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Speaker: Honourable Scott Reid, MHA

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The House met at 10 a.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Reid): Is the Government House Leader ready?

MS. COADY: Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Ready.

Is the House Leader for the Third Party ready?
Yes. Okay.

Admit Strangers.

Order, please!

Orders of the Day

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to everyone on this glorious sunny morning. It's nice to see the sunshine.

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 3, please.

MR. SPEAKER: Motion 3.

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

MR. P. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Continuing on a recent report that was filed in the House. I just want to talk to the people that are involved here, and I know we talked about no one wins in a situation like this. We talked about the individual who received the job and took an opportunity. So there is no fault on her, herself. Of course, there are also those who had applied for a position, which they believed would be merit based, and they would have an opportunity to win the competition and have that job.

There are those people that are affected, but I think from the report that's done here, there is a Code of Conduct. There is an expectation for how Members in this House of Assembly should conduct their business and behave. I think that's the crux of the matter here. I think Members who have spoken ahead of me have well covered those issues.

In the House over the last couple of days, we've heard mention of this is a long-standing process of movement of executive-level people. I don't think anyone disagrees with that. What we disagree with would be the use of the term process here, because I think the process here was a little off track, to be very polite.

We've heard from the Government House Leader about the benefits and salaries would remain and that individuals can be laterally moved. Laterally moved, in reference to employment, is defined as a move to a different job with essentially the same title, the same pay, the same role within your organization. I think that's very debateable here.

We know this job was advertised. We know when looking at the report here that in early 2018, with the aid of the Public Service Commission, they commenced a job competition to fill a vacancy. Completion of an undergraduate degree in business or commerce was mandatory. Approximately 77 people applied for the position, interviews were conducted and a shortlist of prospective candidates was established.

There were numerous candidates that held master's degrees. Of course, Mr. Brinton explained that he was not surprised at all with the number of candidates applying for this job who held master's degrees. He goes on to say: "Members of the senior executive of The Rooms have traditionally held professional designations or Master's degrees." The position that was being filled was on the HL24 pay scale that ranged from about \$76,000 to \$90,000 annually.

It's been mentioned in this House that the appointment that took place was necessary to bring back the success of The Rooms, but I look at this and: "Mr. Brinton explained that The Rooms was able, with existing staff, to function after the Director of Marketing ... position was vacant. This was possible because of the great success of the 2016 History of Beaumont Hamel celebrations."

They brought in a high number of attendees to The Rooms, and they were able to maintain that momentum through 2017, 2018. So there was no urgent need to come up with a special position to

come in and improve what The Rooms were doing, because they were already doing it.

Going through this whole process of hiring a director of marketing, the PD or requirements, there were five: “Experience leading the development of marketing and communication ...; Experience with brand development and management; Experience managing financial resources; Experience managing human resources; Completion of an undergraduate degree in business or commerce” or equivalences.

We had 77 individuals who applied. They were shortlisted. They were interviewed. One individual was given a job offer. That individual was given a job offer and accepted the job offer at \$85,000, coming in to a position that regularly had people with master’s degrees apply.

This individual: “25 years marketing experience” – and you’re looking for a marketing director – “including international business development marketing and agency side senior level business development and marketing” – development and marketing. Bachelor of commerce degree, certified marketing director designation and a digital marketing professional certificate.

I don’t think you would argue, this individual has what it takes to do the job based on the description. Of course, we later find that, not too long after, this person was removed from the job. This is one person that’s getting lost in this whole event, is the individual that applied on merit. Merit based, which we’ve heard the Premier actually talk about the IAC – merit based. I’m not sure if there’s a difference in the definition, but merit is based on who has the best qualifications and competencies and experience to do the job.

So we look at the individual – and again, this person who got the job, it’s unfortunate. I’ll try not to mention her name because, in my mind, she’s a bit of an innocent party in this as well.

When I look at the qualifications for the individual who received the job, that person has 18 years of experience in the communications sector. Not marketing, not development and marketing, 18 years – that’s six years less –

sorry, my math. Seven years less than the other individual who lost the job, and it’s in communications with private, public and non-profit organizations.

This individual, not involved in development and marketing plans, but provided strategic communications advice to a variety of sectors. One side has a bachelor of commerce degree in the co-op program. This individual studied political science, and is a graduate of the broadcast communications program. Fabulous qualifications, but not for the job that was advertised, and not for the job that was filled. The job doesn’t change because you stick the word executive in front of it. I would argue that putting the word executive in front of it, the first candidate would still be the more qualified for the job.

