacted as well, because people are not going to have the financial ability to tour our province because of the high gas prices and, of course, with carbon tax, which is going to be on top of it as well.



It is definitely making an impact on what we can do. The minister is shaking his head. This is what I'm hearing from constituents in my district and from the Atlantic Mayors' Congress who came to the province. They're hearing it as well. It definitely makes a difference when it comes to what they have to give.

Mr. Chair, after tourism we look at arts and culture. When you have people who can't afford the necessities – and I have to say the Speaker said earlier today, when we opened the House, he recognized the Page that we have here today who is doing honourable work, who's collecting feminine hygiene products for people who cannot afford to pay for those. I commend her for that. I also spoke to her and said I will be supporting what she's doing. I think each and every Member in this House should support what she's doing.

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

**J. WALL:** But, Mr. Chair, when you have people who can't afford the essentials, where are they getting the money for arts and culture? Where are they getting the money for entertainment? Where are they getting money to go out and spend here in my district, in your district throughout the province when they can't afford the essentials?

So that's imperative when you're looking at what people have and the money that can circulate within the economy. That money is being siphoned off into the gas tank and into carbon tax. I'm sure people want to spend it elsewhere, they want to spend it on different things, moreover in tourism or arts and culture; however, we are at the point now where people are rationing their spending and how they're going to go forward, what they can spend it on.

It's very important for us to realize that when we're making these decisions, when it comes to carbon tax coming down again on top of all the other levels of taxation we have, people just have to spend their money elsewhere, Mr. Chair. It's becoming unfortunate that they have to make these tough decisions on essentials, as my colleague said earlier with respect to medications. It's all on the table when it comes to decisions that are being made.

Mr. Chair, I do realize my time is going down; I have several other issues and headings that I'd like to speak on. I'm sure we'll have lots of opportunity this evening to do that. So I do thank you for your time and for your attention. Please, if you can support this young lady in her initiative, I ask that you please do so.

Thank you so much.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the Member for Conception Bay South.

**B. PETTEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's always a pleasure to speak in this House. I like the premises. Most times we don't do enough and I try to do it as often as I can. I am proud to represent Conception Bay South. It is a privilege, each one of us taking this House, 40 of us – and I know everyone feels the same way. I won't say my beautiful district because someone else has the copyrights to that, but I'm very proud.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Scenic.

**B. PETTEN:** Scenic, yeah.

Mr. Chair, we've been debating this a couple of weeks ago and we're back debating again. It's about the carbon tax. I guess underneath all the debate the one common theme you hear said is about individuals. I heard my colleague from Cape St. Francis jump up and he's talking about people. He's talking about their struggles.

We get in the House of Assembly daily and my colleague from Stephenville - Port au Port, our Finance shadow minister, he talks about people's issues. Help for seniors. Help for people with their home heat rebates. Help for people who can't afford to drive their cars gas-wise. Help for people buying groceries in the supermarkets.

These are real stories but they're not isolated to one district in the province, they're isolated to 40 districts. Sometimes the function of this House of Assembly, the layout of the House, the way we're all back and forth and the adversarial nature of this House, there are a lot of Members

on the government side don't really get to speak to the public in this domain in the House of Assembly like we do on the Opposition side. People may ask, why are you keeping the House open? Why are you debating this legislation again this week? You were at it there a couple of weeks, why are you continuing on? Government got a majority. They can invoke closure; they can do what they want.

Ultimately, government can get this bill in, absolutely right. There's no doubt about it, the Government House Leader has the ability to invoke closure whenever he wants and we can shut it all down and move on. To his credit, and I guess to the credit of the House and the people of the province, we're debating this.

We don't agree with the carbon tax. I think most Members opposite probably feel the same way. The Minister of Environment and Labour already stated that it was kind of forced upon them by the federal government. Our good friend in Ottawa – and he's done good things here, I don't dispute that. I haven't got my head totally in the sand, there are good things that the prime minister has done for our province and I credit that.

But there are some things that are not good and this is one of them. So does that mean that because you've done five good things, you're going to give him a pass on something like this? No. These things are affecting people; day-to-day living, it's affecting them. Supermarkets, they're being affected. Heating their homes, they're being affected. Vacations, they're being affected. Every angle in life, everything to do in life.

Mr. Chair, this past weekend it was two doctors I spoke to having just a conversation, basically a chat about many things, catching up on a lot of things. As we know, we never got into salaries, but doing very well for themselves. They as much as stated so. He said you know what I'm struggling with now? I don't want to be driving my truck as much. I've turned my truck into a flowerpot, I told him. I have a nice truck but she's over in the driveway full of soil. My wife recently retired and she's doing flowerbeds. I said now I have a flowerpot in the backyard and I'm using her small car. I don't mind admitting that. My neighbour said, you don't use your

truck no more? No, no, no, I don't use that I said. I use my wife's car, a smaller car; I can't afford to drive that so that's a flowerpot.

