



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Volume L

SECOND SESSION

Number 38

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

Wednesday

May 24, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Government Business

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 4.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Speaker, I move that this House do now resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act and an Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, 2000, seconded by the Government House Leader.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 38.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Warr): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 38, An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act and An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, 2000.

A bill, "An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act and An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, 2000." (Bill 38)

CLERK (Barnes): Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

P. DINN: Thank you, Chair.

It's a pleasure again to get up and represent the fine residents of Topsail - Paradise in the House of Assembly and speak to some of their concerns, but also to this bill, which is a concern for just about every Newfoundlander and Labradorian. Anything dealing with taxes is certainly front and foremost for many of us in this day and age when the cost of living is skyrocketing and there are many, many individuals out there who are struggling.

When I look at this bill, if I'm talking to the Income Tax Act here and the increase in the tax credit for physical activity from 8.7 per cent to 17.4 per cent, the tax credit, and I go back to what was said when we last stood in this House and spoke on this bill, the \$2,000 per family that was put in there. There are only 29,000 who took advantage of it when you're talking about that tax.

When you look at the carbon tax and removing the tax on carbon products, it's certainly something we have advocated for so long. We've advocated for a long, long time and government finally listened, to some extent, and will remove that tax. But it's only short-term relief when you think about it, when you think about the carbon tax, the federal tax that comes into play in July.

I look at this and try to figure out the logic of this tax. The claim is that eight out of 10 families will get the tax back. So you're taking money in carbon tax and it is going to go right back to individuals in the form of rebates. When you go to the whole purpose of the carbon tax, it is to deter individuals or maybe promote – look at it whatever way you want – but it is to direct individuals towards more environmentally friendly activities, using less fossil fuels and using less things that will affect our environment.

A tax, by definition, is a compulsory contribution to the state. It is compulsory. It is levied for a reason. But when we look at this and we say, well, okay, it is there to help lessen our carbon footprint, but if eight out of 10 individuals are getting it back in a rebate, my question becomes: How does that deter individuals? How does that deter individuals if what you pay in, you get back anyway? That becomes a big question here.

But the bigger question when you talk about carbon tax or any tax is the individuals, the residents of the province; those who are at wit's end at trying to pay bills; those who are trying to make ends meet; those who are making decisions between should I turn on the heat, is there anything to eat and some, as we know, are diluting medicines and rationing their prescriptions, so it becomes a very real issue for many.

So any kind of tax is an added burden on those individuals. I would argue that many of the individuals who are in those positions are not contributing to the carbon footprint. Those individuals probably don't own a car. As I said, they can't afford to turn on the heat. They, potentially, if they travel, it maybe with a bus pass, which, as we know, we're encouraging more usage of busing transportation is lessening the footprint.

So these are some of the individuals who are perhaps being negatively affected more than anyone and those are the individuals that you look at them and we say oh, well, don't worry because eight out of 10

individuals will get their money back in the rebate.

So I look at that and the many questions that I get asked on this are: Why put us through that to start with; why put those individuals through that to start; why tax them when they could be utilizing that money much better for themselves? I don't think when this carbon tax was first discussed, when we talked about this last year, people talked about oh well, you ignore or you don't agree with climate change, and that's so far from the truth. We all understand that we have to deal with issues around environment. We all understand that climate change is real and it needs to be acted upon.

What we argued for the last year or more as the Opposition – and I believe the Third Party and the independents were of similar – was that how is this mechanism working? How does taxing those individuals who probably have the smallest carbon footprint of all of us here in the province, how does taxing those individuals and giving it back to them later, their own money, how does that reduce the carbon footprint? How is that effective in the intention of the policy, the intention of the legislation? That's a good question, right?

So I was just reading a quote here from a *Postmedia* news piece back from March: "Canada's parliamentary budget officer says the average family in the seven provinces where Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's carbon tax now applies will pay hundreds of dollars more in carbon taxes this year than they get back in rebates." So in actual fact, there are many who are paying these taxes and many are not getting even the amount they paid in back.

It goes on to say – another quote in the media – "Most households in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador will be worse off as a result of the carbon tax by 2030, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's last report."

That tells us, some of these families, those families that again, as I said, may not contribute to any degree to the carbon footprint are being penalized I would guess in the short term, even though they will get some of their money back. Again, the issue goes to the mechanism that we're using or utilizing to address climate change and our carbon footprint.

The Premier will get up in the House or has gotten up in the House and has spoken to the fact that, well, the situation has changed. We no longer support the federal carbon tax, we think it's not timely and I wrote a letter. That's all great, but I would argue that nothing really has changed.

As an Opposition, what we argued last year, is the same as what we're going to argue now. It still had to do with the cost of living and putting a tax on individuals who could in no way – now way – afford to be paying those taxes, because they had other needs, more pressing needs for them, as I said, heat and food and medications.

Now, I am happy that as an Opposition – and I include everyone on this side of the House – that we were able to talk some common sense into government on this. Because this is where we talk about proactive and reactive; this is what distinguishing the two sides of the House here. We were proactive enough to see this coming. We knew how this was going to affect the public. We knew with the cost of living, that another tax was not going to be the way to go.

I'm glad government has taken this advice, later rather than sooner, but we still have to deal as well with the federal tax that comes into play in July. The individuals I deal with on a daily basis, and especially those who are seniors, seniors on fixed incomes who have to deal with this now, it is amazing. Rebates are great, but again I go back to the logic of, why take it? Why take the tax out of their pockets and hold on to it for however many months and give it back to

them in a rebate? Leave it in their pockets. In fact, I would argue, if there's any way we can put more in their pockets, we should be doing that.

Leave it in their pockets and let's start looking at some more practical means in which to reduce our carbon footprint. Taxes, as I said, are perhaps the easiest thing to do as a government. When you don't have a lot of plans or initiatives to work, well, the default has always been to revert to taxes.

You talk about all the countries that are looked at this. You know, 27 countries, I think, was mentioned. They all agree. They all go on. They all speak that carbon taxes can be harmful to lower income families and I've already spoken to heating, transportation, food. This just makes this tax a regressive tax. There is no doubt about it – there is no doubt about it.

When we talk about this tax and we talk about trying to get people to be more active and talk about reducing our carbon footprint, I look at this and I say, where are the results of this? What are the perceived results? Yes, we always go back and we say, well, in this country or in this report and that report, this report it works.

Our demographics in this province are different from other provinces. Government has started to acknowledge that in ways that our demographics just shift, an older population and we have some of the higher rates of those on income support. All these have to factor in to any decision you make regarding any initiative, really, but especially if it includes taxes. If you're trying to reduce a carbon footprint through a carbon tax, then you really need to address, okay, who are those that are creating this larger carbon footprint? Who are those and how can we target those individuals, businesses, corporations, whatever, to lessen the carbon footprint? How do we do that?

What's been done here with this government is throw a blanket over

everyone, tax them all, carbon tax and we'll give you back a rebate down the road. Like I said, eight out of 10 of those will get their rebate back. I'm not sure if that's the right thing to do. But, again, we argued this for a year.

I see the Minister of Finance wants to get up so I look forward to her comments. She's itching over there. I either said something right, wrong or hit the point.

I will sit down to give her my five seconds.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you.

I'm recognizing the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

S. COADY: Thank you very much.

I've been a long time, good friend to the Member and it is fun to be in the House of Assembly with him. He did give me one second on the clock, so that was very kind of him.

Allow me, Chair, if I may take a few more minutes because the Member from Topsail - Paradise opposite is correct that there are some challenges to what he said into the record. Allow me to take a few moments and tell the people in the province what is actually happening today.

This is all part of our budget; *Budget 2023* is yet to pass the House of Assembly, hopefully in the coming days we'll be concluding the House of Assembly review and requirements around *Budget 2023*. This is one part of that where we are looking at any tax-related issues and anything related or impacting revenues.

So this act that we're debating this morning has three key components. There is, on the very positive side, an increase in the exemption threshold for the Health and Post Secondary Education Tax. That really is

something that the businesses in this province have been calling for. I know the business community, it really is an improvement for the business community. It impacts tens of thousands, I believe, in the business community – no sorry, tens of thousands, my apologies, 1,250 businesses in the province, Chair, and I think it's very, very valuable. It gives up to \$14,000 annually per business if you're getting the maximum tax savings here.

So it really does have beneficial impacts for the people of the province. Now, in listening to my colleague across the way, he was saying that there are challenges in this bill. I would say there are some very good points in this bill, that being one of them. When you're impacting positively 1,250 businesses in the province, that's a very positive thing.

The second thing that this bill we're debating this morning is doing is improvements to the Physical Activity Tax Credit. It's going to encourage and support physical activity in the province. Again, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador set its goal by 2031 to ensure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are more healthy and more physically fit than they are today. So we are incentivizing, encouraging and improving opportunity with regard to the Physical Activity Tax Credit.

I listened intently to the Member from Mount Pearl North who gave some good suggestions and we'll be taking them into consideration for next year's budget around the possibility of doing something, in particular, for those of lower income, those on income support. Maybe we can support them. So I listened intently to that and I appreciate that suggestion.

In today's act, we're actually making improvements to the Physical Activity Tax Credit. We are improving it. The tax credit is improved and that is a positive thing for the people of the province. It's improved by, as this is a refundable tax credit, families can

claim up to \$2,000 in eligible fitness expenses and receive a credit of up to \$348. Now, that's not an insignificant amount of money and we're trying to encourage people to be more physically active. I know a lot of people do online. You know, as long as they have a receipt, they can do online training. Some people go to a gym. Some people participate in hockey. Some people participate in soccer. All of those are eligible.

Chair, there were in 2021, the first year of this tax, 29,390 filers. That's a lot of people in this province in the first year of this tax credit to take advantage of that, where I do believe when we have the results of the 2022 tax year, it'll be higher than that and have a greater impact for the people of the province.

We, again, encourage people to be physically active, to get out there and participate in sports and activities. It's really, really beneficial, not only to your health but also to your well-being. The Member opposite and I used to row on Quidi Vidi Lake, so we both know the value of exercise and how important it is. I know that he was an exceptional rower in his day. Probably not today, but an exceptional rower in his day.

Chair, I will say, and this is getting to the point where the Member opposite focused, that was on the carbon tax, in this particular act that we're debating today, we are repealing the carbon tax. We're in essence taking measures to repeal the tax. I'm going to tell the people of the province again why we are doing that.

This year, Canada, the Government of Canada, the federal government, has determined that the carbon tax agreement that we put in place in 2018 – so going back now to 2018, there was a change to the *Revenue Administration Act* by this government to implement the requirements of the carbon tax, so now we are removing that. So we're actually taking clause 13 that

repeals Part III.1 in its entirety, as well as other provisions that remove references to the carbon tax throughout the act. Here's why: This year, the Government of Canada has determined that this carbon tax agreement that we had in place is no longer compliant with its benchmark.

Now, Chair, I will say the reason why Newfoundland and Labrador negotiated with the federal government – so going back to 2016, the federal government announced plans to implement carbon pricing to help Canada meet its greenhouse gas emission targets. At the time of implementation, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador was able to negotiate an agreement to ensure that the impacts on consumers were minimized and to maintain competitiveness in taxation and in economic opportunity.

Importantly, the exemptions included home heat fuels, meaning no carbon tax on home heat and further exemptions from carbon tax were also negotiated by the provincial government included agriculture, fishing, forestry, offshore and mineral exploration. So there were really two areas where we were able to carve out from the federal government's carbon tax. One – and I think this is very important – home heating. The second big piece is economic activities, as I've mentioned: agriculture, fishing, farming, those types of things.

Now, the federal government has said the agreement that we had no longer meets with their benchmark requirements and they are imposing now the federal backstop in Newfoundland and Labrador. They're also going to be doing so in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and PEI. I will tell you that Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Yukon and Nunavut already are subject to the backstop. Now, we're finding this a very difficult and disappointing outcome as it means that the exemptions that we were able to have in this province will be removed.

These exemptions were fully implemented in January 2019, and again, very importantly, home heating fuel, aviation fuel for flights within the province, fish processing, mineral and offshore exploration, silviculture, on-grid electricity production that is not regulated by the *Management of Greenhouse Gas Act*.

So we have concerns and we are disappointed. Quite frankly disappointed, and we've been lobbying the federal government strongly on this matter and we have been clear to the federal government.

As stated by Premier Furey in his September 2, 2022, correspondence with the federal minister of Environment and Climate Change – and I'll quote it: "The current price signals being provided by the market are far stronger than the signals that removal of these exemptions would have provided under normal economic circumstances, and they are already generating the changes in perspective and behavior that the Federal Government desires."

As a result of the federal government's decision to impose the federal carbon pricing backstop, we're repealing the carbon tax effective July 1, 2023. If we do not do that, then you would have a dual system. We don't want that. We obviously don't want that. We wanted the agreement that we had in place that would have ensured the carbon tax was not on home heating fuels, was not on agriculture, fishing, forestry and offshore mineral exploration. We wanted the agreement to stand.

So this bill today will allow us to increase the threshold on the Health and Post Secondary Education Tax and benefit 1,250 businesses up to, I think, \$14,000 which is an incredible amount of money, up to \$14,000 annually for some businesses in this province, an incredible improvement for these businesses. Especially when we're having some challenges with cost of living,

some challenges coming out of the pandemic, this is a good benefit to them.

We're helping the people of the province become more physically active with the Physical Activity Tax Credit, very, very important. We're putting up to \$330 back into the pockets of people. So I'm sure Members opposite will support that and we're repealing the carbon tax because the federal government is removing the exemptions that we had under agreement. We're repealing that and the federal government is coming in with their backstop. I implore the people in the House to ensure that we do not have double taxation under the carbon tax. Because if we don't repeal it and the federal government comes in with their backstop, that will be what will happen.

To improve things for the businesses in this province to give them money back in their pockets, to ensure that they are robust in their economic opportunity and to give back money to the people of the province upwards to \$328 to the people of the province to become more physically active: That's what this bill does. I'm sure, Chair, that this is a very positive thing for the people of the province. This is giving money back to the people of the province and ensuring that when the federal government comes in to impose their backstop on the people of the province, that we do not have anything in the statutes of Newfoundland and Labrador that include taxation because that agreement is now gone.

So that's what this bill is doing. Please don't confuse it with other things that might be occurring at the federal level. You'd have to take that up with the federal government. What we're doing here today, again, is improvements and beneficial to the people of the province. I'm sure everyone in this House would support improvements and giving money back to the people of the province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you.

I recognize the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

J. DWYER: Thank you, Chair.

That was quite the bit to listen to. I'm not sure if the Members opposite are agreeing with the imposed federal carbon tax, if they'd like to say, but you voted for it. You agreed with it. You said you wanted it. Now, all of a sudden, we put our backs up against it and now we have to impose a backstop on home heat fuel, agriculture, fishery, forestry, offshore and minerals.

In the previous speaker's amble, I guess, talked about helping 1,250 businesses with \$14,000 each. I'll tell you who it's not helping: It's the 530,000 residents of Newfoundland and Labrador that can't afford a carbon tax, simple as that. You're doubling down. You got another sugar tax. Making choices for people – helping people make choices.

Speaker, \$320 for active living. A \$320 rebate on active living, on physical activity. Has anybody seen the prices of registrations and stuff? No, but you're sitting there saying how good this is. I mean to play house league hockey is \$400 and then you still have to buy equipment, still got to get there, you still have to burn gas to there, burning carbon tax. It's not helping the people.

We understand on this side that we are moving, Chair, to a green economy. We do understand that. But it's not like flicking a light switch. That's not how it works. We can't impose it on the people to take money out of their pockets to make sure that this works. That's not how it should work. We're in this House to look out for the 530,000 people.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

J. DWYER: We just passed the largest budget in Newfoundland history.

Anyway, Chair, I can't hear myself think. If the Member on the other side wants to stand up and speak after I sit down, then he's welcome to do.

CHAIR: I encourage the Member to move on with his speech.

J. DWYER: This is interrupting, talking straight at me.

Anyway, the cost of living here in Newfoundland and Labrador is so out of touch for the average person that it's just unbelievable. Then we're just taking more money out of their pockets. It just doesn't make sense.

Another one, we understand we have to reduce the carbon footprint. But when you look at the cost of living and there was also an increase in personal income tax. Instead of improving the economy and getting our people back to work – which I know that's what they want to do in my district because we have a very industrial district in Placentia West - Bellevue and we have a lot of big infrastructure implements. But people want to work. We want to get inside the gates and start utilizing these sunken costs to the benefit of the people of the province.

Anything that we do in here, it can't be for the benefit of a party or benefit of the individuals inside this House. We represent that 530,000 people. Therefore, we should all have a say in that. But when we make a decision, it has to be to the benefit of that 530,000, not a minute few. It needs to help everybody. That's the whole point that I'm trying to make.

We went up and we tried to argue to Ottawa and we believe in Ottawa taking the lead on carbon tax. But like I said before, if it's something that is a good news story, we announce it three and four times, four or five photo ops, all this kind of stuff. But when it's

something that is regressive, oh, that's the federal government, we have no control over that; that's the feds. That's not how it works.

When we say about taking up an argument with Ottawa, I have a feeling that is what the people of Newfoundland and Labrador hired the government to do, to bring their voice to Ottawa. I can't really get into the six Liberal MPs that are not educating the people in Ottawa on how it is to live here in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is very much different, Chair, than it is in the rest of Canada.

When we talk about carbon footprint, we look at these larger centres like Vancouver, Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary, Montreal and stuff like that, they have subway systems and stuff like that, I can understand that. But Ms. Strowbridge out in Arnold's Cove is not going to take the subway to Clarendville to get to her doctor's appointment. She has to drive; she has to be transported to that location. She can't afford a new electric vehicle. She can't afford to retrofit her house from oil to electric.

One per cent of the population of Newfoundland and Labrador picked up on the electric car rebate. Less than one per cent; 1,500 people. So not even the richest people in the province are agreeing with it; they're not transitioning. They haven't jumped out of the gates and said let's do this. I think we kind of started with too lofty of an expectation, to be quite honest, starting with a vehicle. We could have started with something else that would have made more sense.

When you think about how we live our lives here in Newfoundland and Labrador, I don't think it is about trying to ruin the world. I think we're good purveyors of our land here in Newfoundland and Labrador and we utilize it to the benefit of the people and that's what it should be utilized to the benefit of.

But when we cave in on something like carbon tax, one minute we're saying that we want it and the next minute we're saying that it is a federal tax and you're trying to wash your hands of it, then it's time to stand up and be counted. Get your six Liberal cousins that are here in the province, go en masse and tell them July 1 is just not going to work. What a nice anniversary gift to the *Blue Puttees* on July 1; taxing the people that they fought for, makes zero sense.

So what we're trying to do here is we're trying to implement a tax to cut carbon emissions by putting people into poverty. The implementation of this is going to cause people to have to stay home and not drive their cars to job that's going to improve our economy. That's what's going to happen.

I can tell you right now it's happening already. People can't afford milk. We throw away more milk than we buy here in Newfoundland. We can't give it away; just as well to throw it out.

We all say it's about making choices. Well, that works for both sides of the House. You just move a couple of notches down the cooler door, you get a better option. Yeah, so let's tax water. It's bad enough to have a carbon tax, a very, very regressive tax that's not going to really improve the lives of people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

When we delve down on stuff like taxation, it's not the 1 per cent or the top 5 per cent of our society that gets affected. They can absorb the costs somewhat, but it's the people who can't absorb the cost that I'm here to talk about and to let the government know that this is really going to change the lives of a lot of people when it comes to the cost of living. To fight for exemptions in home heat and agriculture, fishery, forestry, offshore, minerals, all that kind of stuff, that's all well and good, but stand the ground and say no, it's not going back on these things and we're not accepting the federal backstop.

That's what we have to do as a province. We have to stand up for the people that we're here to represent, all 530,000 of them. This is not about party stripe. It's not about Ottawa. It's not about Newfoundland and Labrador. It's about all of us working together to find a solution to a real problem and that's the cost of living.

We have to move forward and we have to move upward as we move forward, not move backward and downward. It's not a race to the bottom. Newfoundland and Labrador is rich in natural resources, it's rich in people and it's rich in chutzpah. What we need to do is we need to stand up for ourselves, be counted and let people know in the rest of the country, that yes, we're very unique, due to demographics and geographics. But I'll guarantee you one thing, the amount of travel that we have to do to go from point A to point B in this province is not going to be helped by a carbon tax. I really would like to see this government stand up for the 530,000 people in the province that are really going to be to the detriment of this tax.

Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The Chair is recognizing the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Thank you, Chair.

It's certainly always nice to get up here and support the people of my district, the people who put me here, and talk, especially when anything comes to gorge income tax, talking about a tax act. I'm sure they're interested and they would like their voice put forward with regard to a tax act because tax is not a word that my constituents or anybody around the province likes to hear at any time.

Certainly with the tax act, we've been talking about the carbon tax, of course. We all know climate change is real. We know it's coming. We know it's here. We've seen it time and time again. We've talked about the floods. It's only this year we had Fiona on the Southwest Coast. You can see the devastation that's caused. We can see that our climates are changing, that we need to do stuff to combat that. But does that come with a cost to residents? Does that come with a cost to every day individuals that they've got to pay for a tax to keep them safe?

I don't think that a carbon tax is the right way to be doing that to individuals, to residents, that just because climate change is here and we need to do our bit for carbon, but it doesn't come to a tax for a residents. We all know what tax do. You know how hard it is on the pockets. I know that the minister can say that they're giving it out through sports, they're giving it out through businesses, but that's coming from the individuals that can't afford another tax. They can't afford to do this.

To enforce the tax, we know that the Liberal feds came in with the carbon tax and they said that this is what we're going to do, we're implementing the carbon tax; we're going to have a carbon tax. I think we all saw it here in the House of Assembly, that side all stood up, same as the Third Party all stood up and voted for it – stood up and voted for it. The same as what they did in Ottawa; all the Liberals in Ottawa stood up, same as their cohorts with the NDP in Ottawa, same as the provincial one. They all stood up, all in support of it. So it was federal and provincial Liberals and NDP, all cohorts voted for the carbon tax and was forced upon us.

Now, you don't know if you should have done that or you shouldn't have. If you did it in the beginning, then we wouldn't have to be here today doing what we're doing because we knew in the beginning that the carbon tax wasn't the right way to go. We

know that initial tax on fuels, how that affects the everyday people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

On July 1 another carbon tax is supposed to be coming into effect; 17 cents on diesel, 14 cents on some gasolines. Now, that will affect a lot of people in the province. That will affect the farmers. That will affect the business owners. It will hurt them.

