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Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

Wednesday

June 1, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Before we begin, I would like to welcome Jack Hogan to the House of Assembly this morning.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Government Business

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

Yes, welcome Jack to the floor of the House of Assembly. I think the MHA for Windsor Lake is the first dad to take advantage of the rules that were changed a few years ago, and I know Alexander spent a lot of time in the House of Assembly, but this is Jack's first appearance of many, I hope.

Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Motion 1.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services:

THAT notwithstanding Standing Order 63, this House shall not proceed with Private Members' Day, today, June 1, 2022, but shall instead meet at 2 p.m. today for Routine Proceedings and to conduct government business;

AND THAT, if not adjourned earlier, the Speaker shall then adjourn the House at midnight.

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, Mr. Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, third reading of Bill 62, An Act To Amend The Child And Youth Advocate Act.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that Bill 62, An Act To Amend The Child And Youth Advocate Act, be now read a third time.

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

Seeing no speakers, is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, An Act To Amend The Child And Youth Advocate Act. (Bill 62)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Child And Youth Advocate Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 62)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, third reading of Bill 64, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 6.

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 Bill 64, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 6, be now read a third time.

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

Seeing no speakers, is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

AN HON. MEMBER: Division

SPEAKER: Division has been called.

Call in the Members.

Division

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask the Members to take their seats.

All those in favour of the motion, please rise.

CLERK: Andrew Furey, Steve Crocker, Lisa Dempster, John Haggie, Tom Osborne, Siobhan Coady, Sarah Stoodley, John Hogan, Bernard Davis, Derrick Bragg, Brian Warr, Elvis Loveless, Krista Lynn Howell, Scott Reid, Sherry Gambin-Walsh, Lucy Stoyles, David Brazil, Barry Petten, Tony Wakeham, Craig Pardy, Chris Tibbs, Loyola O'Driscoll, Lloyd Parrott, Joedy Wall, Pleaman Forsey, Jack Dwyer, James Dinn, Jordan Brown, Lela Evans, Paul Lane, Perry Trimper.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

CLERK: The ayes: 31; there are no nays.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

By unanimous vote, I declare the motion carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 6. (Bill 64)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 6," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 64)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Conception Bay South, that this House do now recess until 2 p.m.

SPEAKER: Before we do recess, I just want to remind the Members of the Management Commission that we have a short meeting in the Speaker's boardroom now, if you can all attend. It should only take 10 minutes or so.

CLERK: We don't have quorum.

SPEAKER: Oh, sorry. We'll postpone it.

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

Recess

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

Before we begin, I would like to welcome in the Speaker's gallery today, Carlos Palavicini and Ekaterina Jáuregui, parents of our Page, Gala

Palavicini. They are here visiting us today from Mexico.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: In the public galleries, I would like to welcome Katie Parsons. Katie is the subject of a Member's statement this afternoon. She is accompanied by her parents, Charles and Michelle, and her nan, Theresa.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Also in the public gallery, I'd like to welcome Terry and Lisa Hutchings from Happy Valley-Goose Bay, parents of a former Page, Anna Hutchings.

Welcome everyone.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

SPEAKER: Today, we will hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of St. George's - Humber, Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans, Lake Melville, Stephenville - Port au Port and Cape St. Francis.

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

S. REID: Speaker, today I want to make Members, and indeed all listeners, aware of a special cultural event. The Bay St. George Powwow will be held in Flat Bay on July 8, 9 and 10. This will be the first powwow in Bay St. George since 2019.

A powwow is a unique event signified by social exchange, cultural sharing and ceremonial rituals. Indeed, the powwow is a time of teaching, learning, singing, dancing, feasting, sharing and healing. Powwows are an expression of culture, pride and identity. It is a unifying ritual of the young and the old, a collection of the past and a celebration of the future.

The Flat Bay powwow is the showpiece of the cultural revival which is happening among Mi'kmaq people in this province and is an event for Indigenous people who want to reconnect

with their heritage and for everyone in the province who wants to more fully understand the multicultural nature of our province.

Speaker, I invite all Members of the House and the general public to attend the Bay St. George Powwow held in Flat Bay on July 8, 9 and 10 of this year.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Speaker.

As the salmon season opens, I rise today to honour the mighty Exploits River in Central Newfoundland and Labrador. For over a century, anglers have been drawn to one of the most beautiful waterways in North America for an experience to remember. Along with some world-class fishing, the Exploits offers attractions and accommodations for families as we welcome many for Come Home Year 2022.

The Riverfront Chalets have five chalets overlooking the Exploits River that has been successful year after year offering Rafting NL on site, canoeing, kayaking, snowmobile and ATV tours.

Riverfront Chalets offer four Gwitna'q Culinary Experiences this summer where guests can paddle to a secluded island and are greeted by a chef preparing four courses of traditional Aboriginal meals.

For the first time, adventure enthusiasts can now enjoy ziplining across this magnificent Exploits thanks to the opening of Exploits Extreme Ziplines. There are six lines for both young and old alike to enjoy as they take in the breathtaking scenery.

Tourism operators in my district have put in so much for a successful season this year. I encourage all to enjoy a safe and happy summer on the mighty Exploits River.

Thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

P. TRIMPER: Thank you, Speaker.

Yesterday was the last day of work for the well-respected assistant superintendent responsible for the Labrador Correctional Centre, James 'Bud' Hickman.

In his 36 years, from corrections officer, to union leader and finally the senior regional position, he has been a role model in corrections. Connecting inmates and staff to Labrador's cultural values has been an important priority. He often found creative ways to reacquaint or even introduce these values and life lessons.

One source of his inspiration came from a Canadian Labour Congress Convention and the opportunity to meet with Nelson Mandela. After spending 27 years in prison, Mandela once said, "As I walked out of the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison."

Bud understood these words and what it meant for the team around him. With increasing responsibility and seniority, he was able to apply new perspectives to support those who were struggling. He ensured that staff understood how they could make a positive contribution to life in Labrador.

I would ask this House of Assembly to extend our appreciation to Bud Hickman for a career of service and a legacy that will continue to inspire.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

Maurice Hynes of Stephenville is a retired educator and school administrator in the

Stephenville area. His commitment to community has been witnessed through the many volunteer positions he has held over the years: St. Stephen's parish council, the airport board, cultural destination committee, town councillor and the list goes on.

One of Maurice's many passions is his involvement with Branch 35 of the Royal Canadian Legion. His dedication to the Legion stems from his early years when he joined the Canadian reserves in 1975. Maurice was promoted through the ranks until he was named a lieutenant colonel in 1990. Maurice was a member of the directing staff at Canadian Army Command and Staff College in Kingston, Ontario, and director of advance training for Land Force Atlantic Area.

Presently, Maurice devotes many hours volunteering to ensure the viability of the Royal Canadian Legion in Stephenville. He wears many hats: fundraiser, cook, manager, entertainer, greeter, organizer and performs any role that's needed. As a fellow volunteer commented: Maurice is the glue that keeps this place together. He does all this to ensure that the veterans continue to have a presence in a town that is so heavily steeped in military history.

We salute Lieutenant Colonel Maurice Hynes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. WALL: Speaker, I rise today to recognize Katie Parsons, a Level III student of Entrepreneurship 3209 at Holy Trinity high school in Torbay.

Last week, Katie, along with three of her classmates, was chosen to be among the top 15 students from across our province to take part in the Enterprise Olympics, a provincial year-end conference to recognize the province's top student entrepreneurs and their venture marketing plans.

Each student presented their marketing plans before a panel of judges and business professionals, and Katie was selected as the provincial winner. Her business project, WINK

Lash Studio, was comprised of research on demographics and related products and services, a full business description and management plan, followed up with social media advertising.

Winning the top prize was accompanied with \$1,500 in prize money. Congratulations, Katie. You are a wonderful ambassador for your school, for the District of Cape St. Francis and for our province.

Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Katie Parsons on winning the 2022 Enterprise Olympics for Entrepreneurship 3209, and wish her all the future success with her business project WINK Lash Studio.

Congratulations, Katie.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House to recognize May 29 to June 4 as Tourism Week in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Tourism Week is an opportunity to celebrate the province's tourism industry and local businesses, operators and employees. They have put Newfoundland and Labrador on the map as a travel destination of choice and are the very reason why tourism is such a strong economic pillar in our province.

Year after year, they create exceptional tourism experiences, showcase the uniqueness of our beautiful province and our communities, and they share our warmth and hospitality with visitors from all over the world. Experiences that celebrate our arts, cultural heritage, nature and culinary – the authentic experiences visitors want.

Industry outlook for the remainder of 2022 and into 2023 is promising. Operators are reporting that bookings are very strong for June to

September and the fall season is also shaping up to be a busy one. Some operators are booked entirely. Marine Atlantic bookings are exceeding 2019 levels.

As part of Come Home Year 2022, there will be lots to do and see this year. Special events are being planned in 170 communities around the province. Over the last two years we have invested over \$19 million directly into tourism operations. To help build the capacity and experiences, we have also invested close to \$17 million in cultural and community organizations to upgrade infrastructure and add to or enhance their programming.