I mean on a serious note, these are two doctors stood up looking, and they're really dead serious when they're saying this. Ultimately, I'm sure they'll probably survive, but when you start rationalizing and you start looking at your own situation – when you're in a group, you're in the top 1 per cent, or probably even the top half per cent, in some cases; we don't know what the salaries are – that's real. They're not my constituents. They're people I know.

But those are the real stories we're hearing out there. We'll come in and the Minister of Finance many times will get up and talk about the \$142 million. My colleague from Ferryland keeps a tally on that. I'm not sure where we're to now, it's somewhere around – I keep the tally on Muskrat Falls; he keeps the tally on the \$142 million. But we're there. We're getting up there. Nobody disputes that.

But the senior who called me on Thursday afternoon, after the cost of living announcement was made, she was really – she called me repeatedly; I missed her calls. I had to speak to her; she had to get it off her chest. She said I make \$1,800 a month. I burn electricity. This is no good to me. I'm getting eight cents off gas. They might put that up tomorrow. What's the benefit to me then? I can't afford to eat. She referred to the Premier and not in a bad way but by his name. I can't say it in this House. But I'm hearing directly – here in this House today, I'm telling that story. Very good point.

That's not to say the \$142 million is no good. We've never said that. It's not enough. We know the province will say otherwise, we've put an extra \$80 million; \$222 million now is the new number. We've graduated from \$142 million, now we're \$222 million. Fair enough. Is it enough? Do anyone here think it's enough? People here might think it's enough. I don't think it's enough.

Do I understand the fiscal situation we're in? Yeah. But if people are not spending money, or can't spend money, or are struggling to survive, what does it matter if you keep your books balanced, if you keep borrowing less? What

does it really matter? In the financial situation of the province, what does it really matter when the people again – and I'll go back to my original comment, Mr. Chair, 40 of us here who we all represent, who we are really the champions of. We're the champions of the people in our communities and our districts.

I know a lot of Members opposite – and I've seen them operate over the years and they are the champions for their people. So shouldn't we all say that \$222 million is not bad, that's a nice number? But is it enough? No. If it was enough, you wouldn't be getting the complaints; you wouldn't be getting the concerns.

On the Opposition side, we collectively get issues raised to us. Members in government probably don't get the same ones because we have a role to play. If we flipped over on that side, which we'll get there eventually, this side here will be getting them emails because that's the role. People that understand the House of Assembly, our role as Opposition Members are to lobby government for better legislation, argue government for how they spend their money. Better expenditure of money: that's our role. That's an inherent role in the Official Opposition. I mean the Loyal Opposition has a role to play. That's our role.

Liberals email us. Sure, they're not going to email their own crowd because they are the ones making the rules. So why are you going to email them? They are only going to spend \$222 million. We think they need to have \$442 million, so what is he going to email them for? They know the answer, so they're emailing us. When you get a chance have a crack at them. That is what we do.

I know I'm being very flippant. That's the reality, that's what we all deal with here. I have lots of Liberals coming to me now that I think – lots of Liberals are probably going to stay my way if we continue on. But we'll leave that for another day, Mr. Chair, because then we are getting into elections now, and I'll probably going to go off on the beaten path, but that's the reality we deal with. We deal with all political

stripes on this side of the House because we are the voice.

I go back – and a lot of Members were here, a lot weren't. In 2016 we stood in this House and we went day and night, back when they used to be able to do a real filibuster. There used to be three of us over here and it was – the Chair can probably remember it well. We went around the clock and around the clock and around the clock. It was because we strongly believed in what – and to this day, years later, I don't regret one second. I could have gone longer because, ultimately, we were bringing their voices in this House. It is the people's House.

It is what we did; it is what we signed up for. It is what is expected of us. I remember we used to have coming in the stacks of emails from people. We didn't write it. There was no speech writing going on back then. We never had enough staff for that or enough money to pay them. We used to go email after email. It is all we could do, Mr. Chair. We couldn't do nothing else. I am not a great writer so I would read email after email after email after email.

Eventually, two days in people started saying: Hang on a second; I heard my email was read. We were getting a lot of that stuff. But, ultimately, they were applauding us. They knew that the end of the day, you know what, government had that big majority back then of 31 seats I believe. They knew that government would get their way eventually; they'd wait you out. I guess that's what happened.

The mission we were on was more about speaking up for the people who don't have that voice. Because when you're in government – not this Legislature, any legislature in the country and across the world, that's what you run into in the Westminster legislatures. You get Government and Loyal Oppositions – and the US is different with the representative. We're into a different legislature here.

We have a role and it's a role that I will not take lightly – and I'll have more time to speak before the day is out. But it's a role that I take very seriously. I think everyone on our side take very seriously. Even the independents, even the

people in the Third Party. They mightn't support Bay du Nord, but they'll get up and speak for the people when their turn comes.