The parts and everything that they have coming in to the province that affects their equipment to get their fields cleared, to help with growing our vegetables, that is certainly going to affect the farmers. How will the farmers get that back? They'll get that back through the grocery stores. They'll get that back through the prices that individuals will have to pay for their fresh vegetables, to put food on the table for the families that they're having trouble right now to put food on the table. This is a fact. You can go searching for whatever you want to search for, but this is a fact that carbon tax is not the ideal tax for individuals right now, because people in this province are paying.

Again, we talk about seniors a lot – home heating fuels. Last year, I think every one of us received calls from seniors; they couldn't afford to heat their homes. It's going to be worse this year. By the time fall comes around, the winter comes around, they've been making choices now – they're certainly going to have to make bigger choices come the fall on whether they heat their homes, whether they have food on the tables. This is going to be devastating to the residents of this province.

Another tax on this is not where we need to be. Because like I said, with regard to the farmers, the cost of getting stuff in to pay for those supporting the programs that they need to get in here, that's not what this is all about.

When you decide what you want to do, if you want to support the carbon tax or don't want to support the carbon tax, this should

have been done. We shouldn't be debating this part of the budget right now. No tax is good for any part of our economy right now. With regard to sports and initiatives, sports are expensive to play. The cost of the goods, whatever they need, protective gear, protective item for sports, that kind of stuff to play in those leagues and registration itself, as my colleague said, it's expensive. So when you put that towards the sports programs and whatnot, it's still expensive. It's coming from the taxpayers' dollars.

Again with a sugar tax, to make people make healthy choices, when the cost of our produce are going up and then people have to make healthy choices because the sugar tax is costing other products to go up like juices, milks, that kind of stuff, then they can't afford to buy those other goods.

So a tax in this sense does not help the people of the province. We need certainly to address those situations. It doesn't work right now. Another tax on products right now doesn't work and we need to certainly pay more attention to that.

You're going to find that on our shelves, because of those taxes, people will not be able to afford to eat this year. They're going to be making hard choices between food. They're going to be making hard choices between keeping warm, and that's not the choices that our residents of Newfoundland and Labrador should be making. They should be living more easily, making better choices. That even helps our health care system. When they're warm, when they're comfortable, when they're eating well, that even keeps people out of our health care system. This runs right down through the line. It's not just because we're doing a tax that we're going to force people to do one thing or we're going to force people to do something else.

All this runs right through the system. When people are having a hard time choosing between food, when they're having a hard time choosing between being warm, that

makes hard choices physically and mentally on themselves and they end up probably even having worse choices and then their health diminishes. So all this runs right down through all our systems and we certainly need to make better choices than what we're doing with regard to taxes. So we're going to see a difference in that in the coming months.

Other than that, Chair, I'll take my seat and I think some Members might have some comments on what we have to say here. I'll take my seat and let somebody else speak.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you.

I'm recognizing the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

S. COADY: Thank you, Chair.

Facts matter – facts matter.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

S. COADY: So I've got to correct the record on a few things that the Member for Exploits just said. Facts matter and I'm not wrong. You're absolutely correct; I am not wrong.

So allow me to say to the Member for Exploits what happened when the carbon tax was introduced back in 2016 – I've already read this into the record; I've already spoken these words, but I'm reminding the Member opposite in 2016, the federal government announced plans to introduce a carbon tax. As a matter of fact, they were elected on that very premise. They spoke about it in the 2015 election. They said that when they came in they were going to introduce carbon tax and they did.

What the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador did, and it was the right thing to do – absolutely the right thing to do and the Member opposite actually agreed it was the right thing to do in a roundabout way – is we

were able to, at that time of implementation, it was coming in – the carbon tax was being imposed. Ontario had the carbon tax imposed. But what we were able to do, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador was able to negotiate an agreement that basically ensured that the impacts to the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador was minimized because the carbon tax was not implemented on home heat fuels. We negotiated that and that agreement was accepted.

That's very important because, up to this point, home heat fuels have been exempt from carbon tax. I know the Member opposite wants that. We all want that in this House. We want carbon tax not to be imposed on home heat. That is why we're repealing the carbon tax today. The agreement that we made with the federal government back in 2016 when they were imposing carbon tax, we were allowed to exempt home heat fuels and we were allowed to exempt agriculture, fishing, forestry, offshore and mineral exploration. All those things were exempt from carbon tax.

Now, last year the federal government came and said we are now making changes to the carbon tax and they are saying that the agreement that we had with them is no longer – I can hear the chirping across the hall. Chair, I know they're frustrated. I know they're frustrated but we are frustrated as well, that now the federal government is imposing the backstop, as of July, and implementing this on home heat. We have said to the federal government, that's not acceptable.

I've read into the record what the Premier has written to the ministers of the Crown of the federal government to say that that is not something that we accept. So in order for us to –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

S. COADY: I'm sorry. Did you want to speak again? Because you're certainly more than welcome to do so. You're more than welcome to do so, but if the Member opposite is going to speak again, please say factual things. Facts matter. Please say facts.

I know he's smiling at me because I can tell you right now facts matter and I'm giving the facts. The facts of the matter are in 2016 we had an agreement with the federal government. The federal government has said that agreement is no longer acceptable to them and they are imposing the backstop. What today's job today is, is to increase the threshold for the health and post-secondary education tax, is to increase – double actually – the Physical Activity Tax Credit and to repeal the carbon tax because we no longer have that carved out that we negotiated with the federal government. Those are the facts.

CHAIR: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. LANE: Thank you, Chair.

I agree with the minister: facts do matter. She is right. The problem is not necessarily with the facts. The problem, I guess, is some of the stuff that's not being said. I think that's some of the issue that people on this side might have. I'm not going to speak for them. They're more than capable of speaking for themselves, but the minister is right.

I can remember at the time when the carbon tax came in and Dwight Ball was the premier, at the time, and it was the made-in-Newfoundland-and-Labrador solution, I think is what he called it at the time. Basically, we were either going to be imposed with this federal backstop or the feds allowed the provincial government of

the day to negotiate a carbon tax agreement for Newfoundland and Labrador.

She is right. That carbon tax agreement would not see carbon tax going on home heating. That was the rationale. While I, and I can speak for myself, and I know Members over here for sure, were totally against carbon tax. Well, I can't say all Members over here, but most of the Members over here, totally against carbon tax, period. I have been crystal clear, it's nothing but a tax grab. It's doing nothing to change anything.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. LANE: It's not going to change a thing. I'm driving as much today as I did last year and the year before that and I'm going to drive again next year. Nothing is changing, that's the reality, other than the fact that I'm having to pay more tax for it. That's the bottom line. Nothing is changing.

Now, the minister is correct, and that's why I begrudgingly, and I emphasize the word, begrudgingly supported that bill to impose the provincial tax because I was given an option: either take this one or this one is going to be imposed on us. One or the other, there's no – if I had my way there would be no carbon tax, I made it clear. But given the fact that I have no choice, it's this one or this one, I'll go along with the government of the day and I will support that one because, as much as I hated all the carbon tax, I just could not bring myself to say we're going to have people who are struggling in Newfoundland and Labrador with their home heat, we're going to have to pay carbon tax on a necessity like home heat.

Now I would argue that a vehicle in the lives of most people is also a necessity. But you can't question that, especially if they have to go to work and everything. But at the end of the day, I wasn't going to have some poor old senior on a pension froze to death because she couldn't afford to put oil in her

furnace because of carbon tax. I thought it was wrong and that's why I went along with it begrudgingly.

The minister is not wrong when she says that. She's also not wrong when she says that we are just simply repealing the tax. She's not wrong there either. All that is factual; I agree with her, facts matter.

But here's another fact that's not being put out there, though. This is the part that kind of gets my goat a little and others, perhaps, on this side of the House. It's that people, everyone in this House, most of our constituents who do have vehicles have been also struggling with the cost of living. Part of that has been at the pumps. Part of that has been at the pumps. Not only are the prices at the pumps impacting you directly when you go to fill up your vehicle, but because of the carbon tax it's also driving up the cost of food, because of transportation and so on: ferries take fuel, transport trucks take fuel, so it's all having a ripple effect and driving up the cost of living. So when the government comes out now and tries to position themselves in a way of, well, this is not our tax, we disagree with this tax and we're standing with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, it comes across as a little disingenuous. That's the problem.

Because at least under the federal backstop – now this is for people in terms of paying at the pump – you will get back a cheque every three months. I don't believe Seamus when he says that you're going to get more money than you pay in. That's a pile of malarkey as far as I'm concerned, but at the end of the day you will get some sort of a cheque, some money back.

Under the old system, which was adopted, the provincial government didn't give people money back. If you were against the carbon tax when the province was collecting the money, why didn't you write out cheques every three months and give it back to the people? You didn't do it. You took the

money; you put it in the general coffers. You said the money was going to be used towards environmental initiatives. That's what you said. We challenged it numerous times. Oh, no, it's going to environmental initiatives.

I can guarantee you, if you take the money that was collected by the provincial government that went into general revenues and you matched that up with any new environmental initiatives, that money wasn't spent. It might have been a portion. Maybe it was 20 per cent of it. I don't know the percentage, but I can guarantee you the lion's share of that money went into general coffers and you spent it accordingly. That's where it becomes disingenuous and hypocritical.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's a fact.

P. LANE: Facts matter and that's also a fact. That's the issue.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. LANE: That is the issue. If we're going to put the facts out there, which I totally agree with, we can't just cherry-pick the facts, we have to put out all the facts.

Government might argue we were in tough financial circumstances – which they were, no doubt – and we chose to keep that money in general revenues because we needed it for other things. At least be honest and say that. But don't pretend, all of a sudden, that you're against the carbon tax because when the money was coming in to the provincial government coffers, you had no problem collecting it and you didn't give it back.

Now the money is going to the feds. You're not getting any of it anymore. It's not going into your bottom line; it's going to the feds. At least they're giving some of it back. But I do still share that same concern that now that poor old senior that we're talking about that was going to be froze to death, that's

what our federal government is doing to those seniors.

I don't believe they're going to get more money back than they're putting in. I really doubt it. We'll see. Shame on the federal government for imposing this tax on seniors in this province, in particular, and low-income people who have to heat their home with oil. Shame on them for doing it.

Shame on our federal Members who are not standing up – at least I'm not hearing them, I'm not hearing a sound. Quiet as a church mouse. Crickets from our federal Members who are not speaking out on this regressive carbon tax and the impact that's going to have this coming winter on seniors in our province.

We should all be outraged by that and we should be lobbying them, putting them on the hot seat. They're supposed to be Newfoundland's representative in Ottawa, not Ottawa's representative in Newfoundland.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. LANE: But that's not the way it is, unfortunately.

I'll support the bill because, obviously, we're going to repeal the tax, so why would I not support that. Unfortunately, seniors are still going to be hit this winter, thanks to the federal government.

I will support the government, once again, begrudgingly, but I will once again say for the record that carbon tax is nothing but a tax grab. It should be abolished, period, end of story.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The Chair is recognizing the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

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

That was some great points by the hon. Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands. I'm going to touch on that a little bit more and go a little bit further.

There's a reason why our federal MPs are not voting against this and not standing up for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, there's a reason for that. I know the reason and I'm going to say it right now. The reason is those federal MPs are making \$180,000 a year, most of their travel paid for. They're not backed into the corner most Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are because, if they were, they would actually stand up.

You put any of those MPs into a corner, like most people are from Buchans, Lamaline, South Brook, all across this Island that can't afford to heat their homes, put food in their fridge and got to stick \$8 worth of toonies and loonies in their car at a time because they can't afford anything else; you put them in the corner like that, I guarantee you they'd vote differently. That's the problem.

Whenever I debate or whenever I try to keep an open mind, I try to reverse the roles and put myself into the person that I'm debating on behalf of. It actually helps because you see different points. I see some points that the Minister of Finance was saying, but if you take an MP and you stick them into a corner, just like most of us are in, most Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are in, I guarantee you they'd vote differently. But they don't have to and that's where we need the real power of a vote next election, I guarantee you.

We need to vote for people from now on that are going to truly represent Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that know the struggles b'ys.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. TIBBS: How can you represent a people that are struggling if you've never struggled before? Our current prime minister, I guarantee you, has never struggled in his entire life, financially. Most MPs are not struggling. Now, some may have seen what the struggle is like in earlier days but a lot of them forget pretty quickly.

So when we talk about now putting on a carbon tax for home heating fuels on a group of people who couldn't afford it before, who could not afford it before to heat their homes to keep their families warm and now we're going to charge them more. Shame on Ottawa for putting that on each province to have to deal with because now we have to deal with this. It was hard enough to deal with it before and now we have to deal with it again.

We've got to try to find a solution to keep those families warm throughout the winter. The solution is not putting on one heater in your house, closing all the doors and staying in that room because that's what people are doing. That's exactly what people are doing. They're going to try to call it behaviour management and that seems to be –

AN HON. MEMBER: Behaviour modification.

C. TIBBS: Behaviour modification, sorry. Yeah, behaviour modification, behaviour management, it's something that the government has been throwing around for quite some time now. Carbon tax is not going to do the job that it's purposed for. It will not do it. It's not going to lessen the carbon footprint in the smaller towns, these smaller rural towns across Newfoundland and Labrador. All you're doing is creating more pressures and stresses on the people that don't need those right now.

Of course, what does that roll over to? The mental illness and the mental health that we're trying to keep the people of Newfoundland and Labrador going. It's

tough, it is, and it's a sin actually. It's a sin that this tax is going to come down now on top of people to heat their homes during the winter.

The Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands just talked about at the pumps and whatnot, people have to get around. Listen, we've talked about it over and over again but it holds true, to put a blanket carbon tax over an entire country, it's absolutely ludicrous. It's not fair and it's not just. We are not on a fair playing field so the rules shouldn't be the same for everybody. If they were on a fair playing field, absolutely.

If there was another way for people from Buchans to get to Grand Falls-Windsor to get the groceries that they need, the necessities they need, then 100 per cent I would love to see an alternate mode of transportation. I would absolutely love to see it, but it's not there. The option isn't there.

So when you impose a carbon tax on somebody in Toronto or Ottawa or Edmonton or Calgary, anywhere else, they have subway stations. They have above ground trains. They have buses. They have Ubers. They have so many different options, but we don't. So why blanket everybody with the exact same rules and regulations when they're not on the same playing field? I think that should come into play, but it's not talked about. That's not talked about up in Ottawa, but, unfortunately, we're going to be the casualties of that here, us and many other rural places across this country, unfortunately.

We talk about groceries being a necessity, so there's no tax on it, of course, and nor should there be. But travel is a necessity as well. We must travel to get to work. We must travel for extracurricular activities.

Vacations: we still live on an island; part of this province is an island, but, unfortunately, that's not taken into play because Marine

Atlantic is now going to boost their tax as well.

It just goes to show that Newfoundland and Labrador, we are going to be paying more and, unfortunately, the people in Ottawa just don't get it. We have supply chain issues, of course, and whether it be in the Big Land or here on the Island, we have supply chain issues. We saw that with Snowmageddon; it shut down the Island for four or five days. It wasn't just the Avalon. We had empty shelves in Grand Falls-Windsor.

So our supply chain is so fragile that a carbon tax imposed on truck drivers, imposed on getting our goods here, you think that's not going to be affected. Of course, it is. We went a year trying to look for different medications in pharmacies. Children's cough syrup – empty. I mean, to not say that it's not going to be harder on Newfoundland and Labrador then some other places in the country is disingenuous. We need to ensure that we know it's going to be very, very tough.

I agree with some of the stuff government are saying, but one thing I don't agree with government are saying is that let's not try to spin this in a positive light; let's just call it what it is. It's a terrible tax for our province and the people who live in our province.

So let's just stop with the spinning of this. It's a terrible tax. Whether you're pushed into a corner to vote for it, for that backstop, whatever, but let's not spin it the way it's supposed to be. There's no Newfoundlander and Labradorian going to have more money in their pocket at the end of the day, it's just not going to happen. That's one thing that should come up in these conversations as well.

A couple of people have spoke about it before: Muskrat Falls. The Minister of Justice and Public Safety made it quite clear, last week or the week before, that it's the Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that are paying for it. That's our carbon tax. We

have a huge hydro project that we are paying for, that we are proud of or we will be proud of. It not just helps Newfoundland and Labrador, that project helps a lot of Eastern Canada. That project, if brought into the Loop one day, it's going to help a lot of Eastern Canada. It is going to help this country.

In a province of only 530,000 people, less than half the city of Edmonton, then I'm sure Ottawa should be able to look at us and say, do you know what? You guys are doing an amazing thing for this country. That's your carbon tax. That's what you have to pay for. That's what I'm talking about when I talk about a level playing field because it's not. It's completely not and we can do much better than this.

The resources in our province – Marathon Gold had to reconfigure all of their costs coming up for the project they have currently going on. By the way, they haven't made a nickel yet, but they're still going hard; they're still giving out the community benefits agreements and there are still lots of money to donations for different charities in my area but they haven't made a nickel yet. Their costs up, up, up, up – going up and it is. Unfortunately, it is.

So is that going to stop new businesses from coming into the province? I believe it will. It's hard enough to get business now. It is. I'm quite thankful for the resources but they come to an island and the added costs that we have here, it's going to be tough. All that I'm saying, my point here is that it's not a level playing field. It's completely not, nor should every province be treated like a level playing field, or city or rural area should be treated the exact same way. It's unjustified.

I'm not going to lecture our current provincial government about it, only them, because it's our federal government as well. Again, you take our current prime minister and you stick him into a corner where he can't afford to do the things he's doing, where he can't afford to feed his family, heat

his house, drive his kid to hockey and pay for his kids' hockey registration, I guarantee you those attitudes will change in a hurry. But until we get people out there who can truly understand the struggles that are happening here in Newfoundland and Labrador because our current six MPs, they do not. They do not, apparently. Until we get people up there who truly understand the struggles, we're going to have to put up with stuff like this from Ottawa for a very long time.

Thank you, Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you.

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

P. PARSONS: Thank you Chair.

It's always a privilege to stand in our space here – of course, I represent the strong District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave and it's my first time actually speaking to this particular money bill. I just want to get up in the spirit of healthy, fulsome debate and we're talking about Ottawa and the treatment of Ottawa to the provinces, in particular Newfoundland and Labrador. But I just want to remind the hon. Member across who just made some points about the current prime minister. I just want to take us back to a previous prime minister, Stephen Harper, who we all remember.

I'll never forget; I was actually a journalist at the time, Chair, and we talk about what's good for Newfoundland and Labrador. I remember at the time that this particular prime minister took away our Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre as a political punishment that happened here in this province. I see the Members over there chirping now and they're putting expressions on their face, but it's true.

It was only two provinces in Canada that we're slated to lose their maritime rescue sub-centres, which was Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as Quebec. At the time Quebec didn't end up losing theirs, but we certainly did and it was a political punishment. I remember the rallies on the waterfront. All parties came together. I mean, what better way to hit Newfoundland and Labrador where it hurts than take away our Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre.

So we want to talk about the cold comfort and the cold treatment from Ottawa, but let's just remind the Members in the not-too-distant past what we had to endure here. I will say for the record that since the Liberal government in Ottawa took office, this is the most financial support that we have ever seen in Newfoundland and Labrador from Ottawa.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. PARSONS: Who can argue any different? Look no further than rate mitigation. I asked the hon. Members across the way just back in 2014, 2015 when the infamous Bill 29 was brought in to block information to the media, to members of the public and even to Members of this hon. House of Assembly, to pass what we know as the Muskrat Falls. We know that we're dealing with it; our ratepayers are dealing with it.

I will also remember it was this Premier that went to Ottawa, that called Ottawa, that's on the phone with Ottawa every other day and look what was secured with rate mitigation to protect the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. PARSONS: Talk about (inaudible). But it is true. So imagine if the rate mitigation did not come through from Ottawa for the people of this province. Imagine if this Premier could not secure that. Where would we be?

We know what we're seeing with the cost of living and it's not just unique to Newfoundland and Labrador. Everybody is hurting. I hear from my constituents in Harbour Grace - Port de Grave. We all hear it, all 40 districts here in this province, about the cost of living. We know that much of it is beyond our control. But I would like just to set the record straight because just if you get up and people just tuning in, listening to some of the Members across the way just spewing the propaganda, eliminating facts, they would be under the misconception that it's this government that's bringing in a carbon tax.

Again, I just want to set the record straight: This Premier, as well as this side of the House, have been to Ottawa to argue against the carbon tax and we know that. So I just want to set the record straight for the people at home or tuning in that we are not in agreement with a carbon tax on the people of this province or any other province across Canada.

Facts do matter and, again, rate mitigation. I mean, God, just look how far off we would be or how worse off, rather, we would be in this time in this climate of cost of living. Just setting the record straight about – just make sure that the Members across the way are putting forth the facts – the facts. That's it, Chair, I'll take my seat and I won't belabor this debate further.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you.

I recognize the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I watched a movie last night in my hotel room; it was called *Hot Tub Time Machine* and it was about the Liberals and how they could always go back in time to every

previous administration and find a solution. By God, they're in it right now, just imagine.

AN HON. MEMBER: You got to know your history.

L. PARROTT: Listen, I know my history pretty well. As a matter of fact, I'll tell you that I worked in search and rescue when JRCC was cut and I understand fully how it affected this province. If you want to have that debate with me, come on over, because I know more about search and rescue than you ever will know. Come on over.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Agreement: a negotiated and typically legal binding arrangement between parties as to a course of action. That is what we had in carbon tax. I'm not saying that our previous agreement was good, but I can tell you what, it was much better than what we have right now.

Now, I'm not going to debate the fact that we're repealing what our agreement was in order not to pay twice. I get that; the minister's not wrong when she says that. It is a fact. But here's the other fact, every Member in this House, collaboratively, along with the provincial Members, should be standing on their desk jumping up and down saying that what's happening in this province with this new carbon tax is not fit, not fair, won't work and we can't have it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Newfoundland is not the same as every other province, and it's about time that the federal government understood that. If you go to rural Newfoundland, you will quickly understand how this carbon tax is going to affect them simply with home heating fuel.

Now, I'm not going to argue the fact that we're trying to get heat pumps into houses, but we've debated that in this House. We

understand that there are lots of people who cannot get a heat pump based on the electrical systems they have in their houses, 100-amp systems. They can't afford to do it; it's just simply a fact.