So what has happened and what process took place here? I’d argue that this process is not the process that’s happened over the years. I would argue that over the years you’ve had actual lateral movement of executives who have moved into jobs and job titles that are equivalent to what they’re moving from.

We heard it mentioned about professional development and succession planning. I’ve never heard of moving someone from a top-level job that paid \$130,000-odd, down to a job that pays between \$70,000 and \$80,000 and call that professional development. I don’t understand the concept there. Professional development, usually you’re building on what you already have.

I understand the salary. It’s been said that we have to maintain the terms and conditions of the contract that the individual left and to avoid legal or liability issues after, but what do we do for the individuals that applied for the job, offered the job and let go before he or she started? As I said, 77 people applied for this position. Completion of an undergraduate degree is mandatory. In any other job competition, that’s a screening issue and immediately if you don’t have it, you’re not considered. Not the case here. Apparently, you can be.

I go back to merit based. We talk about merit based and the Premier talked about merit based yesterday in terms of the Independent Appointments Commission and talked about all

the positions. A huge number of applications received and over 600-plus positions filled; 238 tier-one, 365 tier-two appointments and 46 per cent women. I'd love to see that at 50 per cent but 40 per cent is fabulous. I'm not arguing with those results – fabulous.

I go back to the process on merit based. I think Members in this House will recall we got called back in July to come in for a sitting to deal with an appointment to the Privacy Commissioner's office. The reason we came in was because, of course, a minority government; we need to all agree on this position. So we came in because the person who placed under the first person was the one that government wanted in the job. Government wanted this person in that job.

We sat down as an Opposition and Third Party and that and we looked at the résumés, we looked at the competition and we said no-brainer. If this is truly merit based, the number one candidate by far is the individual who gets the job; however, government wanted the second individual.

Now, if I take it back a little further, when the Management Commission met on this to fill the temporary vacancy, when Mr. Molloy left for greener pastures, it was a similar situation. We sat in that Management Commission and I remember the former leader of the Third Party spoke up on it and we all agreed. There was one person there that had the best qualifications for the job and we thought that person should be in that position.

The former leader of the Third Party mentioned – because government, again, who held the majority in that committee, wanted the second person, who just happened to be also the same person they wanted to appoint permanently. Again, the former leader of the Third Party mentioned if we do that, first of all, we're denying the qualified person a job and, secondly, we're giving that other individual an advantage when the position comes permanent.

She was right. It was almost like you had a crystal ball. She knew what merit based meant to government. Merit based is not based on the qualifications, competencies and experience; it was based on who they wanted in the job. That point is significant here because we're seeing

what's happened again playing over. It's unfortunate because it casts a bad light on the 600-plus positions that have been hired. How many of those, through a majority government, placed the top candidate? I have to question on that, I really do.

Now, in this report, we're seeing a different process here. We're seeing a process where you go through, you have the lovely organization charts done up – org charts are done, planned out, ready to roll. I know from my experience working in government, to put that together, you don't implement it the next day; you start working on transitioning. I think the date on the PowerPoint presentations is the third week of September – or, sorry – yeah, it was September.

Then we turn around and within a week or two we have an individual in the job. Well, first of all, we have an individual gone out of the job who won it based on a merit-based competition, who won it, who's gone, and we have another individual shift over.

We had an applicant with 25 years' experience; international business development and marketing; agency-side, senior-level development and marketing; bachelor of commerce degree; certified marketing director, who we're hiring at \$84,000, and we turn around, we stick executive in front of the job now. We hire an individual with 18 years' communications experience with a variety of sectors, who has provided communications advice to a variety of sectors, who has studied political science and is a graduate of broadcast communications.

I look at that and I say, okay, that's lesser qualifications. I'm not arguing the person's qualifications, but they're not the qualifications for the job that was filled.

Guess what else? Not only did this person walk in to the \$85,000 job, but was given a raise of about \$40,000 for a job in which we just found out that a viable, qualified and competent person who applied in good faith, wanting to be hired, needing a job – along with the 77 others that had applied – was told a couple of days later: sorry, service is no longer wanted. Out the door.

That's atrocious. I don't believe it. I can't believe it. I think it's still a story we're dreaming here, of what goes on. Total disregard for our residents and those who want to work and want to do it in the right way – total disregard – and we go and do this to that individual.

Then we talk about – and I agree, there are individuals, there are families, there are people involved here, but this should never have happened. Somebody here fooled up. The Government House Leader, she's admitted there have been errors made here. Everyone knows there have been errors. The minister responsible is talking about apologizing. Don't apologize for nothing. I have never apologized for nothing. I'll apologize for anything I've done wrong.