So I think that is the issue where we're here. We are here for carbon tax, but we're here for people. And I know their voices can't be spoken for on the other side, but we will speak for them on this side.

Thank you very much.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. Member for Ferryland.

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

I appreciate the opportunity to be able to get up and speak and thank, again, the residents of the Ferryland District for voting me in. I'll start off by saying hello to my mom who's probably watching today home. I think she only –

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Last week she learned how to get on – she doesn't have it on her TV on the Bell, but my daughter who's in Liverpool gave her the link to get on. I said that's not a good thing and then last night I was down there and I was leaving, she said, now, Loyola, behave yourself when you go in there tomorrow.

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** So I think I'll tell her in advance to shut off the iPad.

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** So I will get to a serious note. We are talking about the carbon tax for sure. We're talking about lowering the prices for the people of the province. First thing that's going to come in September is the sugar tax. That's something that they don't even know is going to hit them yet. We're talking about bringing down taxes; they have no idea what's coming yet.

I heard the minister speak earlier about the sugary drinks that they're taxing – just sugary

drinks. But he's got to realize that these companies are doing their best to bring down the sugary drinks. They have diet Pepsis; they have diet Cokes; they have sugar-free drinks. So they're doing their job to do that. They don't need to be putting more tax on them. They have to go out as companies now and change their POS systems. Tens of thousands of dollars it's costing those companies to change their point of sales, computers, to be able to do that.

So that's something that the government went out – I know; I heard from them. They went out and said you're doing this, there is no choice, you're getting it done so you might as well adjust to it. They didn't get a choice; they have to do it. And it is something that they've been doing since they started, over the years, to make these pop drinks less sugary. They have been doing it themselves. They have been trying to.

It is the same as a car companies. As I have said before, now they're into electric vehicles. I will be in the process of buying a vehicle by next March, as an example. If I go in to order a car today, I'm going to be eight or 10 months away to get a car, let alone an electric car. So they're not geared up yet. So they're forcing this on us – I know the federal government are forcing this on us and we're going to get there. We're eventually going to get there, but they're forcing this on us. We're making the pay right now and that is hurting the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We're forced to do that. Like I said, there are no cars there to get. There are some cars; I shouldn't say there are no cars. They're having trouble getting cars; I know that. I know people who have been out and they're three or four months waiting for a car to come in and they haven't got it yet. So now you're trying to get in the process of yeah, I'll probably like to have an electric car, but I wouldn't want to leave to go to Corner Brook tomorrow and drive across in my electric car and have to stop four times and wait a half hour to an hour for it to charge up fully. So the technology right now, that's where it is; it's going to be a half hour to an hour to get maybe fully charged, not fully charged but close.

So you have to stop two or three times to leave to go across the Island. So if you have a seven-hour trip to Corner Brook right now, then you're

going to have another 1½ hour tacked on to that so now you're leaving earlier. That is the way it is going to be until all these cars get tracked in and their batteries and all that stuff.

Someone else had asked me: How much do these batteries cost for these cars? Well, they hadn't had an issue with them as of now, that I know. But somewhere along the ways, it is like anything else, you have a battery in your bike, your ATV, or your car, the battery gives out at some point that you never want it to give out. So electric cars are not around yet, I wouldn't think – they're here probably five or six years, I'd say that is how long. Maybe a little longer, I'm not sure exactly. So five or six years.

So now, a battery gives out in that; anybody here know the price of a battery in one of those electric cars that you got to replace it? Nope, neither do I. I'm going to say it is \$4,000 or \$5,000 at a minimum. That is a minimum right now. That will probably go down the more cars you have. So you're talking about \$5,000 for a battery for a car or \$4,000 if that happens. It is eventually going to happen. If the cars are going to be electric, they're eventually going to wear out. Same as your cellphone. It is like there is something in the cellphone every two years, it is like the cellphone goes dead and you need to get another one. It is like it is programmed to go down. Cars are going to be the same way, eventually, at some point in time. Hopefully, you're going to do that.

So you're looking at a cost of living and I look at the government, and I heard the Member for Bonavista say the poverty reduction. We look at that. Why not a Jumpstart program? Instead of putting sugary taxes, why not put some money into a Jumpstart program for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador to help the kids?

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** You're talking about healthy living, you start a Jumpstart program, kids will get involved in sports or whatever activity they're going to do, whatever they can, whatever the schools can help them with, or any organization to get more kids out and being active. Well, that's an incentive to do it, not put tax on the sugary drink. That doesn't make any sense to me. I would put more money and take

the money and invest it and get the kids out to be more active. Get them into hockey, get them into softball and get them into gymnastics.

If anyone here thinks gymnastics is going out waving pompoms, they're sadly mistaken because it is probably the most athletic sport out there. For anyone that's ever watched and you go watch these events, it's absolutely an athletic sport.