Speaker, our government will continue to stand with our tourism operators in creating and enhancing their experiences, and encouraging visitors to “come home.” Please join me in thanking all those involved in the tourism industry for showcasing the wonders of Newfoundland and Labrador, not only this year but into the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Speaker, I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

On behalf of the Official Opposition I would like to recognize this week as Tourism Week. In the historic District of Bonavista we have many attractions which I hope tourists, both local and visitors, will take time to visit this season. From the Bonavista Lighthouse to the Matthew Legacy, the Ryan Premise where Rick Street is one of the most knowledgeable guides I know. Elliston Sealers Memorial, Coaker premises in Port Union, Cable John gulch in Spillars Cove where, in 1936, a 14-year-old Janey Phillips was blown over the 110-foot jagged cliffs without a scratch.

The legendary Skerwink Trail in Port Rexton and the historic properties of Trinity, there is much to see on the Bonavista Peninsula. The District of Bonavista also boasts many

amenities, places to stay and everything needed to make your stay enjoyable and comfortable.

To all tourism operators throughout the province, I wish you much success this season. I hope to see you at one of the provinces great attractions this summer and fall.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

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

After two hard years, we are wishing all tourism operators a successful, safe season, full of joy and fun. For people living here, at home, and across the province, we encourage you to get out and explore every corner of this beautiful province we all call home. There is so much to do and so much to see.

We wish everyone happy and safe travels this tourism season.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

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

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I am pleased to recognize June as National Indigenous History Month.

The history of First Peoples has not been fully told. It's a history that has been told to us using a Western lens. This is not two-eyed seeing. We can't change history, but we can go forward together and collaboratively with Indigenous governments and organizations, along a path that involves listening, understanding and mutual respect.

As our government continues to build on a relationship of trust with Indigenous governments and organizations, we continue working on a series of actions which honour the culture and history of Indigenous peoples. This includes replacing symbols of racism with symbols of reconciliation.

National Indigenous History Month presents an opportunity for residents of Newfoundland and Labrador to better understand the traditions, cultures and history that shaped the lives of First Peoples. I encourage everyone to seek out events organized by Indigenous peoples during Come Home 2022 as one opportunity to become better educated on Indigenous culture and history.

Speaker, we share a responsibility to learn from the experiences that have been passed down through generations of Indigenous people and better understand the Indigenous struggles to preserve a way of life in the face of colonialism, conflict, racism and adversity.

Residential schools are an acute example of one such struggle. We are painfully aware that some students did not survive, and the sorrow of these tragedies remain today with survivors, families and communities.

In order to walk the path of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, we must learn from history to do better.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

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

Speaker, I join with the minister in recognizing June as National Indigenous History Month. During this month we take the time to recognize the rich history, heritage, resilience and diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples across Canada.

Newfoundland and Labrador in particular has both a beautiful and painful history with Indigenous peoples. As we recognize and celebrate our First Peoples, let us all take the time to reflect on our shared history and support efforts towards reconciliation.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: I thank the minister for the advanced copy of her statement.

Indigenous history must be preserved and taught to all residents. Reminders of harm done through colonization should not be hidden; rather, the narrative needs to be changed to correct our history. Government needs to take action on economic marginalization called for by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Come Home Year is an opportunity for government. Make travel to and from Indigenous communities more accessible and affordable.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

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

D. BRAGG: Thank you, Speaker.

The Wildlife Division of the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture has just wrapped up the big game licence draw for 2022-23 season, and applicants have been eagerly checking their results online.

This year, the moose quota for Newfoundland and Labrador was set at just over 28,000 licences, with 575 caribou licences allocated for the Island.

As an avid hunter myself, and successful this year, I know the annual release of the big game draw results is an exciting time for thousands of hunters. We received 75,261 big game applications this year. Within 24 hours of announcing the results, earlier this week, we recorded more than 230,000 hits to the Wildlife Information Management System.

This year our department made the transition to a primarily online application system to support the increased public access to Newfoundland and Labrador's forestry and wildlife resources, while also continuing to allow access for those without Internet capabilities.

With more hunters in the province using online services to submit and monitor their big game applications, our staff has streamlined the management and operation of the application process to improve it for hunters and administrators alike.

Speaker, I want to thank our dedicated team of wildlife professionals for developing another comprehensive, science-based wildlife management plan and for handling this year's draw process with professionalism and dedication.

Although the fall seems a long way off, I remind all eager hunters that most Moose Management Areas in Newfoundland and Labrador will open for the season on September 10. Successful applicants must submit their fees by June 30.

Speaker, we also remind all residents to help protect our natural resources by reporting suspected illegal activity at stoppoaching.ca or by calling 1-877-820-0999.

Congratulations to all applicants and the best of luck for a safe and successful hunting season.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Thank you, Speaker.

I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. We here at the Official Opposition would like to congratulate the thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who will be out to get their moose this fall.

There has never been a time more important to get involved in our own food chain. Moose have become an important part of the culture and cuisine of the people of the province. The proper management of this resource will ensure that future generations will know what it is to be a part of the food chain supply and how to harvest responsibly.

Speaker, though we support the transition to more modern government, the implementation of the online system was fraught with issues and had many seasoned hunters wondering if they would even get the chance to apply for their moose this year.

I am pleased to hear that 28,000 moose licences were issued. Unfortunately, myself and the Member for Corner Brook didn't get one. We are disappointed to hear that the minister did and hope that there was no one else left out because they didn't have access to the ability to apply.

On behalf of the Official Opposition, I would like to thank the staff of the Department of Forestry for their stewardship of this resource and wish all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians happy hunting on September 10. Please report poaching and enjoy our forests responsibly.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, as a successful applicant in this year's big game draw –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. DINN: – I do want to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Although, I

will suggest that many people are of the opinion that a moose licence in my hand is a sure way of conserving the life of that moose.

We encourage all hunters to be safe and report illegal pouching if they see it. Thanks to the department in making sure that our moose populations and our wildlife populations are protected and conserved.

We also ask that those who have extra meat find ways, such as through the Hunters Sharing The Harvest program, to make sure that they get those foods to people who are in need in their communities so that the bounty of our natural environment can be put to good use, even for those who may not be able to go out and enjoy the country and harvest their own animal.

Again, I'll be thinking of you in September, if I'm lucky enough to bag one.

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.

Today we learned the number of people in our province without a family doctor has skyrocketed to 125,000. The Minister of Health earlier this week lashed out a doctor in Central, where this crisis is at its worst, for expressing their frustration with a lack of support with full emergency rooms and with no end in sight.

Premier: Why does this crisis continue to get worse under your administration and why are you putting more Newfoundlanders and Labradorians at risk?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

We've all recognized the crisis in health care, Mr. Speaker. We've moved and done, I would say, a reasonable job of trying to navigate in the short term.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER A. FUREY: We recognize the acute issues that this causes for families across the province, Mr. Speaker. In fact, we recognized it before the rest of the country. That's why we launched the Health Accord to reimagine and redefine how we provide services.

The old model is not going to work. You can commit to the old model, but it's simply not going work. We want to make sure that we're investing – right now we invest more per person –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER A. FUREY: – per year on health care year after year, yet we have the worst results. We can't continue to do the same thing. We need to have a new paradigm, and that's why I'm excited about the Health Accord. That's why I'm excited about hiring a new assistant deputy minister solely responsible for health recruitment and retention and a new DM responsible for health transformation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

Like the Liberal budget, your approach to health care is just not enough.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: One in three people outside the Avalon do not have access to a family doctor due to the failure of your Liberal government. Here's a quote from the former Medical Association head, Lynette Powell – and I quote – diagnosing late stage cancers that were once

treatable is one of my greatest fears as a family doctor. Now even more people are at risk of such a nightmare.

I ask the Premier: Did your last ribbon cutting recruit any new family doctors?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

Recruitment of family doctors is an ongoing issue. We're working with the College of Physicians, family physicians of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker. We've taken meetings with them. We've taken their guidance. One of the recommendations was to have an ADM specific to this particular issue, Mr. Speaker. She's hired and she's good and she's going to deliver results, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

PREMIER A. FUREY: I mean I can continue with the chirping if you'd like, but I'd like to answer the question. We're going to continue to recruit and retain Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, as well as look outside the box in terms of how we provide critical care to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I heard the question, but I want to hear the response, too, please.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

But the Premier has to be aware that we know of eight communities that in the last months now no longer have a family doctor to address the issues of their constituents.

Speaker, our office has heard from patients whose local ER was closed forcing them to drive hours to St. John's, only to have to sit on the

floor or stand in the hallway for hours and hours at the Health Sciences Centre. With the ERs overflowing, hallways full and patients left scrambling to find someone, anyone to refill their prescription.

How much worse is the Premier willing to let this crisis go and affect the people of Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker, for the question.

Access to primary care is possibly the most pressing issue we're dealing with at the moment. Patient Connect NL was opened for Eastern Health in metro. It has registered just over 13,000 applicants. It has capacity to take at least half as many again. I would encourage people in that geographical area to call that number.

With respect to Central and Western regions, Patient Connect NL will open within the next two to three weeks to begin that registration process, so we can identify those patients clearly and arrange for their appointments on the basis of clinical need. In the interim, 811 and virtual services are available for prescription renewal as well as your local pharmacy.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

Well, it must be only the Minister of Health that doesn't understand that we're in the midst of a crisis and people need interventions now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: The Premier's Liberals are simply out of touch with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Health Minister continues to antagonize doctors, continues to dismiss concerns voiced by health care professionals, and the Medical Association has called his

statements about collaborative care clinics untrue.