There's a big issue here. I don't want to rag on the individual; I just want to bring some light to what actually happened here in terms of the position and the competition, the lack thereof. People out in the public, in our environment, in our economy who are looking for jobs, want a fair shake and want to be employed based on merit.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to start my discussion today with the assertion that I will not be supporting, nor will my caucus be supporting this motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. COFFIN: The issue at hand is, first off, if we accept the findings of this report – and I unequivocally do accept these findings. To put this discussion in context, I would like to just restate our allegations and the findings:

“Allegation #1

“Commencing in March 2018 and continuing until October 2018, Minister Mitchelmore directed staff of The Rooms Corporation ... to hire Ms. Carla Foote as Executive Director of Marketing and Development without competition or a position description, in

violation of generally accepted human resource practices, including the application of the merit principle to hiring within the Public Service.”

The findings of that allegation: “Specifically, we find that Minister Mitchelmore fundamentally mismanaged his obligations pursuant to the following provisions: The fundamental objectives of his holding public office is to serve his fellow citizens with integrity in order to improve the economic and social conditions of the people of the province.... That he act lawfully and in a manner that will withstand close public scrutiny.... That he base his conduct on the consideration of the public interest.... That his relationship with government employees should be professional and based upon mutual respect and should have regard to the duty of those employees to remain politically neutral when carrying out their duties....

“Allegation 3

“Minister Mitchelmore instructed staff to set the salary for the Executive Director of Marketing and Development position to which Ms. Foote was appointed at \$132,000.00, far exceeding the salary provided for in the vacant Director of Marketing and Development position at The Rooms, thereby grossly mismanaging public funds.”

The result of that allegation is: “... we find that Minister Mitchelmore grossly violated his obligations as contained in section 8 of the Code of Conduct.”

I am reassured that the Premier also concurs with these findings. So I think now the issue at hand needs to look at the punishment.

Before I get to that, I would like to point out that the individuals writing these reports, the Commissioner for Legislative Standards, as well as the Citizens' Representative, were fair, just, appropriate and professional in executing their duties. I will point out that those individuals were hired using the proper procedures as outlined in our own government regulations. I concur with their findings and I do now want to look at does the punishment fit the crime.

My, there's so much to talk about. Just to start, let's talk about who has been harmed in this process. Not only have we seen the public service disrupted, have we seen the integrity of the public service disrupted, have we seen that the mutual respect of individuals working for the minister has been distorted and disregarded, the staff involved have had a very difficult time dealing with this. Not only is it the staff at the department, it is the staff here in the House of Assembly, as well as anyone else that has been affected by this particular issue.

We have had time taken away from the House of Assembly regular proceedings; everyone here has been affected by that. I have received a barrage of emails, and I know everyone has been following along on social media. We know how the public has been feeling about this.

We have sullied the reputations of all House of Assembly Members. I am hearing it, as well everybody else. This gets on all of us; this is very inappropriate. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador are extremely disappointed and have also been feeling the effects of this. They are slighted.

The minister before me also pointed out how difficult it will be to rise above the public perception of distortion in public hiring. That is a huge blow to a province that is looking to attract new people to come work and live and set up families here.

So the reputation of government in general has been harmed. The perception of fairness in public service hiring has been distorted. The integrity of the House and its Members have been compromised. The working relationships and co-operation in the House has been upset. Public funds have been mismanaged.

I would be remiss not to point out that we are in a fiscal crisis and it would be very nice to see the fall fiscal update to put that in context.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. COFFIN: But we ought not to be throwing money around like this.

There are more things. An apology will not suffice. As evidenced in this report, it seems to

be that there may have been a lack of training on the part of the minister. I was wondering: Has he hired another person before? Has there been training in the proper procedure for hiring executives? Has he used the same procedure in hiring other executives? Does the minister require human resources training? Does he require human resources training – not that I think he should be allowed to hire again, at least until that training comes to fruition.

We've also seen that since the minister doesn't seem to understand the hiring procedure and his role in it, will there be a review of his other hires up until this point?

Another point I'd like to point out here: Does the punishment fit? We've heard the Premier mentioned that it must be very difficult for the minister to sit here and listen to these accusations and criticisms and have the report brought to light. Well, Mr. Speaker, so does every other individual in this House of Assembly. We are all having a difficult time with that right now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. COFFIN: An apology is not enough.