Now, we're going to let them implement carbon tax on rural Newfoundland. This is a sin tax, make no mistake about it. If you don't believe the fact that it's a sin tax, think of this. Last year on *Open Line* the Minister of Immigration said the intention of the federal government is to increase the price of fuels, that is how, just like a sin tax, you know, that is how you dissuade people from burning fuel and from crediting carving emissions. That is the federal government's carbon strategy. That's a formal federal minister's quote and he thinks it's okay. Think about that.

We sit here and we've listened all of this session about the provincial government saying you guys are going to vote against the budget. Not once have I heard anyone say: we voted for the carbon tax. Well, you did. You all did last year. You all thought it was great because it was a made-right-here solution.

Now, all of a sudden, the made-right-here solution is apparently being taken away and we don't hear a word. It's okay to say oh, the Premier wrote a letter, or the Premier went up and he talked, but do you know what? We should be offering solutions instead of saying we wrote letters. We should be saying let's work together. Let's go together. Let's fight together.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Let's lobby the federal MPs. We're not saying that. It's not being said and it should be said. It should be said on a regular basis. If you want collaboration, you have to offer it up. At the end of the day, this carbon tax is going to hurt people in this province in a way that no other tax will.

When the minister got out of her hot tub time machine, she talked about the good things that they've done. They never mentioned anything about the tax that was imposed on Marine Atlantic; never mentioned the sugar tax; never mentioned a lot of stuff.

Now, we can talk about the feds or the provincial taxes. We can take our time machine and go back to 2015 and talk about the 320 increases that were put in, I think it was 321 or something – facts. Wow. We forget about those facts.

Some of them have been –

S. COADY: (Inaudible) Muskrat Falls.

L. PARROTT: Oh, she wants to talk about Muskrat Falls.

So carbon tax: carbon tax was implemented to build a low-carbon economy. Think about that. Part of a low-carbon economy would be what? Hydroelectric facilities, just imagine.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: It's the cost of doing business.

Now, I'll remind you guys of something. You guys had a plan to put a prison in: \$250 million. It's gone to \$500 million. Do you know what you called it? Inflation. But when Muskrat Falls doubles over eight years because of your failure to deliver, your inability to build it –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: – it got nothing to do with inflation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: You cannot have it both ways.

Just because something doubles for you guys, it's inflation. Come on, you have to make your mind up. Which side are you talking out of today? Oh, I know.

Listen, the bottom line with Muskrat Falls is it's a key to a green economy. It costs us a fortune. It costs us a fortune. It was mismanaged. There were missed steps. We should learn from that. Yes, it cost us money, but the reality of it is we can't brag about what it's going to do for our green economy in one breath and the next breath say how terrible it is. We either want it or we don't.

Here you guys are talking about Gull Island and an Atlantic Loop. I have an idea, Quebec got cap and trade for carbon tax. Quebec gets cap and trade. They are under a totally different scheme than we are: 23 per cent per ton by 2030; we're going to be paying 30-something. We're not even talking about that. We're going to negotiate an Atlantic Loop with the federal government and with Quebec and we should be holding that as leverage. We should be saying, do you know what? This carbon tax don't work. You're not getting Muskrat Falls. You're not getting Gull Island. You're not penalizing us for the things that we're doing right. But that's what we're not saying, I can guarantee you that. We should be saying that.

There are ways for us to move ahead, instead we find ways to step back, bow down, cow tail, I don't know maybe it's because it's your cousins, I don't know. I have no idea, but it does not make sense. At the end of the day, if you talk to anyone in rural Newfoundland who doesn't have public transit, who pays extra money to get stuff in; if you talk to the fisher people; if you talk to the Coast of Labrador, goods being shipped up; if you talk to Labrador West; if you talk to anywhere where there are thermal generation plants, we can't have those two arguments. At the end of the day, we are in a situation where this is not good.

Now, again, I'll go back, our Finance Minister is not wrong. There are good parts to this bill, absolutely, and they are not imposing a carbon tax. The carbon tax is being imposed by the federal government. But we need to fight harder against the federal government.

I can tell you, I don't think there's one person in this House that wouldn't stand with the Liberals to fight against the federal government on this carbon tax and implementation on home heating fuel. People can't afford it.

It's not just a rural tax. The people who live in the urban Newfoundland all have family. We all come from rural Newfoundland at some point. We all know how it affects those people, we represent them. We go into our ridings, we see how this affects infrastructure for roads. We see how it affects everything, but we don't say a word. We need to find a way certainly to minimize the impacts of what's going to happen here.

I said the last time I spoke about this carbon tax bill: talk about heat pumps. The lowest income people in this province are most likely burning oil. Certainly the ones that live in Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. I've talked to the minister about it. They've done some pilot projects, but they haven't gone out around the bay and done the pilot projects. I think they need to. We need to look at a way to do those things. Instead, we just sit here, we spin our wheels and we argue back and forth about the same thing.

Mr. Chair, this carbon tax is not going to serve anyone in this province at all. The previous carbon tax, as bad as it was, was a much better option than this is. Now when you take home heating fuel and you put it into the equation, my God, rural Newfoundland will either relocate – it's almost as if we're trying to force rural Newfoundland to relocate. They can't afford to stay where they are. They can't afford to drive back and forth.

When we talk about tax, the one thing we don't talk about is the fact that if you live in rural Newfoundland, you drive 100 or 150 kilometres to get your groceries. You're already paying carbon tax on your fuel. Then you go home and you pay carbon tax to heat your house.

If you can't afford your fuel, you're driving all that way to go to a mall and walk around and stay warm and do things. It's really a regressive tax. No different, like I said, than the Minister of Immigration said, he himself, called it a sin tax. He said just like a sin tax. His words, not mine. We shouldn't be okay with it.

Anyway, on that note, Mr. Chair, I'll take my seat.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you.

I'm recognizing the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just wanted to stand up and address some of the comments made by some of my colleagues across the way, and support my colleagues on this side of the House that deal in the realm of facts. I think I would like to send kudos to the MHA for Topsail - Paradise because he always uses the line of facts matter. I appreciate that. At least someone on that side actually believes that facts do matter.

I don't have to shy away from any words I've said in this House of Assembly at any time. *Hansard* will show the record of what I've said. We did unequivocally support the carbon tax that was a made-here-in-Newfoundland approach last year. No doubt. I'm not going to stand here and say I didn't. I spoke to it many times because it was something that we could support based on what the exemptions were. That's changed.

Fast-forward a year from that and we're in a situation where I think the Member from Terra Nova highlighted that was better than what it is today. That's why we sent letters to the federal government on September 2, the 2nd again, the 9th, the 16th and the 3rd. Numerous phone calls, numerous lobbying efforts to try to get the federal government to move and leave our Newfoundland-and-Labrador approach in place because we think that it's much better for the people.

The Supreme Court of Canada has determined that the federal government has the ability, let the blame lie exactly where it should, at the feet of the federal government. They've established this, not the provincial governments, not Newfoundland and Labrador. So it's at the feet where it should lie with the federal government. They made the decision. The Supreme Court of Canada supported that decision and that ability for them to force that on the people of the country, not just here. So from my standpoint, that's why I said what I said last year, that's why I'm standing up here and very happy to repeal the carbon tax based on this year.

The changes are not in the best interest. I would tend to agree with many of the colleagues that have spoke earlier that said the costs have risen. The measure that the carbon tax was trying to achieve is already being achieved by the global pressures in the marketplace. That's why we were talking to Minister Guilbeault, as well as the prime minister, to pause on the carbon tax. That's what we fought for, that's what we will continue to fight for.

But let there be no mistake that, as a government, we are firmly fighting this approach to ensure that there was a Newfoundland-and-Labrador approach. We walked away from the table in 2016-2017 when there was negotiations about carbon tax to get the made-in-Newfoundland approach. I know Members opposite that sat on this side understood that very well. Members on this side understood why we

did that and I would hope everyone on that side still do.

It was important to us to get those exemptions from home heating oil. That is why it is such a big, important factor for us in our change to the new program that we're putting in place for oil to electric. That program is going to address some of the concerns raised by hon. Members across the way that deal with the most vulnerable in our community that may not be able to afford to have that upfront cost of upgrading the electrical panels, changing out to electric furnaces or changing out to mini-splits or full change out for the systems.

They may not be able to afford those changes so that's why the program has changed into allowing us to pay that to suppliers, giving a much more generous to those that require it the most – the most vulnerable, the lowest income level – as well as the highest level of technology change. So we're going to continue to try to push the envelope on that.

I know there are many people on the other side that throw things like, why are we moving with electric vehicles. Every jurisdiction in the world is moving in this direction. Every jurisdiction in the world is moving this direction. We can say that it is only 1 per cent but 1 per cent made that choice this past year. There is going to be much more over the next couple of years as infrastructure catches up and as supply chains catch up. The prices of electric vehicles are coming down every day to better match the cost of internal combustion engines. That's what's happening. We're not doing that; the marketplace is doing it. Those are things we're going to continue to focus on and we're going to continue to do those things.

I'm never going to sit in my seat and shy away from when someone asks me to stand up to talk about what I believe. I believe that it is very important that we wrestle with carbon tax; wrestle with the carbon that

we're creating in this society. I think everyone in this House understands how important that is. I think the hon. Member for Exploits said he believes in carbon tax. We got to do something about it. That's what we're doing.

I don't necessarily agree with everything that we have to do but every one of us has to pick up and do a little bit more – every one of us, because we're going to see what is happening in the southwest coast of our province happen more often and more devastating. We don't want that. We have coastal communities in this province. We want to make sure to protect our societies and the best way to do that is make all the changes we can easier.

Nobody wants to put extra cost on people. That is not what anybody wants to do in this House, on both sides, but it is important that we got to wrestle with that because the costs are going to have to be paid, whether it is paid through fuel or reducing fuel, which is what our approach is. Putting money in the hands of people to make those changes so there's less carbon footprint there.

I could go on and on. I'm not going to today because I think there are other people who may want to stand up and speak. But I do want to say anytime you have any questions about programs that we're doing in the Department of Environment, please feel free to reach out for your constituents and for you as well.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: I'm recognizing the Member for Torngat Mountains

L. EVANS: Thank you, Chair.

Just going to speak briefly on the bill, Bill 38 and for people out there who are just tuning

in, one of the important reasons why we have to introduce this bill is if we don't, there will be double taxation. So people in the province will be paying the carbon tax twice.

Also, there's a Physical Activity Tax Credit. The Minister of Finance spoke about it, and with the intent of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians becoming more healthy and physically fit. I agree with that totally. She talked about improves to expanding the credit so people can claim now up to \$2,000 and get a refund; I think it's for a family up to \$348, something like that. That's really important. We need to take more initiatives to increase things that will actually improve the physical fitness and overall health of people in the province. So I have no problem with that.

Also, I will make note that there are a lot of barriers to people in rural Newfoundland, not just in my District of Torngat Mountains, for accessing this Physical Activity Tax. For us a lot of times we don't have access to gym memberships. We don't have the equipment in our communities to be able to exercise for people. Like if you live in St. John's or in some community, more times than not you can buy physical equipment, like a treadmill; but for us to buy a treadmill, if they'll actually ship to my district, we pay more than the maximum \$348 in just shipping for a treadmill.

That's not including the cost and if we have to buy the treadmill in Goose Bay, we'll probably almost pay twice as much as we would pay most of the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. So it's important to put things into context, and that's the reason I keep advocating for shipping, for food.

Now, just looking at the carbon tax. A lot of banter going back and forth here about the carbon tax and why it's important to have a carbon tax. The carbon tax is a government solution to helping reduce climate change or slow climate change. There are a lot of people who talks about is climate change

real or not real. I remember, as a young university student, actually dealing with the potential of climate change, because even back then, many, many generations ago, when I was in university, we knew that increasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere was going to result in climate change.

Then we look at the last 10 years, the last 15 years, we saw a drastic changes that made the facts true. That people could actually see the facts and believe it.

Now just looking at my time, I want to maximize the use of my time. So climate change, we talk about global warming, greenhouse effect, but most of it we know is about the carbon dioxide release into the atmosphere. We see in my district and we see in other parts of our province and even across Canada, like the fires in Alberta; we see the floods across the world; insect and animal invasion. That's all a result of climate change.

In my district, the ice is freezing later so it impacts our ability to travel, to hunt, to fish, to gather. Also, we lose the ice more quickly in the spring. So, for us, being able to travel, being able to hunt and fish is really, really impacting the people in my district and it's really impacting our health. It's also impacting our physical fitness because what ends up happening is nutritious food is a lot of times priced out of the reach of people. I talk about that a lot in the House. So the intent of the Physical Activity Tax is good. But in actual fact, in my district, we're not benefiting very much.

So how do I feel? How do I feel about a carbon tax? I'm a biologist by profession. I worked in the environment for most of my adult life, so how do I feel about a carbon tax? I'm sitting over here with the Third Party. Everyone wants to point out how the Third Party supports the carbon tax, is trying to get something done about climate change. So how do I feel about it? I actually stood up in the House of Assembly and

asked for the tax to be taken off the stove oil. So that sounds like it's making me a hypocrite.

But, in actual fact, in my district we have to look at what are our options. This government had 20 years to prepare. Canada had more than that to prepare, to change the technology, to give us options. So when we go to the gas station to fill up our jerry cans to go out in a speedboat in my district, we don't have an option. There's no electric option; there's no renewable energy option. For us, if we want to go out and get fish, seals or birds to offset the high cost of food in the stores, we have to go to the pump. We actually have to pay the taxes.

I want to talk a little bit about the reality in my district. I had better talk about it because I am going to run out of time. I asked for tax to come off the home heating fuel, the stove oil. In my district, right now, we're paying \$2.0863 a litre. That's 208.63 cents a litre. In St. John's, here, they don't understand. How can anyone understand when they're being charged \$1.158? I'll tell you what the difference is. The difference in what we pay between here and St. John's is 92.76 cents a litre. So 92 cents a litre. Actually, it's 93 cents a litre.

If you want to look at the tanks outside the house, the 1,000-litre tanks for stove oil, for people who have actually got furnaces. There's a huge incentive now for you to switch over to electricity. That 1,000-litre tank – here in St. John's, in actual fact, when you fill it up, you will pay \$927.60 less than people in my district. The most vulnerable – \$927.60 less a tank.

Looking at the Northern Peninsula on the Island, because I always talk about Labrador being treated differently than the Island. On the Northern Peninsula if they fill up that 1,000-litre tank, that red tank outside the house, they're going to pay \$862.26 less than somebody in Nain or Hopedale in my district.

Now, the huge initiative to switch over to electricity – how can we switch to electricity? Well, first off, we're still going to be contributing to the carbon tax because our diesel generating stations that actually powers the electricity that we use in our district is fuelled by diesel. So there's no savings to the environment, yet we're paying these huge costs.

Really, the biggest thing for me is our seniors who can't haul wood, people with disabilities or people who don't have the physical ability, the manpower, to haul wood are stuck paying for this stove oil because we can't use electricity. Nineteen cents a kilowatt hour – now, what about hauling wood? We pay \$2.063 cents a litre in my district for gasoline. That's how we haul our wood. That's how we hunt. That's how we fish. Right? So what's the difference? Now, for somebody in St. John's to fill up their tank, they're going to complain about it when they go in to pay the money. If you're in my district, you'd have to pay an extra \$23.28. So, for me, it's we are being harmed over and over and over again. We want to talk about the carbon tax, in actual fact, none of it is helping people in my district.

So, Chair, I'm going to sit down now.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The Chair is recognizing the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: Thank you.

Chair, first of all payroll tax, exemption increase, nice gesture but still doesn't address the long-term vision to help businesses and workers move to a living wage. Physical Activity Tax Credit certainly works for those who can already afford to have these memberships and engage in these sporting activities. But I do want to talk a little bit about the carbon tax, since this seems to be the bait that preoccupies this debate, the issue.

Certainly from our point of view, when it comes to home heating, yes, it's a significant problem for those who heat their homes with oil. But also, and maybe this is where we need to be going, the programs that are out there need to be a little bit more affordable, a lot more affordable. It works, a lot of them, if you've got the money to make those changes but it's got to be a little bit more affordable for those who are on fixed incomes.

However, I do want to interject with regard to the carbon tax and three things in particular. That the carbon tax is not necessarily the culprit or the boogiemán that it has been made out to be here. There are other factors that are contributing to the lack of affordability, which I haven't heard the outrage over, namely the record profits of oil companies that have been driving it up. I've actually heard from my colleagues here, certainly maybe a little bit of an NDP approach, an acknowledgement that it comes down to income or the lack of income that affects affordability, which is why we promoted such things as a livable minimum wage and guaranteed basic income.

Finally, while there's an acknowledgement that climate change is real, everyone knows it's real, acknowledging it and platitudes will not solve the very real consequences and costs that will come our way. I would submit that it will affect and cost those who are most vulnerable. They will be the ones that will suffer the most.

Now, in his article, "Ten reasons we can't blame the carbon tax for inflation" – this is by Jim Stanford, a very well respected and noted economist, 10 reasons. I'll just quickly go through them.

The surge in inflation since the pandemic has been experienced across almost all industrial countries, whether they have carbon pricing or not. The US doesn't have a carbon tax. It experienced higher inflation than Canada. Japan and Korea both have

carbon taxes, and their inflation has been even lower than Canada's.

Two, increases in the carbon tax have been gradual, and started long before recent inflation that's wreaking havoc on a lot of people. It's decelerating rapidly – even as a larger \$15-carbon tax increase is absorbed. The Bank of Canada expects inflation over the coming 12 months to fall back within its target range. In short, there is no visible correlation at all between carbon tax increases and the rate of inflation.

The impact of the carbon tax on final prices is small, even on fossil fuel products. At current average gasoline prices at \$1.50 per litre, that's a 2 per cent increase. A \$15-carbon tax increase translates into a direct 0.08 per cent increase in overall consumer prices. That is, less than one-tenth of 1 percent.

In the year ending in June 2022, when inflation peaked in Canada, the price of gasoline increased by 75 cents per litre. So that increase was almost 40 times larger than can be explained by the change in the carbon tax in that time. Gasoline prices have come back down, even as the carbon tax increased.

Clearly, it is other fluctuations in energy markets, not the carbon tax, that have dominated energy price changes, and the overall inflation rate. That's number five. Here is where we need to consider this: Increased fossil fuel prices by 30 times as much as the \$10 carbon price increase in the same period.

What happened? Record profits, greedflation – not only by oil companies, but also by grocery chains. Galen Weston stepped down because he was a distraction from their corporate profits. But not once have I heard outrage expressed at the record profits and how that is impacting our seniors, our people on fixed incomes, the people who drive.

Let's take a look at the real reason; the ones who I guess are supporting the campaigns. That's what this comes down to. Let's talk about how we resolve that.

In February, the Bank of Canada reported to the House of Commons: "... that the \$15 per tonne annual increases in the carbon tax raise the average economy-wide price level by 0.1 percentage points. That can hardly be measured"

"The whole point of the carbon tax is to stimulate economic adjustments aimed at energy conservation, investment in non-polluting energy systems" Changes are already happening.

Now, any vehicle we drive, just about all of them have powered windows. At one time, they were a luxury item. Prices came down. That's what happens as the technology expands. It happens.

The price of electricity is coming down. The price of electric vehicles is coming down. If we're talking about affordability, I would suggest that there are many people who could not afford a gas-powered internal combustion engine even before the prices went up. It was out of their price range. A lot of seniors gave up driving for a lot of reasons. Affordability is one; nothing to do with the carbon tax. A lot of people rely on an inadequate public active transit system, which we have failed to create because it has not been a priority if we want to talk about making it affordable.

"Once we consider the direct and indirect impacts on prices, the net effect of the carbon tax on the overall price level could be negative" Certainly that's the result of a study by Oxford Academia entitled the *Journal of the European Economic Association*. They did a study basically of Europe and Canada and found that certainly in Canada it was slightly deflationary; stimulus investment that's being provided by the carbon tax.

Have habits changed? I've driven a lot less and part of it is because if I'm going to preach it, I'm going to act it, if I can. So that means biking, taking the bus, walking where I can. That's not for everyone, but I will tell you that if we want to make it affordable for seniors, for people that can't afford a car to begin with, let's start looking at where we need to put the investments.

Basically, here is the thing: "Most of the revenue from carbon pricing regimes in various provinces is rebated back to Canadian households" mostly to those with lower incomes. I tell you the story again of the individual who lives in a small cottage, about 500 square feet, does not heat the place with oil, does not drive and will receive four quarterly payments, Chair, of \$163, roughly \$652. I would say this person is going to be in money.

Here is the thing that bothers me the most, simply acknowledging climate change is real will not stave off the inevitable cost and tragedy that will await for us. I would argue that many of the people that are going to pay the price because of this cost of inaction will be negatively affected more so than they will be by the carbon tax.

We want to look at seniors; let's talk about affordability, Chair. Pharmacare, indexing of pensions and wages, livable wages, rent control for seniors whose incomes are fixed, dental coverage; if we want to talk about making like affordable for seniors and for those on fixed incomes, those are some real ideas – a liveable minimum wage.

It has been acknowledged that MPs, and I would suggest people in this House of Assembly, are not worrying because the income is sufficient. If we want to address affordability issues, let's take a look at the income which people are forced to live on. Let's talk about affordable housing. Let's talk about transportation and ways in which we can make life affordable.

In the meantime, yes, let's make sure that we're not punishing those seniors who are forced to use oil to heat their homes, but let's find a way to help them in the long run as well.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report progress on Bill 38.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

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

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

B. WARR: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and

have directed him to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

When shall the report be received?

J. HOGAN: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the Committee ask leave to sit again?

J. HOGAN: Tomorrow.

SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, report received and adopted. Committee ordered to sit again on tomorrow.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Motion 1.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

AN HON. MEMBER: Division.

SPEAKER: Division has been called.

Call in the Members.

Division

SPEAKER: Are all Members ready?

Are the House Leaders ready?

All those in favour of the motion, please rise.

CLERK: Andrew Furey, John Hogan, Lisa Dempster, John Haggie, Bernard Davis, Tom Osborne, Siobhan Coady, Pam Parsons, Elvis Loveless, Krista Lynn Howell, Andrew Parsons, Steve Crocker, Sarah Stoodley, Derrick Bragg, John Abbott, Brian Warr, Sherry Gambin-Walsh, Scott Reid, Lucy Stoyles, Eddie Joyce, Paul Lane.

SPEAKER: All those against the motion, please rise.