I ask the Premier: Why do you tolerate this behaviour from your minister?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

I'm proud to say that we have a good working relationship with the NLMA, Mr. Speaker. They provided advice on primary-care clinics; they provided advice on the Category B and Category C sites around the province. We are looking at those recommendations –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER A. FUREY: I beg to differ, Sir.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER A. FUREY: We're working closely with them –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

If this continues, Members will be named and lose their speaker privilege this afternoon.

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER A. FUREY: We continue to work with them. There is no easy answer to this. Despite the rhetoric of the Opposition, there is no particular simple, easy answer. In fact, when I heard one of the Members answer a question to this, the answer was to recruit more high school students, Mr. Speaker.

That is a long-term solution which we are working on, but we are struggling. With the NLMA – working with the NLMA and the

Registered Nurses' to address this acute issue, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Speaker, I beg to differ with the Premier that this is rhetoric, when 125,000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians don't have access to a family doctor.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

D. BRAZIL: Speaker, the Premier's Liberals and their pals in the NDP voted to make life more expensive in Labrador and throughout all of our province. If the Finance Minister was listening to the people, government would not have to fumble through this budget and multiple attempts to address the cost of living, which both, I might note, the minister and the Premier acknowledged was not enough.

I ask the Premier: Why do you allow such an out of touch policy to be put forward by your Finance Minister?

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

S. COADY: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I will say to the Member opposite that we have had multiple – not only unions, we've had banks, we've had community associations and we've had business associations all praise the budget. It struck a balance.

We are working in extraordinary times, Speaker, and we've made extraordinary measures. As I said yesterday in our debate around the gas tax, we are able to do that because of the hard work of the Premier with our colleagues in Ottawa. We're going to continue to do all that we can.

Speaker, \$222 million has been returned to the people of the province. That is the most that has been done by any province in Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, well, those bankers all must live in Liberal districts because we're not hearing it on this side of the House, I guarantee you that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: Speaker, the Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality let the Blue Door program die without support. The minister says the commitment to human rights through pay equity legislation is too expensive. The minister ignored requests for help from the Elizabeth Fry Society.

I ask the Premier: Why are you satisfied with the lack of support for these valuable programs by your minister?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality.

P. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker, and I thank the hon. Member for the question.

The Blue Door program, which the hon. Member referenced, of course, as we know, is a federal program that started over five years ago. I'm happy to say that we have met with the group from Thrive to offer ways on how we can work with them and how they can find new sources for funding.

As we know, the half-million-dollar ask simply can't come from the Office of Women and Gender Equality. That said, we are certainly committed to working with them as we really appreciate the valuable work that they do.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

It's unfortunate that the federal government, their federal Liberal partners, saw the value of a program like this and funded it for five years, but the provincial Liberals don't see the value of continuing this program. It's shameful, Mr. Speaker, shameful.

Speaker, earlier this week the Minister of Fisheries took an unprecedented step of ignoring the advice of the Fish Processing Licensing Board and is now risking the shutdown of the crab fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador. You say your government makes decisions based on evidence, but your minister proved it is all about politics.

I ask the Premier: Why do you allow your minister to ignore the experts in our field?

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

D. BRAGG: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I really have to stand for this because one or the other doesn't match up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

D. BRAGG: It is because of the volume of crab that's in right now; we have almost 70 per cent of the crab captured in about seven weeks. So we have a volume of crab that's in the market now that has flooded the market. To open more fish plants would cause a bigger problem so I don't know where the Member is coming from.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

D. BRAGG: It was great advice that came from the board, great advice that I took. I took a month to weigh out where this is.

I stand by my decisions that I made and time will tell if it is a great decision. But right now

the facts and the figures show it is a step in the right direction to keep the people employed in this province that are employed right now.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

It is evident, again, that it is a pick and choose what is beneficial politically for the Liberals versus what is right to do and listening to the experts of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I asked if the Premier supports his Cabinet. Is it fine for the Health Minister to antagonize health care professionals? Is it fine for the Finance Minister to ignore the needs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador? Does he think a ribbon cutting is more important than real, tangible action to help the people of Newfoundland and Labrador?

I ask the Premier: When will you come up with a plan that shows real leadership and addresses the needs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

I'm happy to speak to the plan and what we've accomplished already: \$5.2 billion for Muskrat Falls –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER A. FUREY: – West White Rose, Bay du Nord –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER A. FUREY: – Terra Nova: All things that we've accomplished in a short period of time, Mr. Speaker, and we're just getting started.

We've taken the deficit from \$2.1 billion down to \$351 million, Mr. Speaker, and we're just getting going. If they want theatrics, we can have theatrics. We're only getting started.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

D. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, you want to talk about all the wonderful things over there –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

D. BRAZIL: – let's talk about the 125,000 people who don't have a doctor.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

D. BRAZIL: Let's talk about the most exodus of any province in this country here of people going. Let's talk about the fact that we have the highest unemployment rates, the highest tax rates, the lowest access to health care and the highest chronic diseases here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

D. BRAZIL: That's your record right now, Mr. Speaker, and that's the record of this Liberal administration (inaudible) and those issues right now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

I ask the Premier again: When will you come up with a tangible plan that addresses the immediate needs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. The highest cost of living, the highest fuels in Canada and the exit of more

people than in any other province, Newfoundland – solve the problems here. Work with the people of this province. Do the right thing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

I spoke with the other premiers in the Atlantic provinces just last night, Mr. Speaker, and they were jaw-dropped at how much we've actually done. So the Progressive Conservative cousins and the other premiers across the Atlantic region have done far less for their populations.

Nova Scotia's only done \$15 million; we've done \$244 million to give back to the people of the province. Let's talk about child care. We can talk about Muskrat Falls; we can talk about the support for the oil and gas sector. We can talk about our support for health care workers. It keeps going and going, Mr. Speaker, and we're just getting started.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, the Premier just talked about jaw-dropping. Let me tell you what's jaw-dropping: 125,000 people without a family doctor, a backlog of surgeries and blocked emergency departments. What this government wants to do to make people healthier is introduce a sugar tax.

So I ask the Minister of Finance: Will you cancel the sugar tax?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER A. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the sugar tax is not a fiscal tax; it's an economic policy to drive behaviours. It's a behaviour modification.

First of all, you don't have to take my word for it, Mr. Speaker; how about the World Health Organization, who recommends this measure?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I can't hear any talk. Just settle down a little bit and continue on with Question Period.

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER A. FUREY: Don't take my recommendation for it, Mr. Speaker; take the World Health Organization's recommendation. Sugar and sweetened beverages are a primary cause – excessive use of them are a primary cause of diabetes, heart disease and poor health outcomes. You don't have to take my word, look at the British Medical Journal out of an epidemiology study that was done out of Cambridge.

Tax like this actually reduces sugar consumption by 30 grams a week, Mr. Speaker, which will help our population with respect to chronic disease.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, the Premier is exactly right. I will not take his word for it – I will not take his word for it. But I will take the words of the Health Accord. Nowhere in the recommendations of the Health Accord, which the Premier has alluded to several times in this House, do they recommend a sugar tax. Not one recommendation of a sugar tax.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: So I'd ask the Minister of Finance, it is nothing more than putting hardship on the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and the last thing they need is behaviour modification. They have enough suffering right now. Eliminate the sugar tax.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

S. COADY: I must say it was a very theatrical performance of asking a question. But allow me to tell you that the Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

If you want to waste Question Period arguing back and forth, we can let that go. Otherwise, the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

S. COADY: – the Canadian Paediatric Society, the Canadian Cancer Society, I can continue, Speaker. But what I'll ask the Member opposite is are you right, or are all those organizations that are involved in health care in our country, and they are supportive of this particular initiative. We've heard from the Premier on the World Health Organization, and what's happened in medical journals around the world. I take their word over his.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Let's just talk about the reasonable job the Premier is doing on health care.

Speaker, while this government deflects and lays blame, we heard of another example this morning of a tragedy on this government's watch. This morning we heard of the story of Barbara Myril White of Labrador. Barbara waited 17 days in the hospital in Goose Bay waiting for a cardiac care bed in St. John's – 17 days.

Premier, the failures of your government are costing lives.

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

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Obviously, these are very difficult situations and my sympathies, our sympathies go out to the family.

The issue of referrals from any area of the province into the cardiac program are matters determined by clinicians. The urgency with which a patient is transferred is a decision made by physicians. I will not, and I'm not going to go down the road of speaking to individual personal circumstances.

Myself and my predecessors from all sides of the House have studiously avoided that out of respect for the families. All I can simply say is that we will investigate the issue and Labrador-Grenfell and Eastern Health are working to try and identify remedies for the future.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Speaker, thank you.

As the minister said, these are difficult situations, but they're becoming too common – too common. We're talking about people's lives here.

Barbara's daughter said – and I quote – we, the family, know for certain if she was taken seriously and sent to St. John's she'd be with us here today.

I ask the Premier: How many cases like Barbara's are going to happen before this government takes action?