Those are some of the places that we should be investing our money into the kids to get them more active, to get them out in the communities to do more of this stuff. It's just a different incentive. We got away from that in 2016; they cut it out. I believe the Member for Bell Island was a part of that program when it first came out. It was a big initiative and we just squashed it. It came in and you just cut it. But you can go out and tax people more now. It makes no sense.

Tax people more and don't give the kids any more money to get out and be active. Tell me what part of that makes any sense. That's a poverty reduction to me, if you're going to help the kids get out and get active. They're going to get out and be more energetic in the community and be more healthy. Costing the health care system less money over a period of time. That's what we're talking about.

Food prices, obviously have gone up. Based on fuel prices, the food has to go up. You talk about vacations, going on vacations. People are going to have a hard job to go on vacations. First of all, they leave the province and we have to do a test for \$59 or \$60 to get out of the province per person, to go on a flight to prove that we don't have COVID or if you already had COVID. It costs you \$60.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Don't stay in Canada (inaudible).

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** If you're going to go outside of Canada, that's correct. So I will make that point. If you stay in Canada, then it's not going to cost you – good point. I will take that under advisement. That's a good one, though.

If you go out in the US or anywhere else, it's going to cost you \$60 each. You have four in a family at a minimum and that is \$240 more,

besides your flights. Then you get down and you can't get a rental car. Rental cars are doubled. I know that; they're doubled. Not only here, everywhere. That's not only here, that's everywhere.

Obviously you go to the gas stations now and you're driving here – we just drove across the Island; \$300 to go across the Island and come back again. It's not cheap. Somebody said that's doubled from last year. I'm going to say probably double or close to it. It wasn't exactly double, but it's pretty close.

But those are the things that are affecting the normal, everyday person. I know you're not forgetting it, but we're here to reinforce that's why we're here. We're here to speak for the common people, to be able to get out and have their life – get back to normal. To do their regular driving and to do all the things they'd like to do. They can't go out to a restaurant as much.

What you came in with the other day, all of a sudden you opened the door, jeez, we found \$80 million. We must give that out to the people.

Why didn't we do that when the budget came out? It's like an imaginary door or closet was found. It's unbelievable. I took three weeks of bantering on everybody to try to get it – wow, we found a door with \$80 million behind it. Now we're going to give that out to everybody. That's amazing. I can't believe it.

So you must have come up with that idea. No, three or four weeks of bantering is how it got there and the reason it got there is because the people on this side have spoken for the people and you had to have a look at it. I don't blame you to have a look at it. It's a great idea and it's a great initiative. I'm glad you did it.

With all that advice that we have given you, I'm glad that you opened the door and found \$80 million to help the people. I'm very glad of it. Hopefully, you can find another \$222 million somewhere else in door number two; we'd like to have another \$222 million.

I'll leave that off, I'm running out of time here, but I certainly have to get another opportunity to speak later on.

Thank you, Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I just want to touch on the sugar tax as well; everybody else seemed to have a minute here. I've just got a question for the government: The predicted tax revenue for this sugar tax is what, again? I'm going to ask my –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Five million dollars.

**C. TIBBS:** Five million dollars is the predicted revenue for the sugar tax. My question is this: If your plan is supposed to work, shouldn't that revenue be zero?

**S. COADY:** Please God.

**C. TIBBS:** Please God. That's right. But we have said \$5 million. So nobody is going to drink less sugary drinks. The only thing this is going to accomplish is taking more money out of taxpayers' pockets that really can't afford it. If your plan was going to work, that prediction would be zero, but it's \$5 million. So you're expecting for people to continue to drink sugary drinks.

I'm on board with it, I would love to see people drink less sugary drinks, too, but I think a different approach is needed here.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Hopefully it's zero

**C. TIBBS:** Hopefully it's zero, yes, absolutely. Hopefully it's zero.

On one hand, we're taxing the people of the province as they drink sugary drinks, but on the other hand, we're sticking our hands back in the pockets again to give money to a brewery. How does this make any sense to us?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** It's about choice.

**C. TIBBS:** It's about choice, but we're making a choice of promoting that brewery and putting money back in there. That's the choice. We

make the choice of giving it to the brewery and taking it out of taxpayers' pockets. It just makes no sense to me at this moment.

So we talk about the carbon tax, and you'll have to forgive me if I do not take the word of the main head honcho who is pushing this carbon tax down everybody's throat, which is our prime minister. When he shows up at the Delta a few weeks ago in six or seven huge black Suburbans as a security detail. Now does he need it? Does he need it? One could argue of course he needs it. He is an important man and important dignitaries like that they need it. But guess what? Harold Curtis in Grand Falls-Windsor that works in the produce department at Dominion, he needs to get to work as well.

