



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

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Volume L

SECOND SESSION

Number 66

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HANSARD

*Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA*

Tuesday

April 23, 2024

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

Before we begin this afternoon, in the public gallery, I'd like to welcome Tyler Hynes and his parents Beth and Eugene Hynes. They're here this afternoon for a Member's statement.

Welcome.

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

### Statements by Members

**SPEAKER:** Today, we'll hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Terra Nova, Torngat Mountains, Bonavista, Exploits, Topsail - Paradise and Fortune Bay- Cape La Hune, with leave.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

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

I stand today to congratulate athletes from the Terra Nova District.

The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Memorial High School Hockey Tournament started last Thursday. This is the largest high school tournament in our province, dedicated to the memory of those fallen comrades who never made it home.

This tournament plays 80 games in seven days, which, for the players, officials and volunteers, makes for an unforgettable weekend of hockey.

The Discovery Collegiate Destroyers, with the help of five female players from the Clarenville Minor Hockey system, won the girls battalion division.

The Glovertown Eagles, in combination with J. M. Old Collegiate of Twillingate, won the female bronze medal.

The defending champions from last year, Clarenville High Cougars male team, came up a little short this year, but they played well and enjoyed their weekend thoroughly.

A member of last year's team, Jaden Peddle, returned in a reservist role with the Royal Newfoundland Regiment to volunteer. We thank him for his service.

Long may their legacy live on.

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

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

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

The late Cecil Jacque of Postville left school at Grade 9, when his father took ill. He had to help his family. Cecil's first paying job was building roads in Postville using a pick and shovel. Man, they sure made you work too. That was Cecil, a hard-working man, always providing for his family.

Cecil shared stories about caribou hunts, fishing at Aillik and the Brinex days. His stories kept memories of Elders alive: George Sheppard, Fred Decker, Aunt Birdie, Uncle Johnny and all those who are now gone. Good stories told in a gentle voice about hard work, a bit of fun and caring for each other. Cecil's sense of humour may have got him into a bit of trouble in residential schools. Get a strap every morning, I used to, I think, Cecil would laugh.

Cecil's legacy, a decent hard-working Christian, caring for his community and those around him, especially his children and his wife Matilda – Tilley. Love birds they were, still in love after 55 years of marriage. His children: hard-working, kind, respectful, traits they learned from Cecil and Tilley.

Cecil was a man worth listening to. He lives on in our memories. A man loved and respected is never forgotten.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

**C. PARDY:** Speaker, this past weekend saw the clashing of 16 of the province's male and female high school hockey teams compete in the 7th annual Royal Newfoundland Regiment Memorial High School Hockey Tournament in Paradise and Mount Pearl.

I would like to congratulate all who participated in this tournament and congratulate the male team from Holy Heart high.

While the District of Bonavista has much to celebrate, we were over the moon this past weekend with the D. C. Destroyers from the Discovery Collegiate High School in Bonavista, winning the female division. This school from rural Newfoundland, along with some players from adjacent schools, competed against much larger schools and performed admirably.

In the quarter finals, they defeated the reigning champs, Queen Elizabeth Regional High and the path to the gold medal was opened up.

In the finals, captain Jordyn Piercey, assistant captains Hannah White, Klaire Hayward and Jada Moulard, led the team against Corner Brook Regional High, winning 5 to 2.

Bonavista has a storied history of hockey success and this past weekend's tournament indicated that the skill set of our athletes remains amongst the province's best.

I ask Members of the 50th House of Assembly to join me in celebrating the female Discovery Collegiate hockey team.

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

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

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

Today, I would like to recognize and congratulate Mrs. Ella Humphries of Northern Arm on 38 years of service to the town. Ella will be retiring on June 28, after serving as town clerk. During this time, Ella has been a staple to the community with dedication and commitment. She has also worked with multiple mayors and councillors and has shown she has the knowledge and passion to achieve enhancements and projects to carry the town forward.

Speaker, I would like for all Members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Mrs. Ella Humphries on her retirement and to thank her for her many years of service.

Thank you.

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

**P. DINN:** Speaker, every tab counts as Topsail-Paradise resident Tyler Hynes collects pull tabs from aluminum cans and donates them to the Ronald McDonald House Charities here in St. John's.

Tyler was two years old when he was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia and remained in treatment until he was five. Tyler, now 13 and cancer free –

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

**P. DINN:** – did not stay at the Ronald McDonald House but sees the importance of giving back.

Since 2019, Tyler, with the help of his stepfather Eugene, has been collecting pull tabs. Each December, they donated them to Ronald McDonald House Charities to be

recycled and Ronald McDonald House Charities Newfoundland and Labrador is then paid for the weight of the aluminum.

This year's goal was to reach one million tabs, and this was possible with the tremendous support from caring people in Newfoundland and Labrador and across Canada. They estimate that this year's collection was over 850 pounds, which translates to between 1.1 million and 1.2 million tabs collected. And they are not stopping there, as Tyler hopes to get a million or more again next year.

We do thank the Speaker's office for starting on that as well. Thank you for the donation.

Speaker, I wish to congratulate Tyler on his amazing dedication to fundraising to help others and wish him continued success.

**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.

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

Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, April 18, I had the pleasure of participating in a ceremony of the documentary of *The Forgotten Warriors* at the Miawpukek First Nations community centre in Conne River. First-time filmmaker Noel Joe created the documentary and to use his words: "It is a story of hope and pride .... The sacrifice that was made and the determination."

It was an evening of many emotions that included laughter, tears and anger as we watched the hunger for justice in this story of a nine-day hunger strike by Mi'kmaw activists in 1983. That protest was led by

retired Miawpukek Chief Mi'sel Joe, alongside of his four brothers: Andy Joe, Billy Joe, Ches Joe and Aubrey Joe and friends Wilfred Drew, Mike Benoit, George Drew and Rick Jeddore. Three of them, Ches Joe, Wilfred Drew and George Drew are now deceased.

Reconciliation with our Indigenous leaders and communities is very important and we have come a long way since 1983 and we will continue to strive to be inclusive in all that we do.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating Noel Joe on this documentary and please take the time to watch *The Forgotten Warriors*.

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

**SPEAKER:** Statements by Ministers.

#### Statements by Ministers

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

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

I rise today to highlight our commitment to advancing improvements in transportation infrastructure throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, supported by our government's unprecedented multi-year funding commitment.

With close to 10,000 kilometres of provincial roads and highways, we have once again developed a balanced approach for this year's highway construction season, supported by an investment of \$288 million in *Budget 2024*.

The Provincial Roads Plan is based on input from departmental engineers and the travelling public. Other significant factors in determining the list of highway construction projects include the impacts of climate change; commercial, industry and tourism

impacts; traffic volumes; and populations serviced.

Speaker, in recent weeks, we have already issued tenders for significant road improvements in areas including Jackson's Arm, Cormack, Bay de Verde, Trepassey, Witless Bay Line – repeat, Witless Bay Line – Bay d'Espoir, Labrador West, Burgeo and the Northern Peninsula, with much more on the horizon.

It's going to be a busy construction season as we prepare to upgrade many roads, highways and bridges all across our province. The work we are all doing will support communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador and will help drive social and economic activity in rural and urban areas.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

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

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

Speaker, road infrastructure is a crucial part of this province. Not only is it the mechanism for economic growth across the province, but the key lifeline for residents' daily activities. It's our hope that as we kick off tourism season, tourists who are actually able to rent a vehicle or drive their own don't leave our province with horror stories caused by the neglect of our rural roads.

The minister appears to be working toward the top recycling award, as the 2024 budget reannounces many road improvements previously committed to as far back as 2022. We hope that the Liberal Furey government is fully engaged in completing the mentioned road improvements, unlike the trend they have set thus far. And it's

pretty good that Witless Bay Line has made the list. It must be some bad to get in the Liberal book.

Thank you.

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

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

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

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

Roads are the links to keep our communities together and support our economy and help it grow. As a key element of infrastructure, we want them to remain in the public hands.

That's why we're calling on this government to cancel plans of the twinning of the Trans-Canada as a P3 project. Reinvest the money that is used towards private profits and put it back into regional transit and a regional transit plan to bring down cost of travelling throughout our province, as it's so expensive right now and there is no plan for regional transportation.

Thank you.

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

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

Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

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

During Estimates on Friday, the Minister of Health and Community Services was unable to provide a final cost for 2021 cyberattack.

So I ask the Premier: Three years later, how much taxpayers' dollars did the largest cyberattack in Canadian history cost this province?

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

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

As we know, the cyberattack was quite a disruptive period of time in the health care system across the province. We struck a committee to ensure that it would not happen again and that we would have a robust cyberattack prevention system.

The Minister of Health and the former minister of Health had put together a plan and we intend to enact that plan.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Again, Speaker, this was an attack that shut down our health care system and impacted many people across Newfoundland and Labrador.

I once again ask the Premier: How much was the final cost of this cyberattack?

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

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

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

We committed, during Estimates, to get some figures for the Members opposite. In 2022-23, it was almost \$4 million spent on enhancements; almost \$15 million last year; this coming year, it will be almost \$12 million spent on enhancements; and there will be continuous funding in future years to enhance IT to ensure that it is as secure as possibly can be.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, I'll try again.

NL Health Services now has a credit line of almost \$600 million that has been maxed out. How much of that debt is related to payouts for the cyberattack? I want to know, how much money have we paid out for this cyberattack?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if the information on what has been paid out is available. I know that international agencies and federal agencies have indicated to us that there is certain information that should not be put into the public realm to help prevent future cyberattacks. This is one of those pieces of information.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, during Estimates on Friday as well, it was confirmed that the new Western Memorial Hospital will open later this year without a PET scanner. This was a promise made to the people of Western Newfoundland by the former Liberal premier, so way back, in writing in 2014.

I ask the current Premier: Are you breaking this promise?

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

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

As you are aware, we are quite happy that the new Western Memorial is going to open.

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

**A. FUREY:** It's going to be fabulous. It was announced by the Members opposite but completed by this side. We're happy that it's going to be open. We're happy that it's going to serve the people of Western Newfoundland. It's going to offer a diverse set of services.

With respect to the PET scanner, we did transfer a sum of money to the Western health authority to secure, to ensure that when it was necessary, as the doctors proclaimed it to be necessary, that there would be at least a financial downpayment available to them to be spent. That was the commitment of the last election campaign and that's the one that we maintain.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, I'll ask the question one more time, again, to the Premier: Are you committing to a PET scanner for Western Newfoundland?

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

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

As I just said, during the last election campaign, we agreed that we would transfer money to the Western health care foundation to hold in trust, should a PET scanner be required. Then we would be there to support a PET scanner implementation, but that we had discussions with the radiologists out there, Mr. Speaker, the doctors out there. That is a medical decision, a clinical decision – I know they don't want to hear it, but an operational decision.

We did commit to making sure that the money was in trust with the foundation and, as I understand, it still sits there today, should and when it is needed to secure a PET scanner.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, I'm not so sure that that's a commitment at all, but we've been hearing that government is waiting – quote – for recommendations from the cancer care professionals that the government has not been able to hire yet. The cancer clinic still has a lack of radiation oncologists, radiation therapists, medical physicists and others.

So again, Speaker, I ask the Premier: Is the new cancer care clinic in Western Memorial ever going to open?

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

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

Our recruitment initiatives have secured a number of positions for Western Memorial, Mr. Speaker. The health authority continues to recruit for other positions. In terms of the PET scanner, we have provided \$2 million to the foundation in Western to ensure that when they need that unit, it will be there.

We ensured, through Transportation and Infrastructure, that the new Western Memorial hospital was outfitted with space that can accommodate a PET scanner. The decision to put in a PET scanner is based on the health authority and health care professionals who will determine when and if that is needed.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Again, Speaker, no firm commitment. Again, we've been told that the new clinic, if it ever opens, will only offer very basic services such as prostate and

breast cancer treatment. More advanced care will still have to go to St. John's.

I ask the Premier: Can you confirm this?

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

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

It's a modern facility. It will offer modern treatment options for the people of the West Coast. This government is committed to that, unlike the Member opposite who is committed to taking services away from rural Newfoundland. We want to make sure that we're investing –

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

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

**A. FUREY:** A paved road, though.

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

Premier, you have 20 more seconds.

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

Som, as we have been committed to finishing that hospital, we're committed to the people who are going to serve in that hospital. We're committed to the patients who are going to receive services in that hospital, including a modern suite of available services for cancer, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, what I have continued to ask is the commitment there for the PET scanner, when – when is it going to happen? That's the question that needs to be asked.

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Secondly, what does the new cancer care clinic look like? Is it only going to be the basic services or will advanced care actually be carried out at Western Memorial?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure how much more committed you can be than putting the funding in place and the space in place to ensure that if a PET scanner is needed on the West Coast, if the health authority determine and the cancer health professionals determine that it is required on the West Coast, that it is there.

The money is there, the space is there, the commitment has been fulfilled to put the funding there and the space there. The professional judgment on whether or not that should be put in place is up to the provincial health authority, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

So obviously, there's no commitment.

One thing the minister left out is the staff are not there. That's the problem; they're lacking staff.

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

**B. PETTEN:** It has to be more than smoke and mirrors and photo ops, Speaker, there needs to be action and we don't see any action across the way.

Speaker, during Estimates on Friday, the minister also confirmed the health authority is seeking legal advice on the



appropriateness of the travel nursing contracts.

Speaker, is the legal advice the result of findings of the Comptroller General?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, I have to address the preamble. The Member said smoke and mirrors and unfilled commitments. I remember sitting in this Legislature, Mr. Speaker, in 2007, when that side committed to the Western Memorial hospital. Again, announced it in 2008. Again, they announced it in 2009. Again, they announced it in 2010. They announced it again in 2011. They announced it again in 2012.

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

**T. OSBORNE:** They announced it in 2013. They announced it in 2014 and in 2015. Mr. Speaker, it was actually done when this party came to power in 2016.

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

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

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

Maybe the minister while he was a Member of that party and that caucus for all those years, maybe he should have delivered instead of sitting in the back, keeping his mouth quiet. Maybe he should have spoke up for the people of Western Newfoundland –

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

**B. PETTEN:** – instead of getting up now.

I ask the minister once again: Is the legal advice the result of findings from the Comptroller General? Is this legal advice

you're seeking now a result of some findings from the Comptroller General?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, again, I have to address the preamble.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know if the Member recalls, but I left that party.

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

**T. OSBORNE:** I left that party because of unfilled commitments.

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

**B. PETTEN:** In 2012, Speaker – all those other years he was a happy Member of the PC Party of Newfoundland and Labrador. One of the happier Members – his full family used to be here. Not just him; his entire family used to be here. That is a wild, big divorce.

Minister, can you answer the question? Is this legal advice a result of the Comptroller General? Are you avoiding that answer?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, the advice that the provincial health authority is seeking is based on information that was brought to light, obviously, based on discussions between the department and the health authority.

The review by the Comptroller General, which has now been passed over to the Auditor General, the subsequent and full review by the Auditor General, Mr. Speaker, will look at the appropriateness of spending, the contracts and a number of other issues. The health authority is looking at whether or not the contracts have been fulfilled to the

letter of the contract, which is something we asked them to do.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** So we finally got confirmation that the Comptroller General did find some things, they forwarded it on to the minister and the minister called the AG in to get cover for the Comptroller General. This is what we see happening here.

So, Minister, we also learned Friday that an investigation is under way whether someone at the health authority may have signed off on something that was inappropriate.

Can you table the basis of these findings that the Comptroller General obviously forwarded to you before you contacted the AG?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** See, Mr. Speaker, again, we have the Member on the other side trying to create a story and put words in somebody's mouth that never actually came out.

Mr. Speaker, we've indicated that the Comptroller General's review was in the initial stages. The Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board has indicated that there were no findings, Mr. Speaker. The investigation was passed over to the Auditor General because the Auditor General made the decision to start a full and comprehensive review.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** Speaker, the minister just said in the previous question that through

conversations they had with the health authority and the Comptroller General's office, they decided to bring the AG in. That's basically what he's saying. We all know what's going on. They found things that are not up to scratch. It's his words, not my words. It's the minister's words. Maybe you should tell us why.

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, I think *Hansard* will clearly show what I said versus what the Member opposite is trying to say I said.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** Some people try to be funny, but I'll reserve judgment on what they actually look like, Speaker.

Speaker, based on these new revelations, does the minister believe there was fraud or criminal misappropriation of funds?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, I know the opposite side has asked us to call in the RCMP. I've asked them to tell us what it is we're calling the RCMP in for. I think the investigation and the review will tell us whether or not there are areas to be concerned with, Mr. Speaker, or what those areas are.

We look forward to the Auditor General's review. We also look forward to the piece of work the provincial health authority is doing to determine whether or not the contracts have been followed to the letter of the contract.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** Speaker, I ask the minister a question: Why was the AG called in?

He asked the Comptroller General to come in originally. If the Comptroller General found anything untoward, they were going to forward it on to the AG. This process got skipped entirely because there are things that have come up. Now, they have legal advice on the (inaudible) misappropriation. There are a lot of moving parts here, Speaker, and it's confusing.

But it shouldn't be confusing for the minister to tell us: Why do you have the AG called in now? Why did we skip the Comptroller General? Why do you have the AG called in now? Answers the questions instead of getting on with your theatrics.

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Again, Mr. Speaker, in an effort to try and take the words out of my mouth that the Member is trying to put in, which never actually came out, I can't call the AG in. I was very clear about that the first time the Member asked me to call in the AG. The AG is an independent, arms-length agency. The AG made the decision to do a review of the provincial health authority.

Mr. Speaker, I did have correspondence and discussions with the AG to raise my concerns, but the AG, quite capably, in her own capacity and in her professional judgment, made the decision to do a review. At that point, it was no longer necessary for the Comptroller General to carry out the review.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** One final wrap-up on that, Speaker.

Does the minister think 18 months is an acceptable time period for an AG to come in to do an investigation of this nature? I'd say no.

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

**B. PETTEN:** Second answer to a question he just cut up to mistruth. This House has the ability to call the AG in on any issue. On my last count, this government owns the majority of seats in this House, so this House and this government have the ability to call the AG.

Why didn't you do it? Why don't you get the report done quicker than 18 months? Simple question.

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, I recall the Member saying we should call the AG in, which we can't because she is independent and arm's length. Now, he's asking me to usurp that independence and arm's length agency by saying you should do it faster than 18 months.