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

J. HAGGIE: Once again, Speaker, I am not going to deviate and talk about the specifics of any individual case. There are mechanisms to look back. But the issue of a patient and their urgency for transfer is a clinical one. It is made by doctors; it is made by physicians in consultation with physicians, or nurse practitioners in consultation with specialists.

Those are the factors that determine the speed and the urgency of transfer.

Again, my condolences, our condolences to the family.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Again, as I said, this is becoming too common. So maybe it's time to start looking at these individual cases time to look at the lived experiences of these families to come up with a solution. Speaker, Barbara's daughter also said her mother deserved to be helped –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

P. DINN: Now, this is a serious issue. For the crowd across there, the talking while I'm talking to a serious issue – the death of an individual deserves a lot more respect. And they're still going on over there.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

P. DINN: You stand up then and tell me you're not talking over there.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

AN HON. MEMBER: Lowest (inaudible).

P. DINN: Damn right it's the lowest – damn right it's the lowest.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

A. PARSONS: I didn't say a word. I have listened to everything you said. Didn't say a word.

SPEAKER: I ask the Member to take his seat.

A. PARSONS: I didn't say a word until you started talking about all of us. We are listening.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

A. PARSONS: Don't you say I'm talking, I'm listening –

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask the Member to move on with his question.

The hon. Member for Topsail - Paradise.

P. DINN: It's very difficult to say you're listening when your mouth is moving. That's the problem.

SPEAKER: Move on with your question, please.

P. DINN: That's the problem.

SPEAKER: The Member's time has expired.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Speaker.

The Premier stated in an earlier question that the government is aware of the health crisis –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

P. DINN: Damn right (inaudible). Someone died.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

P. DINN: Someone died and you're over there talking.

AN HON. MEMBER: Shocking.

P. DINN: Damn right it's shocking.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask the Member for Topsail - Paradise –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Speaker.

The Premier stated in an earlier response to a question that the government is aware of the health crisis where real people in the province are losing access to health care every single day. I am not sure if it's an acute issue, as he stated such, but in December 2019, the Bonavista hospital was down to only two physicians from the usual five.

On December 14, 2019, the minister assured me, in this House, that by January 2020, there will be four physicians and that service will be maintained. Now, 2½ years later, the Bonavista hospital is in crisis with one physician.

Speaker, I ask the minister: What part of his plan failed?

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Primary care access in rural Newfoundland and Labrador is and always has been, since I came here 30 years ago, something of a challenge.

Certainly, at the time the answers in 2019 were given, they were accurate. The understanding we had was that the physicians concerned would stay. They have decided otherwise, and we are aware that there is a reduction in physician numbers.

Eastern Health are in the position to assure me the service is stabilized for the short term, and are working on more medium-term solutions. As the Premier addressed earlier on, the long-term solution lies around recruitment and retention, and we have active strategies in that direction.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Speaker, the Bonavista Peninsula Health Care is one of the busiest emergency rooms per capita in the province, and Dr. Parfrey's Quality of Care NL would give you the statistics to indicate that Bonavista is one of the busiest ones; however, like many facilities in

the province, it is suffering from a lack of physicians, as the minister stated.

I ask the minister: What is the new plan or the new strategies in addition to hiring an ADM for recruitment to fix this issue?

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Back in October of last year, we announced a \$30-million package to attract graduates of the residency program from Memorial University and indeed any university who wish to set up practice in rural Newfoundland, in return for an interest-free loan of \$100,000, as well as a minimum income guarantee.

In addition to that, we have increased the enrolment in the residency program this year for family medicine. I'm pleased to say it is fully subscribed with all 35 positions filled after the second iteration of the CAHM's match.

We're aware of the problem and Eastern Health are working on operational details.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Bay du Nord must have maximum economic and employment benefits for this province. Given that the hull of the FPSO will likely be constructed outside of the country, will the minister push Equinor to bring the hull into the province and complete all other work, including topsides and subsea modules?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and happy to answer a question in this House and talk about important issues.

What I would say to the Member opposite is that certainly there was a framework agreement that was negotiated back in 2018. We're going to continue to stick by that. I appreciate the concern that the Member brings up. We want to see as much work here as possible, and we're going to continue to uphold that framework agreement.

Certain things may be possible, certain things maybe not. But I agree with the premise of the question, which is we'll always continue to press operators and producers to ensure we get as much work here as possible. That stance hasn't changed and will not change.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology in my question spoke about the dialogue between Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and the PUB, but didn't answer the question.

I ask the minister: Why hasn't recommendation one from the Muskrat Falls inquiry been implemented, and what other recommendations are outstanding?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think I did actually answer the question that the Member asked in terms of there's an ongoing dialogue between the PUB and Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro as it relates to projects in Southern Labrador. There is a disagreement between the PUB and Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, but that disagreement does not mean that the Muskrat Falls inquiry recommendations have been contravened in any way.

We continue to work on those recommendations; there are a number in place. I

don't have the exact number right here, right now, but I can say that we certainly have taken advice from that project, we've taken this inquiry very serious.

What I would say is that, I go back to the main point which is we want to ensure the best possible energy development in Southern Labrador and we'll continue to work towards that goal.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

The Bank of Canada increased the benchmark rate today to 1.5 per cent.

I ask the Minister of Finance: How will this affect our borrowing and our deficit, and what effects will this have on the programs and projects announced in their budget?

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

S. COADY: Thank you.

It's a very important question. We are seeing rising interest rates, no doubt. We've seen this now, I think it's the third time this year. So we are obviously monitoring the markets. We do a series of different borrowings: 30, 60, 90 days, five years, 10 years and 30 year different offerings in the bond market. Right now, we have sufficient liquidity on hand. We also have to do a tremendous amount of borrowing. There is \$2.7 billion this year.

So we are concerned about the rising rates but we are going to do everything we can to keep those as low as we possibly can because it won't have much impact on this year's budget but it will, again, increase the cost of borrowing which is of concern.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

During the 2021 Estimates Committee meeting on Education, the minister stated, in relation to the integration of the NLESD into the Department of Education, that officials were looking at short-term, medium-term and long-term achievable goals. We are the end of this school year; another one will soon start.

I ask the minister: What are the achievable goals for the 2022-2023 school year?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is an important question. I thank the Member for it.

For this year, Mr. Speaker, we are anticipating some efficiencies. We are looking at in the range of about \$2 million in savings, which is a short-term achievable goal. We have had a number of meetings this week, Mr. Speaker, with both the chair of the board and the CEO of the NLESD and things are on track.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

P. TRIMPER: Speaker, here on the floor today and yesterday in debate, I spoke about the tragic circumstances surrounding the death of Myril White: wife, mother and grandmother. On Sunday, I met with the family, a very devastated family, who had prayed for the hope and the support that never came in time, unfortunately. While this family grieves and seeks answers, Labrador and indeed this entire province needs a new way to deliver health care in our province.

I would ask government if they could please provide us an update – and I'm trying to remain positive – on the long-awaited Health Accord blueprint that was to be presented last month?

Thank you.

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

A very relevant question given the nature of the questions in Question Period today.

I am happy to inform the Member opposite that our discussions with the Secretariat around the Health Accord suggest that this is in the final stages of preparing for a publication in terms of accessible changes and making the document consistent online with some of the accessibility provisions that we have brought in about, you know, visually impaired and such.

So imminent, I think, is the best word I can offer at the moment, but I don't have an exact date. Imminent.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

P. TRIMPER: Thank you, Speaker.

I thank the minister. I think the entire province needs to be positive and hopeful.

Another problem, however, we have with the Medical Transportation Assistance Program occurs when people who are medically discharged after being medevacked to St. John's are then left to determine, for themselves, how to get back to Labrador. Even if they were to go through the MTAP for prepay airfare, it can be anywhere between five to 10 business days to process the application.

Why does someone have to wait on yet another form if they need financial support to get home after they have already experienced a traumatic medical episode?

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

The Member opposite raises an interesting issue. Transitions of care in health care systems are always areas of concern. I, personally, see no reason why paperwork, such as for MTAP, can't be done as part of a discharge planning. This is something that could be integrated into the in-patient service.

It's an excellent suggestion. I'm happy to take it, not just to Eastern Health but, hopefully, to our new unitary RHA as well so it is consistent across the province. The Member opposite raises a very good point.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

P. TRIMPER: Thank you, Speaker.

One final question for this session. As the cost of living continues to escalate, particularly in Labrador, it is time to recognize that the threshold for the NLHC housing needs to be adjusted. While the level is set at \$65,000 for Labrador West and for Torngat Mountains; the level in Lake Melville is \$32,500, as it is in the rest of the province. Most people, just above this level, struggle to find affordable housing.

Will the minister commit to examining this issue and, hopefully, increase the level to reflect reality in Labrador and maybe the rest of the province?

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

J. ABBOTT: Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to answer the last question of this sitting. At least I think it will be.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: (Inaudible.)

J. ABBOTT: I'll do that.

Interestingly enough, one of my colleagues here on the front bench asked me the same question just the other day. So one of the things that Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation is doing is looking at all its financial and economic thresholds in terms of eligibility.

But for those who had a chance to look at the report from the minimum wage review, it also recommended that government look at these social policies and how they interact with our low-income supports and our minimum wage. So we will be doing that as part of a comprehensive review and hope to report back later this year.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Speaker.