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

**C. TIBBS:** Gail Budgell who works in the OR in the Grand Falls-Windsor hospital, she needs to get to work as well. Ray Parby, he drives the school bus every morning, he has got to get to work as well. The only difference is these people do not have the money to put into their gas tanks like the prime minister and his seven Suburbans do. And that is not right. That is not right. You give him the same paycheque as some of these people with the same bank account, I guarantee he would suffer as well and that carbon tax would go away pretty quick.

I heard the Finance Minister earlier today talking about this as a home run. When we use the analogy for baseball, sort of thing, and we started the analogy for baseball, but when that was said here, that this was a home run for the province, everybody cheered. I don't know what people are cheering about. I have no idea.

I moved to Ireland in 2000 when I was 22 years old and there was an older fellow there Gus O'Donovan. He sort of took me under his wing and he gave me some of the best advice I have ever gotten in my entire life. And it is the best advice I have ever gotten. He said: Chris, at 22 years old you pretty much know everything that you are going to know in life, like all of the basics you know it right now. Now be aware of

it. When you separate those two things, you get a completely different outlook and outcome.

We all know the people in our province are hurting here today. We all know it. Everybody knows it and we stand here and we say, yeah, we know it. We get the emails. We know it. We know it but there aren't many people that are aware of it.

You can argue with me and say that you are aware of it. You are not. You are not because I would argue that there is not a person in this Chamber that goes to the gas station and pulls up their phone really quick before they pump that gas to see how much money they have in their account. There are very few, if anybody here that does that. But when you stop into a gas station and a mom or dad has got to take you their phone to check real quick: I got \$17 in my account, I can put in \$15. That is being aware of it. That is being aware of it.

When a mom or dad goes to the grocery store, everything costs a little bit more right now, and I've said it before, and I'll say it again, you watch senior citizens or a mom and dad, a single mom or a single dad put stuff back on the shelf. Do you know what? We know they're doing it, but we're not aware of it. Not a person here is aware of that, not a person here. We're all trying to be a little frugal at home, I'm sure, but when you have a budget of \$78 for your week's worth of groceries and you have two youngsters, they're aware of it, trust me.

We might know it, but they're aware of it and that is the disconnect. That is the disconnect that I've seen throughout government for eons and eons and eons.

We can stand here and we can argue back and forth and talk about what's best for the province, but until you're aware of what the people are going through, and I'm not talking about looking at an email. I'm not talking about talking to a constituent every now and again and you say what you think is what they want to hear. I'm talking about being aware of it: Being in that situation. We all were in that situation probably at one time, but we easily forget. I think we easily forget.

So my argument would be to stay on the ground, talk to these people more. Be in contact with these people more. If you want to be aware of what they're going through, try to be in contact with them a little bit more and try to take on what they have. People out there are missing mortgages, car payments, everything else. Houses are getting repossessed. We know it; we say it in passing. Not many people are aware of it and, unfortunately, that's where the disconnect comes in.

I want to take a quick second and just give a quote here. Not a quote, sorry, a definition: Equality verses equity. I'll use the province, instead of person. Equality means each individual province is given the same resources or opportunities. Equity recognizes that each province has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome. Not all provinces are the same. They truly are not.

Geographically, of course, we're a dispersed province. Our people are dispersed, we're more of a territory; I've heard that more than once. But when you look at each province being different in Canada – and my colleague from Stephenville - Port au Port said it best earlier – we've done our due. We have done it. We've taken on these hydroelectric projects so hopefully all the bunker C that's being burned in this province is going to be taken offline. We're helping Nova Scotia. We've helped Quebec over the past 50 years, haven't we? We have paid our dues.

In my opinion, we should be rewarded with that. We should be able to go to Ottawa and say we have done our due diligence, we've taken a chance, we've taken the liabilities and here we are. That should be rewarded to Newfoundland and Labrador. We should not fall under the same category as every province, including Ontario for instance, that probably puts out more pollution than any other province in Canada. So when we look at the equality and equity, that's a definition that should come into this conversation when it comes to talk to the prime minister or your friends up in Ottawa there.

We ask who's fighting for us, who's bringing this message ahead? I would like to know what was said. Was this argument made that not all

provinces are equal, so not all provinces should be treated equally, just to have a carbon tax across the board? It's not good enough.

This equality and equity can be used the same as urban and rural places in Newfoundland and Labrador as well. You know what, the Metrobus in St. John's and on the Avalon here, it's absolutely fantastic. I hope people use it because it's a great service. We don't have it in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. We don't. So people that have to drive from Grand Falls-Windsor to Botwood to go to work – not at the emergency room, by the way, because that's not open, but anywhere else down there, for people that have to make that drive they can't get a bus. They can't get a bus down there; they have to take their vehicles. When you're spending 40, 50 bucks a day to get to work, well by God, what's the sense in going anymore.