Let's talk about some of the other apologies or some of the other issues that have required intervention or discipline on the part of the Premier and his Cabinet. Certainly we have seen – and this was a potential question, but I think it's more appropriate here. I was going to ask: Mr. Speaker, why is it that a single, profusely regretted, inadvertent, although inappropriate act, results in an ejection from Cabinet, while a series of deliberate, sustained and manipulative acts gets a pat on the back and requires only an apology?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. COFFIN: We have seen other incidents. Certainly, there are Members sitting in this House right now who have been ejected not only from Cabinet, but from caucus for simply voting on a private Member's motion.

I have some questions about the appropriateness of the restitution or the remediation that needs to be done here and I would like to have some

sense how we mete out this punishment. Is there a graduation or is it simply a matter of circumstance? Because, as we know, we're in a minority government right now, so perhaps the circumstance in which we sit may be predetermining the punishment that is meted out and, quite frankly, that is inappropriate.

Let's keep talking about this. Let's look at these things in context. We've heard the Premier mention that the résumé of the individual hired for this position, she was highly qualified. However, the highly qualified individual was not evaluated in the context of all of the other highly qualified individuals. That person was identified and reviewed in a very specific circumstance, and not in the context of anyone else. There was no competition. That, in itself, is inappropriate.

The Premier also raised the point that we would not be mentioning this had the individual in question not had this particular surname. Mr. Speaker, I think, no, that ought not to be the case. Perhaps the unfortunate coincidence of the surname, that is inappropriate and that may have other implications, but the fundamental problem here is the mismanagement and inappropriate hiring of an individual. That individual's surname has nothing to do with the inappropriateness and deviation from the proper process of hiring, so, yes, we would still be discussing this because this was very inappropriate.

Let's talk about what has been done. I've noticed timelines in here and I notice that immediately after the tabling of this report, two days ago – two very long days ago – we found that the Premier decided that an independent review was absolutely necessary, and issued the call for the independent review with no terms of reference, no discussion of how they were going to hire this individual, independent individual, to do the independent review.

This seems like very much a knee-jerk reaction designed to distract us from the core issue. I'll point out this, in particular, what I've noticed, if one would follow along some of the timelines here, we found that in August 28 there was a response from the minister to the original report. Days later, the minister and his deputy were hastily shuffled out of that department and other ministers moved in.

So that suggests to me that the far more important thing here was to make this go away as opposed to address the fundamental issues of, one, this was done and done inappropriately, and the distraction that we're having over here, we need a better process to be able to move executives around government.

No where in this report, either one of these reports, does it say that the process for moving executives around government is inappropriate. And, in fact, I found a quote earlier saying that if there was process, it was the responsibility of the clerk of the Executive Council to point that out. However, what I found is that the only action on this item was the Premier's response to Minister Mitchelmore's lawyer's submission that this process be reviewed, and the minister was shuffled out of his post.

That has been the response. It has not been the response to, one, address the mismanagement of public funds and the appropriateness or the inappropriateness of the deviation from the prescribed process.

So what we are seeing is a lack of addressing the fundamental issue of the integrity of the House of Assembly, of the processes in which we embody and we stand by and our oaths of office. We need to address that issue specifically and not at the noise that is being thrown at us along the way.

There's more. Does the punishment fit the crime?

MR. SPEAKER: I just want to caution the Member and ask her to withdraw those remarks. I'm familiar with the phrase, does the punishment fit the crime.

MS. COFFIN: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I think that may be misinterpreted, so I'd ask that the Member withdraw those remarks.

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for pointing that out to me.

That was a turn of phrase. I have used it inappropriately. I unequivocally apologize for doing that.

To continue: Is the response to the accusation appropriate? An analogy: I had a conversation with someone about appropriate responses and we used an example of if someone stole \$500 from you, would it be appropriate for the person who stole that \$500 to repay you?

Well, yes, that is a form of that, but that doesn't get at some of the fundamental things. If someone steals from me, one, I wasn't expecting it; two, it was at a time that was very unfortunate for me; and, three, you have invaded my personal space and you have violated some of my own personal safety. So I think the appropriate response is not to pay restitution of \$500, but to perhaps take \$500 from the individual, who stole, at a time when they least expected it and perhaps when they could least afford such a thing, and then maybe we're thinking about something that is comparable.