Mr. Speaker, I think that's the choice of the AG to do a comprehensive review, which does take time, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** On Friday, the premier of Nova Scotia accepted the resignation of his Justice Minister for statements the minister made diminishing the impact of intimate partner violence on people in that province. The premier took this action, despite the public apology of his minister, because he knew how important it was to signal to victims of violence that the

government will not disregard or diminish their experiences.

Will the Premier of our province do the right thing and hold his Justice Minister accountable and ask for his minister's resignation?

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

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

I spoke on numerous times about how I feel, how important it is to address domestic violence in this province. In fact, the words that she's referring to from another minister from another province are not the words that I used. In fact, I've said the exact opposite.

I said it in a letter here that I wrote the federal minister and I'd be happy to table this: I write this letter to express my concern over the ongoing epidemic of intimate partner and domestic violence, which continues to plague Canada with too frequent catastrophic effects. This was written about a month and a half ago, Speaker.

This has been my position for a long time. This government is taking steps to deal with it. I'm proud of the words I've said. I've apologized for one incorrect statement I said in this House, but I continue to work with individuals. I stress how important it is to deal with this epidemic, not only in the country, but specifically in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Speaker, our Justice Minister said he never, at any point, thought of resigning in the wake of this. Retired Crown lawyer Mike Murray called this minister unfit to be Justice

Minister and the executive director of Corner Brook Status of Women Council condemned the minister's behaviour.

I'm asking the Premier to take leadership here and demand his minister's resignation, as Nova Scotia's premier has demanded of his.

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

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

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, as I said, I continue to work with all the individuals who have been affected by this in the province.

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

The Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

**J. HOGAN:** Again, I've said I've made a mistake in this House with the comment that I made. I've withdrawn that comment. I've publicly apologized for that comment.

I'm very proud of the work that I, as minister, have accomplished in the last few years in the department, including working closely with the police, with the courts, with Fire and Emergency Services, with Search and Rescue and Corrections. I look forward to continuing that work as long as the Premier has faith in me.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** This is beyond just a mistake. It's more than that. It's about attitudes. I asked the Premier to answer this question, but he continues not to take the leadership.

On Monday, April 15, when I questioned the Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality about the Justice Minister's statements, she decided not to stand with women's groups and women across the province who are outraged by the minister's conduct and those calling for his resignation.

I ask the minister again: Instead of defending the minister and his statements, why did you not stand with the people of this province and ask as well for his resignation?

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

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

I thank the hon. Member, of course, my colleague for the question and her attention on this matter.

As we know, intimate partner violence is not just an epidemic here, we see this across the country and ultimately across the globe. Look no further than what's happening in Russia and Ukraine and, of course, the West Bank.

We take this very serious and I'm very proud of the work that we have done across government as well as negotiating a \$13.6-million bilateral agreement with the federal government to support our stakeholders, the people on the front lines. We continuously work on them, not just to help prevent violence but, of course, to educate and to be in a position of prevention as opposed to response.

We take this work very serious. I'm glad to see that the Member also wants to give this her attention. I say she's always welcome, of course, to come and to be part of the resolution, Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Speaker, I'll ask the Premier one final time here today. His Justice Minister stood in this House and stated that "lawyers in this province are not retraumatizing sexual assault victims, whether it's a Crown or a legal aid or a private lawyer in this province. It's not the way it works. It's actually impossible for it to happen."

Are we expected to believe that a minister who believes this to be so true and was adamant just weeks ago, now no longer holds this view?

I ask the Premier: Why doesn't he demand this minister to step aside so his continued presence is not compromising the oversight of justice in this province and further silencing victims of sexual assault?

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

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

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

Intimate partner violence is certainly an epidemic here and across the country, Mr. Speaker. It's something that we take very serious.

With respect to the specific comments the Member opposite is addressing, the minister said with, I believe, sincere remorse and compassion that he made a mistake and he's apologized for that. We're all human. He's fallible. He's owned it and he's committed to working continuously with groups and stakeholders to ensure that this government continues to address intimate partner violence in a respectful way.

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

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

**J. WALL:** Speaker, Thursday in this House, the minister admitted there are only 13 individuals residing at the airport inn. Again, government signed a lucrative sole-source contract with a Liberal friend for \$21 million.

Does the minister think that \$1.6 million per resident is a good value for our taxpayers?

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

**F. HUTTON:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member opposite for the question.

The 13 individuals, which I believe is now 12 individuals, were all living at the 106 Airport Road, a former hotel location, prior to the signing of the agreement. We have engaged with End Homelessness St. John's, as I've reported to the House and through a media release, to do the operational aspect of 106 Airport Road. They have finished their outreach for staff. We have said that there is going to be a phased-in approach to allow individuals with complex needs to come to the 106 Airport Road location, our Transitional Supportive Living Initiative, and it is one that is going to be successful, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**J. WALL:** Speaker, the reality is that no one new has moved into that facility yet, although all these millions of dollars have been spent.

The Liberals went out last fall and signed this contract with no staff and no solid plan to actually run the facility while spending millions, and the proof is at the tent encampment, which is rapidly expanding.

Will the minister now admit that his plan is failing?

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

**F. HUTTON:** Mr. Speaker, it takes a little bit of time to get the appropriate staff in place. Our community partner, End Homelessness St. John's, funded by the federal government, we have reached an agreement with them. They are going to run the operation at 106 Airport Road. They are currently seeking staff. They put out a call for staff. We are going to have addictions counsellors. We are going to have mental health advocates there. We are going to have staff members through NL Health Services so that on site, there will be these supports available.

It is a Transitional Supportive Living Initiative there, what it requires is the proper staff. Putting somebody in a house is not the only thing we're doing. We are offering these wraparound supports, which these folks need.

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

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

**J. WALL:** Speaker, I heard: It takes time and we're going to do .... Well, tell that to the people at the tent encampment who are waiting day after day.

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

**J. WALL:** Speaker, the chair of the housing task force, which is the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi, was going to have all encampment residents placed by Christmas – his words: placed by Christmas.

Now months, and millions of dollars later, the number of people continues to rise. When is this Liberal government going to be accountable to the people at the tent encampment?

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

**J. ABBOTT:** Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to respond.

The task force continues to do its work. We met just Friday past. We got updates from each of our agencies involved. We are working towards some of the things that the Minister of Housing just addressed. We are making sure that the services are identified for each individual at the tent encampment, and we will continue to offer those services.

At the same time, both the minister, myself and other ministers and MHAs visit down at the tent encampment. I was there yesterday talking to the individuals and talking to some of the protest organizers to make sure everybody knows how the government is approaching this very important and significant issue.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

**C. PARDY:** Speaker, on November 8, the Premier and the Minister of CSSD announced a new – quote – targeted seniors' reduction poverty plan.

Minister, when can the seniors of this province, living in food insecure homes, expect to see this plan?

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

**P. PIKE:** Speaker, our province, of course, is home to an aging population and we realize that that requires targeted intervention to ensure that people age well and are able to live in their own communities. That's so important.

*Budget 2024* provides \$10 million for a comprehensive Seniors' Well-Being Plan.

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

**P. PIKE:** Mr. Speaker, this plan will prioritize home repair modifications for our seniors. It will support caregivers who are taking care of individuals in high need and provide income and grants for low-income seniors.

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

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

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

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

In my district, people are being refused access to timely and adequate mental health care; not just adults but children are being failed as well. Last week, I asked the minister, does it take someone dying before people in my district can access mental health care? Now I have a 14-year-old child on life support and her mother tells me that this child has been failed by the mental health care system.

So I rephrase: Minister, how many people must die before people can access adequate mental health care in my district?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Health and Community Services.

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

We cannot speak to individual cases in the Legislature or in public, as the Member knows. I can say that that particular case, Mr. Speaker, the COO in the area has been dealing directly with the Member on that particular case.

I can also say that *Towards Recovery* and the 54 recommendations have been accepted by government and are being put in place. Many of them are already in place.

There's an All-Party Committee that continues to meet to build on the mental health and addictions recommendations in *Towards Recovery*.

There is much more work to be done. We recognize that, which is why we put an All-Party Committee in place, Mr. Speaker. There's significant money, again, in this year's budget to carry on the work of mental health and addictions.

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

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

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

This government must do more than just talk about reducing the negative stigma attached to mental health care. I have a 16-year-old child who can't return to school until they have their psychosis diagnosed. This is the fourth week of missing school and having to live with the growing burden of stigma.

I ask the minister: Where are those wraparound mental health services I was told in the All-Party Committee that you referred to on mental health and addictions? Where are those wrap-around services? They're not in my district and they're not in Labrador.

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, there are a number of entry points for mental health and addictions which are available in Labrador as well. There is Doorways. There's 811, Bridge the gapp. There are FACT teams in Labrador. There are also mental health and addictions beds in Labrador. There are a number of investments we've made.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the COO for Lab-Grenfell has indicated that there is a complement of psychiatry and psychologists

available to provide services in Labrador. If someone falls through the cracks, that is concerning. I know the Member has spoken directly with the COO on this particular case, but there are supports available in Labrador and we look to continue to build on those supports through investments in this year's budget, as well as the All-Party Committee and the recommendations that I look forward to receiving.

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

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

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

This weekend a fire destroyed a tent on the grounds of the Colonial Building. Fortunately, no one was in the tent at the time and no one was hurt.

I ask the Premier: What measures will his government take to prevent such incidents from happening in the future?

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

**F. HUTTON:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member opposite for the question.

We, too, are thankful that nobody was injured in the weekend incident. But I think, Mr. Speaker, that punctuates, it underlines what we have said all along. Living in a tent with open flames is unsafe, which is why this government and our community partners provide, on a very regular basis, options. We have many options that are offered to people to live either in staffed shelters, private shelters and, when necessary, hotel rooms.

We have said from the beginning that this protest, which it is, it is not a safe place for people to be. Which is why we offer these solutions and will continue to. Including investing millions of dollars in our Transitional Supportive Living Initiative.



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

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

**J. DINN:** Speaker, people wouldn't be in tents if there were adequate options. This is not a protest – this is not a protest and that belies what he really believes.

Speaker, with much expense, the government recently installed video surveillance cameras on the outside of the building.

I ask the minister responsible: Will his department also install electrical outlets so people, who are really there because they don't feel safe elsewhere, will not have to rely on propane to heat their tents? Will you install electrical outlets? Simple solution.

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

**J. ABBOTT:** Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to respond.

I know that question was asked previously. The cameras are there for the Colonial Building and that's why they're there. In terms of any other services that we're providing, the Minister of Housing identified and itemized those.

But I have said, when I've been down at the tent encampment, we will provide services, but we will not be bringing services to the campsite.

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

**SPEAKER:** Oral Questions has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

### Tabling of Documents

**SPEAKER:** I do have one.

In accordance with section 19(5)(a) of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, I hereby table the minutes of the House of Assembly Management Commission meeting held on January 24, 2024.

Any further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

### Notices of Motion

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

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move in accordance with Standing Order 11(1) that this House will not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, April 29, 2024.

Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move in accordance with Standing Order 11(1) that this House will not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 30, 2024.

Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move the following motion, that notwithstanding Standing Order 63, this House shall not proceed with Private Members' Day on Wednesday, May 1, 2024, but shall instead meet at 2 p.m. on that day for Routine Proceedings and the conduct of Government Business and that, if not earlier adjourned, the Speaker shall adjourn the House at midnight.

Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move in accordance with Standing Order 11(1) that this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 2, 2024.

Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow introduce a bill entitled, An Act to Amend the Limitations Act, Bill 74.

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

**SPEAKER:** Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

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

I give notice to the following private Member's resolution:

WHEREAS the House of Assembly currently has an annual budget Estimates process allowing Members to complete a line-by-line examination of the annual budgets of core government departments and ask questions to ministers and relevant senior staff concerning estimated departmental revenues and expenditures; and

WHEREAS no such process currently applies to government agencies, boards, commissions and other government entities such as NL Health Services, Memorial University, College of the North Atlantic, Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, OilCo, the Newfoundland Labrador Liquor Corporation and others; and

WHEREAS Members of the House of Assembly are elected by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to, among other things, be stewards of the public purse; and

WHEREAS a significant portion of the provincial government's annual budget flows through agencies, boards and commissions without examination by elected Members of the Legislature;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House direct the government to initiate a process and allocate the required time and resources to allow elected Members the opportunity to review budgets and question appropriate senior staff of government agencies, boards, commissions and other

similar entities on an annual basis similar to the process utilized in budget Estimates.

This will be my private Member's resolution to be debated tomorrow.

Thank you.

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

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Orders of the Day.

### Orders of the Day

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

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, 2000, Bill 35, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

**SPEAKER:** We'll move directly to Orders of the Day.

It is moved and seconded that the Minister of Finance shall have leave to introduce Bill 35 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.'

Motion carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a

bill, "An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, 2000," carried. (Bill 35)

**CLERK (Hawley George):** A bill, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, 2000. (Bill 35)

**SPEAKER:** This bill has now been read a first time.

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

**J. HOGAN:** Tomorrow.

**SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 35 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Motion 5.

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

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that notwithstanding Standing Order 9, this House shall not adjourn at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, April 24, 2024, but shall continue to sit to conduct Government Business and, if not earlier adjourned, the Speaker shall adjourn the House at midnight.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

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

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Motion 6.

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

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that under Standing Order 11(1) this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 25, 2024.

**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.

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

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

We're debating the amendment.

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

It's always a pleasure to stand in the House and speak on behalf of the fine people of my District of Terra Nova.

The District of Terra Nova is no different than most districts in this province. We all have our own unique issues and we all have issues that are very similar to everywhere else. My district is made up of 42 communities and those 42 communities make up 11 municipalities and 11 LSDs.

They see the same things that we all see in here on a daily basis, whether it's issues with the roads or health care, financial burdens, troubles within the fishery.

I mention the fishery and, I guess, I'd be remiss by not offering up my condolences to the families in Lark Harbour after the tragic incident out there yesterday. It highlights the danger associated with people inside of our fishery, what they face on a daily basis. I offer sincere condolences from the entire House.

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

**L. PARROTT:** Mr. Speaker, our districts are near and dear to each one of us and I believe everyone in this House is here for a reason. The initial part of that reason is to represent the people who put them here. When I think about my district and I think about the minister over there talking about all the multitude of upcoming roadwork, I've invited him out a couple of times to come see the inadequacies I have St. Jones Within, South West Arm and Random Island. I would argue that you can't fly over the roads in Random Island in a helicopter, they're that bad right now. It's absolutely ridiculous.

As someone drives down over that road and they have a near-death experience, because we hear that all the time. I mentioned here in the House back in March, I lost two tires on that road a few weeks ago driving to the road conditions, because that's what Transportation and Infrastructure will tell you if you call and say you had a blowout and where you had it. They'll say you were speeding or you need to be driving to the road conditions.

So I'm talking about two brand new tires that I put on my truck in October. It happens all the time and it's happening to individuals who leave these communities to drive to go to work. They have legitimate fears and concerns about the conditions of the roads. To be quite honest, the minister knows, this past winter in my district, in one day, we had a situation where we had three snowplows go off the road, two of them went off the road because the plows hooked into potholes in the road as they were going and

the icy conditions made them depart the highway. It's just fortunate, just fortunate, that the operator wasn't injured. At the same time, while the minister's department is directing people from other districts to go to St. John's and work on the equipment in here, because they don't have the manpower and the stuff in Transportation and Infrastructure to do the work on the existing equipment.

We have serious problems inside Transportation and Infrastructure right across the whole province and, at the end of the day, when we look at what's happening here in every district when it comes to snow clearing, when it comes to maintenance, when it comes to pothole repairs, all of those things, it quite simply just isn't happening, whether it's brush cutting or any of those things.

One of my colleagues mentioned today about the massive uptake in the budget for roadwork. Well, if you talk specifically to the road builders, they'll tell you that it's not as massive as this government will try to make you believe. The increase in budget is because of the increase in cost. The increase in budget is because fuels have gone up. Carbon tax has affected that. The increase in budget is gone up because the price of tar has gone up. Carbon tax has affected that. The increase in budget is because every single part of work that happens in Transportation and Infrastructure has increased from a price standpoint.

So what is the end result? The road that was going to cost \$8 million to do last year costs \$12 million to do this year. What's government left to do? Increase the budget. What do they do? They increase the budget and tell everybody that we're going to pave way more roads.

Well, if you look at the announcement – and I agree with the Member from Ferryland; it was a lot of recycled announcements. It was announcements from 2022; it's 2024 now.

In 2022, 2023 and some new announcements in 2024; it's not all new work and you can be rest assured that it's not all going to be done in this fiscal year, no doubt about it.

Do they put out some new tenders? Absolutely. The problem we have is the amount of maintenance that doesn't happen. It just simply doesn't happen. I've got St. Brendan's – and the minister, I hope he's listening, because the island of St. Brendan's hasn't asked for a whole lot. They've written the minister on three occasions, as have I, and we haven't gotten a response. Not only have we not gotten a response, they're not asking for anything.

The other thing I'll add is that they haven't asked for anything since 2019. They've got dirt roads out there that are continually graded with no material. They need a substantial amount of Class A in order to upgrade those roads, and they deserve it. At the end of the day, instead of addressing it, the minister ignores it, and those are the types of things that we need to see.

If you go down Southwest Arm, as you drive down Southwest Arm – and you can ask the Minister of Health. He goes down there; he knows it. As you go around the S-bend, you can see the guardrails that have been lid down; they're asleep. They have been asleep for five years.

The guardrails are literally on the ground, broke off, in one of the most dangerous turns on any stretch of road in this province. They have been on the ground for five years – five years under successive ministers, this has been brought up and not a thing done about it. It's not sad that it's not done. What's really sad is that they don't listen. What's even sadder is I don't think they care.

The Member for Ferryland – I wish the minister lived in my district or the Premier lived in my district. There was \$30 million in his district. Witless Bay is getting done; the

Minister of Transportation lives in that district. You look at all the black asphalt and we just had the by-election out there, you go out, the previous minister, lots. The minister across the way – all paved. If you don't have those individuals in your district, it just doesn't happen.

You come to the District of Terra Nova – and it's the gateway to the Bonavista Peninsula. It's the gateway and it includes Terra Nova National Park, so the government doesn't even have to do that. That's the federal government that does that. Then you go down to Eastport Peninsula, again, two of the hotspots in the province for tourism – and I just listened to the minister, to a PMR a little while ago where he said one of the key indicators in their decision-making process was uptake in tourism. Well, guess what? Obviously, it's not because if it was, I would not have those issues with the roads. They would be done – period.