CLERK: David Brazil, Barry Petten, Helen Conway Ottenheimer, Paul Dinn, Lloyd Parrott, Tony Wakeham, Jeff Dwyer –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

CLERK: – Pleaman Forsey, Loyola O'Driscoll, Craig Pardy, Joedy Wall –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

CLERK: – Chris Tibbs, James Dinn, Jordan Brown, Lela Evans.

Speaker, the ayes: 21; the nays: 15.

SPEAKER: I declare the motion as passed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 2.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that this House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply to consider certain resolutions for granting of Supply to His Majesty, Bill 26.

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Speaker.

I received a message from Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

SPEAKER: All rise.

Dated the 2nd day of May 2023:

As Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, I transmit Estimates of sums required for the public service of the province for the year ending 31 March 2024, by the way of further Supply, and in accordance with the provisions of sections 54 and 90 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, I recommend these Estimates to the House of Assembly.

Sgd.: _____
Lieutenant-Governor

Please be seated.

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member of the House of Assembly for Placentia - St. Mary's, that the message be referred to the Committee of Supply.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Warr): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 26, An Act for Granting to His Majesty Certain Sums of Money for Defraying Certain Expenses of the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2024 and for Other Purposes Relating to the Public Service.

Resolution

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

"That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to His Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2024 the sum of \$5,772,561,200."

CHAIR: Shall the resolution carry?

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Chair.

The *Supply Act, 2023* is the main supply and it's introduced following the completion of the budget debate. The requirement is to

introduce debate and pass a main Supply bill to cover government expenditures during the fiscal year. It's a requirement of the *Constitution Act, 1867* and the *Financial Administration Act*. Approval of this bill will ensure funds are available to meet government expenditures during the '23-'24 fiscal year and provide sufficient legislative authority for government to meet its financial obligations. The main Supply bill is a routine and administrative measure.

But I want to take a moment to thank Members of this House of Assembly for their scrutiny, their debate, their review, their support, their late hours and their hard work. I also want to recognize and thank all public employees who have been engaged in this very intense process and for their efforts and for their involvement and for their insurance that the people of the province have a budget that will work on their behalf.

I want to specifically and especially thank the hard-working professionals in the Department of Finance for their skill, their knowledge, their hard work, their extra efforts and, most of all, for their professionalism. We are very, very blessed in this province to have exceptional public employees.

I want to thank them on behalf of the Legislature, on behalf of the people of the province and thank this House for their efforts in ensuring that we have a budget for '23-'24. I think it's a good one for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

A bill, "An Act for Granting to His Majesty Certain Sums of Money for Defraying Certain Expenses of the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2024 and for Other Purposes Relating to the Public Service." (Bill 26)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 4 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 4 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 4 carried.

CLERK: The Schedule.

CHAIR: Shall the Schedule carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, Schedule carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: WHEREAS it appears that the sums mentioned are required to defray certain expenses of the public service of Newfoundland and Labrador for the financial year ending March 31, 2024 and for other purposes relating to the public service.

CHAIR: Shall the preamble carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, preamble carried.

CLERK: An Act for Granting to His Majesty Certain Sums of Money for Defraying Certain Expenses of the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2024 and for Other Purposes Relating to the Public Service.

CHAIR: Shall the long title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, long title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the resolution and Bill 26 carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

S. COADY: Chair, I move, seconded by the Member for St. George's - Humber, that the total contained in the Estimates in the amount of \$8,746,723,900 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year be carried, and I further move that the Committee report that they have adopted a resolution and a bill consequent thereto.

CHAIR: The motion is that the total contained in the Estimates in the amount of \$8,746,723,900 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year be carried and that the Committee report that they have adopted a resolution and a bill consequent thereto.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

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

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

B. WARR: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have passed the amount of \$8,746,723,900 contained in the Estimates of Supply for the 2023-2024 fiscal year and have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

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

When shall the report be received?

S. COADY: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that the resolution be now read a first time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

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

“That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to His Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2024 the sum of \$5,772,561,200.”

On motion, resolution read a first time.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that the resolution be now read a second time.

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

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

The motion is carried.

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

“That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to His Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2024 the sum of \$5,772,561,200.”

On motion, resolution read a second time.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, for leave to introduce the Supply Bill, Bill 26 and I

further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce Bill 26, the Supply Bill, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

Motion, that the hon. Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, “An Act for Granting to His Majesty Certain Sums of Money for Defraying Certain Expenses of the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2024 and for Other Purposes Relating to the Public Service,” carried.
(Bill 26)

CLERK: A bill, An Act for Granting to His Majesty Certain Sums of Money for Defraying Certain Expenses of the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2024 and for Other Purposes Relating to the Public Service. (Bill 26)

On motion, Bill 26 read a first time.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that the Supply Bill be now read a second time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act for Granting to His Majesty Certain Sums of Money for Defraying Certain Expenses of the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2024 and for Other Purposes Relating to the Public Service. (Bill 26)

On motion, Bill 26 read a second time.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that the Supply Bill be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

The motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act for Granting to His Majesty Certain Sums of Money for Defraying Certain Expenses of the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2024 and for Other Purposes Relating to the Public Service. (Bill 26)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act for Granting to His Majesty Certain Sums of Money for

Defraying Certain Expenses of the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2024 and for Other Purposes Relating to the Public Service," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 26)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I move that this House do now resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 38.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Warr): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 38, An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act and An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, 2000.

A bill, "An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act and An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, 2000." (Bill 38)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair is recognizing the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Chair.

I wasn't going to speak on this today but there was a certain speech in this House this morning that made me stand up and speak on this. I agree that I will reluctantly vote for it, same as my colleague from Mount Pearl - Southlands.

The people I get calls from are mostly women, low income, or seniors living alone; mainly women living alone that either their spouse passed away or some other reason. When I heard the Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality stand up this morning and she got on about Stephen Harper. The Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality not once in her speech mentioned the hardship of the women in this province with this carbon tax, so I'm forced to stand up and defend those people.

It is just shameful. It is just shameful how to Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality would not mention the hardship that the women, the people, the widowers in this province are going through. But she decided to take a political hack to try to embarrass everybody in this House. It's just shameful. I just can't stand for it.

You want to bring up Stephen Harper, so I'll just give what the minister didn't speak about. Does carbon tax help the environment? The government website: It creates a financial incentive for people and businesses not to pollute.

Here is the question: If you have a senior, a widower on fixed income, she now has a carbon tax on her heating oil, what does she do? Do you know what her incentive is? Get cold; put on an extra shirt; pay for oil; don't get medication; don't get enough food. And you have the minister standing up and not even speaking about those people.

I bet you, Mr. Chair, you mark my words, I doubt if there are not going to be two, maybe three, on that opposite side standing up now hammering on the Opposition and talking about Stephen Harper back 10, 15 years ago. How many of them are going to be running for the federal Trudeau government? How many of them are going to be out knocking on doors on the federal Trudeau government? They're talking about it is not us; we don't support it. Let's see how much they're going to go out and support their federal colleagues. Let's go see it. It is shameful. It is actually shameful. And they're saying, oh, it is not us. I know it is the federal government, but there has to be more we can do.

The insensitivity from the Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality this morning showed me the disdain that they have for the widowers, the seniors in this province, people on low income and that is a reflection of the government. I got to say if anyone over there wants to stand up and talk about they know the hardships, we all understand them.

And we all understand the hardships that people are going to have. Absolutely, no doubt, this is wrong. But to not recognize that and try to take a political hack and try to banter on this Opposition because of Muskrat Falls. And then talk about Stephen Harper; most people weren't even here when Stephen Harper was there. Most people weren't even here. I don't even know how many people were here from Muskrat Falls. It might be three.

P. LANE: The PCs didn't even support Stephen Harper.

E. JOYCE: The PCs didn't even support Stephen Harper.

But maybe three or four that were here from Muskrat Falls. I was the one that led – and the Member for Burgeo - La Poile was another one who helped lead the filibuster

on it. So don't go using over here and bantering about Muskrat Falls and not recognize the honest, legitimate pain that it is going to cost the many seniors and widowers and low-income people. Please don't do it because it is not worth it. It's really not worth it.

If I want to stand up here now and have some political shots at a lot of people, it is easy for me to do; I have a good memory and I have a long memory but I won't do it because this issue is too important. I just want to read a little stat. A lot of this here comes from Trudeau wanting to be on the international stage, that what we're doing for climate change and all that. We all understand climate change is real. There's no one here going to debate climate change is not real, that we all do our little part.

I just want to put this in perspective, Mr. Chair. Two plants a week in China are opening up burning coal. There are 89 million tons this year alone; 300 million tons of coal added to China in 2022. Here we are forcing the federal government, forcing those seniors to either don't take your medication, don't have extra food or stay cold in your house because he wants to be on the international stage and what he's doing here for the 45,000, 50,000 households here in this province is just absolutely shameful.

We heard people say we're trying to get them to change to electricity. I have to say that is one of the biggest fallacies that I heard here when the government stands up and trying to say let's make them change to electricity. Just go through the process if someone is on oil now. They have to put in electricity. They have to get rid of their hot water tank. Just the cost alone: \$30,000. I spoke to a senior, went down to her house and do you know what she had to do? She had to get her electricity upgraded, go right through her house, another \$10,000. Yet, we're going to be here in this House and the Member who's responsible for the Status of

Women won't even defend them. Just won't defend them; it's shameful.

That's what forced me to stand up here today because the majority of calls that I get are from low income, a lot of females, widowers who just can't afford to stay in their homes. They can't go into a home because there's no suitable accommodations, so what do they do? I'll guarantee you, Mr. Chair, they're all up here now bantering, Prime Minister Trudeau. They're all up here bantering him. It's all the federal government. If he was down here tomorrow, there would be a stampede to try to get through the door. They'd be a stampede.

When you bring up some of the stuff that the federal government has done for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, there's no doubt that there has been good things. But when you target a group mainly seniors, mainly widowers, low-income individuals, this is what we need to stand up for. It's not the big businesses. It's not the business who going to make it no matter what happens; they're going to find a way. It's not the one who's getting the financial incentive. It's the people who are struggling. That's what we're here for.

If we don't stand up and if we don't fight back some way, more though than saying we wrote letters – the easiest thing to do is write a letter and wave it back and forth. Easiest thing in the world to do. Say look, here's what we did. But if we don't stand up for the people less vulnerable, what are we doing? What are we doing in this House of Assembly?

If we want to stand up and just banter back and forth on politics here when there's something so serious as people who can't heat their home, can't afford their medication, we've reached a level that I've never seen. This is why I had to stand up today to remind the people in this House – and I know most people understand it and most people will do whatever they can.

But after that speech today from the Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality and never mentioned seniors once, never mentioned widowers once, never mentioned low-income people, that just shows how certain Members on the opposite side, all they want to do is stand up and play politics. They missed the vision. They missed the vision of why we're here. It's to help people who are less vulnerable and help the people of the province no matter what their status is, to lift them up a bit.

Mr. Chair, I'm going to take my seat today but I can guarantee you one thing, I'll never forget that speech because anytime now that I hear that minister speak in here, I'm going to question is she really concerned or does she just want to make some political points here on the opposite side of the House.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move that the House now rise and report progress on Bill 38.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Those against?

Motion carried.

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

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

B. WARR: Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

When shall the report be received?

J. HOGAN: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the Committee have leave to sit again?

J. HOGAN: Presently.

SPEAKER: Presently.

On motion, report received and adopted. Committee ordered to sit again presently, by leave.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I move that the House do now recess.

SPEAKER: This House do stand recessed until 2 this afternoon.

Recess

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

Before we begin, I'd just like to take a minute to wish the hon. Minister of Labrador Affairs a very happy birthday today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: I'm told she's 29-plus, I'm not sure how far plus.

Happy birthday.

Also in the Speaker's gallery, I'd like to recognize people here for a Member's statement. They are Jaida Lee and her mother, Amanda.

Welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: We also have several visitors in the public gallery this afternoon.

I would like to welcome Jabez Seymour, who will be recognized in a Member's Statement. He is joined by his mother Melissa, stepdad Jason and sister Cassandra.

Welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Lastly, visiting us this afternoon for a ministerial statement, I'd like to welcome Roland Beanland and John Tobin.

Welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

SPEAKER: Today, we'll hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Humber - Bay of Islands; Labrador West; Baie Verte - Green Bay; Harbour Main; Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, with leave;

Gander, with leave; and Virginia Waters - Pleasantville, also with leave.

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

E. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jacey Matthews who was recently awarded a 2023 Research Inspired Student Enrichment Award. This award recognizes students who demonstrate academic excellence in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Jacey, a Level II student at Templeton Academy in Meadows, will be attending a three-week program at the Boston Leadership Institute in Wellesley, Massachusetts. The program provides students with an opportunity to develop high-level research skills and subject matter expertise through lectures, presentations and hands-on experiments.

Jacey has been involved in many leadership roles in school including the School Student Leadership Team, Identity Committee, school council and Tutoring for Tuition. For the past two years, she has also been involved with the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Parliament and she recently attended the Verna J. Kirkness Education Foundation at the University of Ottawa. Jacey has also been involved with Shad Canada and the Minerva Leadership program.

For the past three years, she has taken part in the Red Shoe Walk and Relay for Life.

After high school graduation, Jacey's future is to pursue a career in the medical field.

Please join me in congratulation Jacey on receiving this award and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

I rise today to recognize Cliff Bryan Lush, or more known as Bryan to his friends and family. Bryan is the owner of a small business called Cliff's TV based out of Wabush. Bryan first opened Cliff's TV in April 1998.

Cliff's TV operated primarily as a TV and other small electronic repair and faired very well in the beginning. In the mid-90s, he became a sub-dealer for Canon printers and serviced the entire Labrador West area. Later in the '90s, he adapted to the changing world of technology by expanding into computer repair.

Bryan grew his business and it remained strong well into the 2000s. He boosted his success by becoming involved in other businesses and was getting involved with contracts revolving around other electronic repair and maintenance. Bryan mostly worked independently with a few temporary employees over the time, until his wife Jane joined the company as a part owner in 2009.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating Bryan Lush and his wife Jane Lush, as Cliff's TV celebrates their 35th anniversary in business in Labrador West. It's a small business like Cliff's that keeps the community growing. Each business and individual in Labrador West, thank you for any way that you've helped.

Thank you, Bryan Lush.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. WARR: Speaker, I rise to congratulate all 2023 high school graduates of the District of Baie Verte - Green Bay.

Indian River High School in Springdale and Valmont Academy in King's Point have each held their graduation ceremonies. Graduates of Copper Ridge Academy in Baie Verte are planning their celebrations this Friday.

Cape John Collegiate in La Scie, M.S.B. Regional Academy in Middle Arm, St. Peter's Academy in Westport and Dorset Collegiate on Pilley's Island will be holding their graduation celebrations in June.

Graduation embarks the beginning of a beautiful journey. Enjoy and savor each and every moment as you transition from high school and set out a unique path that will shape your future.

High school graduation is an incredible milestone worthy of celebration. Parents, teachers, friends and supporters of all graduates are equally to be applauded and celebrated for every effort that assured graduation day.

I ask my hon. colleagues to join me in congratulating the 2023 high school graduates of Baie Verte - Green Bay District the very best in their post-secondary education and future endeavors.

Speaker, Baie Verte - Green Bay is in very good hands.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: I am incredibly proud to recognize two individuals in the District of Harbour Main who have attained unique athletic distinction.

Sean Cleary of Harbour Main is considered one of the world's top pitchers of our time. He has been a softball player with Team Canada for the past 10 years, he has

competed five times at the World Softball Championships and has led Team Newfoundland and Labrador to gold medals at numerous junior and senior national competitions throughout his career. Sean's most recent honour is the prestigious designations as Softball Canada's Player of the Year and Softball Newfoundland and Labrador's Player of the Decade.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: At just 15 years of age, Jabez Seymour of North River attends an elite athletic training prep school on a hockey scholarship in Connecticut. An invaluable member of Team Newfoundland and Labrador in the 2023 Canada Winter Games, he scored three goals and 10 points in six games. Jabez is the highest ranked Newfoundlander and Labradorian eligible for this year's draft for the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League. By all indications, Jabez is on track for a promising hockey career, with great potential for an NHL career.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating these two extraordinary athletes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Does the Member have leave?

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

SPEAKER: Leave is granted.

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

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today I recognize Emily Elizabeth Baker, Grade 12 student at Conrad Fitzgerald Academy in English Harbour West. Emily was selected as one of 10 to represent

Science Team NL at the Canadian-Wide Science Fair in Edmonton last week. This competition gave them an opportunity to showcase, meet new friends, inspire and build individual confidence.

With over 400 students attending this event, there were many presentations, including Emily's project which focused on the utilization of mussel shells from local mussel farms in Newfoundland and Labrador in the creation of a fireproof bioplastic that can be used in place of single-use plastic materials. She was awarded the Senior Sanofi Biogenius Canada Award for her idea, presentation and hard work.

Emily will continue her journey this fall attending Memorial University with studies in nursing and ambitions of going to medical school. I wish her all the luck in her future endeavors and look forward to where her studies will take her.

I know her parents and family are extremely proud of her and Poppy Langdon who is looking down on you today smiling with pride and guiding you in your life's journey.

Please join me in congratulating and sending best wishes to Emily.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Gander, with leave.

Does the Member have leave?

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

SPEAKER: Leave is granted.

The hon. the Member for Gander.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you, Speaker; I thank my colleagues for leave.

Speaker, in this province when you think of aviation you think of Gander. In Gander, when you think of aviation entrepreneurs,

you automatically think of Pat and Florence White.

It all started in 1980 with a convenience store. The couple worked hard to follow their dreams, with Florence studying to become a nurse and Pat pursuing his passion of flying. Several years and three children later, Pat purchased a single-engine plane intending to teach his son to fly. In 1992, the pair founded Gander Aerospace, Gander Flight Training and Exploits Valley Air Services, better known today as EVAS Air. Florence began spending more time on the business, ultimately moving full-time to Gander Aerospace.

What started with a single plane has grown into a multi-million dollar company, specializing in maintenance, manufacture, repair and overhaul, mainly of Beech and Cessna aircrafts. The manufacturing side produces state-of-the-art air ambulances, which are now in service across three other Canadian provinces and at least one state in America.

Speaker, tomorrow these two entrepreneurs will be honoured as inductees into the JA Business Hall of Fame.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating these two inspirational individuals, my friends, Pat and Florence, on this well-deserved achievement.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters - Pleasantville, with leave.

Does the Member have leave?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Leave.

SPEAKER: Leave is granted.

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm so happy to have Jaida and her mom here who just got in from a flight from Calgary about two hours ago from a volleyball tournament.

Last month, Mr. Speaker, at the SportNL Provincial Annual Award ceremony, Jaida Lee received the Margaret Davis Memorial Award for Junior Female Athlete of the Year. This past year was a monumental season for Jaida. She played for Team Newfoundland and Labrador as the first female to play men's baseball at the Canada Summer Games in Niagara.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. DAVIS: Jaida also dominated at the 16U Nationals on the mound and at the plate. She earned Top Pitcher honours, striking out some 16 batters. These successes and her poise and professionalism on the field earned her an invitation to Baseball Canada Senior Women's Identification Camp.

For her excellence in athletics and academics, Jaida received the Team Gushue Award and also the 2022 Baseball NL Female Athlete of the Year. To say last year was an excellent year for Jaida would be a distinct understatement. It was her Hall of Fame year. The game ball she used at the Canada Summer Games is sitting right next to Larry Walker's jersey in the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame. That's impressive.

Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Jaida on a season for the ages and being the solid role model she has become, showing every little girl that any glass ceiling should be shattered.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

E. LOVELESS: Speaker, on March 21, two Transportation and Infrastructure employees at Cold Brook Depot, Mr. Roland Beanland and Mr. John Tobin, were conducting a regular road condition check on Route 460 when they came upon a vehicle that had sustained major damage. They subsequently found a young man still seated behind the wheel, and soon learned the vehicle had hit a moose and while the driver was conscious, he was not coherent.

The men called 911 and proceeded to get the vehicle out of harm's way. While they waited for emergency services to arrive, the two men – along with assistance of another passerby – attended to the young man. At times, they thought they had lost him, but they continued their efforts to keep him conscious and alive.

The next day, they learned the young man had sustained serious injuries. The doctor stated it was most likely their efforts that kept him alive.

Speaker, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to these employees for their courageous efforts. It is not always recognized that our public service employees who are on our roadways in every region of our province, as part of their daily work, sometimes play the role of first responders until help arrives.

I ask all Members to rise and thank Mr. Roland Beanland and Mr. John Tobin for their valiant efforts in helping to save a life.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

I would like to thank the hon. minister for an advance copy of his statement.

It's an honour to stand on behalf of the residents of Stephenville - Port au Port and indeed all Members of this House to join the minister in congratulating Roland Beanland and John Tobin for their efforts in helping save the life after an accident on March 21, 2023.

Speaker, both men sprang into action without giving a second thought to their own safety. Far too often our highway's employees are called upon in dangerous situations and are forced to make quick decisions to protect their own lives or someone else's and we must remember this is often in all kinds of weather and any time of the night.

Speaker, TI employees are often unprotected and vulnerable themselves, as we saw in the tragic deaths of two employees in 2011 and 2013. Both highway employees never got to come home after work. So as we celebrate this heroism today, let's also make sure we give all employees the tools and protections to keep them safe.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

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

I would also like to thank these public servants for their heroism. Public servants are the backbone of this province. Their contributions on how they go above and beyond, often goes unnoticed. We encourage this government to see the value

of public service by expanding training and other personal development for these employees so that more people can actually go out and help in situations like this.

We will sleep better knowing that there are people like Roland and John on the scene and driving our highways.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Labrador Affairs.

L. DEMPSTER: Speaker, I am proud to tell you about a group of enterprising students who have earned the right to compete next month at an international competition in Colorado.

The Shark Tech Team at Labrador Straits Academy placed second overall in the provincial competition, hosted by Marine Institute – an incredible achievement for a small school of fewer than 150 students. Competing against larger schools in the province, 10 students from L'Anse au Clair, Forteau, L'Anse au Loup and Pinware, along with their teacher, Mr. Riley Regular, spent more than 1,200 hours designing and building an underwater remotely operated vehicle.

This school and the Mount Pearl Senior High are the two teams that will represent Canada on the world stage –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. DEMPSTER: – competing against teams from Indonesia, California, New England, Hong Kong and other places around the globe.

This is the first team from Labrador to qualify for an international robotics event, but even more remarkably, the first team to

advance from a regional competition in their first year of competition.