I would like to take the opportunity to table the Fish Processing Licensing Board meetings of April 12-14 with the board recommendations.

During Question Period on Monday, I was informed that I was a little misleading in my responses. The two things that I was misleading on were that the board had taken over one year to do their study. I would say that is here, found in the document. The second thing is that they said that the health of the crab stock status was two to four years and beyond in good shape.

So I just wanted to table that, Mr. Speaker, hopefully for someone to read and to verify that I was not misleading.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: In order for a private Member to put forward a tabling of document, he needs consent from the House. Does he have consent?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes.

SPEAKER: Consent given.

Any further tabling of documents?

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

E. JOYCE: With leave, Mr. Speaker, in a question yesterday, I asked the Minister of Health about the laundry services and he put in a thing where I was on the opposite side. I'm tabling a letter that the decision was made on July 2018. I was not in Cabinet or caucus. Also, he mentioned the two ministers in Corner Brook; there was only one.

I'm tabling the second letter where he clarified later that it was his officials during the consultations, not the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands. Because when the Liberal government made the commitment, we made a commitment that the laundry services would be in. That was made during the election also of 2021.

So I'd just to table these documents, again, and ask the minister to withdraw this statement because I had no involvement, no knowledge, absolutely none, and obviously the Premier never either or the Member for Corner Brook. Because during the election of 2021, they were still stating publicly and in documents that the laundry services were still included in the new Acute Care Hospital.

So I ask the minister if he would do the honourable thing and withdraw that statement. Here's the document.

SPEAKER: As I did with the previous Member, I ask for consent to table the document.

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes.

SPEAKER: Consent is given.

Any further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

P. TRIMPER: Thank you very much, Speaker.

The background to this petition is as follows:

In response to concerns arising from the construction of the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project, changing climatic conditions and the disastrous flood of 2017, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador undertook a comprehensive flood risk mapping and flood forecasting of the Churchill River – originally known as Mishta-shipu, by the way – KGS Group 2020. This million-dollar study was described by government as state of the art in the province and across the country.

KGS Group 2020 concluded that under the projected climate change and one in 20 year open water flood zone conditions, several homes adjacent to Mishta-shipu will be subjected to a disaster similar or worse than what was experienced in 2017.

WHEREAS elevation, adjacency and other topographic features in the KGS Group 2020 depict certain homes to be particularly at risk; and

WHEREAS there is a mental and physical stress taking a severe toll on the residents of these homes, particularly as each flood season arrives; and

WHEREAS we are concerned for the owners of these homes;

THEREFORE we, the undersigned, call upon this House of Assembly to urge the government to develop a plan to address the conclusions of your own work, protect the citizens of this province and provide support to relocate those in danger, out of harm's way.

Speaker, I'm pleased to present this, my final petition of the session. I've spoken many times about this very important issue. I'm also very pleased to say that I'm pleased to see the co-operation that is coming from various ministers on the government side. I recently met with the

chair of the Improvement Committee for Mud Lake. We talked about some of the scenarios, and I'm very pleased to say, Speaker, that we're making good progress.

That's mostly what I wanted to do today. I'd like to thank the government for stepping forward, and I look forward to working with the various ministers, because we're going to need help from more than one department to get this done. But I'm very pleased to say that there is some hope for folks who have been living in risk and fear for the last five years. And I thank government for that.

Thank you.

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

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just wanted to take a second just to say there have been great strides made, as the hon. Member knows. Of course we're willing to sit down with the residents there; I just wanted to take a minute to make sure that that was understood, that we will do that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, I'm presenting a petition to request to provide affordable access to insulin to all who require it. The reason for the petition:

Diabetes is a widespread and potentially debilitating condition. Neglecting to address the growing issue will reflect a much more costly, deadly outcome on the behalf of taxpayers. Insulin was intended to be supplied to all people as a life-saving Canadian invention, as it was intended to be provided at little to no cost. This is not the reality for many who struggle with diabetes.

WHEREAS 34 per cent of the people in Newfoundland and Labrador are diabetic or

prediabetic, with a projected increase to 38 per cent by 2030; and

WHEREAS diabetes is the reason for an alarming percentage of heart disease, stroke, dialysis due to kidney failure, blindness and amputation; and

WHEREAS diabetic medications are far too expensive for many diabetics to afford. Many don't qualify for insurance, don't receive health benefits at work, or lost insulin coverage from their benefits for various reasons; and

WHEREAS Banting, Best, and Collip, the trio who isolated insulin, sold their patent to the University of Toronto for \$1 each because they wanted everyone who needed access to insulin to have it;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure easy, reliable and affordable access to insulin for all residents suffering from diabetes, as insulin is a life therapy and life-saving medication.

We know, Speaker, that insulin in its various forms have been used to treat diabetes since the Canadian researchers isolated it in 1921. At that time, it was a fatal decision; the treatment was to put patients on starvation diets. The inevitable end was death. However, we have heard many stories this year where the diabetics who are paying the high cost of insulin will have to make cuts in their other areas to be able to pay. In some cases, trying to get outdated insulin or to skimp on their nutrition, their heat and other non-diabetic related needs.

In one case, the person who authored this petition, Speaker, she is struggling to pay for dental appointments and antibiotics for a cracked tooth, which has become infected. So this affects people at a very personal, very real level.

Newfoundland is the youngest province and should supply its residents a life-saving Canadian invention, as it was intended to be provided, at little or no fee cost and we can be a leading example for Canada to follow.

We all know, we hear it here very clearly with our health outcomes; this is a simple way of making sure that those who suffer from this disease have affordable treatment.

Thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

SPEAKER: Actually, this House now stands recessed. It will only be about five minutes or so.

Recess

SPEAKER: Members take your seats, please.

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

SPEAKER: All rise.

Admit Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

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

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

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

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, "An Act To Amend Various Acts Of The Province Respecting The Publication Of A Summary Of A Decision Or Order Of An Adjudication Tribunal." (Bill 28)

A bill, "An Act Respecting A Province-Wide 911 Service For The Reporting Of Emergencies." (Bill 41)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957." (Bill 46)

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act.” (Bill 48)

A bill, “An Act Respecting Access To Health And Educational Services.” (Bill 51)

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Petroleum Products Act.” (Bill 52)

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000.” (Bill 54)

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Life Insurance Act.” (Bill 55)

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Condominium Act, 2009.” (Bill 56)

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Income Tax Savings Plans Act And Pension Plans Designation Of Beneficiaries Act.” (Bill 57)

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Urban And Rural Planning Act, 2000.” (Bill 58)

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

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act.” (Bill 60)

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Forestry Act.” (Bill 61)

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Child And Youth Advocate Act.” (Bill 62)

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 6.” (Bill 64)

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

I signed one, meaning I’ve signed them all, because I know you don’t want to stay here any longer than you have to. You can feel it in the air. School’s out!

I applaud all of you for the amount of work that you have accomplished in this past session; you’ve obviously worked very hard, which is what we all expect of you. Now you get to go home, you get to go back to your constituencies and be with the people who elected you and who made it possible for you to be here.

It’s always good to have that time to spend with your constituents; I speak from experience, as you all know. But being able to be back in your constituencies and be able to work with those who depend on you is really important. It’s also important being here in the House of Assembly, as you develop policy that impacts every Newfoundlander and Labradorian.

I was really excited to hear the news about more jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador and I’m sure for all of us that’s really important. Because we all know that if you have a job, it is so much better for, not just your physical health but your mental health. So hearing about jobs is music to my ears and I know that all of you worked on making that possible.

I noticed there was a lot of healthy debate in the House of Assembly; debate is really important. I think that when we think about democracy, we think about debate and the exchange of ideas and coming up with really good policy by working together. So thank you for that. Thank you for all of the changes you helped to bring about through your work and for putting in the time required to have healthy debate and to make sure that we get the best possible policy for our province.

This is Her Majesty’s Platinum Jubilee so don’t forget when you go back to your constituencies to find a way to celebrate. A lot of communities are having what they are calling high teas. I was at one recently in Blaketown. It was absolutely a wonderful opportunity. I will be doing more back in your constituencies throughout the summer.

But 70 years of service on the Crown is nothing to sneeze at. It is service, it is loyal service and through the ups and the downs this amazing

woman has been there for that length of time. So let's celebrate her Platinum Jubilee.

I don't know if you all have your lapel pins, but I hope, if you don't, that you'll reach out to us and get them and wear them with pride this summer. We all know that, of course, it's a celebratory time. So celebrate, enjoy what Her Majesty has done, I think, for the Commonwealth, but as well the fact that we're able to come together throughout our province and celebrate her 70 years of service.

So thank you for all that you've done. It's always good to come back and have a chance to wish you well, once you've given so much hard work to getting your jobs done. Now it's time to go and spend time, not just with your constituents, but with your families. Sometimes we lose sight of how important it is to spend that precious time with your families because we do get caught up in our jobs.

Congratulations to all of you. Enjoy your summer. Stay safe and come back healthy and all ready for another session.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise.

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

SPEAKER: Please be seated.

Order, please!