To roll this up to the circumstances we are in right now, when we talk about the gross mismanagement of public funds and violations of public trust, perhaps an apology is insufficient. I think we need stronger measures and I think that needs to be very resoundingly heard, not only here in the House of Assembly, but by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador who elected us to this office and who expect and have very high expectations of us to uphold our oaths of office and the public trust. That is what has been egregiously mismanaged in this process.

This needs to be remedied. It needs to be addressed rather quickly because we have an enormous number of other things that we need to address in this House of Assembly, and because this has been prolonged, we now have extra work that is hard on absolutely everyone. Not only us here in the House of Assembly, but the staff here as well, anyone else who supports us in our process.

This is inappropriate. The motion does not go far enough and I will, again, reiterate, we will not support it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I just want to offer some perspectives on the issues around lateral moves in government and maybe a slightly contrary point of view to the Member for Mount Pearl North.

We're talking about lateral moves here. We're not talking, in my mind, about hires, as such, in the traditional sense of HR issues, as alluded to by the Member of the Third Party. This is fallen really through executive levels of government and it runs out across multiple areas of government and it runs out into multiple areas of not just core government, but our agencies, boards and commissions for which we have responsibility.

I really want to take a little bit of time just to talk about my own field of responsibility, which is the Department of Health and Community Services and the agencies, boards and commissions for which I have responsibility and authority. That would include the four regional health authorities, but it also includes the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information. Interestingly enough, it also has links with federal organizations, such as the Public Health Agency of Canada.

What I'd like to place on record here for the House to consider is that in each of those areas, there are both members of core government employees seconded out into the regional health authorities, into NLCHI, and we also then in turn have individuals from the regional health authorities, from NLCHI and from the Public Health Agency of Canada embedded in government and, in the case of PHAC, Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information.

The Member for Mount Pearl North laid great stress on titles, equivalency and compensation and benefits.

MR. LESTER: I rise on a point of order. Nothing serious, but –

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

MR. LESTER: Section 44 – I don't recall saying any of that. I think he's misquoting me.

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

MR. HAGGIE: My apologies, Mr. Speaker.

In my excitement, I confused the Member for Mount Pearl North with the Member for Topsail - Paradise. I apologize and I will try not to do that again, Sir.

AN HON. MEMBER: Same haircut.

MR. HAGGIE: Same haircut, yes, okay. My apologies. I didn't mean to offend anybody or misquote.

The titles, from our point of view in Health, are irrelevant. There is no equivalency between our executive and some of the operational titles within the regional health authorities or within Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information. In actual fact, their roles are often significantly different. I'll get to that in a moment as well, because, again, there was talk of equivalency of qualifications and interchangeability almost and, again, the issue of compensation and benefits, because the regional health authorities management scales are, to an extent, aligned with core government, but the titles don't always match the HL scale, vice versa.

I think the key reason for these transfers, in our world, relates to a value add and, to pick up on themes from opposite, it is in the public interest. Because with this exchange of experience and knowledge, laterally, there is considerable benefit to the public. Someone talked about winners and losers yesterday. The winners are actually the people of this province.

So, for example, we would be looking at bringing in new skills into the department. The clinical world changes quite rapidly in terms of current fashions, current best practices in various areas, and it's very hard within the environments of core government to appreciate that. The independent Member for Mount Pearl -

Southlands referenced repeatedly yesterday about the idea of a bubble and us getting out into the coffee shops.

Well, from a professional point of view, our coffee shop in Health are the regional health authorities. They're the front-line workers. They are the front-line managers and directors. We need to bring those experiences into the department. They may not have master's degrees. They may not have years of administrative experience. What they have is a different view of the services we need to provide. If I've heard one thing over the last four years, sometimes it's a criticism and sometimes it's a compliment, is the need to contact and be in communication with front-line workers, with hands-on care providers.

This is one of the ways that we can do that in our department, but there is no equivalency in terms of titles. A lot of these individuals are on management scales. Some are in collective bargaining units. To ensure that they are not disadvantaged by these lateral transfers, we will often to look to ring-fence their benefits, their seniority, their pensionable years, these kinds of things, to make sure that in providing those with that expertise, that experience, they do not lose out and we gain and everybody gains.

Equally, there is a significant benefit to the system for moving executive-level members out of the Department of Health into the regional health authorities. I can think over the years of examples of staff members within core government, a director, executive director and assistant deputy minister level who have gone to regional health authorities on a lateral transfer, with their compensation ring-fenced, their benefits protected, their seniority acknowledged and worked in a role that's labelled director.

Again, the titles don't matter from my point of view, but in terms of the process – and I'll get around to that in a moment or two – they do matter. Because that is how in government people's seniority is identified, people's place in whether or not they fall under the Executive Council, whether OCs are needed to move them, this kind of thing. The titles at the outside end do matter.