We literally have people right now that are saying they can't afford to go to work. What's that going to do for us down the road? So equality and equity need to be discussed. That should've been the cornerstone when we went to Ottawa and fought to get this tax taken away from Newfoundland and Labrador. Every other province might do it, but all I'm worried about is Newfoundland and Labrador right now.

Just a minute left. I'm going to touch on something that I've always touched on and always will, and that's the mental health aspect of all this. Whether it be the sugar tax, the carbon tax, we continue to stick our hands inside the pockets of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that cannot afford it. They truly cannot afford it.

I get our fiscal responsibilities and I get that we're fiscally strapped. It's not an easy job the government has – it's not an easy job – but different choices can be made. They truly can. I've said it before and I'll say it again, just as my colleague for Exploits has said it: The Premier's office in Grand Falls-Windsor is going to cost the taxpayers probably \$750,000 to a million dollars over the next three or four years. It doesn't need to be there, it shouldn't be there. So let's take that money and stick it back into the pockets of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians where it belongs.



Thank you very much.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. Member for Terra Nova.

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

Mr. Chair, last Thursday when the announcement was made on gas tax, I listened to the Premier and the Finance Minister say, boastfully: We've listened to the people. They had an opportunity to listen to the people on April 7 and every day before that when they introduced the budget. If they were listening, we wouldn't have had to wait until last Thursday for this announcement. If they were listening, it would have been done a long time ago. As a matter of fact, if they were listening we wouldn't have spent the last two months listening to them tell us that this could not be done. Sadly, day after day, we heard the same thing: This cannot be done.

Then the default goes to \$142 million that we've put back in people's pockets. Well, I would challenge them to bring one individual forward who received the \$2,400 cheque – one. That's all I'd like to see. The claim is that everybody in the province got the \$2,400 put back in their pockets. The reality is that none of them got it put back in their pockets.

Now, I understand that this money was used to mitigate the price of electricity, but there was no guarantee that electricity was going to go up substantially, as they had predicted. No, you can look across, that was never set.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible.)

**L. PARROTT:** There's a process, Minister, and you know the process as well as I do. So when the process comes in place, there's a chance that electricity could go up, but that process wasn't in place.

I also listened today to the minister stand up and say extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures. There's some truth in that statement, but I will say this: There's nobody in this province that thinks these are extraordinary measures. If you want to see something

extraordinary, perhaps someone should get on a plane and go see their friends in Ottawa, and ask them about the 11.5 cents that people are getting paid. We've got five cents from the refinery and an 11.5-cent carbon tax, along with the gas tax. There's an opportunity for us to be yelling and screaming at the so-called friends, cousins, aunts, uncles, whatever they are in Ottawa, asking for a pause on that.

The very thing that we were told by this government we couldn't do is what they came back and done. Which to me, it leads to the question, how is it that it can happen right now? Maybe it's as my colleague said, maybe they opened up door number two and found a pot of money. I don't know but there are no answers.

There's a quote that says, the number one reason people fail in life is because they listen to their friends, family and neighbours. I would say that this is the one time we should be arguing with our friends, family and neighbours. This is the one time that we should be telling Ottawa that we need relief. When you have people who can't afford to eat, can't afford to go to work and there's an 11.5-cent carbon tax that could be paused, nobody is suggesting that it get stopped. The reality of it is that it's too much right now. Extraordinary times – too much right now – extraordinary measures. Facing off against the very people who have put this in place. It's pretty simple.

The Premier left his chair and flew to Ottawa to listen to a virtual meeting with the president of Ukraine. Yet he won't get off his chair and go to Ottawa and tell his buddy, Justin, that we need extraordinary measures. We are not every other province. We are Newfoundland and Labrador and we need more. We need more.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible.)

**L. PARROTT:** I can call him whatever I want, thank you very much. At the end of the day, if you want to stand on a point of order, go right ahead.

At the end of the day, this province is in a place that we haven't seen before. The reality of it is that we do need extraordinary measures, I totally agree with the minister, but how do we get there.

Part of it is for standing up for the people that need it.

I listened to –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible.)

**L. PARROTT:** Yeah, I seen you were out and seen him.

The cost of living is not made easier by purchasing an electric car. Absolutely –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible.)

**L. PARROTT:** And so I should be. I should be listening on the behalf of all the people who put me here, as you guys should. You guys should get off your –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible.)

**L. PARROTT:** That's the bottom line. I should be listening to everyone running in a leadership. We seen what happened in your leadership. The preordained – every one of you showed up in masks before you even knew what was going on. So there you go.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**L. PARROTT:** You see what it got us. Right where we are right now.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible.)

**L. PARROTT:** I am, 100 per cent.

The reality of it is we need leadership here and we don't have it.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Brazil is doing (inaudible.)

**L. PARROTT:** David Brazil is doing a fabulous job.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**L. PARROTT:** People every day are suffering and this is what we resort to. Here is the reality. The Member for Virginia Waters - Pleasantville says all the time: Facts are facts. And you know what, he is right. He is 100 per cent right; facts are facts, but here is what government just did.