This accomplishment is the result of the dedication and commitment of students and teachers, as well as the unfailing support of parents and community.

Speaker, our government is pleased to support the Shark Techs. I ask Members of this hon. House to join me in congratulating the students from Labrador Straits Academy. As you prepare to leave your tiny corner of Labrador and put your talents up against the best in the world, we want you to know that the Big Land and the entire province are rooting for you.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement.

Speaker, I join with the minister today to recognize and acknowledge the Shark Tech team from Labrador Straits Academy and their impressive performance in a local, provincial competition hosted by the Marine Institute.

A school of fewer than 150 students, building their own remotely operated vehicle, ROV, that's beyond impressive. Now these students, along with students from Mount Pearl Senior High, will represent our province and our country in Longmont, Colorado at the International Marine Advanced Technology Education Centre ROV competition.

The PC Official Opposition and our entire province are tremendously proud of our students and wish them the best of luck at the international competition in June.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

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

I congratulate the students of Labrador Straits Academy and Mount Pearl Senior High. This shows the importance of ensuring students across our province have the supports and resources necessary to reach their potential. Our students are our future, all deserve access to opportunities.

To the students of Labrador Straits Academy and Mount Pearl Senior High, we applaud you. Go forth and take on the world on behalf of Canada and our province. You are already winners in our hearts.

Congratulations.

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: Speaker, the cyberattack that struck our health care system in 2021 affected more people than the Liberal government ever made public. The report says and I quote: "... the vast majority of the population of the province have some amount of personal information or personal health information taken by the cyber attackers" This is the first time that the public have been informed of the true magnitude of this attack.

I ask the Premier: Why did your government hide the sheer scale of this attack on the health care system?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, let me take this opportunity to thank the people who were working in the system during that horrific time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. FUREY: Not only were they challenged with the cyberattack, they were challenged at the time, it's easy to forget, with the pandemic and challenges associated with that and vaccines.

That said, Mr. Speaker, we were very open in our communications. In fact, we said immediately upon recognition that there was a problem. We said we didn't know the scope of the problem but we said that it was a potential that many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians could have been involved in this. We were very open with the communication on that, from day one, offering regular public updates, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

Our recollection of what went on particularly around the debate in the House and the questions out in the scrum there was different, that the information wasn't being shared with the people of this province.

Speaker, we learned that hundreds of thousands of people have not been personally notified that they were victims of this attack.

I ask the Premier: Why are we only finding out these numbers today?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That is in fact not true, Mr. Speaker, we did notify everybody in a broad public disclosure that it was a potential that their records could have been violated. We were very open about that. We did that in a public form, through a media avail. We did that with the Minister of Justice. We did that with the Minister of Health at the time. We had a full public disclosure that everybody's records could have potentially been affected, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, every patient that had COVID-19 testing up to 2021 and their patient information stolen in a cyberattack, why on earth would the province not personally notify everyone that had their information taken by the cyberattack?

The minister wants to talk, or the Premier, in facts, ask his ministers who talks about facts, the facts that hundreds of thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians did have their information hacked and they did not share the information or the notice to the people of the province.

What does the minister or the Premier say about that?

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

I think it's important to actually look at what the report says that came out this morning. What it does say is that the province and the health authorities – let's not forget it was

the health authorities where the attack occurred, not the government itself – took reasonable steps to do the investigation after they realized that it was a cyberattack, which, of course, took some time to figure out what exactly happened; took reasonable steps to contain the information and the breach as much as possible in the circumstances; took reasonable steps to make public disclosure, as the Premier said; ongoing public addresses; numerous letters that went out throughout the period of time, as information became available to the government and the health authorities; and took reasonable steps to provide supports to individuals who were jeopardized and were at risk in this situation, including myself, who signed up for that opportunity as well to have credit monitoring just to be on the safe side.

So if you do look at the report, a lot of good findings in there. Of course, there is some work to do. There's always work to do and we'll continue to work hard to ensure everything is private in the health care system as we go forward.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, I would have thought and we would have thought over on this side of the House and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that reasonable steps would have been to notify people if their personal information had been hacked and to give –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: – them an opportunity to get supports that were necessary. They didn't do this.

Patients in Central Health for 15 years; patients of Labrador-Grenfell Health for 14 years; patients of Eastern Health for 11 years; all patients that had their blood work

or specimens sent to Eastern Health for specialized testing for 11 years.

When will the province personally inform all patients that their privacy has been breached?

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

I'll repeat what I said, it's important to look at the facts and conclusions that were reached in the Privacy Commissioner's report that reasonable steps were taken to contain the breaches when we realized that they occurred and when there was a realization that it occurred and reasonable steps to ensure that protections were offered such as credit monitoring that was made available to everyone in the province who was at risk and some people, including myself, availed of it.

Reasonable steps were taken. Unfortunately the incident happened. We did what were best options available at the time to contain the information and the report actually concludes that. If the Member opposite wants to read it in detail, I'm sure he can. He probably hasn't had time yet, but I can assure you that those answers are in there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Well, I can reassure the minister that reasonable steps from any other person's perspective would've been about sharing that information, and particularly – you don't have to listen to me, let's talk fact. Let's talk about what the authors of this report have said. The report also states – and I quote – that some details about the nature of the breach were not disclosed at the first reasonable opportunity,

as required by law. This is the quote of the authors of this report, the investigation.

I ask the Premier: Why did his government flippantly ignore the law and not disclose information about the breach to the people of our province?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As mentioned before and I'm sure everyone can recall, we did disclose to the public in a reasonable time frame, Mr. Speaker, that there was an issue. This is quite complex. It was a large privacy breach, quite complex. It had national security implications, provincial security implications. There is no distinct and definitive playbook for this issue.

As a result, we sought the best evidence available, the best advice available. We talked to the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security regularly. We talked to the minister of National Defence, the minister of Public Safety, the Canadian security establishment, all of whom were recommending the approach that we took. In the absence of a definitive playbook, we have to seek advice and follow the best evidence available.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: I'm clear to understand from the Premier, the authors of the report who did due diligence and did a very professional investigative report were wrong? Again, another example of wrong. That leads well into my next question about who's wrong and who's right.

Speaker, residents of the province are shocked to learn that the Liberal government spent almost \$700,000 to fight Carter Churchill's rights to an education.

This is an outrageous abuse of power against the Churchill family who were fully vindicated.

Speaker, how can the Premier defend this outrageous decision on his watch?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, the incident occurred before my watch, Mr. Speaker. It was changes brought on secondary to the previous administration under a different colour. That said, this issue is not about me and it's not about them; it's about the parents who suffered.

As I have said in this House, I apologize for any suffering that any government, as I sit in this Chair as Premier, has caused them or their son. We will endeavour to continue to improve the situation, not only for that person, Mr. Speaker, but all pupils in our education system.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is about accountability here when it comes to rights to education in Newfoundland and Labrador. Speaker, the Liberal government allowed the English School District to spend almost \$700,000 fighting the Churchill family, which according to his father – and I quote – was used to “justify the discrimination of a five-year-old deaf child in a wheelchair.”

Speaker, who is going to be held accountable for this disgraceful treatment of the Churchill family?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, the Member opposite points out that it was an English School District issue, Mr. Speaker. Again, it was secondary to changes that were brought on by a different administration.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, as I've said and will continue to say, we are sympathetic to that particular family and that particular student. There are always ways to improve and we will endeavour to improve. But that was prior to my watch, Mr. Speaker.

It's unfortunate that that money had to be spent. There's no one who wanted to spend money in that way. We want to make sure that that money is being appropriately spent to enhance the education opportunities for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Premier, your name is over the door on the eighth floor. You should demand answers from them – \$700,000 on your watch, Mr. Speaker. Your name is over the door, Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: Speaker, yesterday the minister continued to dismiss concerns raised by parents, staff and students at Frank Roberts Junior High.

Given he refused to attend the rally last week to hear these concerns first-hand, will he now commit to attend a town hall with community stakeholders to answer their questions?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Once again, slightly economical with truth. The facts of the case are that I have not dismissed anything. I have taken them very seriously. I've spoken to the school district. We have asked Occupational Health and Safety to go in. I tabled the report yesterday. An old school, but a safe school.

We've asked health inspectors to go in. Sanitation and maintenance excellent. Their words, not mine. Independent reports provided that we have worked with the school district to remedy the complaints and the issues that are being brought forward by both parents, students and teachers, and we will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker. Far from dismissing it; we've taken it very seriously.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

He tabled a report yesterday and one of the recommendations of the report was they were ordered to develop a safe plan to clean up rodent droppings. That's what he's proud of, among other orders in the report. He swung that around the House of Assembly like he had all the answers yesterday; he should be ashamed of himself. I say it again: Ashamed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: You want me to say it again?

AN HON. MEMBER: Facts matter.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

B. PETTEN: Facts matter, absolutely; facts matter.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Move to the question please.

B. PETTEN: Speaker, I ask, what is the minister afraid of? Hundreds of parents, staff and students have concerns. If he is so secure in his beliefs let him come to the town hall, take his reports and explain to all the parents, teachers and students how safe the school is. Let them ask you questions, Minister. What's the big deal?

Premier, maybe you'll come along for a ride. Maybe I can drive the two of you there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Unfortunately, yesterday the Member opposite who asked that question said – and I think if you check *Hansard*, I'm pretty well accurate – I don't care about the facts. However, everybody else does. So my job was to get an independent view, factual, by people who are experts in it. These are not my words; these are the words of Occupation Health and Safety professionals. These are the words of health inspectors, who the Member opposite was happy to stand up and sing their praises during COVID. Now, when they are saying things that he doesn't want to hear, it doesn't fit with his world view, he dismisses them. He calls them untrustworthy, unreliable and, as I said yesterday, that is shameful.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Minister, we talk about shame. Here we are again today.

I have a responsibility, like the 39 other Members in this House with me, to protect the interests, to the best of my abilities, to the people of my district. The people in my

district are not satisfied with the answers that they're getting from this government. I'm not saying anyone is right or wrong; let's clear the air. Bring in an independent person from outside to study this and get the proper review. Not a tabletop exercise; not a clipboard; go through, tear up floors, look down under. There are issues in this school. I'm not making this stuff up. They're not making it up. They're not liars, Mr. Speaker.

So I ask the minister: Why not order this review? It is a simple question.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Once again, if the Member opposite has faith in our Occupation Health and Safety inspectors, if the Member opposite has faith in our health inspectors, if the Member opposite has faith in professional pest control expert, Mr. Speaker, he could not actually verbalize those questions because that would undermine his argument. He has a world view; what he has heard does not fit with it. We have independent reviews, independent sources; he just simply doesn't want to hear them. There are none whose hearing is as impaired as those who will not listen.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. WALL: Speaker, government is finally moving forward with speed cameras some four years after being passed in this House. However, no tickets will be issued and the largest municipality on the Northeast Avalon has been excluded.

Can the minister please explain why she ignored the City of St. Johns?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Speaker.

I am so excited to launch our pilot project for speed cameras yesterday.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

S. STOODLEY: So exciting.

Speaker, I've never been so popular. I've had municipalities across the province reach out to me wanting speed cameras in their communities. It just shows the interest.

I mentioned this in our pilot, but we are working on an overall program for speed cameras. We are going as fast as I'm pushing my team. I'm pushing them very fast, Speaker.

In the design of our overall speed camera system, there was some data that we needed to know. We need to know how many people are going to be speeding. We need to know that to see if we need a small, medium or large system. So this is really to get information for an overall system design so that we can help alleviate law enforcement.

I'm happy to talk about this –

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The minister's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. WALL: Speaker, I'm sure the minister appreciates being popular, but the question was: Why did she ignore the City of St. John's?

Many municipalities are fed up with speeding and lack of enforcement and they are taking matters into their own hands. Unfortunately, the City of St. John's, which includes the minister's district, only heard about the pilot project after the fact.

Again, I ask the minister: Why is she picking and choosing who can take part in this important program?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Speaker.

As I mentioned, we were in informal discussions with the Town of Paradise and the City of Mount Pearl, as we are working on our overall speed camera project. We are designing a system that will be available to the province and that's very important to me, Speaker.

With the objective of getting some information as soon as possible, we were already working with Paradise and Mount Pearl and we said can you help us do this pilot very quickly. They said yes. They were excited and we moved ahead very quickly. The traffic cameras will be in place June 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

S. STOODLEY: I'm so excited. We're reducing speeds and we're saving lives, Speaker.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

This week is Paramedic Services Week and I certainly want to thank all those who serve us every day. Unfortunately, the hard-working people of this profession are being

pushed to their limits. A recent ATIPP request shows that ambulance trips in this province have increased over 20 per cent in the last four years.

Minister, are we seeing an increase in ambulance trips due to a lack of access to basic health care?

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

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As we see in other jurisdictions across the country, there is a shortage of primary care providers, not only in this province, in every province in Canada, Mr. Speaker. That is a reality that all Canadians are dealing with.

Mr. Speaker, we are very appreciative of the services that are provided by our paramedics, our EMRs, our advanced care paramedics. They play a very, very valuable role and we are recognizing that. We are integrating ambulance services in this province which will provide a better service, better working conditions and serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to the best ability possible.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, the Premier made a pledge in 2021 to bring an IVF clinic to this province, a pledge that has not been met. With the current subsidy announced over a year ago, only covering a small portion of the true cost to receive IVF in other provinces, I ask the minister: When will – and I hope we don't hear, stay tuned, again, I hope we don't, I am starting to hear it already – the Liberal government live up to their promise to create an IVF clinic in this province?

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

T. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, he's probably afraid of stay tuned because we are delivering so much good news.

The reality on the IVF clinic: we have an RFP that has been put out, that is under review to ensure that we, as a government, as a health authority, are provided the advice on the best services that can be provided in this province for fertility services.

Mr. Speaker, we're proud of the fact that that RFP is out there. We will work with stakeholders to ensure that the best services that can be and should be provided in this province are there for those individuals.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm certainly proud that it has taken so long and we still haven't seen it yet; we haven't see it yet.

After years of the Opposition calling for a continuous glucose monitoring program, this Liberal government finally took our advice and included money in this year's budget for a pilot project –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

P. DINN: – targeted –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

P. DINN: The Member across the way has talked about showing videos of me

applauding. I did applaud this. There's no debate there. There's no debate. I applauded this.

So if I can go on here. This was in this budget program but it's targeted to individuals under 18 years. However, Diabetes Canada doesn't recommend an age cap for those that should receive reimbursement.

I ask the minister: Why didn't he take the advice of Diabetes Canada?

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

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We've gotten word back from a number of stakeholders across the country and in this province that have applauded the pilot project for continuous glucose monitoring. This is a pilot project, Mr. Speaker. This is to provide government with additional information to provide that service to the individuals in the pilot project.

I will say, with this particular case, Mr. Speaker, stay tuned because I'm sure a pilot project will lead to further good news. Stay tuned.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DWYER: Thank you, Speaker.

Minister, while the WestJet strike has been averted, the uncertainty and disruption has raised concerns about the reliability of air routes to our province.

What is the government doing to get a wider array of air services for airports in our province so we're not so vulnerable to disruptions by a single carrier?

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

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

My colleague is asking for a shout-out and I'm certainly going to give him one. Myself and my colleague, the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology, have been working very closely with our airport authorities and the airlines to ensure that whatever opportunities are available to this province, we'll make sure they're there.

The Member opposite this morning, Mr. Speaker, voted against \$1.5 million to support the airline industry, so shame on the Member opposite.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DWYER: I guess instead of putting shame over here, we'd like to see the plan because the money that was allotted to the budget did not show us any plans.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

J. DWYER: Where is the provincial air access strategy because we need to attract new carriers and new routes to our province?

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

S. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, it amazes me some days in this place that we can stand here, the Member opposite can stand here and ask about an air access strategy, which we have a strategy by the way, but no thanks to the Member opposite, Mr. Speaker, he stood here less than three hours ago and voted against the money for that strategy. It amazes me that –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

S. CROCKER: Maybe the Member for Terra Nova would like to get up and ask a question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

S. CROCKER: Get up, get up, b'y.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Minister, you have 25 seconds left.

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

Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite stood and voted against the money for such a strategy.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Speaker, the minister was asked if the water bombers are fully staffed for this forest fire season. He said – quote – we have four that are complemented with staff for four of those units. However, yesterday, the minister stood up in the House and said we have three fully staffed, ready to go.

I ask the minister: Which is it?

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

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Very important question, and if I made reference to four fully staffed, then I must have misspoken because the staff told me yesterday that we have three fully staffed.

We do have four assets ready to go. From a service perspective, we are ready to go.

We don't know what the season will – what lies ahead. We know the difficulties that are happening in the western part of this country right now, but, as a province, we know we have friendly agreements with other provinces that help us; we help them. The Premier made the commitment to Alberta, which we're following through on, and if we need them, they're there for us.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Speaker, as recently as yesterday there was a forest fire in Central Newfoundland. When it comes to forest fires, we need the minister responsible for those bombers to know what he is talking about.

How can the people have confidence in the minister if he has two different responses for the same question?

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

E. LOVELESS: Mr. Speaker, I'll challenge those comments when he says I don't know what I'm talking about because he made reference in this House that the assets that are in storage in Gander is left there to rot. They're not wooden, I say to the Member opposite. They're in good condition and you should respect the employees that take care of those units.

I welcome you – because I don't think he's done it. I invite him to go out and see those units, see those valuable people that take care of those units, go out and see what we've got there as assets for this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Speaker.

We're just looking for the correct answer, that's all. We're only asking the question.

Speaker, the Roads Plan announced in March promises significant increase in construction this year. Last year the government carried over \$18 million.

Speaker, if the minister can't get last year's money out the door, why does he believe increasing the budget is realistic?

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

E. LOVELESS: Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite does it in all of his questions. He's very selective to make it seem what it's not. I can't use the word that leads to in this House because it would be unparliamentary. But I say to the Member: He's not long patting me on the back, to be honest with you, during the budget that saw \$1.4 billion; they were over there clapping like a church choir.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

E. LOVELESS: He was one of them. So what is it? You don't want the money for the investment for your district because your mayor certainly does.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, we saw the minister table reports to justify their inactions on issues citing facts are important. I'm tabling in this House a snapshot from the government's air monitoring equipment from over the last few

days showing air particles exceeded acceptable levels in Labrador West.

So I ask the Premier: Does he believe his government's ignoring this issue is acceptable?

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

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I've had many conversations and I thank the hon. Member for the question for his people that he represents. Obviously we're on the same page. We're really working with the proponents up there to get the dust under control.

They're starting earlier in their program that they're doing every year. They're continuing that further. The mitigation program that's under way has started now. We're going to hold them to account to that to make sure that's as good as can be expected and we want it to be there for, not just your questions that come forward, but for the people that you represent as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, since April 28, there has been multiple days where air quality monitoring shows particles in the air that we breathe is well passed the acceptable levels set by government. Yesterday those who were over a 300 per cent rise.

I ask the Minister of Environment and Climate Change: Will he start enforcing the regulations and hold these companies accountable for their actions?

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

B. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, I think I addressed that very eloquently earlier by simply saying that we have been in contact with the company, as I've told the Member who has been on this issue from the start. Their suppression program has started earlier than ever before. They're going to continue to do that. We're going to hold them to account. I can't be any clearer than that part. We're going to continue to do that.

When there are exceedances we're going to be contacting them to see why this happened, what can be done to mitigate those concerns. I've asked the hon. Member if hears any of those concerns, please let us know as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

We cannot have another summer of mine dust blanketing our community.

Will the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology send in mine inspectors to review the mining companies dust mitigation plans, inspect their sites and prioritize health of the people of my district?

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

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's a very important question that you are raising. We're going to continue to do our part from the Department of Environment and Climate Change. We're going to continue to hold the proponents responsible for their actions with respect to that.

They're starting the process – and I think the hon. Member understands that. They started the process earlier than they have before. Do they need to do better?

Absolutely. We're going to try to keep them focused on doing better and doing it earlier so they can mitigate those concerns before they actually happen in the community.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Education tabled an OHS report, a health inspector's report and the attendance record for Frank Roberts Junior High to justify why nothing more needs to be done to address the concerns of the school community. Yet, the minister is unwilling or unable to produce any data or reports to justify the construction of a new school in Portugal Cove-St. Philip's.

I ask the minister again to table the reports, the data or the magic eight ball he and his colleagues are using to make infrastructure decisions.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I think I've been misquoted and certainly misinterpreted, if not misquoted.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Education, 30 seconds.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker, for your protection.

The reports I tabled were part of a description of the actions that we have taken in response to concern from Frank Roberts Junior High, from the staff, students and the community. There was also, which I didn't table, but I'm quite happy to, if the Member opposite would like it, a factual list of measures taken by the school district to date and proposed over the course of the summer to remediate the issues that have been identified.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

E. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, the keys to the new acute care hospital in Corner Brook will be turned over to government on October 23, this year, and opening soon after. We know the PET scanner has been put on hold and funds are in a trust to be used at a later date, \$2 million. Many residents have to travel to St. John's to receive this radiation. There will be a radiation unit in the new hospital in Corner Brook. This is so important to the residents of Western Newfoundland who have to travel to have this dreaded disease taken care of.

Can the minister please update this House of Assembly of the status of the radiation unit for the new acute care hospital in Corner Brook?

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

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The construction of that unit is on schedule as of the last time we checked for an update. Naturally, Mr. Speaker, as with anything, recruitment is ongoing for staff for that unit. Once we get the keys to the new facility and once they're able to recruit, that unit should be up and running.

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

E. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, the position for a specialist to start the setting up of this radiation unit only went out in March of this year. Due to the lateness of this recruitment, government knew about this radiation unit since 2016.

I ask the minister: Will you ensure that the radiation unit in Corner Brook will be operational without any delays to ensure that Western Newfoundland will receive this treatment with their families due to the lateness of this recruitment that only went out March of this year?

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

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If government are not receiving the keys to the facility until October, Mr. Speaker, I believe the Health Authority is doing best practices in terms of recruitment. If the recruitment went out for March of this year, the facility will perhaps be up and running late this year or early next year, Mr. Speaker, but we will continue to recruit for all positions that are required for that facility and, as we recruit, operations will be undertaken as they should be.

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: I do have one.

In accordance with section 23 of the *Auditor General Act, 2021*, I hereby table the Food

Premises Inspection and Licensing Program performance audit.

Are there any further tabling of documents?

The hon. the Member for Labrador West with leave.