As per tradition, now we'll give the leaders of the individual parties an opportunity to address.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

It's an honour again to stand in the House of Assembly as we acknowledge the end of the spring sitting of the House of Assembly and the debate for the last number of months outlining the issues that we've heard from Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I first want to start by talking to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We feel and we understand your frustration. We understand the challenges you're facing. We, in the Official Opposition, have done everything that we felt we could to ensure your voice was heard and your concerns were brought to the House of Assembly; that we could help instill change that would benefit the people of this province.

We know there are a multitude of challenges out there. We know that there are still challenges ahead. We know there are factors here that can't be controlled by an individual citizen, but we do know collectively your voice has to be heard in this House. It's your House. It's the House that people have sacrificed so much for to ensure that our democracy gives you that opportunity. To ensure the government and the people who sit in this House reflect policies and programs, but particularly, financial abilities for the citizens of this province to feel that they are safe, that they can live with dignity, but they can particularly live healthy and be prosperous in our great community.

While this has been a challenging time, perhaps one of the most challenging sittings I've had in my 12 years sitting in this House for a number of reasons: one, the economics; and two, getting an understanding of exactly how we address the issues that are facing the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and realizing we've got to be flexible for the people here. Understanding that things change in a moment's notice to reflect the particular priorities in this province. If we ignore what we hear every day, if we ignore the cries of people who are suffering – it is most often the ones who suffer the most are the ones we hear the least from. They are the people we have a responsibility to support and represent and ensure that if they can't speak out, that we speak out for them in this House of Assembly.

So I'm very proud of the Official Opposition for what we have done in the House of Assembly, bringing their concerns forward and lobbying government to make changes that represent the particular needs of the individuals in Newfoundland and Labrador. I realize we can't do everything for everybody, but we have to make sure we do the right things for people when they're in their hour of need. That is what

we fought for in the last number of months here, it's what we have been fighting here for the last number of years and it's what we'll continue to fight for on this side of the House. I would hope that the government Members also hear the same cries and the same concerns, and try to echo putting in play programs and services that understand and address the particular needs people in Newfoundland and Labrador face.

While these are challenging times, we've talked about the resilience of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We've talked about the potential we have here. We can never dismiss that because the minute we dismiss that, we dismiss the hope that this province has already had for 500 years and will continue to have. What we must ensure, and we continue to push for – and every Newfoundlander and Labradorian, those that live in this province and those who've left, must be cognizant that the people of this province should be the beneficiaries of the resources we have here.

We have talked about being open for business and we encourage that. We encourage it domestically, internationally, but to the point where we, and I say we, the citizens of this province, are the ones who are going to ensure that their livelihood is better than the previous generation, and that the generation that's here doesn't leave because there's no hope or no options here.

We know we have challenges in our health care system. We know we have major challenges now in the cost of living. We know we have challenges in ensuring that our infrastructure is up to par. We know we have challenges in making sure the rest of this Confederation accepts us as an equal partner. There have been many strides taken over the last number of decades, but there are many more that need to be done.

We need to stand united for what's right for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. While we'll argue and we'll debate – and we may disagree – we all collectively need to find the most equitable way to address the needs of the people of this province in this House, and ensure that every Newfoundlander and Labradorian feel that they're represented by their elected officials.

I want to also note to the people of this province, we hear what you're saying. The thousands of emails we've gotten. The thousands of calls we've gotten. The concerns that you voiced through the media and social media we've gotten it. We tried to reflect those needs and those concerns to the House of Assembly.

I'm happy to say we've been successful in a number of things. We've been successful in encouraging government to change some of its policies to reflect the particular needs. Is there much more to be done? Of course, there is. Is there much more listening to the people of this province that needs to be done? Of course, there is. Are there more creative, innovative ways that we need to address things? Of course, there is.

The way we're going to do that is collectively. As 40 Members of the House of Assembly, no matter what party stripe you have or you're sitting as an independent, we all legitimately put as the priority the people of this province. We'll debate how we do that, we'll debate what the priorities are, but I think it's simple to come to a consensus. What the people say, particularly the majority of the people, should be the priorities that we act upon. We need to be more collectively agreeable to move in that manner.

I do think there are better ways that we can operate the House of Assembly: more all-party Committees to look at things, more strategic planning and more inclusive processes. We'll continue to fight for those. We'll continue to lobby government to move things forward, but we'll also continue to let the industries in our province know that Newfoundland and Labrador is open for business. We have the most skilled set of workers in the world. We're so creative that we're a jump ahead of other industries globally, with the innovation of our young people and our education system here. So we want to build on that. We want to continue to do that. We want to ensure that the people of this province are the ones who have a brighter future.

Mr. Speaker, to the people of this province: While you're struggling, and we understand that, we'll continue to fight for what's right. We'll continue to try to find solutions that best address the needs of the people of this province. But we want to ensure that you don't lose hope.

Don't lose hope in this great province of ours; don't lose hope that we're an equal partner of this great Confederation of ours; don't lose hope in the resilience of the people of this province for the last 500 years. Because we'll be here for another 500 and well beyond that, as we work together.

Speaker, before I conclude, I do want to thank so many people who made this a very interesting, a very open discussion for the last two months, and for those who very diligently sat through late hours and who supported what we did here. So I first want to start by our Table Officers here, and acknowledging the work that has to be done so that the House of Assembly can run efficiently, and that the legislation that we have and the budget process that we debate is done in a professional manner.

I want to acknowledge all the people related to that: Hansard, the Broadcast Centre, all of the people related to that process itself, the information distribution. I want to acknowledge you, Mr. Speaker, and your Pages, for the valued work here in ensuring that the House of Assembly is run under the democratic process that we have here. Our Sergeant-at-Arms, I want to welcome him back; we did that officially earlier the year, but having him here now is an added sense of security and decorum for the House of Assembly.

To all the civil servants of Newfoundland and Labrador who help in making the House of Assembly work for the people of this province, I want to acknowledge them, but I also want to acknowledge the key people that we have in our own staff, how important they are to us in ensuring that we are prepared, our research is done, and that we're here to make sure that the issues that the people bring to us are brought to this House of Assembly.

To our staff in the Opposition Office, a particular thank you to them. To my colleagues here, I particularly want to acknowledge them also for working as a team and always ensuring that the issues of the people of this province are at the forefront. We try to put politics aside to ensure that the issues are put there and that we're here to represent them, regardless if they're constituents of your district or not.

I also wanted to particularly acknowledge our families. People forget that. There are sacrifices made by everybody in this House, no matter if you're away from the House for a period of time, if need to attend certain things in your family, we understand that. You know, I do think it's even harder for those who have smaller children.

I fortunate enough to come in when my kids were teenagers, so the adjustment was a little bit easier. And I'm fortunate enough be in an urban district. But I do acknowledge those who travel from Nain, Labrador, to the Baie Verte Peninsula, and the Burin Peninsula, and everywhere else around the Northern Peninsula and the challenge they have when they have to move back after leaving the House of Assembly on a Thursday evening. So I acknowledge all of those.

But I want to particularly also conclude by thanking the people of Newfoundland and Labrador for acknowledging that we're in a great province, but also acknowledging that we try to do what is best for the people of the province. And we have heard that from them. I know that we have done everything that we possibly could. We have fought and argued and made suggestions and gave alternatives. We were successful on a number of them and, hopefully, that is a small piece of improving people's lives.

Will we give up on that? Not on your life. There is too much left still to do to improve the lives of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and ensure that people out there – the senior citizen who heats their home with wood who is not getting a break now, needs a break this fall to also offset the cost, because wood has increased as much as oil has. Things like that. And there are hundreds of stories out there. Thousand of people who are going to be affected by the economy. Do we all hope that the global issues change? Of course we do. Do we all hope that our own economy changes? We all do.

But I will tell you, as things transpire and as the global issues change and the domestic issues change, we on this side will be there to make sure we represent the people of this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, on that note, I do wish all of my colleagues in the House of Assembly a safe summer. I know we will be going back to our districts and we will be listening to what the people say and we will be ready to come back to this House and ensure that the fall sitting outlines policies and programs that are necessary to address the issues facing Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I will make this last offer to the Premier and to his government. We are here to be collaborative. We are here. If there is a change in approach that needs to be done and it makes sense to help the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, I will guarantee you, the PC caucus will be co-operative, will be collaborative and we will help to ensure that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are the people who are going to benefit from any policies, any legislation or any decisions made in this House.

I do wish everybody a safe summer. I know everybody is going to go back and work hard, because I know our caucus have already talked about the multitude of events they are going to attend, the meetings that they are going to attend and the issues they are going to talk to with constituents.

I do wish everybody here a healthy and safe summer session. Let's make sure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are the people who are safe no matter where you are, no matter your demographic, no matter your age, that we do whatever is possible to help them.

So, Mr. Speaker, on that note I thank you, I thank the House of Assembly and we look forward to our fall sitting again.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

It is indeed an auspicious day when our last day is also the first day of the salmon angling season. It is hard to believe, though, that I have been in this position, I guess, for a little over three years as an MHA. That's two elections – one of them a pandemic election. We are in the third year of the pandemic. We have had to negotiate how we operate the House in that time. We have had to find ways, both federally and provincially, how to help businesses and workers navigate and survive this. We have to roll out vaccines and how we distribute them.