In Health, they don't. We are not at all interested in that. We are interested in exchange of knowledge, exchange of skills. We might move people – with their agreement, obviously – for professional development.

So it may well be that we would send someone from the Department of Health into a regional health authority who actually lacks a skill set, who actually has not got the qualifications on paper to fit into that job but brings a whole series of other skill sets, and in a sense is going to get on the job training because they're placed into a network in a support system.

There is no impact on the quality of care. Indeed, the system will benefit from the transformational knowledge and, I think, particularly of lean technology or techniques that we've introduced into the RHAs and have introduced into the department where we've taken people who really just have that skill set which is unique to them and put them in a clinical setting with support.

So, again, it's very difficult in my world, in the Department of Health, to acknowledge and accept the arguments of the Member who last spoke from the Opposition side that the titles, the qualifications and the labels on paper are as germane in my world as they might be when you first look at them from the outside.

To then take the issue of process, because a lot of comments have been made around the process by which people get moved one way or another. Quite frankly, my humble observation is this was never designed as a process. What has happened is we have inherited a practice over the years, and a bit like a skiff on the water, it has got barnacles on its bottom. They've accumulated over time and slowed the thing down, quite frankly; or made it less efficient than it should be.

I would applaud the Premier's suggestion, that once he had the opportunity to read the report, as did all the Members here, except those that read CBC, once he'd done that he realized the obvious. That there was a flaw with the system and that this needs to be actually looked at from an organizational and a systems behaviour point of view.

That system, I would argue, did not exist. This is where we end up with the discrepancy around what titles are on the outgoing end and what titles might be on the incoming end, how they line up with pay and compensation, how they line up with benefits. It's done for the benefit both of the receiving organization and to allow development in the donating organization, if you like.

Again, to emphasize some of the comments that have come in a negative way from the other side, the winners of these kind of knowledge and experience transfers are actually the people of the province. It does serve a public interest and it makes the system, such as it is, a better one.

I would argue that one of the things I saw when I read the report, and I being a Member of the Management Commission had sight of it in advance of the House – and just for the record, I have not spoken to anyone about the contents of that since I received the password for it from the Clerk of the House. I want to state that very clearly for the record, and I would be happy to co-operate and, indeed, keen to co-operate with whomever the Speaker and the Privileges and Elections Committee should chose to investigate what I would regard is a gross contempt of this House in leaking that document to the media.

Having digressed a little bit, I think the message I took away was that there seemed to be a gap in communications between the clerk and her submissions to the investigating bodies, be they the Legislative Commissioner or the Citizens' Representative of the day. There seemed to be a gap in appreciation of the nature of these lateral transfers. Despite the clerk's obvious communication skills, I don't feel that was reflected in the deliberations that I saw. That's my two cents' worth, for what it is worth.

I have a reference here to a comment, and I don't know to whom it's attributed but *Hansard* would be able to unravel that. There was a reference to mistakes being made. What I would argue, however, is there may be some errors of process but what if the actual mistake we're really referencing is a systematic, long-standing, cross-party government practice that we have now been forced to recognize was never designed as a system. This system is not unique

to this government, it's not unique to this department. It has existed for decades.

I can go back through my own department – and I'm not going to name names. Names have been bandied around here way too much. I can go back through my department for at least two decades that I have access to and show lateral transfers in and out with protection of salaries and benefits, with no OCs written, and this is not, in my view, an egregious abuse of anything. This was done with the betterment of the health care system at its core and a desire to find better ways of doing what we do; and, really, in a sense, fulfilling my mantra as minister, which is spending smarter, working smarter and bringing ourselves into the 21st century.

I'm not going to take all my time, Mr. Speaker. I think I've made the points I wish to make: that in whatever review comes forth on this, I would suggest that we do not throw the baby out with the bathwater because there is a huge benefit to Health, and I would argue that my colleagues in Education and other government departments would be able to make very similar cases for their own areas of responsibility. We should not throw the baby out with the bathwater.

I look forward to co-operating with the Privileges and Elections Committee into what I see as a rather neglected but major issue that this House now has, and also to support the contention that it is unreasonable to unduly victimize one individual for a mistake that is embedded in the system.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Bennett): The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

MR. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I hope that in my short time standing here, I represent the sentiments of the district of which I serve well in relation to the issue that is at hand.