Does the Member have leave?

Hearing no objection, the hon. Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: I table a snapshot from the last month from the air quality monitoring station in Labrador West, along with the photograph showing the apartment building that's supposed to be there but it's covered in dust.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: 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 Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Speaker.

These are the reasons for this petition:

WHEREAS it has been established that smaller class sizes in our primary and elementary schools create positive educational outcomes for students; and

WHEREAS smaller class sizes provide teachers and staff the opportunity for meaningful interaction, authentic

assessment and an overall healthy learning and teaching environment;

THEREFORE we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to take immediate action to prioritize the issue of class sizes, recognize the adverse impact of large class sizes on quality education and allocate the necessary resources for an improved educational environment for students and teachers alike.

Speaker, the reason for this petition today is that I've heard from many, many concerned parents. I've received letters; I've had multiple testimonials from teachers, especially in the Holyrood area who have children that are attending the school there. In particular, they're very concerned about the classes of Grade 1 and Grade 2 as well.

The numbers for Grade 2 for next year are unreal. For Grade 1, for example, I'm told that the numbers are 28 and 27 per class, yet we know that the maximum or the cap is 25. So even here we see that they're exceeding the school boards own published acceptable limits.

Speaker, what is the concern here? The concern of these parents is that the quality of the education that their children receive is going to be severely compromised. This is not conducive to a healthy learning environment, having large classes like this. They are concerned about the fact that many students have different learning needs, they have different personalities and they require variations of attention from teachers. They're concerned that this is not providing a very positive environment. They are concerned that we are not going to afford our children the opportunity to love the learning that they receive and the teaching that they receive.

They've reached out saying that their beautiful little learners deserve more. Not

only the parents of the children but, Speaker, the teachers themselves talk about the working condition. I heard from a teacher in the District of Harbour Main who's concerned that basically the effects of these working conditions, the daily stress levels because of these overcrowded classrooms and the fact that these stress levels are so high, if conditions do not improve, she, for example, is going to have to seek employment elsewhere.

There's teacher burnout, Speaker. We are very concerned. We need the government to act. We need them to be in touch with reality and to see that the problems that exist in our schools today are real.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

You have two minutes, Sir.

J. DINN: Two minutes, that will give enough time to read it then.

A petition calling for the funding for active and public transportation.

These are the reasons for the petition:

Government has proudly announced it is spending historic levels of money on highway repair and expansion in this year's budget, totalling \$1.4 billion over the next five years.

Rudimentary traffic analysis shows that provincial highways barely operate at 50 per cent of the traffic capacity at peak travel times. Inattentive driving and speeding are the primary causes of highway accidents. Widened roadways further encourage this behaviour contributing to highway-related fatalities.

Private vehicles cost the average Canadian over \$10,000 a year, per vehicle, forcing struggling seniors and the minimum-wage

workers into vehicle poverty. Diverting even a fraction of the yearly highways improvement budget into funding public and active transportation can provide reliable, predictable and daily routes to most hubs in the province.

Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to commit to developing active and public transportation options in the province through legislative and budgetary means and cease any further highway expansions without providing robust traffic studies including factoring inter- and intra-community public transit.

Speaker, we know what the geography is of the province and it's easy to say that there's a reality, but I'll quote this from George Bernard Shaw, made famous by President Kennedy that "There are those that look at the way they are, and ask why? I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?"

I think at some point we've got to start looking at how do we make sure that those who can't afford a vehicle, like seniors, that they have a way to get around.

Thank you.

Orders of the Day

Private Members' Day

SPEAKER: It being 3 o'clock, I call upon the Opposition House Leader to bring forward a private Member's resolution.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island, the following private Member's resolution.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you.

WHEREAS Memorial University's administration has shown contempt for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, their history, their sacrifices, the founding principles of the province's only university and the people's House of Assembly by refusing to continue leading the convocation singing the province's anthem at graduation ceremonies even while admitting the decision to stop singing the anthem should never have been made in the first place; and

WHEREAS while fully respecting the autonomy of Memorial University in academic matters, the House of Assembly can require that this ceremonial wrong be corrected by restoring the anthem to graduation ceremonies through legislation;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House urge government to bring forward legislation to require the "Ode to Newfoundland" and the "Ode to Labrador" to be sung at graduation ceremonies at Memorial University's convocation;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the government be encouraged to review and give due diligence to the proposed legislation appended to this resolution and bring forward legislation to a similar effect.

The appended legislation is attached, Mr. Speaker, and I'll leave that. I read that in when I presented the resolution yesterday, actually. I think we can get back to the crux of the matter of the fact that the "Ode to Newfoundland" and what it means to the people of this province. I've heard much banter, and much positive banter, actually, in support of this cause and this issue. I've heard the opposing views too, that's part of what we do.

One thing I hear a lot of is there are a lot more important issues in the province. I couldn't agree more. But isn't this important? If we forget where we came from and if we forget why we're here, if we forget our forefathers, if we forget the reason that

made us what we are today, isn't that a wrong, too? Are we missing the boat somewhere along the way? Sure there are other important things. In my mind, this is the foundation of who we are as people.

If we used that analogy we could say sure we don't need education as long as we got health care. We'll educate ourselves. That's a waste of money. You don't need pavement on roads, you can walk, you can ride a peddle bike. You could really minimize every issue if you want to get down to the point of there's just something more important, because outside life and death, you can minimize any other issue in the province, any other issue in mankind. That's not where we're to.

This is a very important issue. This is our anthem. This is who we are as a people. We did it a few weeks ago in the House here and we stood and we sang the anthems and it was actually one of the few times that comes along and we were united on this issue. We've been united on this issue before.

It doesn't have to be this way. We can make this right. This can be fixed. There is a way of fixing this. There's a legislative change. Because I believe the university has demonstrated their inability to manage something so sacred to the people of this province. It's important to every person in this province. I've said it before and I'll say it again: It's an absolute insult to the people of this province, but it's also an insult to this Legislature that the university continues to defy the will of the people. I think that's terrible. I think they should hang their heads in shame because I think it's outrageous.

I've heard the arguments from MUN and the president of MUN and other officials from MUN. They believe, you know, that somewhat you don't interfere with their autonomy. We're not interfering with their autonomy in teaching out children, our students.

My daughter is convocating next week. Like I said, a lot of people – my other daughter have already went through there. I have a lot of colleagues – I went there. We're not knocking the autonomy of the academic piece. This has nothing to do with academic piece. This is to do with us as a people. You're coming in and you're interfering with something that's so scared to this province. The university was built as a memorial to the fallen soldiers from this province that fought, long before we were ever part of Canada, when we were a country. It's very important and it's our actual anthem. It's Newfoundland and Labrador's anthem.

What we're asking for is realistic and I really think it makes a lot of sense. The university, in my mind, they've lost their ability and they're lost their right to make decisions on our anthem. Think about this now. We have a university that has decided that they're going to pull the anthem from ceremonies. They're going to consult and they're going to come up with a better anthem is basically what they're saying, a better way of recognizing our province. That's not the university's role. They're meant to educate, research. They're meant to teach people. They don't belong in this conversation.

This conversation belongs here in this Legislature by the 40 Members that represent this province, not by 130 appointees – the senators and Board of Regents that are appointed and whatever way they're elected. That's their own separate group. They continue to do their autonomy. They continue to deal with the university issues and the academic piece. In my mind, they've lost a lot of respect in this province in handling of this Ode, but they've also lost their right to deal with any issue pertaining to the Ode.

Why can't we bring back in the "Ode to Labrador" and the "Ode to Newfoundland" as part of the convocation ceremonies? Any changes that's made to that, if they want to in their wisdom, offer suggestions to make the change they should be presented to this

Legislature who then, in turn, can debate and bring it up in legislation and make that change and vote on it like we do every other piece of legislation that comes to the floor of the House of Assembly.

There's no way that we should have a Senate of 95 and a Board of Regents of 30 making this decision. I strongly feel on this issue that what we're doing is right. I believe that what the university did is absolutely wrong and I've spoken about it many times. Last year, we had a resolution in the House and we unanimously passed it. I got up in the recent Question Period and all of us stood and we sang. We united on this issue.

We can make changes. We set laws for this province. We set laws for every individual in this province. Think about that. Every time we're setting laws, new legislation, and the budget was passed here today for almost \$10 billion, yet we're giving the ability, the authority to our Ode to the university, to a Senate and a Board of Regents who really and truly I don't think they have the finger on the pulse of Newfoundland whatsoever.

I mean I hear their rationale. What about the 520,000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that take great pride in this anthem? That's the question you have to ask. Are we, as people, on a mission to insult people from outside our province? Absolutely not, we're one of the most welcoming places in the world. It's not about that.

You can't exclude to include. If they want to find a way to include those people, find a way. We're all about that. We'll applaud that. Bring it there and we'll probably pass it unanimously. But don't deny us the right to have our anthem. Think about it, our anthem. Like I said the Canadian anthem, they kept singing the Canadian anthem until they found the right words that everyone were agreeable to. It passed through the House of Commons. Then it became common practice and we all sing the new anthem now.

But we never stopped singing the old anthem. Why? It frustrates me. I listened on the day after we all got in the House and sung it here. I know that they had an interview with the president of MUN. Mr. Bose's analogy angered me. I think it should have angered everyone here in the province and in this House. He just was totally dismissive of what the Legislature decided to do.

When we fund the university as a province, over 80 per cent of the funding for the university comes from this province, this government, this Legislature. We asked them in a respectful manner to reconsider, to reinstitute the Ode, probably make some changes, bring in the "Ode to Labrador," and try to be as inclusive as possible. We were open to change and maybe we can discuss it with them. Instead they just pulled it out, no, we're not doing any more.

Even though they acknowledged that was a mistake, yet now this time around, the acknowledgement shouldn't have been done the way it was done last year, but no one got the gumption or the courage to put it back in. That's all we're asking and let's work on probably a new solution that maybe some words, the language in there that may be offensive to someone, we could probably refine that. That happens over time. We should never change who we are and what we stand for.

We're all proud Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and I've always said that Ode gives to me a sense of pride and it should give everyone in this province a sense of pride. Why we'd stand quietly by and let the university interfere with something that, in my opinion, is way out of bounds and it doesn't belong. This is not a debate for the president of the university to decide or the Board of Regents or the Senate. They have no right to be deciding this and discussing this, and they've proven that to me and this Legislature, the people of this province. So they've lost that right, take it from them, legislate it and they'll have no choice. It's

terrible, shameful thing that we have to stand here in this House and debate it and debate it over and over again.

I'll go back, like I said when I started, people say there are bigger things in the province to debate. Absolutely, and we debate them every day. Every hour of the day, every minute, every night, weekend, as politicians we're always debating issues. But never ever to lose sight – the big argument there is not about that, there are lots of issues, but this is equally important. My only advice to any of those naysayers is you should never forget where you came from. If you forget where you came from, you'll never know where you're headed to.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Labrador Affairs.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm going to try to get about five minutes in here before I start coughing, if the House will indulge me, and just speak briefly to the private Member's motion that's on the floor today. I don't think I need to read it again, Speaker, other than to draw attention to the **"THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that this Hon. House urge the government to bring forward legislation to require the Ode to Newfoundland and the Ode to Labrador to be sung at graduation ceremonies of Memorial University's convocation"

Speaker, there has been much play in the media, by the press, a check of *Hansard* will reveal certainly in this House around Memorial University making a decision, the Board of Regents, to drop the Ode. The Ode, the national anthem whatever country or flag that you're associated with, we know that it always evokes a lot of feelings of emotion and passion. You look back to your traditions, your history, the place where you come from. So while I certainly, Speaker,

respect the expression of passion for the "Ode to Newfoundland," and I'm not opposed to the "Ode to Newfoundland" in any way, but I recognize, as others have said, that it is not inclusive of all areas of the province, Newfoundland and Labrador.

I supported the resolution when it came forward, Speaker, because it recognized that Labrador has had its own anthem since 1927. I think for the purposes of the record I'll just share with this House, Dr. Harry Paddon in 1927 wrote the anthem and sometimes we get teased because it's to the tune of "O Tannenbaum." There are alternate melodies that have been proposed. But, Speaker, the Ode constitutes the first major, symbolic declaration of Labradorian solidarity.

There are so many occasions that I can look back through over my short life still and when you're standing at the E. J. Broomfield arena in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and it's Winter Games night that brings Labradorians from all four corners of the Big Land together and it's packed with several hundred people at capacity. We stand and somebody opens, maybe with a better job than we did here, but I want to commend my colleague from St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows for raising the "Ode to Labrador" just recently here in the House. But there's just a fire that's lit in your belly, there's something that stirs and you relate because we come from that land and our fathers and our forefathers and our grandfathers, they trapped.

Even though life in that really rugged land was very, very hard and my grandfather, Ben Powell, has written many books about life in Labrador; 19 books published, actually. His first book that was published was *Labrador by Choice* because he actually came from Carbonear in 1936 and came to Labrador and made it his home. But I'm digressing now as I often do.

AN HON. MEMBER: A good book.

L. DEMPSTER: A good book says one of my colleagues, Speaker.

But it's what we associate with, just the way we do with our flag. Actually, I'm wearing my flag today, Speaker. The white for the snow, the green for the land and the bounty it has given us and the blue for the water and what we've earned.

So while I certainly appreciate and respect all of my colleagues in this hon. House and the passion they have to see that MUN bring the "Ode to Newfoundland" back, I'm certainly encouraged to see that a portion of it is that it will recognize that Labrador will be seen in the singing or in the convocations as well, Speaker.

Like the "Ode to Newfoundland," the "Ode to Labrador" unites Labradorians. I have many examples that I can point to and I'm sure my colleagues across the way on the other side of the House will agree with me. As the November 2022 resolution stated: "... both odes include heartfelt celebrations of the natural beauty of this place with the lyrics that continue to resonate universally"

Just like I've seen colleagues across the way from the Island portion of our province, and I have a lot of my family that's from the Island portion of the province, I've seen them get up and speak so passionately about the Ode. I was born and raised in an isolated community on the coast of Labrador and the Ode is what we have been tied to for all our lives. There's so much pride in the Ode, Speaker.

So I just want to say I'm happy with the direction of the resolution. It's unfortunate that MUN went down that road and made a decision to stop singing the Ode at the convocation, but sometimes when you go through a challenging time and you come out the other end, you're better off than you were in the beginning. I believe if we can see that the convocations are more

inclusive, going forward, then that certainly will be a positive step in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to quote one verse before I sit down and give my colleagues time because I know we're very limited here on Wednesday afternoon.

"Dear land of mountains, woods and snow,
Labrador, our Labrador.
God's noble gift to us below,
Labrador, our Labrador.
Thy proud resources waiting still,
Their splendid task will soon fulfill,
Obedient to thy Maker's will,
Labrador, our Labrador."

Beautiful, Speaker. We are a land, very vast in geography, very resource rich. We do have challenges but we also have so much to be proud of, those of us that are privileged to call the Big Land home. I'm happy with the direction the PMR is going, moving forward to include an "Ode to Labrador."

Thank you for the time, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. WALL: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm happy to have heard the minister stand and speak to this PMR. It's always a pleasure to stand in this hon. House to represent the fine people of my beautiful District of Cape St. Francis and to have an opportunity to speak to this private Member's resolution today with respect to the "Ode to Newfoundland" and the "Ode to Labrador," as the minister said that is important to make known, to have it know here in this hon. House.

Speaker, when we sat some days ago, the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs stood and she said that legislation is always up for discussion. She also said: In our

department, it's certainly something that we can take into consideration with respect to a legislative change with respect to the "Ode to Newfoundland" and the "Ode to Labrador" at the Memorial convocation. Well, I'm happy to hear that they are open to looking into whether they are going to include it at Memorial University. I think it's quite important to include both Odes.

My colleague from CBS said – and I quote – our party will ensure fast passage of any legislation relating to the Ode. I can certainly second that, Speaker, with respect to the importance of what the Ode means to our province and to, of course, the population of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Ode is a tradition going back to the 1950s. It's been sung at many places throughout our province, not only at the university but in all corners of our province. Speaker, this is the anthem of the people of the province and omitting the anthem from convocation ceremonies, I firmly believe, is a clear lack of respect for this hon. House.

We have 40 Members in this hon. House representing 540,000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and it's important for the public to be reminded of that. This is the people's House. This is the official Ode that is in legislation and for it to be removed, Speaker, from Memorial University, it cuts me to the quick.

I go back to my colleague again from CBS when he referenced that his daughter is going to be graduating and I'm hoping I'm going to hear him stand up and sing the Ode at that convocation ceremony. If he wishes, I'll have his back but that's entirely up to him, Speaker.

Memorial University historically is exactly that, it is a memorial to the fallen of our province – it's to the fallen of our province. When the hon. minister spoke just a few moments ago she said it evokes tradition and passion – it evokes tradition and passion when we speak in this House.

When she said that I am reminded and I am thankful that my parents took me to the Remembrance Day ceremonies in my hometown of Pouch Cove. I can see the veterans parading in there now, Speaker. I can hear Mr. Alex Gruchy sing "God Save the Queen" and the "Ode to Newfoundland." I can hear him now as a young boy. I had the honour as mayor to continue that tradition in my hometown of Pouch Cove, as it carries on in all towns in my district.

But when I go back, my colleague said you can't forget where you came from. If we don't know our history, we are bound to repeat it. So when I think back and hear that Ode sang, I think of the veterans. I think of the names of Noseworthy, Hudson, Sullivan and Evans. I think of Baldwin. I think of Mr. Reuben Castella, who was one of the 68 who answered the call the morning after the Battle of Beaumont-Hamel. He lived in Pouch Cove, Mr. Reuben Castella. If I'm not mistaken, he died in 1984. He lived a long life when he came back, but he lived each day, when he came back, with a battle every day that he fought in the World War.

I think of Mr. Bill Tuff of Pouch Cove who was in a concentration camp, who was imprisoned and was there for years. His family had given him up for dead. They had a memorial service in Pouch Cove as well, with a headstone and he came home three years later, what that gentleman went through. So when we sing the Ode, it invokes passion and I'll be the first to admit it.

For that to be removed from Memorial University is a lack of respect for this hon. House and for the people of this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. WALL: Speaker, as I said, the veterans that came home from my hometown of Pouch Cove, like thousands of others across this province – we have them here in this Legislature. They have their own

battles, each and every day and how can we honour them by removing this Ode? I simply cannot fathom it, Speaker. We have to remember our history. As I said, if we don't remember our history, we're bound to repeat it.

So I'm hopeful this PMR today will be supported on both sides of the House. I'm hopeful that we're going to see some leadership here, as the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs said, open to a legislative change, open to discussion on it. I'm hopeful that we're seeing some leadership today, Speaker, because it's needed. In this day, in our society right now, leadership is needed from this hon. House in order to show leadership at Memorial University and what needs to be done.

Speaker, my colleague from Bonavista said, some ways ago: The House supports Memorial University for the university to fire on all cylinders. Well, I couldn't agree with that more, Speaker, but I can stand here in my position today to say that the university has to support this House. The university has to respect what comes from this House and if that is needed with a legislative change, well, I'm hoping that we will have the leadership to see that.

Speaker, I've been in this House two years. There are five or six of us that are the rookie MHAs here in this House. I've had many proud moments standing on my feet in this House, but the proudest is the opportunity that you gave me, Speaker. You gave me the opportunity to stand and sing the "Ode to Newfoundland" in this hon. House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. WALL: It's still brought up to me today by people across our province. I'll be forever grateful for that and who knows, one of these days, I might have the chance to sing the "Ode to Labrador." We'll see. But I can certainly tell you, it is a proud moment for me, one I'll never forget. As I go back to the minister's comment about invoking passion,

I'm full of it today. I'm soon going to swell and bust the buttons on my shirt, I can tell you that.

Speaker, I can tell you just because we walk through those doors, it doesn't change who we are. We are Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We respect the Ode. We respect the people who have fallen and we remember those from what they gave for the benefit of our Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

So, Speaker, I'll take my seat. I do know that we do have others who want to speak to this. I'm happy to speak to it today. I'm hoping that this House will support the PMR, as we go forward, and I do hope that we will get some leadership with respect to decision-making and legislative changes in this hon. House that we can go forward and say to all people of this province that we support you, we support the "Ode to Newfoundland" and we support the "Ode to Labrador" at the singing of all convocations.

Speaker, thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER (Warr): The hon. the Member Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

C. TIBBS: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I only need five minutes just to say a couple of things here. We go through legislation every other day; this is a no-brainer. This is 100 per cent a no-brainer. The majority of this province overwhelmingly wants this Ode back into our convocation, including the "Ode to Labrador" as well.

I can actually remember the first time I ever heard the Ode. It was just about every other day. I don't know if anyone else can remember – I'm a little bit younger than most here, but if you can remember when you were younger at the end of CBC, when they signed off in the nighttime, what did you see? You heard the "Ode to

Newfoundland” and it was sung beautifully. You seen the fishermen on the water. You seen the people up on Signal Hill dancing and it was an absolutely beautiful commercial to end off the day. I remember hearing the Ode and I still go into YouTube every now and again where you can find it, and I love listening to it because it’s absolutely fantastic.

Memorial University is built to remember our fallen soldiers but, like I said before, it’s a great reason. The Royal Newfoundland Regiment got a saying. I don’t know if anybody knows what it is. Anybody know what the Royal Newfoundland Regiment motto is? Better than the best, and it’s a great motto. We talk about soldiers and we talk about our veterans sort of thing. My colleague from Cape St. Francis talked about, when he was younger, he heard the veterans come in and sing the Ode and it was absolutely a beautiful sight. But I’m looking forward to what the veterans would have to say. What the fallen soldiers if they could say today, what they would say. These beautiful 14- and 15-year-old kids who knew what they were fighting for, and this would remember them.

We talk about soldiers and we talk about veterans, I don’t know if everybody in this House knows we got a veteran right here in this House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. TIBBS: We have a veteran right here in this House of Assembly, the Member for Terra Nova. The Member for Terra Nova, right out of high school, he went through the mud and he went through the blood. He gave everything he had to ensure that this country would be kept safe. He gave his time to this country. So I hope that he does stand today and have a few words as well.

But my key message would be this: If we’re wondering what reasons we need to ensure that we keep that Ode there, just ask yourselves what would our fallen soldiers

say and what would our current soldiers say because this university is in honour of them. It’s because of them that we’re able to send our daughters and our sons to this university for some of the top education in Canada. I’m more than proud because of that.