We faced, internationally, withdrawal of troops in Afghanistan, the war in Ukraine, and accepting refugees from those countries. We witnessed the trucker convoy in Ottawa. We're dealing with the soaring costs of living, housing issues and poverty issues and, of course, piled on top of that, Snowmageddon, atmospheric rivers, climate crisis.

It's almost as if someone has invoked the curse, may you live in interesting times, because we have been living in interesting times. We have weathered much together, but I'm reminded of one other quotation that I've used before is by G. K. Chesterton: "We men and women are all in the same boat, upon a stormy sea. We owe to each other a terrible and tragic loyalty."

I do believe that applies to us in this House and it applies, as we decide so many issues for the people of this province, and it applies to the people of this province.

As MHAs, we depend on each other within our party; there are no two ways about it, but we also still depend on each other within this House of Assembly to bring the different perspectives that may or may not be popular, to make a decision that may or may not be popular, but in our own collective wisdom we've deemed it that it is the best interest of the province. We depend very much on the people out there to keep us grounded in reality.

So yes, it comes down to the phone calls, the emails, the social media posts, the petitions that we present in this House so that the voice is heard. We bring different perspectives. I know, from us, what we tend to focus on are the

systemic issues and how do we resolve this issue so we're not constantly pulling people out of the river, drowning people out of the river. How do we stop them from falling into it?

I always think of a couple of questions: Why did I get into this? Why do we get into this? I do remember years ago when people would be looking to run, at the NLTA, why do you want to run for this position? Because that's the key question: Why? I have to believe that we're all in here at some point; take away the theatrics, and everything else that goes with it, that we're in here seeking the best for the people of our province.

Whether it's addressing the cost of living, protection of the environment, making sure that we have a healthy life, a healthy province, a healthy education system and health system, I do believe that. In many ways, when we look at Question Period, that is the theatrical part of it but it is not all we do.

So I do want to start off and recognizing that we still have a lot of work ahead come September. We're starting a summer this time that is not going into June. We're coming out of the pandemic and, hopefully, this is going to be an opportunity for people to get back out and enjoy each other's company, too.

I do want to thank my colleagues, to Lela and Jordan, especially – well, they're the only colleagues I have, really – for the work that they have done in supporting me. Different perspectives in this party; different geographical areas; different age rangers; you name it, but that is what makes the party strong: our small but mighty caucus.

To the independent Members, to the government Members, to my colleagues in the Opposition who decide to promote me to the federal leadership and Jim Singh, I think I was called yesterday.

AN HON. MEMBER: No, we asked Jim to sing.

J. DINN: So to the Members who represent their far-flung districts and spend an awful lot of their time away from home and family. I'm fortunate, at the end of each day, no matter

whether the House is sitting or not, I go home to my family, which is about an hour walk or a 10-minute car ride or a 20-minute bus ride, whatever way you choose. But I get to be with them, I get to be with my grandchildren as much as I want.

For those of you who travel from distances and who have to spend months here, sometimes, to deal with the issues, and even on constituency week you may not get back, I applaud that. I recognize there is a cost, there is a sacrifice and there is a commitment there. No doubt about it.

I do want to say here to the families who support you because you cannot do it without them. If you want to know that family is important to us, all you had to do was look at the people who were gathered around the Minister of Justice and Public Safety's child this morning and looking at the smile on the minister's face this morning, you know what is important to each and every one of us. I think each and every one of us holds that image in our mind when we are here making decisions.

So I do want to thank the ministers and the Premier as well. It's not easy. I don't care what any of the positions are here; you're making decisions that are definitely going to run into opposition here and are not going to be perceived in the way you want them. I still think we have the right ideas, but, nevertheless, the fact is, it's not easy being in those leadership positions.

To the Members of the Official Opposition here, because it's easy to be tarred or identified as the naysayers, always being critical, but that's the job we do: of always pointing out here's where we could be better, here's where the flaws are.

To the many deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers and departmental staff who come here for Estimates meetings; when I look at the binders over there, you're not coming in here on your own speaking off the cuff, and that goes for both parties here on this side. We've got people behind us who are basically making sure we're as prepared as we can be. There's no two ways about it, they're the ones who are doing the work. We're sort of the eye candy or the front people or whatever you want to call us. And maybe not the best of eye candy.

To each of us and our office staff, the MHAs, the people who do our research, the people who help use with communication, to the people who offer us advice and make sure that we, again, are informed. To our constituency assistants, I know that each and every one of us here has a long-suffering, hard-working constituency assistant who is taking care of those phone calls of our constituents while we're in the House of Assembly. I can't praise them enough.

To Hansard and the Broadcast Centre, we could do something about the lights, maybe, but nevertheless thank you for making sure that the message, the debate gets out to the public. To OCIO and Corporate and Member' Services who I've used many times, thank you for the help and thank you for the help that you provide in making sure our systems are secure and that our expense claims are filled out.

To the Commissionaires who makes sure that we're secure and certainly to the security personnel and to the Sergeant-at-Arms, too; I went to school with this gentleman. He's doing a remarkably good job of keeping the Mace and the stand polished, so I'll give him credit on that, but you can't argue with a good Celtic and Crusader, so that's a bonus.

To the Clerk's Office, to the Speaker, which at times has got to be a challenging – reminds me of being a teacher at times, that's all I'm going to say and to the Table Officers there who we are able to access for guidance.

As we navigate out of this pandemic and chart a course back to normality, we need to again acknowledge the work that the front-line workers, our public service have done over the last two – well, going into three years now. The front-line workers, our nurses, our doctors, our hospital staff, teachers, the workers in the businesses who kept the economy chugging along during this pandemic. I'm speaking as if it's over and I realize it's not, but we're actually moving in another direction and hopefully a better direction.

To the cleaners in our building, who basically keep our offices clean and our washrooms clean.

Again, I will say thank you to our families, especially those who, like I said, whose spouses

who have to travel from home. Personally, to my wife Michelle, I wouldn't be as coordinated as I am, and more importantly she is the one who keeps me grounded and will argue with me when I'm probably not saying things that make sense.

To my mother, to our mother, who I will say I'm still probably the favourite son.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

J. DINN: However, she won't be surprised by any of it.

I will end with this, a shameless plug for my District of St. John's Centre. Now, we may not have the grandeur of the West Coast, the vast landscape of Labrador, the world charm of many of the districts, but we do have Mundy Pond, which is the home of the Mundy Pond Regatta. It will be taking place on July 9. It will not have the racing shells, but it will have punts.

If you're in St. John's Centre, Mundy Pond, on July 9, I invite you to come along, try a few of the games of chance. It's for a good cause. It will be on the north side of the pond. It's a sign that we are getting back to some sense of normal. There's that hope and there's that optimism.

Let's hope that over the next six months to a year that the economy is going to improve and we'll get back on our feet as a province and we'll start doing the things we need to do for the people of this province.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

Certainly another busy session is coming to an end here in the House of Assembly and it was certainly a world-wind session. I want to thank, again, all the Members for their continued passion and representation that they bring to the House of Assembly from the diverse people of our province and from their districts.

Of course, we many not always agree, but I commend the leaders of the Opposition and the Third Party, along with their colleagues and the independent Members, for their dedication to their constituents, for enhancing debate and ensuring that constituent voices are well heard.

I also want to acknowledge and agree with many of the sentiments that were proposed here in the House this last session: That this province is full of hope and opportunity in a direction towards a sustainable future for Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER A. FUREY: Service to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador is indeed a noble endeavour. Regardless of the rigour and the contention of debate, I believe that everybody in this House, for them, the pursuit is genuine and the destination is truly righteous. I personally am always humbled and honoured to represent the great people of Humber - Gros Morne and thank them for their continued support.

I would like to give a very big thank you to the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Finance, as she delivered and passed her third budget in 20 months – unprecedented in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER A. FUREY: To everyone who worked on *Budget 2022* and every single one of the public servants in our province, we know you work hard. You have heard it from all three of us here today. We understand the pressures of your family and the pressures that you face in delivering services to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and you do so, heroically, every single day.

Budget 2022, Mr. Speaker, is about balance. Balancing the challenges that we face as a province but also realizing the stress and strain of the cost of living and the concerns that creates for families. Making responsible decisions that best serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and recognizing that the situation is

dynamic and ever changing: 50 per cent off registration fees for passenger vehicles; eliminating the 15 per cent retail tax on home insurance; \$5,000 to help home transition from oil to electric heat. In total, our government has returned nearly a quarter of a billion dollars to the people of this province to further address pressures caused by the rising cost of living, not just here, not just across the country, but around the world.

We are not the only leaders, and I say that collectively about everybody in the House of Assembly who are struggling with this challenge. The president of the United States is struggling with this challenge. The prime minister of the UK is struggling with this challenge. The prime minister of Canada is struggling with this challenge. So although we feel down sometimes about the struggles, they are not ours. They are being faced collectively by the people of the world.

We have also provided 10 per cent increase in the Income Supplement; 10 per cent increase in Seniors' Benefit; eight cents per litre off gas and diesel at the pumps; and a \$500 rebate for furnace oil in the fall. On top of the \$46 million to bring regulated child care down to \$10 a day, leading the country; nearly \$2 million to support electric vehicles; \$5 million to help small businesses adjust to the recommended increase in the minimum wage; more free bus passes; and \$500 million to keep power rates affordable.