I've got two of the hottest spots for tourism in the whole province in my district and I guarantee the roads aren't touched. Does the minister care? No. He doesn't even listen.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible) move out there.

**L. PARROTT:** Yes, it would be great if he moved out there.

Secondary to all of that is we have a conversation in this House a lot about firefighters, what they bring to the equation, what they mean to Newfoundland and Labrador. Most Members here, I hope you're aware – right now there are Scott Air-Paks in this entire province and they're all expiring and they're not going to be fixed. The letters have been sent and I can tell you, right now, that the fire departments cannot afford to replace them. They cannot afford to replace or repair them.

All, in amongst that, we get the Premier out with his pork-barrel politics promising 10 sets of bunker gear to one fire department. I've got five fire departments in my district that don't get one set. How does that work? It doesn't make sense, but I would assume that that promise will be kept and kept very swiftly regardless of the fact that they didn't win the district. Seeing how it was a promise made by the Premier, I guess no different than the ER that was promised in my colleague's district that never happened, but the Premier made that promise too, and the PET scanner, made that promise and we hear today that it may not happen. We heard today that it's not even their decision to make which is very unfortunate when you think about it.

You talk about firefighters. One of my colleagues had an unfortunate accident in his district the other day and it was the firefighters who had to sit there with the injured individual for an hour and 32 minutes waiting for an ambulance to show up. You go throughout most of rural Newfoundland and you will quickly find out that the first responders for all accident scenes are volunteer firefighters.

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

**L. PARROTT:** In most instances, driving vehicles that are inadequate, if they even have the vehicle. In most instances, they don't have the modern training that they require, not because they don't want to do it but because they don't have the funding to do it. You take a fire department now, in rural parts of Newfoundland, if they had to respond to an electric vehicle, an EV fire and tell me how many of these fire departments have not only received, but have been offered the training to respond to those situations. If one of those vehicles goes up and goes bad, it's terrible for everyone. The fires that they cause compared to a regular gasoline combustion fire are totally different.

So we have volunteers that are doing this and continually asking for support. Upgrades to the 911 system that were announced in last year's budget, we still haven't seen it – or maybe that was two years ago they took \$21 million away, I think, if my memory serves me correct and now all of a sudden nobody knows where the money went. It went back to general coffers; it was supposed to be upgrade our telecommunications and none of it has happened. Yet, in amongst all of that, we're still being charged for it. It's an interesting question: Where does it go? How do they manage that? General coffers, \$21 million that was raised for specific reasons and now it's gone.

You talk about the firefighters and what they do and what they mean to us, everyone in here. I know in my district, the volunteer fire departments, if we didn't have the volunteer fire departments throughout the District of Terra Nova, as I said earlier 11 municipalities, 11 LSDs, 100 per cent, we would be lost. Not only would we be lost, but the cost of insurance on an individual's house would be astronomical. The ability for people to respond to any kind of an incident would be gone and, in amongst that, in government's cleverness, they're now looking at getting rid of the rural ambulances, the only lifeline that some of these communities have to help.

Now, I'm not suggesting that it's not going to work, but I can tell you we're not prepared for it. There are no answers to the questions that are being asked. The individuals in these rural communities that depend on these ambulances, the ambulance care providers who've been established for 40 or 50 years, they feel like they're being brushed to the side, left out in the dark and this is being forced fed down their throats, and that's pretty much exactly what's going to happen. That's exactly how it's happening. No different than the failed regionalization plan, I guess. We'll come out. We'll make an announcement. We'll tell you how we're going to do it and if you don't

like it we'll change our minds, we'll put the report back up on the shelf with all the other reports that are sitting on the shelf. Sounds pretty typical, doesn't it?

Well, just think about it. Nine years in, it's the same MO. For nine years, it's been report after report going up on a shelf, collecting dust, lots of these ideas, lots of announcements, most that don't happen, all kinds of photo ops and here we are today in the exact same situation.

Budget day, it's kind of peculiar; we listened to one of the ministers here talk about how we weren't here for budget day. We weren't in this building for budget day, no, and we went outside – we didn't have the opportunity afforded to us or it was never mentioned to us to come in. That's the first thing I will say. While this government snuck in through the doors with their sleeping bags and their big fire truck red pyjamas, they came in and they went to sleep. They stayed here for the night. They never mentioned it to us. They were all cozy.

As a matter of fact, I seen the Premier sneak out of here with his pyjamas and his sleeping bag last week to go out to the by-election for the results. I seen him loading up the vehicle out there. I don't think he unrolled the sleeping bag that night. I think there was a high level of disappointment, but all of that aside, they came in for the budget.

Now, that's all good that they came in and we didn't come in and all the comments were made to us. I get that. I understand the whole idea that you should be here. I can tell you, from my time in my previous life, I know what civil unrest looks like. The reality of it is, nobody should have crossed that picket line. That's the reality.

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

**L. PARROTT:** I can tell you exactly what civil unrest looks like.

But here's the other thing. We sat here in this building, right here, all of us, with all of these seats full – they were full with fishermen and guess what? We had fishermen calling out Members of government for being asleep – asleep in the Legislature while debate was going on – asleep. And we're getting heckled for not being here.

I tell you now, the reality of it is, that when you're a sleepy Member, you probably shouldn't be doing the heckling. You should probably leave you pyjamas on and stay home in bed.

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

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

**L. PARROTT:** He got the red pyjamas, I guarantee it; it's a onesie.

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

**L. PARROTT:** I'm being disrespectful, I'm being told. But that's okay, I'll take that. If she wants to stand on a point, she's more than welcome to stand on a point of order and say I'm being disrespectful.

What's disrespectful is how we treat seniors in this province. What's disrespectful is how we treat people with disabilities. What's disrespectful is a whole lot of other things than the way that people in this House talk. The disrespect that is shown to our seniors and people with mental health issues. And if you don't believe me, I'll tell you what, I listened to the minister over there today talking about Doorways and FACT teams and 811.

He should call the people that were on *Open Line* Friday morning. He knows who they are, I don't need to say their names. He should call that family whose 23-year-old son had a mental breakdown over two years ago. He's gone the Doorways. He's called 811. He's been in the Waterford. As a matter of fact, he was in the Waterford at

the lowest time of his life – at the lowest time of his life – and guess what happened to him? They put him in a cab and sent him home.

We don't have the ability to address those issues, so if you want to talk about what's respectful and what's not respectful, I'm hear all day. I got no problem doing that. We can talk about it all day long.

You should go to Clarenville and talk to the young man that just did a threat in the Clarenville High School, who didn't have the support he required, who went to Doorways, who called 811, who associated with the FACT team, who can't get the carry-on continual help that he needs. We can talk about carry-on continual help after when we talk about the false announcement of the 50,000 people rostered into community care clinics, because the minister knows how many of those actually have continual care. Not very many.

So if we want to talk about respect, we can have that conversation. We can talk about the respect that this government affords people in Newfoundland and Labrador with their fake announcements, their photo ops and their misleading way of governing because that's exactly what it is. So when we're finished, after the amendment, we can talk about respect for another 20 minutes.

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

**L. PARROTT:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to table right now, a non-confidence subamendment. Me, as the Member for Terra Nova, move the subamendment, seconded by the Member for CBS:

That the amendment that was previously presented, the non-confidence motion, be amended by changing the period at the end of thereof to a comma and, also, by adding immediately thereafter the following words: and that this House also faults the government for failing to guarantee people access to a primary care provider; for failing

to retain health care professionals such as nurses and doctors while wasting a fortune to replace those they have driven away; for failing in all its years to introduce a comprehensive poverty reduction plan, like the one they cancelled; for failing to address the social determinants of health such as affordable food, housing and medicine; for failing to address serious mental health and addictions needs; for failing to address violence and crime in our communities; for failing to provide proper resources to police; for failing to rehabilitate inmates; for failing to address the housing needs of our people; for failing to ensure women are paid equitably for the work they do; for failing to protect homeowners from court action by Crown lands to seize the homes they live in; for failing to review and reform all taxes, fees and income support programs; for failing to cut red tape and other impediments to business growth that have worsened on their watch; for failing to hear and include persons with disabilities; for failing to hear and include Indigenous communities; for failing to plan ahead and to make early childhood education available; for failing to listen and to support teachers and to make our schools safe places for our youth to get quality education they need; for failing to listen to the students and make post-secondary education affordable; for failing to be transparent and accountable about its dealings on energy and other matters; for failing to diversify our economy and derive maximum community benefits from the development of all of our resources, from oil and gas to minerals; for failing to raise the bar on food security by driving local agriculture; for failing to prevent to raise the bar on food security; for failing to multiply the value of our fishing industry; for failing to make the case for joint fisheries management; for failing to manage the finances of the province responsibly and sustainably; for failing to make the case for fair health transfers based on a need; and for failing to fight early or effectively enough against the Liberal government's carbon tax that the Liberal government of Newfoundland and Labrador repeatedly



endorsed and rammed through the House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, this is the subamendment by me, the Member for Terra Nova, seconded by the Member for CBS.

**SPEAKER:** This House will stand recessed while we have time to consider the subamendment.

This House is now in recess.

### Recess

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

Are the House Leaders ready?

Upon review of the subamendment, I do find that the subamendment is in order.

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

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

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

I think, given the subamendment and the amount of conversation inside it about failures, we should probably talk about some successes. It's a good segue into it.

What have we done successfully? The one thing that we say we haven't done successfully that we have is this Liberal government has supported the carbon tax. They were very successful in that endeavour. As a matter of fact, every single one of them, with the exception of one Member who voted for it, a couple of times.

Now, the argument was it was a made-right-here-in-Newfoundland carbon tax back then, so they could support it but when it became a federal carbon tax, they could no longer support it. As a matter of fact, the Premier wrote a letter and he wanted it paused. Well, a pause doesn't do anything good. We need it stopped. There's no

question about it but the whole idea of flip-flopping – as a matter of fact I thought that the MP McDonald was in the House they were flip-flopping that much. It was like a big feed of seal flipper pie.

The carbon tax hurts everyone, and we all know that. The easiest way to say it is that we talked about roads earlier and how carbon affects our roads building and our budgets. We talked about taxation and we talk about the cost of goods getting to the province. You know, it's funny the government talks about Muskrat Falls all the time and the cost of Muskrat Falls and the Premier made an interesting comment earlier. He said, you announced it and we built it. He was referring to a hospital and Muskrat Falls was not a whole lot different. Don't lose sight of that. We didn't build it. They built it.

I'd love to ask the Minister of Finance, when it's her turn to speak, to get up and tell us what we would be paying for electricity if we only had Holyrood. If we only had Holyrood and we were paying their buddies carbon tax on the oil that fuels Holyrood, what the cost of home heating would be. Because Muskrat Falls, they touted, was going to double, which it hasn't. Smoke and mirrors because we're used to the smoke and mirrors. There is all kinds of that. It hasn't doubled.

But I can guarantee you, if it was Holyrood, with the amount of maintenance and with the expansions that had to happen and the cost of the bunker C that fuels it and the carbon tax on top of that, our home heating cost wouldn't have doubled. They would have tripled.

So now tell me that Muskrat Falls is such a bad idea.

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

**L. PARROTT:** For you people at home who can't see this, she's over flashing around her book like this.

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

No props.

**L. PARROTT:** That is not a prop. That's a book.

**SPEAKER:** She's not speaking.

Order, please!

**L. PARROTT:** She's flapping around –

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

**L. PARROTT:** So I'll ask all the Members over there, if we didn't have Muskrat Falls, would we have hydrogen? If we didn't have Muskrat Falls, would we be developing or looking to develop Labrador West for green iron? If we didn't have Muskrat Falls, would the Premier have gotten his picture taken with Peter Pan? Not a chance. The Premier never would have seen Peter Pan or Captain Hook or any of the other things that were so important to him. It never would have happened because it was Muskrat Falls and our green-ability.

Hang on now, because the Member for Cape La Hune talks about it all the time that we don't have a green plan. We don't have an environmental plan, but he's against Muskrat Falls. He thinks it's no good. All you've got to do is listen to him talk. Every single time they talk it's Muskrat Falls, Muskrat Falls, Muskrat Falls, and guess what? They don't support it, so in 2017 –

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

**L. PARROTT:** In 2017, the Minister of Finance stood up and said we're going to

bring it over the line. Muskrat Falls, we're carrying on with it. This government had the opportunity to cancel it if they believed it was so bad.

Not only did they have the opportunity to cancel it, they had an opportunity to manage it in the way it should have been managed. Instead, they chose to bring in helicranes and in the middle of the winter, dig down through 18 feet of snow to put up towers when they knew that they could not polarize those power lines for two or three years. They spent billions of dollars rushing a project that they couldn't complete. It's 2024 and it's still not operational and they know that, and that is their fault – their fault.

I challenge the Minister of Fisheries over there who is always doing that, call an inquiry into Muskrat Falls now and see what they'd say. See how they talk about the construction and the completion and see what they'd say now versus the inquiry that was called back in 2017.

We know what they'd say. It was a high level of incompetence. It wasn't managed properly. It should have been done in a different way, and anyone who understands construction would understand that. At the end of the day, when we came in here with Muskrat Falls, the constructability portion was the largest failure. It wasn't the idea; it was the constructability failure.

There is no question the inquiry found lots of stuff, but like I said to the Minister of Finance, have another inquiry and tell me what they'd say. They would talk about how it was built and exactly what happened.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** They did a report.

**L. PARROTT:** How old is the report? I challenge you, get up and talk about the report and how old it is and what happened since then. It's pretty simple.

At the end of the day, you can't have it both ways because they stand up in one breath

and say Muskrat Falls is no good, and then they go around the world – as a matter of fact, I believe if I'm not wrong, the Empire Club is hosting the Premier next week, and what's he going up to talk about, green energy and Muskrat Falls.

He's going up to tout it, yet his caucus Members are all over there saying no good, nope, not here; but we support carbon tax, we voted for it. We all voted for carbon tax. We think that's great. No, we don't support it anymore. The Premier asked for a pause, so we don't support it anymore. We're not allowed anymore, but we used to support it. We voted for it. It's a totally different world now.

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

**L. PARROTT:** Sugar tax, there you go, my colleague just said sugar tax. There is no question that people can get up and talk about the high rates of diabetes and obesity and all the things that this province has. Well, guess what? This province has the highest rate of a lot of things: unemployment, obesity, childhood poverty, all kinds of things; yet, carbon tax, sugar tax, all those things are going to cure it.

We are going to tax people into prosperity. We are going to tax them into a healthy living style. It just simply isn't working. If it was working, our bills would be going down. The money they take in would be less, not more.

It's funny how they come in and they talk about the unemployment rate and they say it's the best its been in years. Well, I would say this, bring home all the rotational workers and tell me what our unemployment rate looks like. Bring them all back. Pretend that we don't have any and look at our unemployment rates. It would be astronomical. We'd be in such a bad place.

At the end of the day, we know exactly what that looks like. But this government has been very successful in their stickhandling –

that's what I'll call – of carbon tax, because one day they thought it was the best thing. When the money was going into their pockets and it wasn't going back out, they wanted carbon tax, they supported it. Now they're going to say, but that was different back then, fishermen weren't paying carbon tax and agricultural and all those other things, they weren't paying carbon tax.

They're not wrong when they say that. I'll give them that much, but it doesn't matter, they still supported carbon tax in its essence and what it was doing.

Right now, carbon tax is hurting this province in a way that everybody knows how bad it is. It's hurting us from in grocery stores; it's hurting us in clothing stores; the ferry that crosses the Island; our hydro plants; every mining company we have here; everyone that depends on it. To top it all off, the Member for – I have to get it right because she'll correct me – Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair, she knows, she agrees with me. We have thermal generation plants going into her district with our green plan and they're putting back in diesel plants. Now how green is that? We have so many rural communities in this province that should be looking for different alternatives and instead of going that route, we're going the exact opposite route of what we say is going to work.

**L. DEMPSTER:** (Inaudible.)

**L. PARROTT:** Yeah, it's still going to happen.

If we look at Labrador West, if we look at the South Coast of Labrador, the North Coast of Labrador, if we look at St. Brendan's, we look at any of the islands on the South Coast of Newfoundland who depend on these thermal generation plants and we wonder why we're paying so much for our hydro bills. We pay to subsidize those plants and part of that pay is what we pay in carbon fees and that effects everyone.

When the prime minister stands up and he's picking on the Premier, or whatever you want to call it, he's wrong. I will say, the Premier is right when he says that we're disproportionately effected. I agree with the Premier. I agree with him 100 per cent.

Where I don't agree with him is the fact that he's asking for a pause and not a stoppage. Where I don't agree with him is that he's – well, in this instance, three years too late, but the rest of his colleagues are far too late, six years too late. So here we are and we're stuck with it.

I have to go back to mental health, because it's an issue that is near and dear to, I think, everyone in this House of Assembly. I mentioned earlier about a couple of instances that happened in my district in the last week. But I tell you one of my colleagues pointed out this morning, the esteemed colleague for Bonavista, he said: Do you notice on the news the uptake in violent crime and missing people and in drug charges? It is astronomical what's happening in this province.

Now, whether it's through a lack of policing or poverty or people's desire to make money illegally, I don't know. But a lot of it comes back around full circle and it affects people's mental health. When you're living in a community and you have a neighbour that's next to you, you're afraid of him; when you're a senior and you have some punk kicking your door down in the middle of the night to break in and steal stuff; when you have a child who's involved with drugs or who's been involved in crime, through no fault of their own because they can't get the supports they need; when you have crimes and violence happening in schools; when you have teachers crying out that they have issues in schools; when you have nurses saying that they're being assaulted at their workplace, we have a serious issue.

To say we have FACT teams and Doorways and 811 – I'll go back, we put a PMR in this House last year and the PMR was about the mental health crisis and the crisis in our

health care system. We had a Minister of the Crown, the Minister of Transportation, stood up and said we don't have a crisis in our health care. A former ADM who stood up here 12 months ago and said we don't have a crisis in our health care.

Well, I'll tell you what, if you don't think we have a crisis in our health care, you haven't talked to any of your constituents, any of your colleagues or anyone else in this province, because everyone feels that we have a crisis in our health care. As a matter of fact, the word crisis is thrown around in this House on an order of magnitude that's incomprehensible. At the end of the day, everything we do is a crisis. It's not fictitious, it's a real thing. We have a food security crisis. We have a health care crisis. We have a fiscal crisis. We have a housing crisis.