I just looked up the actual definition for tradition and it says the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation. I don’t know about you all, but I do not want to be the generation that takes the Ode out of Memorial University. Let’s make the decision today to keep it where it belongs.

Thank you very much, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I grew up in Labrador so I listened to – I always have to make sure I get this right – the Member for Cartwright - L’Anse au Clair speak this morning about the “Ode to Labrador.” My dad is buried in Labrador, my mom still lives there, my brother is still there and it’s my home. But I’ll tell you, the proudest things I am are a Newfoundlander, a Labradorian and a Canadian.

I served in the military and I can remember whenever we had the opportunity as a bunch of Newfoundlanders when we were deployed or doing something, at every option, there was a Newfoundland flag, a Labrador flag and we sang the Ode. Now I’ll be the first to say that we didn’t always sing the “Ode to Labrador” unless there was the right crowd of people there, but it ought to have been sang.

When I thought about this PMR and all the conversation that’s gone on about it, I’ll tell you the one thing that really caught me and hit me the hardest, there was more fight over Memorial Stadium being bought by a

grocery store than there is over Memorial University disrespecting the men and women of this province by eliminating the Ode. There was more gumption by government and the people of this province about a hockey stadium that was a memorial, make no mistake about it, but no different than our university, it's a memorial, and no different than the Ode, it's a memorial. It's a memorial to the people that went before us and all of a sudden it's unimportant and people who shouldn't be allowed to make those decisions are making those decisions. But if it was a grocery store, we'd be outraged. It's really a sad state when you think about it.

Eighty per cent funded by the government, you've got to think, you know, sadly, I believe that this has gone on far too long. This conversations should not be happening a week before the convocation. We knew it happened last year. We had lots of time to fix it. Sadly, through a lack of leadership, and I'm not saying that the lack of leadership comes directly from the other side, but I think this House ought to have made this a bigger priority. I believe that this is an option that allows us to fix it. I believe that the PMR should be voted on and passed, but I believe the legislation should be put before the House of Assembly before we leave tomorrow.

It would probably be the quickest bill that ever got passed in this House. It would happen immediately.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: If we don't understand the importance of where we came from, then, as my esteemed colleague said earlier, we don't know where we're going.

Just last week, the Leader of the Bloc Québécois stood up giving a speech, he had a map of Quebec and in that map of Quebec there was no border to Labrador. If there's no border to Labrador, then that eliminates Newfoundland. I don't care what

anybody says, Newfoundland and Labrador is one united province – one united province. The reality of it is that we sit back and we allow and we don't say these things, we permit them. I do know the Member for Labrador West spoke out about it yesterday on the news, but the reality of it is, as a province, as a House, as a Premier, we should be standing up for these things.

This Ode, as silly and simple as it sounds, the smallness of this, we shouldn't overlook the symbolic importance of this. As many have said before, when you reflect on why this Ode was created, what it represents and why the "Ode to Labrador" was written, it's written not just to honour the people that were alive at that day when it was released. It's not about Dr. Paddon or the "Ode to Newfoundland" that was written in 1902. It's about the people that came before and the reasons it was written. It's about the land. It's about the people that came before us and we need to embrace that. Sadly, we overlook that some times in order to accommodate other people, we don't accommodate ourselves.

Now the university is world-renowned for its accommodation of foreign students. We go out of our way to make them welcome to this province. Do you know why we do that? Because they are welcome to this province. We want them to come here. We want them to stay here. It's an important part of who we are. We've been a cultural mosaic since the beginning of time, a melting pot. However you want to describe it, we've always wanted people from other parts of the world to come here, get educated and stay. It's an important part of what we do. But to eliminate who we are in order to accommodate other people, it doesn't make sense. We need to make sure that this Ode is sang at this year's convocation. Like I said, this legislation allows us to do it. We can move quickly on it and, I think, it's something that we can make happen immediately.

When we talk about the argument with the Ode and how we've overlooked the importance of it for the last 12 months, it's been brought up several times. My colleague this morning, or just a few minutes ago actually, spoke about when he was asked to sing the Ode. I can tell you, I sat in this House, we came here in 2019, and the reality is that was the first time we sang it, I believe. It wasn't just the first time, I mean, it was the first time we sang it in this House and what a feeling. It was overwhelming. It was emotional.

When I joined the military, I signed allegiance to the Queen, I think four times. I've done it here twice and I can't wait to do it to the King. That doesn't mean that my allegiance doesn't lie to this province. I'm in this House of Assembly the same as everyone here. We're here to represent the people who put us here. The people who put us here, I can guarantee you if you were to talk to them, very few would have anything negative to say about the Ode being sang at any kind of an event.

As a matter of fact, I think it should be a broader scope of legislation that tells us we should sing the Ode more often, more frequently, not just at Memorial University convocations. I think it should be sang at high school graduations. It should be curriculum. It should be part of our history because we embrace the history of everywhere else, but for some reason, as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, we forget about our own history.

So if you look at the "Ode to Newfoundland" and the "Ode to Labrador" and you look at the importance of what it does and what it teaches. I mean, you listen to the words or read the words, you can read them as a poem. You can sing them as *Old Christmas Tree* or you can sing the Ode how it's sang. If you sit down and you read those words of either one of the Odes, you will quickly see what it talks about: Strength and beauty and the ruggedness of our land. Do you know what? Both of them say the same thing, just

in different ways; both of them speak to the people, the land, the culture and what this province is made of. For us to allow a university to decide that's not an important part of the convocation, I think we're missing the boat.

I'll say something else, if you're a student that came from another country and you studied in this province and you're convocating this week, next week, what a way to send them off. What a way for them to know who we are, to listen to a room full of proud Newfoundlanders and Labradorians singing about the province that they just got their education in. It tells exactly who we are. I can guarantee you when they go back to their own countries, they sing their anthems. They sing their odes or their anthems or whatever they want to call it. It's an important part of their life and we should not allow it to not be an important part of ours.

The "Ode to Newfoundland" and the "Ode to Labrador" ought to be sang at Memorial University and nobody, not the president of Memorial or the Board of Regents or anybody, should have the ability to say otherwise.

The last thing I'll say on this is I am a veteran and I'm a proud veteran.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: I challenge anyone in this House to find me a veteran that's from Newfoundland and Labrador that would not agree with what we're talking about here today. I can tell you people sacrificed so we had opportunities like this and the mere fact that we have to discuss this in this House is disgusting. It's shameful, it's unacceptable; it shouldn't even be brought to the House. It should not be something that we have to worry about. But I tell you rightfully so, we should be worried about it because it has been pushed aside by people who don't have the right to do that.

I would love to see everybody support this legislation. Not just for our students that are convocating, but for the men and women that came before us and fought for us to have those rights and freedoms. I think we should put this legislation forward tomorrow. I'm sure that this side of the House would grant leave to do a first, second and third reading and push it through as quickly as possible. All you've got to do is ask the question.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Education.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I just want a few words and a couple of observations really about this. Symbols matter, symbols kind of define a culture, collectively, and elements of it individually. Anthems, particularly in the western culture, have been one way of doing that. The Ode, with which I have no issue at all with, we voted unanimously in this House on previously resolutions about the role of the Ode in convocations. That's still unresolved partly, unfortunately.

It was actually written by a guy who was born in Barbados, who died in London, Cavendish Boyle. The music was written by another Englishman, a famous musician called Hubert Parry in the early part of the last century – sorry, the century before. So it's an interesting history but it is part of the history of a colony becoming a dominion, becoming a part of Canada, that identifies very clearly a lot of our history.

No one, I think, on either side of the House debates the position of the "Ode to Newfoundland." I think, however, there has still room for some sensible, reasoned input about how Labrador figures in this whole thing.

We are Newfoundland and Labrador and have been now for some time. It is not a question of taking anything away from the "Ode to Newfoundland" but rather the intent, as I understand it, of this PMR is to add in more than just a passing acknowledgement of the fact that Labrador is part of us and exists.

I think because of that, there are voices that I'm aware of within this province, both on the Island and on the Big Land, who may have some views that are slightly different, perhaps, than what had been fairly clearly outlined in this resolution and that is what actually is the anthem that you would put in there under the *Provincial Anthem Act* that is truly inclusive and representative of all of Labrador.

I'm not sure, as an Islander and a new first generation Islander, that I would be in a position to comment on that. I know that in discussions, informally and offside, with people from Labrador, there is not one single unified opinion about an ode to Labrador rather than necessarily the "Ode to Labrador."

With that in mind, I would propose what I would consider a friendly amendment, but would bow to the wisdom of the Speaker in this.

Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Windsor Lake, that the private Member's motion currently being debated be amended by adding immediately after the words "urge the government to" the words "consider legislation to require provincial anthems" and deleting the words "bring forward legislation to require the 'Ode to Newfoundland' and the 'Ode to Labrador'" in the THEREFORE BE IS RESOLVED clause.

And adding immediately after the words "government be encouraged to" the words "establish an all-party Committee to determine which song should be added to represent Labrador in the *Provincial Anthem*

Act and to” and deleting the words “and bring forward legislation of similar effect” in the FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED clause.

I would welcome your comments on that, Speaker.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The House stands recessed until we can determine whether the amendment is in order.

Recess

SPEAKER: Are the House Leaders ready?

Order, please!

After consideration of the proposed amendment, we find that the amendment is not in order.

The hon. the Member for Gander.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you, Speaker.

It's unfortunate that that item, the amendment, is not in order. However, with the issue of the “Ode to Newfoundland,” as I say I don't believe there's any doubt. I do feel, however, that without some nuances around the Labrador piece, that this motion is somewhat flawed by virtue of its lack, and I will certainly have to consider my position on this.

Thank you very much.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

I just briefly want to speak – I was going to speak on the amendment but now I'll speak on the private Member's motion. First off, I

would like to say, out of respect for all the people who have been impacted by the removal of the “Ode to Newfoundland” in the university, I do support having the “Ode to Newfoundland” put back in.

I understand the intent from the official Third Party to put forward that private Member's motion. Also I recognize their intent on the inclusion of Labrador to feel a part of it because the “Ode to Newfoundland” just specifies Newfoundland.

I hear the Member for Cape St. Francis and other Members over there talk about their private Member's motion. They talk about war. People who fought and died in the war. People who've come home after serving in the war. A Member who actually served our country over there spoke. So it's really, really important to acknowledge the importance of the “Ode to Newfoundland.”

I'd also like to point out it's not only about war, it's not only about the struggle, the survival during war and it's not about the loss of people in war fighting for our freedoms. Because when I look at our province and before we joined Confederation, there was time when we were actually a country. So it's not just war, it's the struggle with hard times, what the “Ode to Newfoundland” meant to the people on the Island and the “Ode to Labrador.” Hard times, the struggle.

I've actually heard accounts from people who are still alive about their fear of starving to death. If it was a hard winter, they were at risk of starving to death. I've heard stories from actually a family member who sat with a woman who had talked about having to actually go on – this is very interesting, so anyone who wants to listen to it, I welcome you to listen to what I have to say. The struggle to survive in Newfoundland and Labrador, the hardships that people had to endure to actually become a province, to become one of Canada – there was a woman who told a story and I won't say who she said it to, but she said when we were

young girls, two of us were on night shift – I might have said this before because it really impacted me. We were on night shift. We used to have to go out in the punt and jig for rock cod at night. We took shifts and the rock cod was for dog food for the winter because your dogs had to survive in order for you to haul wood, in order for you to trap, in order for you to actually be able to travel.

I look at the Island and I know people on the Island went through the same things. The fishery – how many people lost ancestors to the sea? You look at the hard fight to survive, to earn a living. When I listen to the Member for Cape St. Francis and the other Members here in the Third Party, when they talk about what that “Ode to Newfoundland” means to them and their people and the heartbreak of losing that.

Where was it happening? It was happening at the university, our university, our future. We always say the students are our future, the ones going through, getting an education. Do you know what happened when they took it away, what really, really impacted people? When they took it away, they replaced it with what? Nothing.

So what this Private Member’s motion is about is actually reversing a wrong. That’s what they’re trying to do over here. Right?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. EVANS: They’re trying to reverse the wrong. But they’re going one step further. They’re also making it about inclusion, the “Ode to Labrador.” They’re recognizing the importance of the “Ode to Labrador.” Now with that being said, I do have to caution us all about the wording in the private Member’s motion. I do have problems with urging the government to bring forward legislation to require the “Ode to Newfoundland” and the “Ode to Labrador” to be sung at graduation because, in actual fact, it’s not the intent, I know that. I know the intent of this private Member’s resolution

but we have to be very, very careful when we’re actually asking government to direct the university. Because of the precedent it could be setting. In actual fact, I think the intent of it is to actually appeal to MUN to be respectful of the history and the tradition of the proud and strong Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who built our country before we became a province.

The only problem I have with that is when we actually are putting in legislation to direct the university. I don’t think that was the intent.

Also while I’m up here and I’ve got four minutes I do want also to expand a little bit. Memorial University, our proud university, there are many things going on over there that’s actually having an impact. We have to look at the university strike, the MUNFA strike. Was there resolution that came forward that ended the strike? Was it acceptable? It wasn’t completely acceptable. Also one of the things that came out of the strike was that the university, MUNFA, was calling for more say in university decisions and a commitment to collegial governance. That never happened. That’s something that we have to look at when we talk about the university.

The legislation was amended so that the faculty could sit on the Board of Regents, but it actually wasn’t guaranteed. There’s a possibility now of a member sitting on the Board of Regents. So that’s something that needs to be resolved.

We look at the students protesting. Students protesting in 2023 has got to be worrisome and we look at why they were protesting. We also have to look at the quality of life for students at our university that we’re so proud of.

The housing crisis: students are struggling to find a place to live. If you can’t find a place to live in the community that houses the university, you’re denying them access to their education. So that’s something that

needs to be looked at. There are many, many things that we need to look at.

Speaker, I'm not going to go on, but I do say I support the private Member's resolution. I look at the intent of it but, in actual fact, I do have some concerns about the legislation part.

I'll sit down.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to stand today and I'm going to support this private Member's motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

E. JOYCE: I have to say I hear all the time, all around: How did this even happen? Why did this even happen? It's just a question. All of a sudden, we're not going to do the "Ode to Newfoundland" or "Ode to Labrador" at convocations any more. The reason why is because of inclusion, people coming in from outside. But if you actually sing and play the "Ode to Newfoundland" and the "Ode to Labrador" for people who are coming from outside the country and coming to our university for the inclusion part, it will show what a great province we have in Newfoundland and Labrador.

So all of a sudden, because it's not inclusive, and we welcome all international students here, all international students we welcome to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, but for some reason now, we can't stand up and express ourselves in Newfoundland and Labrador at a convocation at Memorial University.

I know it was brought up earlier a lot, Mr. Speaker, about the people that passed

away. I had an uncle who passed away in the First World War, I found his grave in France. For him now to think that we have an issue about playing the "Ode to Newfoundland."

I'll just tell you something, if anybody ever travelled around, which I had the privilege of doing and going up to the war memorials, when they realize you were from Newfoundland at the time, not kidding, do you know what they play? The "Ode to Newfoundland," they have it.

So we can't play it here in Newfoundland and Labrador for the respect of fallen soldiers, but back then the "Ode to Newfoundland" because we were still part of the British Empire, we were not part of Canada, they played the "Ode to Newfoundland" over in France, in Belgium and other areas, but we can't play it here at the university. Here we are debating, asking the university that was built, Memorial University, for the people who laid their lives down and the people who suffered, we're asking can we, please?

We're the Legislature. No disrespect, but if someone says to me we're stepping on the autonomy of Memorial University to get the "Ode to Newfoundland" and the "Ode to Labrador" power to us; guilty as charged.

I would say in this House, Mr. Speaker, Labrador means a lot to me also. That's where my dad, all my family fished, I had an aunt who lived up there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

E. JOYCE: The Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair, she remembers this, when they were changing around the seats in here. When they were changing the seats around, I stood up for Labrador. I was adamant in our caucus that Labrador would maintain four seats because of its diversity, because of its geography and its uniqueness. I stood up for Labrador and I make no apologies for that. I make no

apologies for it because Labrador is unique in Newfoundland.

But we can't just say all of sudden, okay, Labrador is unique, we have to just throw everything out. If there's an issue with the "Ode to Newfoundland" or the "Ode to Labrador" let's do what we're doing and let's change it. But just don't put a stop to it because the people coming in; there are a lot more international students coming in. They're proud to come to Newfoundland and Labrador. We should be proud of what we're doing for people around the world.

We should stand up and don't take a back step because there are people coming in. Let's stand up and say how proud we are. Let's stay in Newfoundland and Labrador. We're a proud people. Labrador: proud people; very proud people. My father and grandfather spent more time in Labrador than I was ever born.

Let's have this debate here today about letting Newfoundland and Labrador be prominent at Memorial University. Let's not take it and oh, we can't discuss it. We can. This is the Legislature of Newfoundland and Labrador. We're here to represent the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We're here to represent the past of Newfoundland and Labrador. The past includes the people who laid down their lives to be called Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

E. JOYCE: Why we're here, why we're even – and there are a lot of people from Labrador who laid down their lives also. A lot of people from all over this province that laid down their lives, a lot. My brother served in the army. He could tell you stories, too. We're all affected by this here. Then why we can't pass a resolution in here and tell Memorial University.

Mr. Speaker, if you know we're doing something here that's going to hurt the full

autonomy of Memorial University, there's a problem. If we walked in and said, okay, you have to start cancelling these classes, you have to cancel this class; we have a problem. But the minute you walk in to Memorial University – and I don't care who agrees with me, who don't agree with me – and say, you have to respect Newfoundland, you have to respect Labrador, play the Odes at the convocations, Mr. Speaker, I will lead the charge. But there'd be only one problem, I won't be able to get their first because I'd say everybody in this House would lead the charge.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

E. JOYCE: The only problem is now, government – and I understand where government is coming from, I understand. We can't get on the autonomy of Memorial University. Well, let's be politically correct. I can tell you one thing, I'm not worried about that. To get the "Ode to Newfoundland" and the "Ode to Labrador" played at the convocation to represent my uncle, represent my brother, represent the Member here who was in the army here, represent him also, the memorial for him also and everybody else, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, I'm not concerned about the public backlash because I can tell you people want us to do it.

I'm not criticizing anybody on the Board of Regents, but when we have a group to sit around and say okay, we made that decision, now we're going to move on from it, and we can't go back as legislators, people we represent and say no, that's not happening.

Mr. Speaker, do you know the sad part about this? They're down there saying we want the autonomy. We want the autonomy, you can't come in and tell us to play the Ode. Guess what? The same people in Newfoundland and Labrador who can't hear their anthem sang at the convocation are the same ones supporting them and paying

for it and they're saying that no, no, no we can't.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to support this private Member's motion. I'll stand up for it and I hope the government will stand up because what's happening in this private Member's resolution is saying that we should go back and get legislation, if we need to, play that "Ode to Newfoundland," play that "Ode to Labrador." If there are changes that need to be made, let's make the changes. There's no problem with that, but just take it and throw it out because we got the people coming in.

Do you know something, Mr. Speaker? I spoke to a lot of people who were international students. Do you know what they said? We didn't know anything about that being cancelled. They didn't know anything about that. They're proud to be in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I deal with a lot of Ukrainians. If we played the "Ode to Newfoundland," do you think they're going to say you shouldn't do that? I was with a bunch of Ukrainians last Sunday night and there were Ukrainian songs and they started dancing. I was proud that at that festival we were playing a Ukrainian song. I'm proud of their heritage. I'm proud that they got out in the middle of the floor and just started dancing to the Ukrainian anthem and Ukrainian songs. I'm proud of it.

I'm as proud as watching Ukrainians and other people from other countries celebrate their diversity from their countries here in Newfoundland and Labrador as they are us celebrating Newfoundland and Labrador and the struggles we went through all throughout the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. All throughout the struggles that we went through, they are just as proud of us celebrating our culture, our heritage, as I am to watch them celebrate, to learn from their culture and heritage.

So I'm going to support this private Member's motion and I just don't see why

we're even here. I think as legislators, as the people, we always say we make the decisions here. Let's stand up and let's put a motion in here. Let the government stand up and support this and let's get this done so we can put this aside, so we can go back and celebrate our culture, celebrate our heritage, just like we celebrate any other country's heritage that people live in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We're all one, but we're all distinct. If someone from Ukraine wants to be distinct and play the Ukrainian anthem and their songs and dance, bring it on. If someone else wants to come from the US and wants to play the US anthem and tell us the difference, play it. But we should not, by any means, be stopped from playing the "Ode to Newfoundland" or the "Ode to Labrador" at a convocation at Memorial University made by a bunch of people behind closed doors.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

I stand as well to add my voice to all of those in this House today who support this private Member's resolution. In some ways, I question why we have to spend an afternoon talking about something that should have been a given.

When a decision like this is made by a university, and when that decision was originally made, it was a very small group of people at the university who made the original decision. It wasn't the Board of Regents or the Senate. It was a small group of the president and a bunch of vice-presidents who made the decision to stop playing the Ode.

They finally recognized after an outcry – and maybe in some ways we should be thankful because Memorial University, despite itself, has turned around and united the people of Newfoundland and Labrador once again. There's nothing as strong in Newfoundland and Labrador than the pride that we have in our province and the pride that we feel as people no matter where we live in this great province of ours.

When a university takes an action that impacts people all over the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, then you hear the outcry. That's what we've heard. We've heard the outcry in all of our districts from people who are upset and they're clearly upset about an action that the university has taken without any consultation, without any briefings, without even going out or talking about how can we make changes to, how we can adjust, what could we do differently? Instead, their decision was simply to remove it and that was the wrong decision.

Then this House, last week, the university had an opportunity to set things right and instead of setting things right they doubled down. They doubled down and said no, we're not going to play the "Ode to Newfoundland" and that, in itself, is not the right decision, once again.

Imagine, we have lots of symbols as a province. We have a provincial bird. We have a provincial flower. We have a provincial flag. Imagine if the university had decided that they were no longer going to fly the provincial flag because they've decided that they were no longer going to play the provincial anthem.

Now, whether that anthem needs adjustments – or, not adjustments, whether it needs to be changed, that's a question. But the university chose to take one of the symbols of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and no longer recognize it. As a result of that, what you have seen is the emotion of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians everywhere to say that is not

the right decision. All of us in this House have stood and talked about this and said no, it is definitely not the right decision.

Today's PMR is a way to look at, let's make some adjustments here. Let's say to the university, let's acknowledge the "Ode to Newfoundland," let's sing it again but let's recognize the significant contribution that Labrador makes to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. It carries more than its weight.