I would think the House has been a tremendous learning experience for the short seven months that I have been in as an MHA. One of the things I would look at is lots of times we must

make sure – as we heard, Mr. Speaker, when you and I and two other colleagues of the House were in BC at the Canadian Parliamentary Association, a colleague from Alberta had stated that when we address and we speak, we speak to the issues and the practices, the ideas, the policies and not the individual. I want to make sure I'm not speaking to the individual in this case, but it's strictly to the act and what we've got in the report that would be here.

One thing I did state with my colleagues was that probably not to count on me to stand and defend something which is really indefensible. I made it clear to expect me to stand and to try to give some kind of credence or normalcy for something that is blatantly incorrect is not in my nature to do.

It's been interesting watching, in my short time in the House, Members stand up to try to give credence or to validate or support something which, in my opinion, would be indefensible. That is probably one of the learning experiences that I've had in the House in the short time I've been here, is that I've seen now probably three occasions where I would see some valued colleagues in the House that would stand to try to defend something that is, in my opinion, and as the report would say, would be indefensible.

My colleague that stood recently before me – and the word egregious has come up several times. In light of what I just stated, I just want to reference something from *Hansard* from Monday. After the report was tabled in the House, this report that we're speaking on now, the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources stood and he made a comment. I want to read a portion of it, because it has a context on the report. He said: "There are two important considerations to be held by the Privileges and Elections Committee. One is, of course, to determine if there can be a course to investigate and uncover the perpetrator or perpetrators to the contempt of the House."

The Minister of Health and Community Services just referenced it in his address about the leak of a finished document. The Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources went on to say that: "The second element to this may be to ensure that this not happen again." The leak. And concludes with: "None of us here want that to be able to

continue. We recognize that sometimes it is difficult to uncover who those perpetrators were of the most egregious – one of the most egregious offences to the House would be a contempt, so we recognize that this has to be resolved.”

I would say in my opinion, and I would think the constituents in the District of Bonavista, that is not the most egregious thing that this House has seen in the short time that I’ve been sitting here referencing the leak that would have occurred with a particular document.

I have made many predictions since I’ve been in the House with my colleagues. I said tomorrow here’s what’s going to happen because that is what maybe ought to have happened, and I referenced three other situations of which I sat here and heard debate around that I thought was not appropriate for this House.

Defending it is tough. The minister who spoke before me had referenced that – and he talked about lateral moves. Well, it was clear in the report that we’re debating that this is not a lateral move. It was determined that it is not a lateral move, so why are we talking about lateral moves when the report that we’re debating states that this is not a lateral move?

The Member for Conception Bay North referenced last night: inefficiencies. We’re talking about inefficiencies: the dollars that we’re talking about in this report – and I look at that as being very significant because there are dollars that are gone to this affair that I would think I would like to see serve some other needs.

If I just may mention a couple, to make my point, Mr. Speaker? I drafted a memo to a representative in the Advanced Education, Skills and Labour and it was about a gentleman that were trying to a range for in Bonavista, a stove, because his was 32 years old and he was on income support, but we did it. We got a stove for him and, through the help of the department, we did that.

I referenced, in my address, that there are two other issues that we have not resolved and if I can just take a moment to –

MR. SPEAKER: I remind you to stay relevant.

MR. PARDY: Stay on the topic – because it is significant when we’re looking at the inefficiencies and the dollars that we’re looking at here to give credence to the significance of this report.

This gentleman in Bonavista doesn’t have glasses, but he is \$197 short on getting glasses. Even with what was provided, those glasses remain and the gentleman does not have them. We’ve tried and we’ve tried hard to get them.

The second thing and the last thing on this point is that the gentleman in Bonavista, as well as others – and it’s been spoken I think by the Mount Pearl North MHA previously – is down to \$37 every two weeks because he’s paying for the overrun on his hydro over the course of the winter. What they do is they take the portion out, which I was unaware of, and it’s down to \$37 every two weeks.

When we’re talking about the significance of this report, I would say to you we are not tackling an individual, we’re tackling what happened here and how significant it is for the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. I would say one case in point I just reflected and there are others.

We are entrusted, as a Code of Conduct of all MHAs that we were sworn in, the part of our Code of Conduct was that we be accountable. We have courtesy, we have honesty and we have integrity. That’s what we have. Those are four things that we all ought to strive for.