Every single thing we do is falling apart. Not to mention the operational crisis in our health care. The crisis that we're not allowed to talk about in the House of Assembly. We can't talk about it because that's operational. Just imagine, operational. I'd say that's what happened with Muskrat Falls. That's why it wasn't built any cheaper, because of the operational issues that the government didn't address.

At the end of the day, when we talk about the crisis in mental health, all you have to do is go out on the front step and look at the young lady who's been out there protesting. All you have to do is listen to the people who are living in the tent encampment, Tent City, whatever you want to call it, who are there by no choice of their own. You had a minister in this House today chose to call that a protest – a protest. It's not a protest, I can tell you, that's not a protest. Those people have no choice. If they had a choice, that suited their needs, I'm not suggesting that they haven't been given choices, because we all know they have been given choices, but sometimes those choices don't fit and that is the problem; sometimes

individual situations are different and we need to look for individual alternatives.

We talk about this province and the issues we face: one of the things we always overlook, and I've said it here several times, population and geography is one of the biggest problems that this province faces. We put a lens on our legislation for everything we do. But do you know what kind of lens we don't put on it? We don't put a rural lens on legislation. We can do things in rural Newfoundland different than we do it in urban centres. We can make things cheaper for LSDs and municipalities. There are ways to do it. It's been proven in Southern Harbour, it's been proven in Clarenville, it's been proven in George's Brook- Milton. If you don't believe me, I think – again, I want to get the district right.

**P. LANE:** Humber - Bay of Islands.

**L. PARROTT:** There you go. If you talk to the Member for Humber- Bay of Islands, back when I was on town council in Clarenville and I believe I spoke about this in the House of Assembly before, I was in the industry at the time, the Town of Clarenville was looking at building a fire department. When they went through government, that fire department was going to cost almost \$7 million and when you start looking at the engineering, the lead certifications and all the things that had to be done in order to make that what was required, it was a 50-50 joint project, between government and the town. The town just couldn't afford \$3.5 million, but do you know what they could afford? They could afford \$2.6 million. That was their magic number.

So they took that exact, identical blueprint and they went to tender without government. They left government out of the process. They built the exact same building for \$2.52 million. They built it for \$4.5 million less than they would have if they had done it in co-operation with

government. Just think about that. Think of the money that could be saved.

So we talk about the requirement when we're building these buildings and we say they have to last 50 years. I challenge every Member in this House of Assembly, if you want to see something spectacular, go to Clarenville, reach out to John Pickett, the mayor of Clarenville and ask him to do a tour of the fire department. Go in and look at it and you tell me that it's not of the nicest, not only nicest but one of the most modern, technologically equipped buildings in the province when it comes to fire departments and they did it for less than half of what it would have cost had they got funding from government. Just think about that and tell me that we're doing things right. Obviously, we are not doing things right.

That ability exists throughout the whole province. The Town of Southern Harbour did it. The Town of Southern Harbour built three buildings, a multi-purpose building and two others and they did it for fraction of the cost. Those things are out there, but we don't utilize them.

The big issue is that when we look at rural Newfoundland versus urban Newfoundland, we don't need a steel and brick fire department. Random Island is down there trying to build a new fire department and their doing it with volunteers, doing it on their own. If they went through government, it would have bankrupt them. It would have bankrupted the LSD; they never in a million years could have done it. But they could do it on their own, and government should be helping. There are ways that they can help and they can do it.

When we talk about budgets – and it's funny, because the government always says: Oh, you guys didn't support it, you didn't support it. There's lots in the budget that's worth supporting. Sometimes it's not what we don't support; it's what's not in there for us to support.

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

**L. PARROTT:** Sometimes the hard decision and the right decision are the same decision. Sometimes people need to understand you can have all the right ideas in the world, but if it doesn't go far enough, if it doesn't put food on a senior's table, if it doesn't help them pay for their bill, if it doesn't get them a bed in a hospital or if it doesn't get them any of the supports they need, medications, whatever, it don't go far enough.

In my district of Clarendville, we have two long-term care facilities right in Clarendville, in the District of Terra Nova. We've got several personal care homes. But these two facilities have wait-lists as long as the halls of this building. At the end of the day, there are solutions.

O'Mahony manor out there with a wait-list that takes people 12 to 14 months to get in – I've talked to the minister and the minister is receptive to it. If we were to double it in size, the wait-list would be just as long in two weeks. But we have protective care units up above the hill, in behind Kent and there is one there now, but in the blueprint I believe it was facilitated to build four. We should be looking at building the other three units. We should be looking for ways to care for people.

Right now, the hospital in Clarendville is overwhelmed with patients that are dementia, level 3 patients, that are putting a burden on the health care system, that are talking up beds they shouldn't be in, because there's nowhere for them to go.

So you got nurses and doctors stressed out; you've got fights in the halls; you've got people running out of the hospital, people chasing them, RCMP at times; ambulances being tied up because there's no beds. Obviously, there is a pretty big issue and I can guarantee you, it's not just an issue in my district. That's an issue throughout the whole province.

We got a facility out in Central, 29 beds, and they're vacant because we don't have staff, yet we're building all these new facilities. We're going to build facilities – it's like the *Field of Dreams* with this government: If you build it, he will come. Well, Shoeless Joe Jackson isn't going to show up here, I can guarantee you that. It's just not going to happen. We do it all the time and there is no planning.

The Member for CBS said it the other day and he's not wrong when he says it. It is okay to build; there's places where we need new facilities, there's not question. There are places where we need to modernize and make things okay, there's no question. But there's also places where we need to hire people, where we need to fix facilities, where we can modernize existing facilities and we can utilize the things that we have now in order to provide the services that people require.

I listened to the Member for Labrador West last week talk about amputees and MTAP, and I asked the minister the other night – I was bit shocked to hear it. MTAP doesn't cover amputees unless it's a prescription to see a specialist and it's a long tale and I get it, but there is only one place in Newfoundland to get a prosthetic.

I'll walk you through something. If you lose your leg or if you become an amputee, a leg, an arm or anything, in this province, MCP doesn't help you. That's the first thing. You're responsible to buy your prosthetic. MCP covers none of it.

Now, if you live in Labrador, Goose Bay, the North Coast of Labrador, St. Anthony, West Coast, anywhere whatsoever, imagine you got to travel back and forth to St. John's for the multiple, multiple, multiple times you have to go to get a prosthetic. First off, the prosthetic is not covered, so a cheap prosthetic is about \$14,000. Now you got to travel, you got to stay in a hotel for weeks on end in order to do it. MTAP doesn't cover it; it's not specialized.

I reached out to the Miller Centre and asked them: How many amputees in the province are we currently treating, roughly? There are just over 400; 443 is the number I was given.

There are 443 amputees, so you think about that. Instead of MCP covering it and treating it, here's what we'll do instead. We'll get you a wheelchair, we'll build you a ramp, we'll hire an electrician to come in and lower all your receptacles so you can exist at home, because that's all you're going to do, and we're going to put you on welfare; or we can give you a \$15,000 prosthetic and send you back to work. You might even become an MHA.

That's the problem with this government.

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

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

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

(Disturbance.)

**G. BYRNE:** That's a catchy tune.

It's wonderful to be a part of a debate about things that are important in our province. It's wonderful to recap some of the exciting moments in history of our province, whether that be Muskrat Falls or previous hydroelectric projects or things that are a part of our past and part of our future, sometimes for better or for worse.

Mr. Speaker, I think there has been a lot of energy spent on whether or not there has been a jaundiced view about Muskrat Falls right from the beginning by Members and whether or not there was tacit support for Muskrat Falls. Let me put this in, kind of, a perspective.

I don't think at any point in time that the ambition to build His Majesty's steamship,

*Titanic*, was a bad idea. I don't think at any point in time was the drive and the goal to build the *Titanic* ever, ever perceived to be a bad idea. What was a bad idea was to drive it at full steam ahead, at maximum speed into an iceberg field. That was the bad idea.

So the idea of building Muskrat Falls enjoyed universal support. Who would not want our great hydroelectric assets to be developed? The problem with Muskrat Falls was driving it at full speed into an iceberg field. That's what caused its problem and that is exactly what we now must face to this day. The fear mongering of \$15 billion in debt, that is what the hon. Member opposite is now suggesting is fear mongering. When we actually have debt that has to be serviced year after year after year after year after year after year – well, that's called fear mongering.

I'd suggest that all we need to know is being vocalized on the floor of the House of Assembly right now by the Members opposite because what they say is that, trust us – the party that does not believe that Muskrat Falls was ever a problem, trust us to fix it. That's what they are suggesting.

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

It's hard to hear the Member speak.

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

**G. BYRNE:** It is so clear, Mr. Speaker. Any reasonable person listening to this conversation right now, the level of vitriol, the anxiety, the level of spite that's welling up inside of the Members opposite, for those who even dare suggest that they may have an accountability problem here, the amount of just anger that wells up within them is palpable, and that is exactly what we are experiencing each and every day.

It's one of the reasons why, Mr. Speaker, in the period when the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador faced its worst ever fiscal circumstance, when the fiscal forecast was totally out of control, when we inherited a \$2.9-billion deficit that was left secret, hidden from all, what did they have to say? Well, the people actually said, even though we have one of the most difficult circumstances ever, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador said, we do not trust the party that refuses to accept that Muskrat Falls is a problem to be the party to ever fix the problem.

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

**G. BYRNE:** And that is what happened. It is one of the reasons why we were successful in 2019 and in 2021, it's because there is a lack of trust.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I say, they argue that the problem could have been fixed, you could have walked away from it; the very notion that after contracts had been signed, that would have by law had to have been paid out, that the smart thing to do was just simply walk away from legally binding contracts with Astaldi and other major suppliers that they signed contracts with.

To suggest that there was ever a moment in time post-2015 that the project could have been collapsed, that it could have been shelved, mothballed, is absolutely ridiculous. That betrays any reasonable person's understanding of basic economics, basic finance, basic law, basic reality.

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

I'm asking Members on both sides of the House, please keep the conversation – if you guys want private conversations, you're welcome to go outside and have them as long as you want. I want to hear the speaker.

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

**G. BYRNE:** Thank you for the protection, Mr. Speaker.

It is obviously concerning to the hon. Members to ever want to recount the fact that there was a judicial inquiry into their actions that really resulted in a situation where we now live with a legacy of how these kinds of projects should be developed in the future and we'll follow that legacy era that taught us well how not to do things.

On sanctioning in 2011, when this program was sanctioned, it was sanctioned with absolutely zero safeguards. That is the reality. It was sanctioned with next to no accountabilities or oversights. It was sanctioned without any reasonable opportunity for it to succeed.

When the *Titanic* left the dock, when it started its transatlantic sail, well then it went into an icefield. The moment that this project, this Muskrat Falls Project, was sanctioned in 2011, it went into an icefield. It was guaranteed what the result would be and so now we live with that legacy.

So I want to say to the hon. Members opposite, if only we could account for the \$500 million in cash that is necessary for rate mitigation, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and its people, the projects that we could have advanced, but we have now sunken choices – sunken choices. We must now spend \$500 million a year mitigating the impact of Muskrat Falls. Therefore, we have to give up, we have to make choices about new hospitals.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me tell you something, how courageous it is for Members opposite and however awkward it must be for Members opposite to want to talk about the Corner Brook hospital. From 2007 until 2015, living the scandal of perpetuating a falsehood about that project and now simply suggesting that taking



individual elements of it and then saying with a critical eye, with a jaundiced eye saying this is what should be or should not be.

Mr. Speaker, there's a reason why the people of Corner Brook and the West Coast really do not have a high tolerance for the Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland ever talking about this project. Because if ever there was a shell game sham by the PCs, it is the Corner Brook hospital.

I'll say it and say it upfront. There was decision that was taken. We took a decision to build that, which they refused to build. We took a decision to add additional services that they refused to take. And there was a decision to build a shelled-in space for the PET scanner. It's time to say this and say it out loud. At the time in 2016, when decisions were being taken about the hospital and about the build in 2016, the Cabinet and every Member of the Cabinet, took a decision in 2016 not to include a PET scanner into the build.

**E. JOYCE:** Not true.

**G. BYRNE:** That is absolutely true and we will provide any documentation that you want to be able to prove that out.

But with that said, in 2016, when there was a decision that was taken, the shelled-in space was available and then, Mr. Speaker, it is the Member, the Premier, who took the decision – the only one who took the decision to add a PET scanner into the policy of the Corner Brook hospital is the current Premier. That is a fact.

We may not want to actually acknowledge and say that out loud, some of us, as Members, but it is the truth. So I bless the courage of the Progressive Conservative Party for even wanting to talk about the Western Memorial Regional Hospital and its rebuild. I think it's a pretty awkward

conversation for them, for obvious reasons. But at least I admire their tenacity.

When you find yourself locked into a room with no windows, bang your head against the wall and maybe you might be able to break the wall down because that's all they really have to offer here.

Yes, this is the administration that built the hospital that nobody else would. This is the administration that added services that nobody else would. This is the administration, Mr. Speaker, that actually is trying desperately and with great competence, great professionalism and great foresight to try to put Muskrat Falls back on track. That is the administration that refuses to admit there's a problem, but still suggests that they are the plausible solution.

It is a fallacy that's worthy of a book on both accounts, Mr. Speaker.

God bless and thank you for the time.

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

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

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

I wasn't planning on speaking this afternoon, but when you hear things about the hospital, that's very near and dear to me, since I started advocating for it in 2011, when I was elected in 2011, and to hear the Member for Corner Brook state that the PET scanner was taken out in 2016 is absolutely, categorically false.

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

**E. JOYCE:** I even got it from former Premier Dwight Ball, we had our differences, when this heated up in Corner Brook, when Dwight Ball said publicly, he had no knowledge that the PET scanner was taken out and he was the premier of the province

– no knowledge. Here's Dwight Ball in a letter in 2014 saying that there will be a PET scanner at the hospital in Corner Brook. This is the letter that Dwight Ball –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Shouldn't he have to retract that?

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

I ask the Member to –

**E. JOYCE:** That's what Dwight Ball put in himself.

**SPEAKER:** I remind the Member to use their title, please – former premier.

**E. JOYCE:** We announce names every day in this House in Member's statements, b'y. Stop trying to muffle me, b'y. We use the name any time we want to.

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

I ask the Member to refer to their name and their title.

**E. JOYCE:** God, b'y, you're always trying to do it. It's the truth, you were there.

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

**E. JOYCE:** You were there for God sake, b'y. We're using Member's names in this House all day. We're doing it all the time.

Anyway, getting back to that, you're not going to sidetrack me. Dwight Ball even said in *The Telegram* – I think it was *The Telegram* – that he did commit it and he had no idea it was taken out.

The former premier, how's that Speaker?

**SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**E. JOYCE:** Thank you.

It's not right but I'll do it just so I can keep on the point.

Former Premier Dwight Ball stated that he had no knowledge that it was taken out. So if the former premier, had no knowledge that it was taken out, Mr. Speaker, he had no knowledge, wouldn't you think he'd know if they put it in there in 2016, which in the letter he stated it was put in there.

Also, just to talk about the hospital because it's so near and dear to me and the people of the West Coast – I don't mean to be upset, but this is the kind of stuff that if you want to talk about going back to 2007, I understand, I was part of it. But when you go back and start taking out things – and I remember the former minister of Health, I wrote him when the laundry was taken out. I wrote the minister of Health and he wrote me back and he said – I can get the letter. I could actually have the letter. He wrote back and he said: In the discussions with the two ministers, it was taken out. I wrote him back, I said: There's only one minister there at the time. Then he wrote me back and said: Oh, in consultation with people around.

So the idea that I was part of taking out that in 2017-2018 was false. Do you know what else was in that letter? I could table that letter. If anybody wants to question it, I could table the letter. Do you know what else was in it? The discussion about the laundry was a discussion with other people, except the premier, Dwight Ball. That was in the letter that Dwight Ball didn't even know, according to this letter, that the laundry services were being taken out of the hospital in Corner Brook. That was in the letter.

I say to the Member for Corner Brook, I understand when you go back to 2007. I have no problem with that; that's fair game. But when you talk about the PET scanner not being committed, it was committed. When you talk about the laundry services not being committed, it was committed. If

you want to talk about the other stuff that was not committed, it was committed.

If you're going to take it out, let's be honest with the people and say why we took it out. That's what we need to do. If there's a reason to justify why we didn't do the laundry service – and just as we speak, from the latest information I have on the laundry service, was that right now it is out for third or fourth – I can't remember – consultant to see what's the best way to have laundry done for Western Newfoundland.

For two years, it's going to be still at the old hospital, old Western Memorial hospital in Corner Brook. That's as we speak, but it was in the initial agreement on the hospital. The space was put there, and I know a former minister of Health said it would cost over \$100,000 a foot, or something. I'm just going off memory on that letter and I still have the letter. I can get the letter; \$100,000 a foot, so we decided to take it out.

But I can tell you right now – and if anybody here can prove me wrong, I'll stand here and I'll apologize. I'll apologize publicly. At no time, from 2016 until April 2018, was the PET scanner or the laundry service ever taken out of the hospital. It was never taken out, I can guarantee you that. Then on the PET scanner, it was an agreement to put it in there. There was an agreement. This idea from that government, that premier, to put in the PET scanner is absolutely false – absolutely false.

Here we are kicking around making these false statements about the hospital in Corner Brook that needs all the services we can get, needs the radiation unit, we need the PET scanner and here we are trying to make politics of when it was taken out when it's just not true. Yet, people have still got to come from Corner Brook, still got to come from Stephenville, still got to come from Port aux Basques, still got to come from Western Newfoundland to go to St. John's for radiation and treatment. Here we are,

standing in this House taking that hospital, kicking it around like a political football when the statements aren't true and the biggest question is the radiation oncologist. They haven't got a hematologist in Corner Brook yet.

**G. BYRNE:** (Inaudible) to apologize.

**E. JOYCE:** The Member for Corner Brook is saying I'm going to have to apologize. Produce the documents and I will show where Dwight Ball made a statement – and I'll track it down before this day is out – that he was not aware that the PET scanner was taken out. That was in 2019 when Dwight Ball said that. I can guarantee you there was never ever in my 2½ years that I've been in Cabinet, never ever was discussed that the PET scanner was taken out, I'll tell you right now.