I had the honour and privilege of working in Labrador for five years and I did go to the arena in Goose Bay and attend the Labrador Games. I know the Member for Torngat Mountains was a competitor many times in the Labrador games and I sat in that arena, as the minister said, and when you sit there in a blocked arena and hear them sing the "Ode to Labrador," I don't think there's a dry eye in the place. Anybody that's originally from Labrador, I think they grow three inches taller. No wonder they kick that ball seven feet or eight feet up in the air, whatever you call it –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: – because you haven't seen nothing until you see them compete.

So I say that this is what this is all about. This is about emotion, it's about pride and it's about, as my colleagues have said, remembering the past. That's what we're talking about here. We're talking about an institution who, with a stroke of the pen or a thought process decided they were no longer going to play the anthem to Newfoundland and Labrador, one of the symbols of our province.

Again, we stand here today passionately, all of us in this House of Assembly, simply saying this has to be fixed. This needs to be changed. It is unfortunate that we stand here with a private Member's resolution talking about having to bring in legislation to do something that the university should

know, should be automatic and we should not have to be talking about this today or doing it. They should have done it already. Yes, we should be making the changes that need to be made to bring our anthem into the future, but never, never forget where we came from or never forget the sacrifices of the people who have gone before us, as other Members have said.

But again, it's disappointing. I'm disappointed in the university. I'm disappointed in the senior administration of the university who have made an arbitrary decision that impacts so many people, but at the same time has a united a passion and a commitment to see this done again and done right.

So, Speaker, I will take my seat and look forward to other comments.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Thank you.

I'm recognizing the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

I'll start off by saying this clearly, I love my province. I'm proud to be here. I'm proud to be from here. I grew up here, corner boy, Newfoundlander and Labradorian, you name it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. DINN: I'm proud of who we are.

I'm proud of my citizenship but when you consider that, citizenship really comes down to an accident of birth, in many ways, but I choose to remain here. My family is here. My daughter is coming back here. The family will be whole. I sing the anthem, not only the Canadian anthem with the new part of it in French, but the provincial anthem as

well and I think I can carry a pretty good tune. I know the feeling of pride that it inspires.

I remember, Speaker, when it comes down to symbols, when we're talked about way back in 1981, I finished up my internship in Harlow backpacking around Europe and the greatest sense of pride is when you would meet fellow Canadians or Newfoundlanders, their flag was quite evident there. You always had that feeling, that sort of that sense of belonging and camaraderie, if you will.

I know the value of attending ceremonies like Remembrance Day and Memorial Day. I know my father instilled that into us, my father and mother would take us down to it. Never really understood it at first, what it meant; the significance of it as a young child. But when I had children of my own, that was part of the annual routine because it was important to remember the people who sacrificed themselves, their lives, in those wars.

Interesting to note that Remembrance Day, while it's a holiday here and it should be, in other parts of the country it is not.

One of the greatest honours I've had as an MHA is to lay the wreath at the Field of Honour in Mount Pleasant on Memorial Day and Remembrance Day. I've been fortunate the Legion itself has awarded me one of its highest honours for a non-member, the Friendship Award. I take all of this with great importance.

Tradition is important. Any of you here from Holy Cross? I know there are a few. Even that, when it comes to the tradition, the school anthem, all those are part of my upbringing.

MUN's decision was ill advised; it was wrong. They should've take a different approach. Definitely should've taken a different approach. It was not the way they should've gone with this. Is it contempt? Not

sure. Is it about forgetting where we came from? Not sure, because did we forget where we came from when we changed the flag, the Newfoundland flag, in 1980. That's when the flag that we have, the current provincial flag, came into effect. It's important to remember that at least up until 1980 in attending Remembrance ceremonies and a lot of the young men and women, too, who died in the first two Great Wars died under the Union Jack. Was that an act of basically sacrilege?

So I support personally the idea certainly of speaking to MUN. We supported the resolution in urging them to make the necessary changes, to reinstate the Ode. No issue that we supported that resolution the last time and we would certainly – we have no issues meeting with them, urging them, pointing this out. It wouldn't be a problem supporting this PMR were it not for the demand for legislation, because if it's about making sure that the Ode is sung, then maybe what we need to do is extend – if it's legislation, extend it so that the anthem, the Ode, is sung in all school, public schools in this province. It's not.

Now I was taught to believe, and I hear it at the Remembrance Day ceremonies and at the Memorial Day ceremonies, that those who fought and died in the two world wars and in the conflicts since, did so that we might have freedom, so that we would enjoy our freedom today and I believe that. That is something that I hold dear and that's the freedom of speech. The freedom to worship as we believe. The freedom of assembly. The freedom to travel where we want. Academic freedom. Academic freedom is not just simply in the courses that are being taught but in the freedom of ideas.

Do I think that Memorial is wrong in what it did? Yes. But if I'm going to have the courage of my convictions, and if we're going to have the courage of our convictions, then it means we've got to live with the fact that we support a decision even when it's not to our liking.

So either we believe in it or we don't; either the comments that we espouse on Remembrance Day about freedom has meaning, or it doesn't or it's just words, but I somehow think that those who fought and died, if that's where we're going, then it comes down to supporting those ideas.

If we want to look at it, Speaker, there are other things that threaten speech, that threaten our freedoms today.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's called Memorial.

J. DINN: It may be called Memorial and we're not talking about whether it's being changed. We're talking about whether the Ode is being sung. The Ode, by the way, which was written by Sir Cavendish Boyle. He wasn't even a Newfoundlander. That's the first thing. He wasn't even a Newfoundlander and Labradorian, for that matter.

I do believe here that if it comes down to, if you want, that we will support anything, if it's about urging, if it's about making sure that the university understands, but once we start down the road of legislation that's where we draw the line because if we believe that the university has academic freedom, then it has that freedom of ideas, even ideas that we fundamentally oppose.

Maybe it's not important to certain Members on this side, I don't know. But it's important to me and to this Party. Period. No ifs, ands or buts about it. I've had relatives who have died in these conflicts. It is a sacrifice and if it means anything, again, I am going to say that academic freedom must be held. That's a principle, that's a fundamental principle and belief in this system. It's as simple as that.

So urge the university, remonstrate with them, meet with them, do all you can, but once we cross the line of legislation, we've taken that first step down a road where if we don't like something we will legislate it, as simple as that.

AN HON. MEMBER: If they want academic freedom, take the money away.

J. DINN: I'm willing to carry on this discussion with Members later, but it's simply for us, Speaker, it comes down to do we believe that the people who fight these wars, who fought and died, who sacrificed their lives, did they fight for freedom and what does that mean? I think to pass legislation, which basically imposes a certain belief on another institution for exercising their right, is shameful. Period.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further speakers to the resolution?

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

It's an honour to speak in this House, again, but it's particularly an honour when we talk about righting a wrong here. That's what this is about. This is about righting a wrong here.

I first have got to start by saying that I am bewildered and I'm shocked and dismayed at the Leader of the Third Party's philosophy here. So he agrees something has been done wrong, an injustice has been done, but he feels, as legislators – now keep in mind, legislators are objective, the reason we were elected was to do the will of the people, the rights of the people and to protect the people. But he's willing to sacrifice all of that by saying sometimes you've got to live with a wrong. That bewilders me, that shocks me and it disappoints me. Particularly when I know we may differ on approaches to certain things here, but we should have a commonality about what's morally justifiable here and we've already accepted.

We've already justified at the end of the day that we all agree that the Ode is something that's historic, it's culturally part of what we

do here, but just as important, it's part of the fabric of Newfoundland and Labrador. I don't care if it was written by somebody from Newfoundland and Labrador or from somebody from –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: – some other country.

I will tell you a stories. When Chris Andrews sang the "Ode to Newfoundland" at Mile One to a packed house for a herder playoff game and the opposing team from the West Coast had a player from the Mainland and, after having a discussion, said to me: Can I ask you something, Brazil? Why was Darren Langdon crying when that song was sang? I explained to him what that means to every Newfoundlander and Labradorian. That speaks volumes to what it means to the people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: So I can't not emphasis my dismay with the Leader of the Third Party her of not playing up the value of us being able to do something right for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and right a wrong that was made by a small group of individuals, being narrow minded, short sighted and probably misinformed as to what was happening here. You don't fix something by breaking something else. That makes no sense to anybody in the world. It's very disheartening when I hear that.

I will say on a lighter note that the university owes an apology to some neighbours in Airport Heights, because there was a violation of the noise ordinance two weeks ago. There's a little pub in Airport Heights and they have musicians who play. The last song sang by every musician – it's a house rule – is "Take Me Home, Country Roads" because it's uplifting. People sing along and everybody gets heightened about it. Two weeks ago – thank God there's somebody out there who watches this House of Assembly and saw when we stood in this

unison and sang the “Ode to Newfoundland and Labrador.”

AN HON. MEMBER: What’s the name of them?

D. BRAZIL: I’d rather not say that because I don’t want to give advertising to companies and not be fair to every other pub and restaurant that are in here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: Nonetheless when the musician sang “Take Me Home, Country Roads,” people sang that. Then, before he finished, he said: Brazil, this is for you and your colleagues in the House of Assembly and sang the “Ode to Newfoundland and Labrador.”

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: For the first time, we got a complaint to the City of St. John’s for violating the noise ordinance that night because everybody in that pub sang it to the top of their lungs and sang it in unison. That speaks volumes of what that means to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: So when we all speak about the Ode, we speak from pride, we speak from our hearts and we speak from history. Everybody has acknowledged it here – everybody. The Third Party Leader has acknowledged it. This is about the memorial; this is about respect for those who sacrificed so much in this province for us. It’s about not excluding anybody; it’s about finding a better way to include everybody. But remembering our history, remembering the significance of it and adding to it, learning from it and enhancing that.

So when we don’t take that pride into account, when we don’t stand in unison, when we don’t support what needs to be

done, then I think we’re doing an injustice to the people of this province; the tens of thousands of people who served in our military who supported that; the devastation that happened at Beaumont-Hamel and in the First World War; the acknowledgement to call our university a Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador. That speaks volumes. That wasn’t decided lightly when it was done in Newfoundland and Labrador at the time. That was done based on pure pride and respect for those who served.

To dismiss it, because part of that was the Ode – it was sang at every convocation. Now I’ve been fortunate enough to have been at maybe eight or 10 of them as a Member and as part of family members and that graduating. But to sit on that stage and hear that song sang and sing along and see the audience and even international students singing along with it, that to me is pride. That’s inclusion. That speaks to our culture and our history.

For us to be dismissive here and say oh yeah, there’s a wrong done but we’re not going to correct it as legislators, then I think we need to look in the mirror and decide, why are we in this House of Assembly? We have a responsibility and more importantly an ability to do what’s right. Do I think the university overstepped their bounds? Yes, 100 per cent. Do I think a small group of people did the wrong thing? Yes, 100 per cent. But a bigger group of people have an ability to fix that: the House of Assembly and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I think we need to do it right now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, I’ll end on the note that we stand proud in Newfoundland and Labrador. We stand proud for our history, our culture, but our ability to find ways to include all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and that’s what this resolution is all about. It’s about doing the right thing for the people of Newfoundland and

Labrador, keeping our history and culture alive and sending a clear message about the memorial that we stand for in this province and our history.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope we'll get full support for this resolution and we'll find a way to bring the Ode back and an inclusive way to ensure that Labrador is also acknowledged for the important part of this great province of ours.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER (Bennett): The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

K. HOWELL: Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to stand and speak to this important issue. As was indicated by the many speeches from my colleagues today, I think we're all in agreement that the "Ode to Newfoundland" is something that's very important to the history of our province; it's something that inspires a sense of pride in each of us and something that we're all very proud to be a part of.

When it comes to Memorial and how they've decided to exclude that from their convocation ceremonies, I think we are all in unanimous agreement that we think that they made the wrong decision there.

In my personal experience at MUN, I feel like I was always given resources. I was always given an education. I was always given support. I liked MUN so much that I stayed for seven years. I was there long enough that I should have had a parking spot and my name on the door, but I never did get a parking spot from the lotto.

I think they've done a great job of inspiring students and putting education into the hands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, as well as students from all across the country and the world. But in this instance, I think it's clear that they've made

a wrong decision and the reaction and response to the decision made by Memorial to stop singing the Ode is evident in a lot of media that's come forward, letters that have come to departments and things that have been published online. People are clear in their resolve that this should be part of the convocation ceremonies.

This is a situation that was created by Memorial University and it's one that must be rectified by Memorial University. While we all stand here together, there's a line here that we have to tread cautiously because, as my colleague from Torngat Mountains stated, MUN is an autonomous body and has its own responsibilities. So that's why I referenced earlier in an answer in Question Period that we have to take that into consideration as we look at what it is that we can actually conduct here in this fashion.

So we all agreed, on a previous resolution for MUN, to recognize the will and desire of the Legislature as well as the overwhelming desire of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to maintain this singing. So I think it's also worth noting we stood here a few weeks ago and sang in this House of Assembly. We did sing the "Ode to Labrador" as well, albeit half pitiful, I will say. We've learned the words since that and we will do a better job moving forward. I have encouraged everybody in this House to get a copy and to learn the words because it is something that is so meaningful to the people of Labrador and as they contribute to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

But, right now, I think, as this resolution is presented, we're in a bit of a space here where it's very difficult for a government to legislate somebody to do these things. It's a slippery slope as you walk down what it is actually that you're going to legislate individuals to do.

For that reason, I will ask my colleagues to give that some consideration as we move

forward with this private Member's resolution.

SPEAKER: Seeing no other speaker, if the Opposition House Leader speaks now he'll close debate.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

It's been an interesting debate, an interesting afternoon, on an issue that I figured all along the majority of the House did support this. You find a lot speaking: we support the Ode. But there's a but coming out of people now because there's some apprehension on legislating MUN – Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador – to take this authority away from them.

I think that is the right decision. MUN has lost their ability, in my mind, to manage any anthem in this province. The argument of the autonomy, I respectfully disagree. I don't know how you equate the autonomy of MUN, MUN's autonomy over educational purposes, research purposes, to include the Ode, to include an anthem. I can't rationalize that in my own mind. It makes no sense to me.

My daughter is going to MUN and a lot of our children and in the future, down the road, our grandchildren's generations will go to MUN. They don't go in there thinking that MUN decides when to play your anthems, your national anthems. That's not what they're there for. If you're from this province, you go in there as a proud Newfoundlander and Labradorian into a university that's named the Memorial University after fallen soldiers in this province.

I heard my colleague, the Leader of the Third Party, said quip out that it wasn't even written by a Newfoundlander. Really? It was adopted by Newfoundlanders; it's loved by Newfoundlanders. That's what matters most.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: Comments like that – and right now the problem with the Ode is there are a lot of Indigenous communities, there are a lot of people not from our province that have issues with some of the language that's in the Ode. We're not saying that's wrong, but you can't exclude to include. I keep repeating this: We're excluding to include.

What we're saying is we're open, we were supportive of a – actually it was a resolution or amendment brought forward earlier by the government side. We're okay with an all-party Committee. Sit down and hash this out, have consultations, whatever you want to do; find a way forward. I don't believe in hiding behind MUN's autonomy to protect them from dealing with the Ode.

I say it again, they have lost the right to deal with the Ode. They've lost the respect of the people of the province and I believe they've lost the respect of most people in this Legislature. Members of this Legislature are voted in by the people of this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. There's representation right across.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: I have a colleague here from Labrador and a proud Labradorian. There are Members of the Third Party from Labrador. We've got government Members out of Labrador. Labrador is a very important part of our Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. We're asking for both Odes to be sang. We're also saying if there are problems with those Odes, let's go and let's have a look and fix it. But why take them out? The fundamental question I keep asking is why are we taking them out?

I've had the pleasure, a distinct pleasure – and I don't hide behind any accusations of there are more important things in this province – there are. But I tell you this is equally as important. I went to Beaumont-Hamel. I had the privilege – it is a privilege. I

went to Beaumont-Hamel in 2010 and I partook in the wreath laying ceremony at Beaumont-Hamel. It's a very moving event. We had the privilege to lay a lot of wreaths on that pilgrimage.

But do you know what was sang at Beaumont-Hamel when we laid the wreath? Do you know what was sang? They sang the "Ode to Newfoundland." They sang that "Ode to Newfoundland." I tell you now I was there and there were other Newfoundlanders and ex-patriots there, it was a very proud moment. No doubt, our national anthem is important and what have you, but when they sang the Ode at Beaumont-Hamel, it was one of the most moving experiences of my entire life.

Yet, we get into wisdom of these academics that are going to decide no, no, we're going to fix this up. What about us? What about the people in this province that's adopted this and loved it. Who cares who wrote it? Forever and a day. What about us? We don't have any say. What about this Legislature?

Again, I'll come back to it: This Legislature is a very powerful body. We make the laws of the land. Yet, we're hamstrung by a university, a Senate and a Board of Regents over there deciding to pull the Ode and we're going to devise a new Ode. But they have no right, as a university, to decide what Ode we sing as people. That's the question.

My colleague, our Leader has just said at an establishment close by they got a notice for a noise bylaw because everyone sang to their heart and soul the "Ode to Newfoundland" a tribute to what we're fighting for. You know, if we don't fight to keep our traditions, to remember our past, where are we going to? I say that in all honesty: Where are we heading to?

We can hide behind MUN's autonomy forever. No one is going over and telling MUN what to teach or what research to do.

We have no problem, we don't want any part of that. We're not talking about doing that. MUN can make their own decisions. They've got a bigger body, three times the size of the Legislature, to make their own decisions. Let them do that. They should not be making decisions on the Odes and I keep repeating that.

We have questioned in this House about the financial operations of MUN. We've debated it many times. I've led the charge on a lot of it and debated it with government. We pleaded to have the AG come in. The AG is in there now; we done that. Does that effect MUN's autonomy? Because there was some question at the time, oh don't come in here. Don't question what we're spending. This is ours, you have no right to come in here.

But government seemed to have found a way to move around the autonomy there, they sent in the AG and they done the right thing, something that we supported and called for forever so long. Now we're going to hide behind the autonomy to say we're not going to sing the Ode, because that's what I'm hearing. That's what I'm sensing around this room. Everyone are saying: We love the Ode and we support the Ode and we don't agree with MUN's decision, but MUN got autonomy and we're not going to go there.

You know, Speaker, it takes courage to make the right decisions sometimes. You're not always the most popular person in the room, sometimes not in the province. But I strongly believe and I think I've been here long enough that most people will attest to it, and I'm not always right – I always qualify that trust me, I'm not always right. But I tell you, my principles, my desires and my passion will never be outdone by anyone in this Chamber or anyone in this province. I believe rightfully or wrongfully in certain things. Whether you're with me or not, I have in me right here, my courage, that's where I fight from.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: It's not always the most popular thing. It's not always the one I get the most accolades for, and that's all right. But I go to bed at night – and I've used this analogy for many, many, many years. There was a person that I worked with many years ago, only recently reminded what I told him: When you go to bed at night and you can look in the mirror and you know in your heart and soul you done what you thought was right, that don't mean it was right, what you thought was right and in the best interest of anyone around you and you don't feel you caused any harm, you can have a good night's sleep.

That's something that, believe it or not, I actually follow those rules to this day. At the end of the day, as the day is wrapping down, do you know what? Sometimes I can't look in the mirror – I look sometimes and I'm not so happy. I can rectify that. I can make amends for those things and I usually do. But for the most part, that's my measure.

I never lost a wink of sleep on my stance on this issue or my stance for standing up for what I believe is right in this province.

When I was elected, there were probably a lot of better candidates out there elected. When I ran, I didn't even know if it was possible to do the job I ran for, but I believed that giving myself the opportunity, I believed I could make myself able to do this job. I'll be honest with you, a lot of that time, I think will and courage has brought me to where I'm to; nothing other than raw will, courage and determination. Tell me I can't do something and that's when I'll be most determined.

That's why I'm so passionate about this Ode issue because it offends me. It offends me to no end. It offends me. You can hide behind autonomy – and I heard the Member from the Third Party, the Leader of the Third Party get up. I respect him as an individual.

I don't respect his opinion on this, but we respect each other.

I'm at a loss. You can't believe in one thing and then hide behind it and run for cover. You can't use autonomy for cover and, unfortunately, I've seen that. I think the government opposite are all in agreement, but they're going to do the same thing. There are all kinds of angles we can finagle to get this through. I mean, we're open to an all-party Committee. We want agreement. We want the House to be united on this issue. I don't think I'm going to get that today, and I think that's quite the shameful thing.

You can't have it both ways. That's when it comes back to my point of courage. Sometimes you have to have courage. There are 20-some-odd Members on the government side. If they don't agree with me, that's their right but if they do agree with me, they should do what's right for the people that voted for them, show the courage, show the leadership and stand and support this resolution.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

All those in favour of the resolution?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

SPEAKER: Division has been called.

Call in the Members.

Division

SPEAKER: Are the House Leaders ready for the vote?

Order, please!

All those in favour of the resolution, please rise.

CLERK: David Brazil, Barry Petten, Lloyd Parrott, Tony Wakeham, Jeff Dwyer, Pleaman Forsey, Loyola O'Driscoll, Craig Pardy, Joedy Wall, Chris Tibbs, Eddie Joyce.

SPEAKER: All those against the resolution, please rise.

CLERK: John Hogan, Lisa Dempster, John Haggie, Gerry Byrne, Bernard Davis, Tom Osborne, Siobhan Coady, Pam Parsons, Elvis Loveless, Krista Lynn Howell, Andrew Parsons, Sarah Stoodley, John Abbott, Brain Warr, Sherry Gambin-Walsh, Scott Reid, Lucy Stoyles, James Dinn, Jordan Brown, Lela Evans.

Speaker, the ayes: 11; the nays: 20.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I declare the resolution defeated.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 4. I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader that this House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole regarding An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act and An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, 2000, Bill 38.

SPEAKER: The motion is that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 38.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Warr): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 38, An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act and An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, 2000.

A bill, "An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act and An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, 2000." (Bill 38)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

Seeing no further speakers, shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Those against?

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 21 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 21 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Those against?

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 21 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Those against?

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act and An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, 2000.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Those against?

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Those against?

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Chair, I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 38.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 38.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Those against?

Carried.

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

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

B. WARR: Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 38 without amendment.

SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 38 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

J. HOGAN: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the said bill be read a third time?

J. HOGAN: Tomorrow.

SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

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

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

This House do stand adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, at 1:30 p.m.