They said if you can't afford to put gas in your car, you should buy an electric car. That is like going downtown and looking at a homeless person and telling them if they can't afford a house, to go buy a house. People can't afford to buy electric cars. People can't afford to buy homes. People can't afford to put gas in their car. They can't afford any of the essentials of life that they need right now.

At the end of the day, that's what we should be looking at. We should be looking at what's happening to the people that need it the most. And the people that need it the most are the ones that are yelling and screaming.

My colleague for CBS said today we get emails all the time from everyone throughout the district. We do and I'm sure you guys do too. We get the sad stories and there are good stories out there too, make no mistake about it. There are businesses starting up, there are tourism businesses that are looking forward to a good summer: There are all kinds of good things happening, but the reality of it is that there are lots of bad things happening.

When we stand up in this House and we talk about what we can and can't do and people say it is about choices, well, here is something about choices. Choices need to be made for the right reasons. When we make choices to invest money in some things and the timing is wrong, then they're not the right choices. We have done that. We've done that in this budget and we've done it historically in this province. At some point, we need to make the choices that benefit the people that put us here.

We've always had a province that's flush in natural resources; flush in opportunity and we've failed to take advantage of it. Now, more than ever, we need to start taking advantage of those things and finding a way to put money back in people's pockets.

I would argue that the way to put money back in people's pockets is to get them working, to get the economy going, to find ways to spur what we have here. Instead, we sit in here and we spin our wheels and we cast blame and we look back in history. We talk about \$142 million, \$500 million, all the mistakes of the past but we forget about the mistakes that we made ourselves as individuals or governments.

We need to start looking forward. That is the only way we can go. When we sit here and we don't look at what we can do. We say we can't do it, we can't do it, we can't do it; oh my God, look, I just found \$80 million. How much credibility does that lend to anybody in this House? The reality of it is we all look like fools at some point.

The timing and the perceptions of the choices that we've made in the last little while, there's no doubt that it's incited people in the public. I will agree with the Minister of Tourism, I don't think for a second that the investment in NASCAR is a bad thing, but I struggle with the timing of it. I don't think for a second that investment in industry in this province is a bad thing, but I struggle with the timing of it based on what people are dealing with.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** It can create jobs.

**L. PARROTT:** I don't dispute that it can create jobs. But people need to be able to drive to those jobs. People need to be able to find a way to get to work.

When we have a Premier who's travelling to Ireland, who's travelling to Ottawa and who's opening offices in Grand Falls.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible.)

**L. PARROTT:** You guys know when he went. Scotland, yeah, sorry. Photo shot.

But the reality of all of this is right here, right now. We've been in this federation for 73 years and for 73 years we still are handcuffed. We've got a carbon tax that's being put down upon us by the federal government; 73 years into Confederation, and they're telling us that we have to implement it. We've got a provincial government that's telling us that we can't

withdraw any of our taxes because backstops will come into place. We've heard that 142 million times to be exact. Here we are a week ago making an announcement on it. So why did we have to wait that long?

Then we have an example, a home heat rebate, I get it, come this fall people will put their first tank of fuel in their thing, I know why we do that. But here's the other side of it, between now and then, there are people who can't afford to pay bills, lots of them. We need to find a way to help those people.

So the seven cents, does it go far enough? I don't think it does. The 11.5 cent carbon tax: there's zero chance that I can support it. We should be yelling and screaming to our federal counterparts to put a pause on it immediately – immediately.

My time is up.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John's Centre.

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

I'll start off by saying: I've been there. I've been there as part of a young couple with a family and struggling, two cars because we had to. I taught up the shore, my wife taught in town. I can tell you it was tough at many times. I won't go into just how bad it was at times, but nevertheless we worked through it.

I volunteered with Saint Vincent de Paul for over 30 years, walking into houses and we saw how much people struggle – a hell of a lot worse than any of us can imagine.

When we talk about the need for immediate help: totally agree. We also need a long-term strategy. When I look at the whole carbon tax debate, I've got to ask myself the question as to who are we helping, because not everyone is going to benefit from that. There are a lot of people who will see not one benefit from reduction in the carbon tax.

I'll give an example where I'm going here, too, because there's a greater cost if we don't address this. I'm sure you've seen the news from Ontario, the tornado that swept through there. It left people dead, destroyed property, destroyed homes, knocked out power to schools. My sister teaches up there and, I can tell you, for a while there that the calls: Are you all right?

Extreme weather events as a result of climate change, or better yet, let's go back to Snowmageddon in 2020 and think about the event and who is going to be most impacted by these extreme events. Not necessarily the people who can afford to put food in the refrigerator, but it's going to be the vulnerable. The ones who are on the margin already. Back then, long before any increase, they were struggling. The ones on income support, where they are already not making enough.