So my thing now that – and I wasn't going to get up and talk today. I really wasn't. If we're going to talk about the hospital, let's talk about it in a positive way. Let's stick to something that we're going to put forward. Let's work on, with the Minister of Health, let the Minister of Health look forward and say how we're going to work on getting the specialist that we need in Corner Brook. It's easier to stand here and banter around here, banter here about the PET scanner, about this or that. Let's look at the positive side and speak the truth. If we're going to take something out, let's take it out, but let's explain to the people why we're taking this out. And I will track it down.

I'll just get on the few other topics now that I'll have that straightened out. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, I got a note today that the gabion baskets will be done. I got a note today. I wasn't aware of that because it wasn't in the budget. There was no money put in the budget.

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

**E. JOYCE:** Pardon me? What did you say?

**P. LANE:** You owe him an apology, he says.

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

I ask the Member to address the Chair.

**E. JOYCE:** Let me ask you a question – I'm serious on this. You said it was going to be done later on. There was nothing put in the budget for it. There was nothing put on Route 450, but today all of a sudden there is. So I would say it is going to be done, but any information I had, even from you and from the department, there was nothing being done on Route 450. I'm just saying that your department is saying today that the gabion baskets are going to be done; I'm acknowledging it and that's what I'm doing.

But from the time the announcement was made to that, there wasn't one thing being done on Route 450. Now, I get on the other parts of Route 450 where there are some major concerns. I was going to take a picture.

First of all, to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, I thank you for the kind gesture for the people of Lark Harbour and York Harbour the weekend. I know there are a few other people, the Member for Burgeo - La Poile, the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, the Premier, a lot more reached out and I know everybody in this House for the tragedy in Lark Harbour and York Harbour this weekend. I know a lot of other Members reached out also, so I just thank everybody in the House for that. The Leader of the Opposition reached out. I know the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture, I know that your heart and soul was in there that day also. So I just want to reach out and add a few words and I thank people for reaching out for everybody on that.

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

**E. JOYCE:** This is something that is a tragedy that happens too much in Newfoundland and Labrador. When you want to talk about the perils of the fishery, this is a prime example, two young men lost into it. I know there would not be a Member in this House that wasn't touched by the tragedy of the weekend. For the Members that reached out to me, to pass on their condolences to the families, thank you all very much on behalf of the families and I acknowledge it all.

Again, I mention that the Premier will cover any cost that they had, that they needed to get people in that needed a bit of counselling and other things. I thanked the Premier last night at the vigil they had, personally for that, because it was a very kind gesture to do, how we all come together on that.

Thank you, everybody, for that and I am sure the family knows that everybody is very appreciative that we're all behind the families in this time. Especially the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture, because I know he probably met a couple of those people out there in his travels in the meetings. So thank you everybody for that, on behalf of the families.

I'll get back to the other thing on Route 450. I say to the minister, I didn't want to take a picture of it, but in talking about Route 450, there is nothing in the budget for any pavement. The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure actually has signs up: Beware of potholes. The department have signs up and I'm trying to explain to them, it's safety concerns. It's about two or three years now and there has been no development there, all patching work. There's one part down Little Port Road whereby the bus won't even turn around anymore, and the minister is aware of it.

So, Minister, the gabion baskets are going to be done, that's great. I hope it's going to be done this year. I was told that they're

going to get it done this year, which is great, which is a big safety concern. But I ask the minister to ask his officials about the conditions of a few areas on Route 450 where there are potholes, ruts in the roads, especially, I'll say to the minister – I know his officials are listening and they're agreeing because they had to go fix one pothole, very severe one there from Georgetown Road up to the top of Allen's Road. That area is where a lot of traffic goes, a lot of school buses goes. The ruts are six inches in the road. There are at least 15 or 20 potholes just from that area alone. Everybody from down the bay – not everybody – about 90 per cent that comes from Lark Harbour, York Harbour, Frenchman's Cove, Johns-beach, Benoit's Cove, Halfway Point, Mount Moriah, half of Curling, they go that route.

It needs to be looked at, I say to the minister, if possible, not even a kilometre of road, to have that done. There are a few areas further down, if you could look at it, if there's any money left over from it, it needs to be done for safety reasons. This is not a luxury; this is a safety reason.

So I'm going to take my seat now and – there's another thing I'm going to say here today is the amendments to that, that the minister put in today, the *Limitations Act*. I say to the government, that's a good move. I'm glad that's going to be tabled. Let's hope now, when the bill comes out, that the bill will be what we are all hoping it's going to be, it's going to be limitations for physical abuse for the area.

I'll tell you another concern out on the West Coast that – I don't know what the answer is and I'm assuming that the Minister of Health is very aware of it. There are a lot of seniors, not just seniors, but mainly seniors that are in the old Western Memorial hospital that I don't think there are enough beds in the new hospital, so people are wondering and they're anticipating that the old Western Memorial Regional Hospital is going to be open for an extended period of

time for those seniors. They're waiting to get a bed in long-term care.

So I ask the minister, when he gets time, to have a few words to explain to the people what's going to happen to the old Western Memorial Regional Hospital now, because there are a lot of seniors in the beds themselves waiting to go to long-term care and there's no room. That's something the minister could take a note on and when he gets a chance to speak, he could bring that up and mention that.

I'll just sit down and take my seat right now, Mr. Speaker, because it's always a pleasure to stand here on behalf of the people of Humber - Bay of Islands. It's always a pleasure here to stand up for the concerns of the people of Humber - Bay of Islands.

To the people of York Harbour and Lark Harbour, to all the families, hang in there. I know it's tough on York Harbour and the Lark Harbour and the extended families in that area. We're all with you. We know the tragedy and how hard it's going to be on so many people in the long term. But may God speed help you all get through it all. May you all find a bit of solace in the time that you had with the children that were lost. It's a tough, tough situation. It shows the perils of fisherpeople in Newfoundland and Labrador, what could happen, how bad it was, the possibilities of just out fishing with people on shore watching, but they couldn't get out to them. It's just a tragic time.

This is the time that I'm proud that all of the House of Assembly comes together to help the families, support the families. The government did it, the Leader of the Opposition did it and the NDP are with us. My friend from Mount Pearl - Southlands was very concerned, calling this weekend.

God bless the people in York Harbour and Lark Harbour and God bless the families. Please hang in there because I know you have tough days ahead.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I echo the words to the people of York Harbour and Lark Harbour. On behalf of the Official Opposition, our hearts are there with them and that community as well.

Speaker, when I heard the Member opposite speak today, he so pointedly wanted to either chastise us or put us in our place. But I think what we're missing here in the House of Assembly is that we have to deal with the orders of today. Asking the past any new questions, gets us no new answers. But when we don't take responsibility for getting a project over the finish line, then that's not on this side at that point. It's on that side over there for the simple fact that I guess it was another operational issue. It was something that was mismanaged as opposed to putting the best foot forward, because we took a B team instead of the A team we were promised.

When it comes to that, I hear the Member opposite, he referenced the PC side several times, but I find that to be a little bit immoral for the simple fact that we've just gone through two by-elections where the signs are changed. They're not calling themselves Liberals anymore, yet they can call out the PCs. I think it's time to look internally on the other side and realize why you're not calling yourselves Liberals anymore.

So, to me, I will bring up one thing because we know that the Premier has written the prime minister about the carbon tax and pausing the carbon tax. What we would prefer, on this side, is to cancel the carbon tax as it's not the right instrument for the people of our country. In saying that, the Member opposite from Corner Brook that just spoke blamed the prime minister and

his Cabinet and his caucus for – I will quote – intellectually and morally bankrupting their decision. I couldn't agree more.

I agree with the Member opposite, but in my impetus to ask them to look internally, maybe they should look at that statement and realize that it applies to them, too, when it comes to the sugar tax because that's not the right mechanism, right now, to throw at the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that find themselves in a crisis when it comes to the cost of living. We've talked about it here earlier today, when we talked about crisis, we're mulling it over like it's second nature all of a sudden.

It's not something that we've got to deal with immediately because, to me, crisis means something that we need to focus on now and we need to get it fixed now. So if that's the case, we've been kicking this can down the road now for almost eight or nine years because from that very first budget to today's budget that we're debating today, there has been no significant improvement in our economy. What we're trying to do is tax people out of a recession, which we know doesn't work. It just doesn't work.

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

**J. DWYER:** Well, again, you're intellectually and morally bankrupt in your decision-making if you're going to double down and keep the sugar tax going.

Should we ask the Premier to write himself a letter? Maybe that's what we should do. We'll ask the Premier to write a letter on behalf of the people of the province to the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador saying that this is not the right mechanism right now due to the cost-of-living crisis that we are currently in.

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

**J. DWYER:** Everything is an operational issue; kick the can down the road; it's somebody else's fault; it's somebody else's

problem; this was created long before us. Deal with it, you're the government. You have to deal with it today. You're the government of the day. We are here trying to help. We want to bring forward some initiatives. We need to start the listening process. That seems to be what the problem is here.

I'd like to talk about tourism, as that's my shadow Cabinet role. In my last address, when I talked to the amendment, I talked about all the good things that are happening in tourism, which there are a lot of good things and we're moving in the right direction, but we're certainly not there yet.

This year is the 75th anniversary of Confederation, something great to build on, because I think one thing we can say is that – I don't speak for everybody in the province, but I think I speak for the majority that feel that they're Newfoundlanders first, where we had been a country and now we're Canadians and we're proud Canadians. But we want to make sure that we are looking after our own province, our own people, first and foremost; that should be our impetus as a governing party.

We have the Year of the Arts, which is a great initiative as well. I think that is something that our province can certainly build on. With that being said, right now tourism is adding \$1 billion of equity and value to our economy, but what could it be if we never had some of the constraints in place that are holding us back as a province to get newcomers to come travel here to spend new money as opposed to recycled money from our own residents. Which was really a help in our economy during COVID because we could do our staycations and stuff like that, but it was within that concise bubble, I guess, that we were safe with and stuff.

So, like I said, what we need to do is we have to look at what's holding back our tourism industry and the biggest thing that I think is holding back our tourism industry,

currently, is actually Marine Atlantic. Because right now, if you wanted to go get a berth on Marine Atlantic for July and August, it's not possible. Should we shut down all the borders between all the other provinces until we can have more people come here and have the ability to come here directly?

Because if we're not able to have any more berths on a boat or anything like that, then why should you be able to go from Ontario to Manitoba free of charge, freewheeling, never cost anything, yet you have to get a boat – if you have a family or anything you probably want a berth, you have to pay for the service to get to the Island, where it is supposed to be an extension of our Trans-Canada Highway. The Trans-Canada Highway has no toll booths on it from going from province to province. I'm not sure why the federal government is not subsidizing Marine Atlantic to the point where it becomes a part of our network of roadways so that it becomes our Trans-Canada Highway. Currently, right now, it's not our Trans-Canada Highway. It's just a means to an end of getting to our province.

If it was a part of the Trans-Canada Highway, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians would pay nothing to come and go from the province, but our guests would not have to pay to come and go from our province, to get across our borders, through our roadway. When we don't have any berths left on the Marine Atlantic we are subject, only, to air travel then, but our biggest issue with air travel then kind of doubles down on the fact that you can't bring your own car because you're travelling by air. Then when you get here, we don't have enough rentals to help people and get a weekly rental or even a daily rental for that matter. So we're deficient on that as well.

There are things that we can do to enhance our tourism ministry. We're just not doing them right now. If that's a billion-dollar industry, then there's no reason that we can't attain \$2 billion for the simple fact that

we have the right product. We have the right place. We have the right people. The problem is the distribution of how we get our product to market. We understand that we've got to bring people here, and I commend the minister for working on extra air travel to Europe. That's going to be a benefit to us in the long run. In the short term, we have to subsidize it to make it work.

What I am saying is that our Trans-Canada Highway includes Marine Atlantic, or it's supposed to. Right now, it's not including Marine Atlantic and, therefore, I find that we are deficient as a province in being able to travel freely the same as every other Canadian, which I think is fair. They should be allowed to travel from Alberta to Saskatchewan or Alberta to BC. We should be able to do it, too, free of charge.

If somebody got in their car from Nova Scotia, right now, other than the price of gas, they could end up in Vancouver, BC and that's it. Other than stopping along the way for meals and hotels or whatever, we all have to do that if we're going to travel that length of a distance but if you leave from St. John's, Newfoundland, not only do you have to drive across the province when the Argientia ferry is not on but now you have to pay for a berth on a ferry, which doesn't make it our Trans-Canada Highway. It actually makes it an impediment for us to leave.

If they want to subsidize, I guess, Marine Atlantic to the same tune as how other provinces are being treated, then maybe on those borders between other provinces, there should be a toll booth and let them pay what we're paying to try and leave this province. Because if you have a family of four and let's say if you had to go for medical reasons, well, that's going to be an astronomical bill for us to pay for air travel. If we're given the opportunity to utilize Marine Atlantic, then maybe we could drive to that appointment in Nova Scotia or even Ontario for that matter, but we don't need to have

this inhibitive charge, because it takes away the opportunity for people to move freely in and out of our province.

We don't have border security, other than for international travel, so why do we have a regressive fee to travel on Marine Atlantic, out of the province or back into the province? It should not matter. Every Newfoundlander and Labradorian should be offered, I'm saying, at least one trip a year, that they can leave the province and come back, free of charge. Just for the simple fact that it is our Trans-Canada Highway and we should have the same – I'm not saying it as an entitlement thing; I don't really like that word. I'm just saying in all equity and fairness, it's just as important for us to travel in and out of our province as it is for all of the rest of the provinces in Canada to be able to move freely throughout the country.

So, to me, that is a big determinant to us increasing our tourism dollars from \$1 billion to \$2 billion minimum and I think we can get to probably \$4 billion or \$5 billion, but what we need to do is we need to support the industry in the right ways, not just about having a craft fair or anything like that, it's about really putting our best foot forward and giving people an opportunity to move freely within the country. Last time I checked, we were part of the country; we're 75 years here now. Seventy-five years is an awful long time to be waiting to be treated like every other province.

To me, if we're not going to be treated fairly, then treat all the other provinces the way we are being treated. So once Marine Atlantic bookings are full and nobody else can get a berth, then maybe we should stop the fact that you can travel within these provinces free of charge. Once Marine Atlantic is booked, that's it, every province is under the same guise then. So if you want to move freely over your border to the next province, you pay the same as if you were going on Marine Atlantic and your trip is not going to be seven or eight hours on a ferry or 12 hours on a ferry, it's going to be



instantaneous, but at least you're given equity to the industry that is not supported currently at the level that it should be.

So travel is going to be the biggest proponent of holding us back when it comes to tourism, but the second biggest one is going to be our Wi-Fi and cell service. It's okay here in St. John's, you don't have very many dead spots or anything like that, but when the federal government comes out with an initiative of \$25 million to the province to increase Wi-Fi and cell service, instead of giving people, like the people in Brookside, for instance, in my district, that has zero ability to use Wi-Fi and cell service, unless they get a private piece of equipment that they pay for, so when we get \$25 million from the federal government and we put it into giving people that already have Internet and already have Wi-Fi and cell service a bump up to get more speed and stuff like that, then it really makes no sense. To me, it's a waste of money because we need to look after everybody before we look after the elite.

So the thing is, if those services are already available in the metro area and the larger areas, then they should be available in the smaller, more rural areas, because it's just as important to them. They still have students that have to get online and do school work. They still have tourists.

We have lots of picturesque areas in our province and if you came from Portugal and you turned around and saw this beautiful piece of infrastructure or a beach or a trail or something, it might even remind you of home, but a lot of times people would love to get on FaceTime or whatever and directly talk to these people and see it on video for themselves in real time. That's not available in all areas of our province.

Notwithstanding that, when we look at Fire and Emergency Services, they don't even have the ability to contact their teammates and stuff like that of who's on route, who's already at the scene, who's going to be

primary on the scene, whatever those things are that need to happen. But in certain areas on the Burin Peninsula, there are total dead zones that if you go off the road you better cross your fingers pretty quick or bless yourself because you don't know how long it's going to be until another vehicle comes by.

There are a lot of good Samaritans in Newfoundland and Labrador, no doubt about it, but if you're travelling alone and you stop somewhere, it's hard to know if you're going to be compromised or not, at this point, because as we can see with the difference of addictions and stuff like that, there are some nefarious characters out there that, not everybody can be trusted at this time, for the simple fact that you don't know what's going on with that person at that time. So if we have a motor vehicle accident or a vehicle that catches fire or anything like that, it's really upsetting, to be quite honest, that these people wouldn't be put in the right light or given the right opportunity to make sure that the patient or the person that's calling for those services is well taken care of.

Like I said, if we're going to improve anything to do with Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation, two of the things to recap would be to really focus on what Marine Atlantic is in place for, why we need to utilize it as often as we do. But then on top of that, we have to look at Wi-Fi and cell service and make sure that everybody in the province is all on an equal playing field, for the simple fact that, like I said, from school students to tourists to businesses to Fire and Emergency Services, all these things live in the 21st century that it's almost a foregone conclusion now that you would have a cellphone in your pocket that you expect to be able to use at any time, but it depends on what area of the province you're in if you can use that at any time.

It's okay in the hubs and stuff like that, because obviously the Bell Aliant and Rogers and Eastlink of the province, we

want them to profit. We don't want them to break even or lose money because then we lose that, it's going to be another degradation of services if they don't see a good business model. But you can't use a business model that bases your impetus only on the metro or hub areas. You need to make sure that those hub areas also have an opportunity to help the outlying communities that they're responsible for.

As we heard the Member for Terra Nova say earlier about the hospital in Clarenville. It's overrun and it's overwhelmed for the simple fact that the hospital in Clarenville is also taking patients from Bonavista because they have hospital that's a degradation of services. You're taking a lot of the people from my district that go basically from Terrenceville right to about Chance Cove that use that hospital as well. Like I said, for not everybody to have that availability, it's quite degrading, actually, to treat our people in that manner. Like I said, when it comes to a lot of this stuff, we can work on it, we can improve things.

The last thing I want to touch on is my esteemed colleague for the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis, he brought up about the SCBA gear and that's the apparatus that helps our volunteer firefighters tackle a fire and utilize for their training. We know that these are becoming obsolete; therefore, we're about six months or eight months out of these having to be replaced.

I would push government, I guess, to make sure that this happens, because we don't want it to be like the fire rescue vehicle in Baine Harbour, that the only time it got action is when it had to be taken off the road and couldn't be inspected anymore.