Mr. Speaker, this government continues to listen to the people of the province, and we know they are stressed and strained. We know they are struggling. We all must figure out creative solutions to navigate these tough waters together. The pandemic, shutdowns and reopening have increased global demand, along with Russia's invasion of the Ukraine. These factors are far beyond our control, and are wrecking havoc on the supply chain pushing prices on fuel, and just about everything else around the world.

But here in Newfoundland and Labrador, your government is doing more than virtually any other government across the country, with fuel tax now the lowest in the country after Alberta,

and we are doing it still while being fiscally responsible, recognizing the debt burden that is on our population.

In all of this, the people of Ukraine have been seeing so much horror and destruction in their home country. I think one of the proudest moments of this year, for all of us, should be and will when we're beyond our seats in this House of Assembly, to look back and realize that we did something different across the country. We took a leadership role. We set up a desk in Warsaw, Poland and welcomed the first flight of Ukrainian refugees to Canada, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER A. FUREY: I want to thank the incredible team led by Minister Byrne and those on the ground, away from their families, civil servants, put their hands up to volunteer to go to Warsaw, Poland for months at a time to ensure that we were matching the needs of the Ukrainian refugees with what we had here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have never shied away from stepping up to help those in need. I thank you all. Thank you for the Opposition and everybody here for supporting that effort. We all welcome Ukrainians to our shores.

In addition to the Ukrainian crisis, Minister Byrne has for the first time, since the early 1970s, since before I was born, seen real strides in the demographic challenge, as we now know there will be an increase in the K-to-12 population across our province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER A. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, we also had a wonderful opportunity to welcome the Royal Highnesses, the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall to our province, on their official tour of Canada celebrating the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

During their visit, we highlighted the significant Indigenous histories in this province and the importance of walking that tough and winding path of reconciliation together. I want to thank the Indigenous groups and leaders for their part,

not just in that tour, but for their weekly participation in our calls, so that we can have a more fulsome and better understanding of where we need to go as a province to right the wrongs of the past, while reflecting on them and not running away from them.

I would be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I did not bring up the fantastic news in our oil and gas industry; Bay du Nord, West White Rose and Terra Nova, all with good news this year, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER A. FUREY: West White Rose alone will bring thousands of jobs to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and significant revenue to this province, Mr. Speaker. As you've heard me say many times, we have the product the world needs right now, and Newfoundland and Labrador is perfectly positioned in this time of transition. We can and will hold two thoughts in our head at once: investing and realizing the benefits and value of the oil and gas industry, while preparing for the future by doing things like lifting the moratorium on wind in our province, Mr. Speaker.

This is a list of important work we have accomplished this sitting – and I can continue going, but I know everyone's tired and itching to get to maybe McNiven's, I'm not sure – investment in health care, working to fill staffing shortages, connecting thousands of people in primary care and reducing wait times for cardiac and joint replacement surgeries. Investment in child care and early learning education, technology industries and so much more have occurred over this session, and I thank everyone involved for making that a reality.

My friends, when we collaborate and work together, we deliver great results for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I was excited and interested to hear the Member opposite, the Leader of the Official Opposition, to recognize that we need to be more collaborative in this approach. There are 500,000 of us. This is the size of a small municipality in the United States. Surely, we can get this right, if we work together, realizing the challenges that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians face.

To the staff who work at the House of Assembly, and the Clerk and staff in the Clerk's office, Table Officers, Sergeant-at-Arms, Legislative Library, Hansard, and the Broadcast team, and of course our Pages who are constantly running. And to you, Mr. Speaker, this has been a challenging session, so congratulations and thank you to you and your office for supporting all of us here in the House.

I know that we keep many of you, collectively those people that I just mentioned here, late into the night, away from your families, away from your loved ones and away from your recreational activities. But you need to keep the lights on, and you do so without ever complaining, always facilitating a fulsome, wholesome debate and never, ever getting in the way. More importantly, making sure that we can do our jobs regardless of the time, regardless of the position, and for that I want to thank each and every one of you.

To the security guards and the Commissionaires, thank you for being here every day. Many of you welcome me here 6:30 in the morning, after my run, and I have to say there's 24-7 service here. It's always great to be greeted when you come to work. For the work that you do on holidays and Easter and Christmas to be here to protect this hollowed House, deserves much gratitude.

To all our political staff in our districts, regardless of our party, thank you for all the hard work you do in ensuring that the constituents' voices are not only heard locally, but are delivered to your MHA so that they can make sure that they're heard and their voices are heard on the floor of this House of Assembly.

Most of those people are answering the phones and dealing with the constituency issues that are tough, they're personal, they're real for families across this province, and the burden that those people, that those assistants actually bear deserves a significant thank you from all of us.

I know that our province – we all know – faces many challenges, Mr. Speaker, but I'm confident that there's a collective will here to recognize those challenges as opportunities hidden in disguise as we move forward with a path for a

sustainable, bright, hopeful opportunity and future for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you to everyone in this House for the work that you do. I, myself, am looking forward to taking in many events throughout the province this summer, as I'm excited to participate in Come Home Year 2022. From all accounts, tourist operations are full and they're booking into 2023. I welcome anyone to come to Gros Morne, if – if – you can get a reservation.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that Come Home Year has been fully committed to, fully embraced, and is now fully subscribed, is a testament to the fact that there is no better home than Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: First of all, I'd just like to thank all the Leaders for their comments. As we finish off the spring session, and we did definitely end it off with a bang today, but I do understand everyone's passion and everyone's commitment to their districts and to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I'd just like to take a few minutes to recognize all those that help in the smooth operations of this Legislature. Many of whom have been identified here today, but I just want to make sure we haven't missed anyone.

I'd like to recognize those that do so much work behind the scenes that we don't see within these walls and throughout the building but they're also working very diligently to make sure that our session runs very smoothly.

First of all, Corporate and Members' Services; the Legislative Library and our Information Management team; our Hansard and our Broadcast team. Thank you very much for all the work you do.

Another group that I'd like to thank is Transportation and Infrastructure who have continued to support this Legislature, again behind the scenes, making sure that everything runs smoothly as it relates to our communications; they set up our desks and

everything else. They worked very hard and very co-operatively, especially during COVID-19 to make sure that we had a safe environment to work in.

I'd like to say a special thank you to Yvonne Power in our Clerk's office for assisting us in our day-to-day operations, making sure the papers and everything you see on the desks are out and ready for us to start our days. I will add that Yvonne is retiring at the end of this month, after 34 years of dedicated service to the public service.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: I just want to wish Yvonne all the best in retirement.

I do have a bit of a complex with all these people retiring around me; I've only been Speaker for a little over a year and we lost our Sergeant-at-Arms, he retired; our other Clerk retired recently; and there are also talks of other members retiring within our office. I don't know if it's me being hard to get along with or not, but I certainly hope not, because I do try my best to work with them. I do have an awesome team around me.

In our Chamber today, I'd like to do a special thank you to our Sergeant-at-Arms, Robert, for doing such a great job.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Also to our Pages, like I said, I've only been here a year, but they are a wonderful group of young people.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: I'm quite sure with their leadership they have proven we have a great future ahead of us.

To our Commissionaires that always are there to help and assist where possible and to make sure that all of our visitors get into the House of Assembly safely, thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: A big thank you to our Table Officers. I've got to say, I've got an amazing team around me: Sandra, our Clerk; Kim Hawley George, our Law Clerk; as well as Bobbi Russell, Kim Hammond, Mark Jerrett and Evan Beazley, who have also been assisting around the Table. I've got to say, you guys have been doing a fantastic job, doing a great job keeping myself –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: – in order and making sure we're following proper procedure. I'm sure the Government House Leader can echo my words there.

I'd be remiss if I didn't acknowledge my executive assistant Kala Noel, who I may add is celebrating her 29th birthday for the ninth time today. I think we all agree Kala has been fantastic to work with, besides an awesome baker – she's always bringing baked items for us. I've got to say, it's been a true delight to work with her.

Even though, like I say, debates gets heated and challenging at times, I think everybody is here for the right reason, we're here to represent the people in our districts and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I do thank you for your co-operation.

Lastly, I would like to thank the people of the beautiful, scenic and historic District of Lewisporte - Twillingate, who have had the faith in me over the last three elections to represent them here in the House of Assembly. I'm quite sure every Member here can attest to how great an honour it is to represent the people of your district and to have the opportunity to sit in this Legislature.

So to the people in my district, thank you very much. I look forward to being in my district over the summer. I welcome everyone to the District of Lewisporte - Twillingate to take part in many of the celebrations that will be happening as a part of the Come Home Year 2022.

I'd also like to wish everyone a very wonderful and safe summer. I look forward to seeing everyone as we head back to the fall session.

Before I call for adjournment, and keeping with the tradition that I started when I became Speaker, I will ask all Members to rise and I will ask the hon. Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs to lead is in the “Ode to Newfoundland.”

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

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

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

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I won't sing, Mr. Speaker, but I move, seconded by the Premier, that this House do now adjourn to the call of the Chair.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

AN HON. MEMBER: Nay.

SPEAKER: Motion carried.

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

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