So when I look at it, in terms of what we call for and what we have looked for, are more robust measures than just simply a tax decrease. Because, in the end, taxes also pay for many of the services, whether it's paving our roads, whether it's reducing, hopefully, the busing for our students, that's what taxes go into. Things, by the way, like the busing, I have no need for it, but to me it's a service that is necessary for people in this province, Chair, who need it. So that's why I pay taxes, even if it doesn't directly affect me.

You may recall I've brought this up before, Canada's Food Price Report back in December predicted at that time a 5 to 7 per cent increase in food prices, 9 per cent here in Newfoundland. That was back in December. We've seen this coming, this is not something that just happened in the last few months. This has been on the rise for the last decade or more. It's gotten worse this year.

I have to address, too, the whole notion about the whole, let's say, use of electric vehicles, of transitioning to a green economy. I was looking at the opportunity here. Now, it's been said that electric vehicles are out of reach. I would suggest that there are an awful lot of gas-powered cars that are out of reach for many people. And if you look at the cost of what you pay in fuel versus the electric rates or to charge a car, it probably balances out.

But apart from that, here's the key thing. We've called for a transition plan because there's no way everyone's going to be going to electric today. That's not going to happen. We know that. I'm not going to turn in my car to get a vehicle for a lot of reasons. But, right now, I'm already planning for that because I know it is coming.

But a transition plan is needed if we are to make sure that we get the most of jobs, people-intensive work; that we start by looking at solutions such as public transit, I'll talk a little bit more about that later; and that we have the necessary supports for workers. That's what a plan is about.

How many here remember Reddy Kilowatt? I do, I remember Reddy Kilowatt. What you may not know is that Reddy Kilowatt was developed in the 1920s as a way to encourage people to electrify their homes. It's hard to believe that there was a time when people were skeptical of electricity. They were afraid of it, didn't think it would work, thought it would cost too much money. Reddy Kilowatt was developed in relation to that, to encourage people to make the transition to electricity.

Now, it's hard to believe because we power our phones, we turn on our TVs and we never think twice about it. But there was a time when people were hesitant about making the transition. It will never work – never work, skeptical, suspicious. There was a plan, though, to get the people who were in rural areas especially, as most of the cities had been electrified by that time in the States, but there were still a lot of people who were resistant to it. But it came about and we don't even think about it.

In 2001, for 9/11, people came to Holy Heart and they were looking for phones because I can tell you, the cellphone was not where it was. And here's my point: Technology develops exponentially. So you think about where the development of any of the technology, green technologies will be in five years, it will be phenomenal. And we've got to accept that.

Will reducing carbon taxes impact food prices? Maybe. I can tell you that for many of the people who contacted me, a lot of them, they're calling out for something different. I've had numerous

people calling for more investment in public transit. I've got a gentleman who is panhandling on the streets of St. John's to pay for diabetic strips. He's not worried about the carbon tax. He's not worried about heating costs; he's worried about diabetic strips. The family in December, who contacted me at that time, who'd just bought \$100 worth of groceries and was totally devastated, didn't know where they were going to get the money to pay for their next groceries, and first time of considering what else they could do illegal, possibly, to get that money.

We've called for a minimum wage which was a living wage and to index it. Even Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador has called for a broader conversation on a provincial-wide transit system to start that conversation. I'm thinking also, if we want to start tackling some of the things that cost people – and not all people, but a lot of people, especially those who are the middle class, let's take a look at bank fees, internet bills, cell coverage, pharmacare, electricity rates. For the most part if we're looking broadening this, whether it's with the federal government, whoever, municipal government, whatever it is to bring down these costs for people. Because to the person who depends on Metrobus, saving a few cents at the pump is not going to make much of a difference.

To the person who is on income support, the single person or who may be living on something like \$4,500 a year, it works to less than \$100 a week, Mr. Chair. So we've got to find broader ways, broader approaches to resolving it so that there's a greater impact on the people of this province, the people who need it.

It's interesting, I'll leave with this: Insurance rates here in St. John's are double what they are on the West Coast of this province. That's what the premiums are. I know my son worked over here and he was paying half the price. So if we want to look at it, let's look at other ways which we can start bringing costs down for people.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Government House Leader.

**S. CROCKER:** Thank you, Chair.

Chair, I move that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

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):** Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay and Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

**B. WARR:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Ways and Means have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

**SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred to them and directed him to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

When shall the report be received?

**S. CROCKER:** Now.

**SPEAKER:** Now.

When shall the Committee have leave to sit again?

**S. CROCKER:** Presently.

**SPEAKER:** Presently.

On motion, report received and adopted.  
Committee ordered to sit again presently, by  
leave.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and  
President of Treasury Board, that this House do  
now recess until 6 p.m.

**SPEAKER:** This House do stand recessed until  
6 p.m.