So, like I said, let's get ahead of things. Let's do things the right way and do things right, because it's the right thing to do, not because there are eyes on us and let's not be intellectually and morally bankrupt in our decision-making.

Thank you.

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

**E. JOYCE:** Point of order.

**SPEAKER:** Point of order.

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

**E. JOYCE:** There was a discussion earlier, section 49, about the PET scanner in Corner Brook, that it was put in 2016. It was never put in in 2016. I just want to read a copy of the statements by the former Premier Dwight Ball. Before it was even opened, Dwight Ball made an announcement as Leader of the Opposition that a Liberal government would expand cancer care services in the province and put a radiation unit and a PET scanner in the acute care hospital to be built.

The commitment was made in 2014, long before construction started. The hospital is scheduled to open in 2023. The former premier: I was never part of any discussion that put this PET scanner on hold or delay – Dwight Ball. He said it was always intended that once the radiation therapy was in place, a PET scanner or a newer, better piece of equipment would be included.

I was concerned about it, after the comments by the former minister of Health, because I know this commitment was made with a lot of work and a lot of people involved. I was never part of any discussion that would have PET scanner on hold or delay.

I want to table this here, comments by the former Premier Dwight Ball on the PET scanner. It was always in the new long-term care hospital. It was taken out without any consent or knowledge of myself or the former premier.

Thank you.

Consent to table the document?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Leave.

**E. JOYCE:** Thank you, I'll table the document.

Thank you very much.

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

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

I just want to speak on this subamendment. Just for the people out there listening and people in my district, I just want to read a part of it. By adding immediately after the following words "and that this House also faults the government for failing to guarantee people" and it goes on to talk about faults and, in actual fact, I highlighted how many faults is included in this amendment. I'd like to speak in support of this amendment, because in my district – my district is treated sometimes, when it comes to services and access to infrastructure, grants, supports from the province, we're treated really almost as a different country, and that's something that people voiced to me quite often.

In actual fact, the Member for Terra Nova was talking about a young person that he knows of who was at the Waterford and was put in a taxi at his darkest moments, when he needed the supports, being released from the Waterford into a taxi.

Now, I want to tell people in the province that I share the concern that the Member for Terra Nova spoke with. In actual fact, in my district when I talk about us being treated as a different world, in actual fact the world that we live in is so different from the rest of the province that we might as well be, say, a part of France or a part of the United States or Great Britain when we look at Confederation. Were we a part of Confederation?

Because, in my district, we can't even get to the Waterford. We can't even see a psychiatrist at the Waterford. I've had parents calling me trying to get an appointment, trying to get their child, trying to get their adult son or daughter actually an appointment because they're family is in full-blown psychosis and sometimes have actually seriously harmed somebody. We see how the health care system has failed them. Not only has the health care system has failed them but law enforcement, the RCMP has also failed them as well. Because the RCMP has an obligation when harm is done to people or individuals to make sure that the environment is safe, and they fail to do that.

So, for us, we can't even get to the Waterford. We can't even get to the Janeway. Let alone be released prematurely. For me, it really is a concern.

Last fall, I went to the funeral for a 13-year-old child, who had died by their own hand. In actual fact, he posted on social media, just before he passed away, a TikTok video. In the TikTok video, he was scanning his home community and talking about how much he loved his community. He loved his community, but he was so, so tired. I stand at his gravesite and I wonder, how in the world does a 13-year-old child be so tired that they don't want to live anymore? Where are the supports? Where's the supports for that child?

Now you may say, okay, he's fallen through the cracks. And then I raise in the House of Assembly a 16-year-old child who is actually entering full-blown psychosis and the mother is calling for help. Do you know what happens? They end up on a video chat with the doctor and the mother is telling the doctor that they need help.

In actual fact, you want to talk about stigma, the stigma of mental health – in actual fact, the child is left in the community to bear the burden of that stigma all alone, because if the child would get the help, get the

supports, get the proper diagnosis, they could begin treatment and go back to their own life, the world that they had before psychosis actually impacted them. But I read now – because I'm reading up in this stuff myself – that, in actual fact, not only is psychosis harming a person's mental health, but it also harms them physically. I'm going to do a post about some of the harms that untreated psychosis actually has on the body. And when you listen to what I will post or read what I post, you'll be able to identify with a lot of these harms.

We are being harmed over and over again, layer upon layer of harm, while we can't even access it. We are dying. You know, when I rose to defend myself in a point of order when I was talking about suicides, do you know something? I actually misspoke. I was so upset, I misspoke and I started talking about percentages. What are percentage for our females committing suicide compared to the rest of the province? It wasn't percentage; it was actually times. It was in the thousands of percentages. But in actual fact, that just slipped my ability to actually think about it, because I was so upset.

At the end of the day, when I speak about my district, we are being harmed in so many ways. Before that, not a lot of people did know what was happening. A lot of people didn't realize what was happening. We can't even get out to our regular medical appointments, let alone try to access mental health supports for people who are being seriously harmed.

We can't even actually get out to our medical appointments and if we get out to our medical appointments, like for an X-ray, a scan or a chemotherapy appointment that are supposed to be there to save our lives, if we can actually be fortunate enough to get out to them, a lot of times we can't get back and that's actually creating a lot of harm for people in my district as well.

So, for us, we're treated differently. There's kind of like a little funny situation that kind of parallels what I'm talking about. My grandniece had actually broken her leg. There was a delay, of course, in getting her medevaced out to Goose Bay. Luckily, there was an orthopedic surgeon or some sort of a doctor that was there and they told my nephew that he's daughter was really lucky, because this doctor don't usually come into Goose Bay and he was able to help my grandniece by adjusting her broken leg so that she wasn't in so much pain. She was in a lot of pain for several days.

Anyway, they get medevaced out here to St. John's and they're there with an older person that's being medevaced, of course, the ambulance comes and takes him first and they're supposed to drop him off and come back for them. In actual fact, they had to wait hours because they found out from the paramedics that that ambulance was diverted to St. Pierre, to pick up somebody coming from St. Pierre and my nephew actually messaged me and he said: Aunt, isn't that like in France? Isn't that another country? So it kind of parallels what I'm talking about here. Because not only are we treated like people from a different country, we know that people of France has higher priority over us.

So there's a lot of irony there. There's nothing funny about people being failed for mental health, people being failed for physical health, cancer, diabetes, heart attacks. Can we get out if we're having a heart attack on the North Coast? Well, you have to actually have luck on your side. You have to make sure you're having a heart attack when the weather is clear so that the plane can come get you. Actually, you have to make sure if you're having a heart attack, that there's not two or three medevacs in front of you. That's what we're facing. That's actually what we're facing.

All of the things that actually contribute to us needing health services is because our quality of life, do we have the same level of

quality of life? Can we purchase food? Can we purchase nutritional food? It's really difficult now to be able to afford nutritional food because of the cost on the North Coast.

When you look at access to being able to heat your house – I talk about the price of electricity. The price of electricity if you use electric heat to heat your house, you're going to actually be paying 19 cents a kilowatt hour. If you're going to be heating your house with oil, you're going to be paying probably \$1,000 to \$2,000 to heat your house – if you adequately heat your house. No one can afford that. So what happens is the houses are not adequately heated. What happens when you don't adequately heat your house? You get mould; you get mildew buildup. These are all things that impact our physical health, our mental health, our overall wellness. That's the truth – that's the truth.

For me, I have to speak the truth. That's why I talk about suicides. No one wants to talk about suicides; no one wants to talk about incarceration; no one wants to talk about domestic violence and abuse; no one wants to talk about people not being able to afford to adequately heat their homes or feed their children, but for me, in my district, it's things I have to raise.

In actual fact, I do support this subamendment and when you look at all the failings, I agree totally. I agree totally with the Official Opposition. There has been failing on top of failing on top of failing and the worst thing for me sitting here is I have to listen when they talk about Muskrat Falls, as if they're totally innocent. In actual fact, when you look at the burden of debt that was incurred, the cost overruns, it was on the Liberal's watch. It wasn't over here.

When did this government come into power? 2015. When did the billions and billions of dollars of cost overruns happen? Right on their watch.

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

**L. EVANS:** For me, I have to listen to it over and over again: failing to obtain a permit, to secure a permit to actually do anything about methylmercury poisoning and contamination of our food chain. How do you fail to obtain a permit? I worked in construction. I worked in operations. I worked in mining and I tell you when a big company wants a permit, they get a permit. So that was just an excuse. We know it was either total incompetence or an intentional failure. For me, we have to bear that burden.

I was in budget Estimates talking about the cost and one of the things I talked about, and I talk about it a lot in my petitions, is about the fact that Northern Labrador is excluded from a lot of the incentive programs and excluded from rebate programs that we hear about. The biggest one to date, since I was elected as MHA, is, first off, we had the one with the construction rebate where there was the incentive going out to the whole province, a province-wide incentive, to encourage construction, to rebuild the construction industry after COVID had created a lot of problems and hardship for companies. You could claim up to 25 per cent of your cost. If you wanted to put a brand new set of steps on your house or a porch or a deck or if you wanted to add a part on to your house or if you wanted to redo your roof or if you just wanted to replace some gyprock in your house, you could do that and you could claim up to 25 per cent. That was a great thing – that was a great thing. But you actually had to have the work done by a certified contractor, the Home Builders' Association affiliation.

Now, how many in Labrador do we have? I think there were two in Goose Bay. We couldn't actually access that service, so we couldn't actually get the rebate. Even though we were building and repairing and maintaining our houses, we couldn't access

that province-wide rebate. I brought that up to the Minister of Finance.

Then when you look at a lot of the other rebates that were being planned, I asked could we be included? Could you take into consideration our geographic isolation and also our limited access to services so that we wouldn't be excluded from rebates? We want rebates, too.

The next one that came up was the oil to electricity rebate. Now, you might say, Lela – I don't know if I'm allowed to use names, so MHA for Torngat Mountains – why would you want to be able to switch over from oil to electricity? Aren't you always complaining about the cost of electricity? People can't afford to heat their homes with electric heat. You have a petition in there for that.

Yes, I do, I have a petition in there for that talking about the high price of electricity. But, in actual fact, we've seen the cost of stove oil go up so high that people can't afford to heat their houses. The high cost of electricity would be cheaper than the thousands of dollars to heat your house every month, not for the year, not for the season, between \$1,000 to \$2,000 a month to heat your house in the coldest months of the winter, and we get cold winters up there. Even when it's unseasonably warm, we're still probably down around -15, -20 degrees.

For me, we wanted to be included with the rebates. But, in actual fact, we couldn't. Seventeen thousand dollars to transition your house from oil to electric heat. People in my district actually had to take that cost on themselves. They couldn't access the province-wide rebate system.

I brought it up in budget Estimates and I brought it up to the Minister of Labrador Affairs and she was very gracious in her answer when I asked about inclusion. She actually did talk about her district as well, because they're on diesel, they're on electricity, they're excluded from the rebate as well. One of the things that they came up

with was a voucher program. Actually, in this budget, there is a voucher program for elders, seniors in my district and in the District of Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair, and that's a good thing. I appreciate that for our elders, but one of the points that I made, and it's a painful point because when I became MHA I realized that there is a lot of discrimination, a lot of prejudice out there against the people in my district.

There's a general opinion from people who have racist views on people in my district that we can't look after ourselves. We can't look after our children. We can't actually maintain our houses, but, in actual fact, when you look at all the harm that's been done to the people in my district, when you look at it, we have difficulty because we have not been provided with adequate services, adequate supports and infrastructure that other districts have gotten. It's not because we're irresponsible. The one thing I spoke of is the problem with racism being based in misinformation.

Now, I gladly accept the voucher for our elders to help with food and heat, but the biggest problem that I have with that, and I said it in Estimates, is that it's not a province-wide voucher, it's just for our districts – Northern Labrador and Southern Labrador. So for the rest of the province, they're going to look and say, okay, they're getting another handout. That's the way they're going to view it, especially, for people who are racist towards our people.

So, in actual fact, when you look at heat and food, if we could access the same programs that the rest of the province gets, we wouldn't have that condescending view put on us. Oh, look they need food vouchers. Them poor old people can't even look after themselves. I'm sick of that attitude. I'm sick of the misinformation and I'm sick of a lot of things being hidden.

All we ask is to be treated fairly, but give us the financial investment we were supposed to get; give us the infrastructure we were

supposed to get. Don't get me started on Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. Year after year after year, houses not being maintained. Even the houses that people are living in, to date, very little maintenance.

I should, this summer, go around and talk to the people and find out when was the last time somebody was in here to do any repairs or upkeep in your house because they don't see it. We've had houses vacant.

Now, it's really, really good, and I got to commend the minister and the previous minister, especially, for the work that was done to address these issues, but it's been decades in the making.

Where was all the money that was going to be invested? Because I tell you, when there are no repairs done, there's no money being invested. So now we're going to start to get some repairs. It's going to look like we're getting something but, in actual fact, we have to acknowledge the year after year, the decade after decade, where we actually didn't get those supports.

We didn't run our houses into the ground. They just weren't maintained. When we look at houses, people working with good-paying jobs, how do you get paint into your community now? It's very, very difficult. Even to get paint into your community because it is about getting the shipping. There are no two by fours, no plywood sold on the North Coast. There are no windows anymore. Before you could go to the store in your community and buy things to repair and maintain your house. That doesn't exist anymore.

For us, all of this really, really is impacting our quality of life. For me, the burden of trying to actually bring some truth to the story is very, very difficult.

Speaker, I'm out of time, so I'm going to actually end there.

Thank you very much.

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

**SPEAKER (Gambin-Walsh):** The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

I certainly appreciate the opportunity to be able to get up and represent the beautiful District of Ferryland. It's a great honour to be in here and I thank the people again for putting me in here to do this.

Today, I'm going to touch on a couple of issues that have been going on in my district in the last couple of weeks. One of them is the nurse practitioner issue in Ferryland. They have 2½ positions or 1.5 positions available out there. I got an email last week. I spoke about it last week in the House, when I had an opportunity. I got an email from a constituent in St. Shott's who notified me that the nurse practitioner is soon going to be relocated to Holyrood. It's news to the people in the district; it's news to me. You would think that the government, especially the Health Minister, would notify the people in the area that it's happening.

This person is located in Ferryland. They do two days a week in Ferryland, they do two days a week in Trepassey and they do one day virtual. Last year, we lost a doctor. They took a doctor out of the area and said it wasn't needed. Now they're taking a nurse practitioner and moving her to Holyrood. So I don't know if they think we're moving out in droves up in the Ferryland District, but that's not the case. We need to have these services available. It's not acceptable that that happens.

She said, back in '22, we had protest up there on the doctor leaving. They were assured no cutbacks were planned and if anything changed, it would be publicly announced. Well, it hasn't been publicly announced, but the people in the district know what's happening. It's not acceptable that they take a nurse practitioner that's in this district, that's serving these

communities – and for people that don't know the district and the minister had trouble with that last year when he had the ambulance issue when he quoted it was in Ferryland when it was actually in Cape Broyle, came from Trepassey.

The district is fairly big. It goes from Ferryland, you go to Aquaforte, then you go to Fermeuse and then you've got Port Kirwan and branches off from there. Then you've got Kingman's Cove, you've got Renews and you've got Cappahayden. Then you're going across the barrens, you're going to Portugal Cove South, you're going to Biscay Bay, you're going to Trepassey and then you're going to St. Shott's. All that's a pretty big area and to have a nurse practitioner leave and go to Holyrood because there is probably more demand is not acceptable to the people in Trepassey, in the Ferryland District, not acceptable whatsoever and not be notified – I don't care if you notify us or not. It's not acceptable to have two nurse practitioners and one leave.

The other nurse practitioner, by the way, that's in my area called me, probably two weeks ago. She's got a kid that's in daycare – and I probably brought that up, too – and when she gets two years old, which is going to happen sometime this month, in April, maybe May, she may have to take time off because she's got no daycare available. Once she times out of the two-year-old group, there's no room to put her in the next group up.

There was two up there when she called me, before this came to light. There were two nurse practitioners there and she had told me this. Now you're telling me there's one leaving. It's not acceptable, Minister, I've got to say. It's not acceptable for this to be happening in the Ferryland District. It's just not.

When she explained, she said, will this nurse practitioner be replaced? Is one nurse practitioner expected to do the work of two?

Will the remaining nurse practitioner attend the clinic on a full-time basis? When she recalls all the conversations, she said, I attended these past few years and foolishly believed local input was valued and now experience the steady reduction in services and only feel frustration and disappointment. Please, you can enlighten and reassure me that this is not going to happen. Well, I can't reassure, but I can reassure that I'm going to bring it up in this House of Assembly.

This is from another mayor in the area. I spoke to her, yesterday, and she said I don't mind if you read it out, not one bit because it's actually happening. The reason given by Eastern health is they have more of a patient volume than Ferryland. Well, we have two nurse practitioners, one leaving and the other one, possibly, leaving if she doesn't get daycare – not acceptable. Not acceptable anywhere in this province, let alone in the Ferryland District and certainly not acceptable out there.

The clerk in the Town of Holyrood advised, and this was confirmed by the clerk at Eastern health clinic, that there are two doctors, Dr. Ryan and Dr. Healy, plus one nurse practitioner practising at Eastern health site there. There's also a physician in a private clinic in Holyrood, making it three physicians plus two nurse practitioners in the Town of Holyrood.

They're going to take the nurse practitioner that's in Ferryland and move her over there. The clinic in Ferryland services communities from the Southern Avalon, which I just read out. The population from Brigus to Cappahayden is 1,969. We now have one full-time nurse practitioner to service the area. There may be patients in Mobile and Witless Bay being seen at the same clinic, which are not included in these numbers.

The age demographic should be considered – and I totally agree with her on that statement, totally agree. When they first started this, when I first got in, there was a



meeting from Public Health and they had all the community of Trepassey up there. When I went up there, I would say there weren't two people under 40 at that time. That's not exaggerating. There were more people over 55 to 60 than there was below it, I can tell you that – definitely.

How can one lone health care provider service the entire area? It can't happen – it just can't happen. Of note, the medical clinic at Bay Bulls is not accepting new patients. That's another issue – I'll get into that in a second, I'll finish this, in regard to new patients.

There was a doctor retired and a number of patients requested to be followed up by the clinic in Ferryland. All were put on a wait-list and she said she was one of them. A number of patients are still waiting. A representative from Eastern health is advising the clinic in Ferryland does not have patient volume, yet patients have been waiting over two years – two years – to get a doctor or a nurse practitioner. And there's not enough patient volume.

You can't sit there and take this and think that it's correct or right for the district. You can't sit there and think that it's correct. I mean, something has to be done. This was sent to the minister and I'm reading it out, so you can't say it's not happening and check into it. I mean, that nurse practitioner should stay where they're to right now and not be moved. We demand up there they shouldn't be moved. It's not acceptable. Totally not acceptable.

Someone called the clinic last week, April 9, and was given the earliest the appointment, April 23. They have two nurse practitioners; called on April 9 and they got April 23. That's two weeks. So there's not enough volume there for another nurse practitioner to be able to take care of it? That's two weeks. It's more down in the Bay Bulls area. If I call in today – and I might as well get into it now – it'd be probably three to four weeks getting in.

There are two people that have emailed me since last year or spoke to me personally that I know that haven't been seeing the doctor in seven or eight years and when they call the clinic, they're no longer a patient because they're healthy. Now, does that make any sense that you can drop a patient because they haven't gone in there in seven or eight years? Another person hasn't been there in 10 or 12 years and they tell them they're not a patient anymore. Now, that makes no sense.

I'm only telling you what they told me. That's what I'm put here to do and that's what I'm going to do. It's just not acceptable. It's happening across the province – it is definitely happening across the province. It's just not acceptable. It doesn't make any sense how you cannot be a patient. God forbid, if I have to call in – the people here have flus, you call and maybe have to go in, who knows what you got, it could be pneumonia. This person that I spoke to yesterday, she had a sister-in-law that phoned down, she was really sick. She tried to phone the pharmacy to get a prescription. Of course, they can't give you a prescription without seeing the doctor or a nurse practitioner.

So the nurse practitioner, in her wisdom, called the clinic and told her this lady is really sick. She called her, she got her in for an appointment the next day. When she went down, she had pneumonia. So now imagine not getting treated for pneumonia for two or three weeks, to wait for an appointment for two or three weeks, you could be gone. That's not to be laughed at. That's a very serious problem, very serious.

It's just not acceptable that we're going to lose a nurse practitioner. I hope the minister, when he gets a chance, looks into that. Because I'm up here and it is very frustrating to speak on it, I got to tell you, very frustrating, especially when you hear about it from your constituents. They don't have the courtesy to give you a call. That's not acceptable. There are government

Members over there and they know it is not acceptable. It applies to everything in your district. They should be calling to let you know stuff was going on in your district. It's just not acceptable.

The other issue I have here is the ambulance issue. We lost an ambulance in Trepassey, it went down to Cape Broyle; they had two. Then they put a rapid response unit in. I'm getting emails here as well, two emails here on the same issue. One big issue, I have to say, is both emails were about an ambulance in Newfoundland and Labrador don't have snow tires on in the winter or some of them don't. I don't know if anybody is aware of that, but some of them don't. I don't know if that's a regulation that they don't have to, but maybe somebody should look into the regulations because that's something that's not acceptable. It just doesn't make sense how we here in Newfoundland and Labrador don't have snow tires on in these conditions to be able to respond to calls.

This lady here that I had, she got a call and they were coming from Cape Broyle, it took them 45 minutes to get there, coming from Cape Broyle, got going up by the Brigus, as they call White Horse, going up out of there and the ambulance couldn't make it up over the hill so she called her brother. She had to sign herself out of the ambulance to say that her brother was picking her up to bring her to the hospital because the ambulance couldn't get up over the hill.

Now that was a quick snowstorm, it happened a couple weeks ago, but that's reality. That's what we're dealing with every day. We're dealing with this stuff every single day and that is not acceptable.

That's just one incident on an ambulance. There's another one there in the district. She was a 93-year-old resident of our community who lives alone, fell at home resulting in some injuries. Unfortunately, this person was not found until 2 p.m. the following day and had been lying on a cold

floor for 14 hours. Once discovered, the resident's family called 911 to request an ambulance. The family were told, at that time, to make sure there was a path shoveled to the house wide enough to allow access for a stretcher, which they did. After waiting for over an hour and 20 minutes for that to arrive, the family was told by the attendants that the lot where the ambulance was parked had not been plowed at that time and they would respond to the call once the lot was cleared. The ambulance still had to be towed out to respond. Like, you can hardly believe it as you're reading this out. It's hard to believe that we're reading this stuff out. That we're making these – I don't know, it's just so frustrating.

Upon arrival at the resident's home, the driver advised that due to a lack of snow tires on the ambulance, they would not be able to park closer to the resident's house and left the ambulance and the stretcher 100 feet away from the resident's door. After completing an assessment on the individual, the attendants then found it appropriate to make the 93-year-old resident walk 100 feet from the house to a cold stretcher, which was taken out of the ambulance when they arrived and left in the driveway.

Now I'm not making this stuff up. But the government of today are responsible. I'm not going to call the ambulance owners; I'm calling the government of the day who are responsible for this stuff. Two of these emails have been sent in and we got permission to be able to send them in. I didn't read all the email but I'm giving you the gist of the email. It's not acceptable this day and age that this stuff be happening. We're going to get a report in July, supposedly, of a new ambulance system, a dispatch system, central dispatch.

I'm after going through dynamic dispatching. We're after going through it all since I've started at this and to see this stuff happening. It's going to come out in July, supposedly, with no input from any MHAs or

what might be happening or what's going to happen or what's going on with the individual ambulance owners. We hear some stuff, but I can't quote that. That's not factual yet until we get there. These are life-altering situations of these people who are making these calls. It's just not acceptable.

Speaker, I'll change the topic but that can't go without being said. That's what our job is to come in here, represent all our districts and bring this stuff forward. You can hardly believe your ears that you're talking about it. It's incredible.

Speaker, I'll touch on the road issues for sure. I'll certainly compliment the minister. He said in his statement today he's doing Witless Bay Line after five years. I certainly thank him for that and for some roadwork in Trepassey. I will say that, and I told him I would, because there is some stuff that is positive happening.

Listen, all my petitions are based on roads, most of them, but I do have some other ones that I'm going to touch on when I get a chance. They did the guardrail on the Gould's Bypass, which they were there for a couple of weeks doing that. They did a good job on that as well.

But there are some of these roads, I'll use the one – and, Speaker, you know as well as I do – from St. Shott's to St. Vincent's, it's absolutely not fit to drive on. If you think Witless Bay Line is bad, that's just as bad or worse. It's hard to believe that there are roads in this province that are actually in that condition. It's hard to believe.

Listen, we know, we get up here, we may cod and torment each other, but I go through some of these districts. I go through the Liberal districts. I go down to Harbour Breton – hard to find a pothole. You won't need a pothole sign down there, you'll use them all on the Avalon, I'm sure of that. You go to Lewisporte area and you go down to some other areas, the pavement is unbelievable.

That should be done on a priority basis. I've had probably three or four ministers since I came in and had some other people come in. It's just so many ministers going through that, I don't know, they start over again. One had a five-year plan, the next one changed it, we're not going to do that anymore, we're going to do a two-year plan. Now, this minister, I'm not sure what he's using but that's the previous ministers that I'm quoting.

When I came in here first, it was a five-year plan. They were going to pick them off one by one, then he was squashing that and there was going to be two years. So where is it now? What kind of priority is put on it? It changes day to day; changes minister to minister. If we have a plan, then they should be using the same plan. If it's in a pecking order, then it should be done. It's certainly something that needs to be looked at and, hopefully, they'll get to do that and look at it for sure.

I will speak on brush cutting as well. I've had some brush cutting done. I'll go back to another one as well. They did some in Tors Cove and from Tors Cove up towards La Manche, but the main areas that needs to be done are from La Manche bridge up to Brigus and into Aquaforte to Fermeuse area. All they have to do is ask if we're going to put it out there, how much is done? How much do they do in brush cutting? It would certainly be nice to know because these areas that are definitely safety issues for the people in my district when they're driving these in the nighttime, it's just not acceptable, Speaker.

I will ask the question – and we're always sitting here, maybe we'll come up with a suggestion – I'm just wondering when it comes to line painting. They're going to do line painting. Line painting is coming now. You have the foggiest season of the year, when is it going to be done? Normally, it's done in our area September or October. But a person at a meeting told me you can get

better paint, it might cost more, may last longer. Would it be cost efficient?

That's something that I wonder if the minister can look into because every year the lines are gone and you have to repaint them. Maybe if you bought more expensive paint, it might last two to three years and might cost you less. It might cost you more upfront to pay for that paint, but it may cost you less in the long run, if you only have to do it every two or three years rather than every year.

Try some in certain areas. Because it's certainly something that could be looked at. Every year, this got to go through this every single year to be repainted. We know – everybody drives the roads, you know. But something maybe we can look at, no question about it.

Speaker, I will touch on the breakwater in Trepassey which was taken down during the storm. The minister said he would look into it. Time is moving on, the weather still happens, water is still coming in over those breakwaters. Let's get down and get moving on this and hopefully something can be done in a quick order and not waste the province's money and federal money and go back and rebuild it again. We just spent \$900,000 or nearly a million dollars on it and it's down. You have to listen to the people in the area that are going to tell you what they tell me – and I'm not an engineer – that it has to go further down in the ground in order to stabilize. Maybe they can get up there and get that done.

Again, I want to touch on the teacher issue. We've been speaking about that since we've been in here, and how a government can come up with a 0.25 position for a teaching position. You have to put that in a perspective of somebody's just getting out of university, they have an opportunity to probably go down in Marystown to teach and they're from in here. So they're going to get a 0.25 position.

I don't know what the pay is, but you have to go down, you have to rent a house, you have a car, you have insurance and they're going to run and do all that on a 0.25 position. It makes absolutely no sense. You're either teaching or you're not. Now, I know they were trying to save money somewhere along the way, but somewhere along the way somebody has to sit back and say, this doesn't make any sense. It makes absolutely no sense to have a 0.25 position.

I know that there are people who had a 0.25 in Mobile and they had another 0.25 in the Goulds and another 0.25 out in St. John's. So 0.75, which they could possibly make it on that part of a salary, based on what it is. But they have to be able to get from Mobile on one day to a 0.25 to get out to the Goulds, and maybe the next day they go out to St. John's to do the 0.25. Does that make any sense in anybody's world that this is happening, Speaker? It just doesn't make any sense, 0.25 positions. It makes no sense.

All the schools – and I get calls and you get calls, too, that we need help in the schools for just more teachers and more student assistants. Student assistants are a big one – real big one. We get cries out from people that need help in schools and they're not getting it. They are not getting it. They need the help. The teacher with 25 or 30 kids and you have a couple of kids that need some extra help, they need it. That's distracting from the other kids, obviously. It's hard on one teacher to be able to do that. So they need some student assistants.

I see I'm running out of time, Speaker. Hopefully in my next chance I get up I'll be able to talk on this more.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I had a few things I wanted to bring up this afternoon. Before I do, though, I just want to go back to health care where I had ended off. The last time I spoke to the budget was primarily about health care.

In listening to my colleague from Ferryland, what he is saying, he's absolutely right in what he's saying about the concerns that not only is he hearing in his district, not only is it an issue in rural parts of the province – I understand they have their own set of challenges, particularly when it comes to ambulance services and so on, getting people in an emergency, but I would say that overall I don't think there's one Member in this House of Assembly, including the minister himself, that in his quiet moments – and I know he's doing all he can. I've said time and time again, I believe this Minister of Health is trying. I really, truly believe that.

He's got to be frustrated because he realizes, I'm sure, like the rest of us realize, like the people of Newfoundland and Labrador realize, our health care system is in total chaos. It really, truly is in chaos. Members talk about it over on this side, certainly, all the time and I'm sure every Member is hearing these issues, whether it be issues like my colleague from Ferryland just raised about not being able to get any doctors or nurse practitioners in the area, issues with ambulances and so on; or whether it be issues like my colleague in Official Opposition raised there last week, tabled pictures of, I think it was, the Health Sciences centre, of garbage all over the floor and mice feces and everything else, the state of the place; or whether it be issues like I raised last week, issues around people that are just waiting so long to get an MRI.

As an example, the wait time for MRIs are just totally unacceptable. As I said last week, we're not necessarily talking minor ailments. We're talking about people waiting months and months and months on MRIs to

find out you have cancer. I wonder how many people – I don't know if the health care authority tracks it or how they would necessarily track it. They probably don't, but I've got to ask myself and ask this House of Assembly out loud, how many people do we think have lost their lives, have passed away because they could not get the services they received, because by the time they got the diagnostic it was too late; or they got the diagnostic and by the time they got to see a specialist, or to receive surgery or treatment or whatever the case might be that it was too late, the disease had progressed too far and they lost their lives – how much of that happened? I don't know, but it bothers me.

As one Member of this House of Assembly, it's one of those issues that kind of keeps me up at night, if you will. I think about it from time to time. When I go to bed, the mind is racing about different things. That's one of the things, legit – one of the things that races through my mind, when I'm trying to go to sleep and you're thinking about what's going on and the House of Assembly and government and everything else is I wonder and I worry how many constituents of mine and people of the province, in general, are not receiving health care – very basic thing, health care. If you don't have your health, you don't have anything. It is very worrisome.

I have a gentleman – and I'm just going to read this one out for the record because this gentleman sent an email to all Members, I think, of the House. I don't know how many Members read it, but he asked would I bring it forward in the House of Assembly, so that's what I'm doing.

This gentleman talks about – this is on April 15. He says: On April 15, at 12, noon, I had blood work done to follow up on a previous issue. At 4:30 p.m., I was driving on the Trans-Canada Highway and I get a call – so that's 4½ half hours later from when he was in getting blood work done. The lady on the other end begins to tell me my potassium

levels in my blood are critically low and I need to get to the nearest emergency room immediately.

This is someone now driving home. I tell her, I have an appointment with my GP on April 16, which is the next day. She tells me it can't wait. You can't wait until tomorrow. This is so serious you need to get to an emergency. This cannot wait to see your GP tomorrow. That's how serious this is.

She tells me it can't wait. She then tells me that it's not safe for me to drive because of the very critical level. So my wife takes the vehicle, turns around and beats it back to St. John's. I arrive at the Health Sciences at 5:15ish and it took me one hour to be triaged.

This is a gentleman who gets a call: can't wait until tomorrow, get back here to the emergency ASAP. You can't drive. This is very life threatening. He gets back and now he's waiting an hour to be triaged. Then they took his blood sample again and told me to sit out front. So the wait began. At around 9:30, the triage nurse said my blood work was back and it shouldn't be long. Now remember this: He gets back at 5:15, told to turn around, you can't drive, you can't wait to see your doctor tomorrow, this is serious, get back here. He goes there at 5:15, now he's hearing your blood work should be back at 9:30 – four hours and 15 minutes later.

At around midnight – now we're into midnight – I spoke with the triage nurse again. So 9:30 she said you should get it any minute now. Now, it's midnight. Around midnight, I spoke with the triage nurse again and asked if I could just leave and follow up with my GP. The nurse said that she was told that my levels were so low that I really needed to stay.

Now, we're into 8 a.m. Tuesday morning – think about it – now we're into 8 a.m. Tuesday morning. I finally was called into a room. Got back at the Health Sciences at

5:15 p.m. because it was such an emergency, 8 a.m. the next morning, after waiting out in the waiting room all night long, finally gets into a room.

I was called into a room. Immediately upon entering the room, they hooked me up to an EKG machine and started to administer some IVs. Once I got on the other side of the doors, the care that I received has been phenomenal. At around 2 p.m. I was taken out of the room and I was placed in the hallway because they needed my room for a more critically sick patient.

It is now Wednesday, April 17, at 8 p.m. and I'm still in the hallway being treated. I was told I would be admitted and fall under internal medicine. Then they told me I could be in the hallway for two or three days because they're so full on the internal medicine floor.

Laying on a stretcher bed in the hallway. This is no way to treat humans. I am sorry there is no privacy here. There are sick people here, vomiting. There are people here screaming in pain, yelling out. This is no way to treat people. Family members cannot sit down in privacy with their loved ones who are here sick because there's nowhere to go.

Back to my story of first getting to the hospital. There's something seriously wrong with this health care system. When I had been told I am critically low of an important chemical in my blood, I was directed to go to emerg immediately, but I waited 15 hours. I know the Liberals have promised to build a new hospital but I really don't think that it's going to be a problem solver. We need a third hospital in this city to help take the strain off the system because the pace that these nurses and doctors are working in cannot be sustained and they're going to crash and burn out from this.

Government officials need to treat these doctors and nurses with the utmost respect. If nurses ask for more money, if doctors ask

for more money, give it to them. You buckle under the pressure of the FFAW but they do not provide us with health care services. So in my opinion, any health care service provider who asks for money, you need to give it to them.

Now, that's just this man's view, I guess, of how to solve the issue. I understand his frustration. I'm not certain we need a third hospital, but I am certain that we need the hospitals that we do have staffed appropriately. That I am certain of.

I would say, when I heard the announcement about the two, I guess, emergency clinics – I'm not sure about the term, I'm going to call them an emergency clinic.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Urgent care.

**P. LANE:** Urgent care, there you go. The urgent care centres, one at the former Costco and another one on Topsail Road, that's sounds like a good idea to me to clear up some of the backlog perhaps in the emergency department, people that are in emergency that really don't need to be in the emergency and they're taking up space and so on.

I would say that if we're going to do it, it's only going to work if those facilities are also appropriately staffed because, if not, all we're doing is we're going to take someone who would be waiting for 15 hours at the Health Sciences, someone who would be waiting for 15 hours at St. Clare's and now we're going to move them into the Costco or into the new facility on Topsail Road and we're going to let them wait for 15 hours there. That's solving nothing – solving nothing.

I'm sure the minister knows this, but if you're going to put facilities in place, we have to have them properly staffed. Bricks and mortar are not the answer; human resources is the answer. I understand that human resources is a challenge, I totally get

that. I'm not going to go on a big rant of how we got there. I did that a little bit before and I do not put that on the shoulders of this particular minister. He inherited a mess. How we got there? There are a lot of factors, some out of our control, some totally within our control – some totally within our control where we dropped the ball for a number of years on recruitment and retention initiatives and so on, which now we're trying to scramble to catch up. And, of course, COVID-19 put everything behind as well. We shut her down.

I'm not a medical expert so I can't say if shutting down all the services we shut down because of COVID was the right thing to do or not. I don't know. There are some people would say, well that's what we had to do and so on. But then, at the same time, we're saying we couldn't do anything because of COVID, I'm hearing – as I talked about the last time I was here – from cancer patients telling me: I'm in a four-bed room in a ward, four cancer patients and one of them – oh, wait a minute, now two of them have COVID-19; throwing them altogether in the one room; COVID and cancer and mix it all together. It doesn't matter anymore.

I would love to know how this narrative changed on COVID-19. I really would. I'm no expert on it, I don't pretend to be. I just went like everybody else. Dr. Fitzgerald said this is what we need to do, she's the chief medical officer of Health, she did what had to be done; we listened.

But it's still boggles my mind. COVID hasn't gone away, from what I can gather, it is still here, we're probably going to have to live with it forever. So how we get to a point where we're all in bubbles at one minute, can't visit a loved one in palliative care, can't have a wedding with more than 10 people, can't go visit my sick grandfather in the nursing home but, now, all of a sudden, like magic, we can take cancer patients and COVID patients and mix them together and throw them in a room at the Health Sciences and somehow that's okay.

Again, I don't understand the medical side of things, but it just amazes me how we can go from one extreme to the other extreme overnight. It makes you wonder was what we did before overkill or are we being neglectful now at this stage of the game. I don't know. It seems like it has to be one or the other because it just does not make sense.

Anyway, I said I wasn't going to focus on health because there was a bunch of things I wanted to bring up and, lo and behold, I've only got four minutes left because of speaking about health, but that's fine, I'll have another opportunity.

I'm going to take the last four minutes, I just want to bring up an issue here, Speaker, it's around a piece of legislation that I think needs to be amended. There are a number of pieces of legislation that need to be amended in this House of Assembly, as far as I'm concerned, but one of them that I think we need to amend – I'm going to throw that out here – is fixed-date elections.

Former Premier Williams brought in fixed-date elections under the *House of Assembly Act*. The whole premise of that, at the time, was that any government should not be able to pick and choose when an election is going to be called based on their political convenience. In other words, when the polls are looking good for us, let's call that snap election and catch the Opposition off guard or when things aren't looking so good, let's drag it out and hopefully we can turn things around.

While it was permitted, it certainly wasn't democratic in my mind, particularly for people who might want to get into politics because there are people over on the other side, business people, as an example. I'm sure the Minister of Finance would agree that, as a business person herself, if you want to get into politics and so on, there are certain things you can't just snap your fingers and do it. You need to be able to prepare to do whatever it needs, set-up

trusts or do whatever the case might be or absolve yourself from certain things in order to run for elected office. How many people are prevented from doing that because they have no idea when the election is even going to be? So you can't prepare.

That's why Premier Williams brought in fixed-date elections, which is there. However, there is a clause, an escape clause, if you will, that basically says we'll have the election every four years. I think it's October every four years. But there's an escape clause that basically says, at any given time, the Premier can go to the Lieutenant Governor, dissolve the government and call an election. That's there. He could do it tomorrow if he wanted to.

I would say to you that is something that needs to be changed. I understand that there could be some extenuating circumstances why we might not be having the election on a particular date, why it might need to be called early or late; things can happen. But I would say that we need to amend this legislation.

What I would propose would be to add an additional clause there to say: In the event, the Premier of the day, whoever that Premier is, is going to call an election outside that four years or inside that four years, that he or she must first bring it forth as a motion to this House of Assembly to be debated by all Members of the House of Assembly so that the government of the day can justify to the Opposition and to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador why they are going outside of that or inside of that four-year window.

It will provide openness and transparency. It would avoid this issue that we continue to have where governments of any stripe can just call snap elections, not for the benefit of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, but for their own political benefit.

Thank you, Speaker.



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

**SPEAKER (Bennett):** The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

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

It's once again a privilege to rise in this House and talk on the budget and talk on my district. I want to pick up on something that the Member for Ferryland brought up earlier on the 0.25 and 0.5 slots when it comes to education. That is the reason, I guess, the biggest reason why we have such a challenge in Labrador West recruiting educational professionals, teachers and the staff and everything that go along with it, is because no one can afford to live in Lab West on a 0.25 or 0.5 teacher's salary. It's such a deterrent that then we're left in Lab West with massive holes in student schedules.

We've seen it time and time again. I have educators and support staff and everything else constantly reaching out to me asking: What can we do to recruit? What can we do to retain? What can we do because it's causing a lot of problems.

Parents too as well. I've had numerous parents reach out, talked about: Well, last year, there was a student that did this, now that teacher was never replaced, how are they going to get where they need to go for their future, especially when they're getting ready to go to the high school level and they're getting ready to go off to university and that?

It's been an absolute, I guess, nightmare, is the best way to put it, when it comes to trying to get through that system and speaking with educators, speaking with parents. Most of the parents I'm speaking to now, actually went to school with me. We're talking about well, when we were going to class and we were going to school here, this wasn't an issue. We had a massive amount of opportunity and everything like that. Now we're seeing that a lot of that opportunity

has dried up, especially in Labrador West, given that we can't get educators and stuff into the system to actually bring this to the region. What we're starting to see is that a lot of it is the recruitment but also the retaining and packages and stuff like that.

If they are only offered a 0.25 or 0.5 placement, no one has the opportunity to take that, especially if the educator that's coming up is the only household income. It's understandable if they come up and their spouse is working in the mining industry or anything like that, yeah you can make a go of it in Lab West. But if you're coming to Lab West and that's your opportunity, the wages are just not comparable. You're not going to be able to live in Lab West on a 0.25 position.

This is where maybe it's time to have the big, broad conversation of: Is this actually working? Is this whole scheme actually working in the broader sense?

The Member for Ferryland brought up the same thing. Down their way, the 0.25 is just not cutting it. They're not being able to keep people down that way and it's the same exact thing that's going on in my district.

It's just not working. It is a deterrent for recruitment because there is just no stability. If they had the stability of a career, a stability of that, then obviously you will get more people to come into the profession, but if that's the only thing that they're looking at, as an opportunity to gateway into that profession, it's not viable.

I think we are really doing a disservice to the children of this province, to the students, when we're also not showing respect and everything like that to the educators that are going to provide education to them. It's nothing but a disservice because it's not about us, it's not about that, it's about the future of this province. It's the kids that are going to school, the high school kids, this is a service to them and we're not treating it with the utmost respect that we should,

especially given that this is what we're passing down to them.

I would be remiss without saying this is where we need to go. The same goes with educators and their support staff and all the people that work in the administration of the schools but also that whole wraparound of supports that is the school community.

If I'm going to throw anything back to the government or anything like that, maybe it's time to evaluate that system and maybe it's time to abolish the 0.25 and actually come up with something that gives stability and gives the thing that actually encourages people to come into the school system, and maybe that's the conversation we need to start having, especially in rural parts of this province. It's not going to encourage anyone to move to Labrador or anything like that for a 0.25 position.

To go on with education, I can't be remiss in, once again, talking about the College of the North Atlantic, but this time I'm talking about the College of the North Atlantic in Labrador West. Honestly, an underutilized asset that we have here in the province but especially in Labrador West. Time and time again I remember, predating my time in the House of Assembly when I was on other boards and stuff, they always used to talk about, you know, we're going to build the mining school of excellence in Lab West.

You were going to turn the CNA into Labrador West mining school of excellence. I've heard, I'd say, three previous Members for Lab West speak about that, and you never ever came to fruition. It's very disappointing to see given the long history of mining in the region, the knowledge that is actually built up in Labrador West and the opportunity it is to actually show that we're a leader when it comes to mining, mining technology and the way forward; especially given the critical minerals, the long history of high-grade iron ore and even the historic mining aspects of the province.

We always kept talking about it. I remember time and time again we used to hear: Oh, we're going to have the mining school of excellence in Lab West. We got a brand new campus built in Lab West, we're going to do this, and it never ever came to fruition.

If anything, over the last number of years, we've seen that for CNA and everything there, recruitment issues but also housing issues and stuff like that has actually, if anything, impacted the ability of the CNA in Lab West and it slowly became underutilized.

A fantastic asset there but, once again, recruiting of educators has been an issue, people applying to the school. There are only so many students in Lab West that are going there. We have no residency. A residence for the school was actually promised; we never ever got it. I believe that was a PC government – just saying – that promised us a residency for our CNA and it never got built.

Actually, I think there are a few other things there, but these things are assets that we could actually utilize to revitalize the school and actually get that across the finish line; actually have the mining school of excellence and be able to bring in people from across this province and train them in all kinds of different aspects when it comes to the mining industry.

It's a growing industry in this province and it would be absolutely fantastic if we actually saw that to fruition. I think we are undervaluing a great asset that we have. The community has been saying for years, we need a residence here. There are people actually trying to go to school there. They can't find housing. There is no rental market. There is no anything there that actually would help a student go through school, yet we have programs and stuff like that.

Then sometimes they said, when we're doing blocks and things like that, someone

gets their class call and can't come to Lab West for their block because there is no where there for them to stay and then we just go into this whole spiral of instead of actually having a solution to the problem, we end up basically cutting stuff out of Lab West.

That's what ends up happening. Stuff got cut out of Lab West. Instead of solving the problem, they just made the problem go away in another means which actually devalues what we're actually trying to do here in Lab West. If I could throw something else back to the Minister of Education, what happened to our residence? Why didn't we get the residence at CNA? It was promised years ago.

What happened to the plan for the mining school of excellence? What happened there? Why did that end up falling off the table? Why is our CNA continuing to be underutilized, undervalued and instead of having worked to find solutions to actually keep what's going on there and the good work that's going on there, why does it keep getting scaled back?

It's one of the newest CNA campuses in the province. We had another one. It is a great facility but unfortunately, because of the housing issues, the recruitment issues and stuff like that, and instead of helping solve the problems of why we have there, instead we're just put on the backburner and it's a huge disservice to the people of Labrador West and the great work that we're trying to do and the mining industry.

Between the technology and safety and going forward with green steel, this is an asset that we should be propping up and helping spread the good word, I guess, of the mining industry. Instead, we're underutilizing it, we're undervaluing it and it's doing a huge disservice to the region.

So if I can throw something back, that's what I have to say about that. We have a great opportunity when it comes to Lab

West. We have a great opportunity when it comes to the mining industry but, once again, we need to make sure that we have everyone on board and make sure that we're actually not devaluing what we're doing, we're not undermining what we're doing; but instead, we're working together so that we can have a great product to sell the world, but at the same time, actually have a great community and have great people supporting around it.

I'll say here again, and I'm sure the Minister for IET loves to hear me when I say this is: We need our power. I'm hoping he works on that. We do need electricity into the region of Lab West so we can actually go forward and actually do some great work. We have great plans for the future. We want to see them cross the finish line, but we also want to make sure that it will benefit the community, it will benefit the people that work in Labrador West, the people that live in Labrador West and the people who want to continue to call it home.

It's not just the workers there, but their families. The people who came before, our pensioners and our seniors, the people that actually paved the way for what we're doing in Lab West. We have to have all these wraparound things, so as things go forward and things move forward, we have to make sure that we're actually the primary beneficiaries of it.

We want to make sure all the groups that in Labrador are going to be the primary beneficiaries of it. We have such an amazing opportunity. Like, I told someone there today, we're not going anywhere. Thankfully, Labrador West has centuries of iron ore still left in the ground in the region. It's not a small deposit. It's called the Trough for a reason.

It stretches from Ungava Bay right down to a place called Fire Lake in Quebec. It's centuries of mining left in the ground in the region, so we're not going anywhere. We're not, like, a 20-year or 15-year little mine.

Actually, proudly this year in June, we'll mark 70 years of continuous mining in Labrador West.

That's right, 70 years. We have actually been mining in that region non-stop in that time, and I can say, in 1953, my Grandfather Ricketts left Wesleyville, took a coastal boat up to Gambo, got on a train and went to Port aux Basques, crossed over to North Sydney, got on another train and went to a place called Mont-Joli, got into a surplus World War II bomber, got dropped off in the middle of Labrador with some gear and a spike maul and told to start laying track. That was in 1953. He was there for when the first cart of ore left the Labrador Trough and went to the port of Sept-Îles.

In 1958, my Grandfather Brown left Centreville, basically the same journey to Mont-Joli and got dropped off in, what they call, a Norsemen, which was an old plane with wooden skis. He got dropped onto a frozen lake with a sleeping bag and they said: See that tent over there? That's yours.

So it's been a long history in Labrador, and 70 years of continuous mining just goes to show that what we're doing there is important but we're not going anywhere. We're not a temporary camp. We're not a temporary town. It wasn't a small 30-year project. This is a lifelong thing that's going to be here long after I'm gone. Long after my children are gone, there will be still people in Labrador West mining iron ore and it's the basis of all building. Everything you can think of, starts with iron ore.

I want to say, and remind the government, that investments in Labrador aren't a temporary fleeting thing. Investing in Labrador is a good thing, and especially Lab West, because we're going to be still mining there. We're still going to be mining there years after I'm gone, so when you're making those decisions and you're trying to say, oh well, it's a mining town – it's not a mining town. We are a town with a mine, but we're not going anywhere.

This is where I want to say, when we talk about these education investments, these College of the North Atlantic investments, investments into health care, into infrastructure, into all those things – we're the very rare few communities that get to say we have 70 years of mining and we got centuries of mining left. There are not many places in this country that get to say that with a non-renewable resource, but, proudly, I get to say that.

We have so much of it in the ground and there are countries all over the world asking us for our particular grade because it is a very rare, high-purity grade iron ore. There are not many places in the world that actually have these deposits.

I know Australia, they claim to be one of the largest iron ore miners in the world, but they actually have low-grade iron ore. The grade there is significantly lower than ours, so it's not sought after by car manufacturers or appliance manufacturers or anything that is into the high-grade, high-quality manufacturing.

This is why I always stress it when it comes to these investment decisions; these investment decisions in the Lab West are long term. It's for an opportunity that will continue to be here long after I'm gone.

This is the same thing we do when we talk about developing housing in Labrador West in the private market. They say, oh, it's like the boom-and-bust cycle and everything like that. Well, there is a boom-and-bust cycle, but the town hasn't closed, people still live there. Actually, from the 2014 downturn to the last census, we actually saw a growth in Labrador West. We actually increased our population. We actually grew during a so-called downturn.

So it's not that the markets maybe dictate, but we're still a product, we're still a resource, a commodity that people want. We have the ability to say that in the last so many years because, like I said, we're going

to be celebrating, this June, 70 years of continuous mining in the region.

This is what we have to keep saying, is that the investments into the region are not the same as investing into a 30-year mining project or anything like that. It's investment into a community that has sustained itself for that period of time. We have sustained ourselves, we've grown and we've been able to do all these things.

This is where I'll say again, investments into child care, the long-term sustainability in actually bringing child care into Lab West, that actually helps grow the region to actually bring it. We need the spaces. We need an actual solid investment into more spaces. We have a very young population. We have a population that we're seeing the change in dynamics. We actually are seeing how more women are getting into the trades in Labrador West.

I can say my two sisters, they are both in the trades in the mining industry. My wife just left one career to go into the trades in the mining industry. There are more people getting into that, so obviously child care spaces are very important because these are not nine-to-five jobs. These are 12-hour days, week on, week off, two weeks on, two weeks off.

We need these investments in the child care so that we can actually encourage more people to get into these kind of industries, these trades, because we need them. We need tradespeople. We also need health care workers, the same thing. Health care work is not Monday to Friday, nine to five. This is an industry with a very demanding schedule. We can't grow our region, we can't move forward and we can't become an economic player to the full potential that we can be without more investments in the child care spaces in the regions like Labrador West.

So this goes back to the investment of saying, we're here to stay. We have a great

long history here. We have great longevity ahead of us, so these investments need to actually be made into the region. We need to actually have sustainable things for our future. Like I said, I want to see another 70 years. I probably won't be live to see it, but, spiritually, I would love to see another 70 years of continuous mining in Labrador West and continue to grow and optimize the region. These are the things that we need to have these conversations about, when we're having investment into regions like Labrador West, it can't be seen as temporary but something that is actually long standing.

This goes back to Education and the CNA and the previous conversations I had about health care and infrastructure for housing and things like this. We have a proven track record. We shouldn't have to prove our case, but we do. We have a proven track record that we grow, we continue to move forward and we continue to be a significant contributor to the economy of the province.

There are other infrastructure needs that obviously we have to have a look at, too. We have to look at municipal, obviously, with our growing population, housing and everything like that. We have to look at water, sewer, things like that. These actual investments in the infrastructure that are long standing, but we actually have to make sure that we're actually able to grow and do that.

It's about what it's bringing in: Hydro bringing new hydro lines into Labrador West to facilitate some of the growth and stuff with the actual mining facilities but also the growth of our industrial park, the growth of other opportunities that we see, other mining companies, other processing and stuff like that.

This is infrastructure that we've been begging for, for years and I know they say, well, we want proof of return and all this other stuff, but like I said, if you build it, they'll come or is it you have to wait for

them to show up and then you build it. It has been a long-standing thing, but it has put us behind. It has put us behind for opportunity; it has put us behind for housing; it has put us behind on a lot of things.

It's really interesting to see that we have two very significantly large hydro lines going into Lab West now, over 350 megawatts, and all winter long you're up to your redline because that's how much electricity two towns just a little over 10,000 people is using, 350 megawatts, day in, day out, for nine months of the year until the electric heat cuts off in people's homes and it comes down a bit so they can actually do scheduled maintenance. But think about, we use more electricity in Labrador West than the entire island of Prince Edward Island. We're just one area with 10,000 people and we're using more electricity than an entire province.

It just goes to show how industrial –

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

The Member's time has expired.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

With leave of the House, I'd like to give notice.

**SPEAKER:** Does the Member have leave?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Leave.

**SPEAKER:** Leave is granted.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**J. HOGAN:** Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to all the Members for giving leave.

Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move the following motion: That for the purpose of reviewing the Estimates of Executive Council in Committee of the

Whole House, debate shall proceed in the same manner as adopted by Committees of the House reviewing Estimates, that is, in 10-minute question and answer periods.

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

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, that this House do now adjourn.

**SPEAKER:** Before I call for the vote, I just want to remind Members of the Social Services Committee that will be debating the Estimates of Education at 6 p.m. this afternoon here in the Chamber.

The motion is that we do now adjourn.

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 10 a.m. tomorrow.

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