When we look at the inefficiencies – and, again, remember, we’re talking about thousands of dollars of people’s money that are wrapped up in this here – we ought not to be looking at the most egregious, being the leak of the document, we ought to be looking at what the impact would be for the residents in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

If we’re going to spend a lot of time on some other issues, we are missing in what our Code of Conduct would state that we are. We are accountable to the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PARDY: I would say to you in this report we failed on the accountability measure, not personally, but it was a complete failure. There is no doubt about that.

I think the Premier spoke yesterday, and I stand to be corrected. He talked about we need a precedent in matters such as this. I think he might even have referenced that this could have happened to almost all ministers.

I found that to be incorrect because if we look at data over time, I would say that is not the case in the affairs of all ministers that have situations such as this. I would say there are ministers sitting across from us now that I would say would not have entered into something such as this situation here. I found it, because in the same report, when we talk about precedence, we had what they refer to, and the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands had stated, he said he was referenced in *The Joyce Report*.

So if we're looking at precedence, we don't need to go back too far. Basically, the same government, a short time ago, when they talked about that he was held, or his position, I would assume he stepped from his position, or the affair was centered around him trying to influence the hiring of a person in a department.

I would say to you when we look at that, if that is the case, then that serves as a precedence. It's not that long ago that we can't extrapolate that and say in our recent memory to know, well, here's an example of a situation that provides precedence.

In the same vein – and then I'll leave it, Mr. Speaker – I know the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, there are times he stood up here and I listened. He talked about and said there were people on the other side of the House – me and all of us here – looking to spend more money. He referenced that, but lost in that was the accountability piece that we have for the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, the accountability of bringing them the optimal service.

I recall, I think probably the Member for Stephenville talked about the dental program some time ago, but the come back to us raising the dental program for the seniors in the

province, covering it and what a benefit that would be on efficiencies in saving money for the province, let alone the enhanced lifestyles that the residents would have.

I quickly refer back to the fact that here they are looking to spend more money. I would say to you, we are looking at representing the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. We want to increase their well-being. We often made a good case to say that sometimes you spend more but we save money in the long run with future health care costs. I agree fully with that. There is lots of this, but the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, in this report, would say there is no return for this. This is money that is gone and not for their benefit.

Just to conclude on a couple of points. In the report it states: "We have had the opportunity to consider the very able submissions of Minister Mitchelmore's solicitor on this issue. A key theme of those submissions is that the hiring of" – the lady in question – "at The Rooms could not happen without the approval of Mr. Brinton, and that if he or the Board disagreed with the hiring, that fact was not made known to Minister Mitchelmore." It goes on to say: "With respect, we disagree."

"We conclude that Minister Mitchelmore's actions in intervening to facilitate the hire of" – the lady in question – "at The Rooms not only breached his Code of Conduct, but grossly mismanaged his obligations under that Code."

Another thing I found, if the difference in the salary that was as a result of this transaction was somewhere in the range of \$40,000 to \$50,000 of taxpayers' money, of the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador's money, the \$40,000 or \$50,000, I know in here it says that the person who was hired, and subsequently let go, has made a claim for damages against The Rooms or the government. It's here in the report. That's another one with a potential cost that has to be borne by the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Finally, to conclude, in a letter that was by Minister Mitchelmore's counsel, he had stated that Minister Mitchelmore states that the hiring of the lady in question for the position of executive director of marketing and

development at The Rooms was carried out appropriately and in accordance with the act, the Code of Conduct and generally accepted human resources practices applicable to government and The Rooms.

I would say to you, when we look at precedence, I can look at some ministers over and know that would not occur. I would expect that it would not occur on the watch. To try to defend something that's indefensible, I think that violates the Code of Conduct as well, when we're talking about having integrity and accountability, courtesy and honesty.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Mount Scio.

MS. STOODLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm rising today primarily because I feel like the debate that we've had so far doesn't fully accurately reflect, in my opinion, the report. My colleagues joke with me that I wasn't a Liberal before May. I wasn't, and so I hope the residents of Mount Scio listening to this, and maybe some of the Members of the Opposition, will take my point seriously, as someone who's read this three times now cover to cover.

I'd first like to say that I do think that Minister Mitchelmore has a significant amount of integrity. As my friend, I was Minister Mitchelmore's parliamentary secretary –

MR. SPEAKER: I remind not to use the name.

MS. STOODLEY: Sorry.

MR. SPEAKER: Unless you're quoting from the document.

MS. STOODLEY: Thank you. Sorry.

I was the hon. Minister of AESL's parliamentary secretary for a few months and I saw the minister every day. My understanding and experience with the minister is that he had a high degree of integrity and took his responsibility very seriously.

When I would go to events on behalf of the minister – arts and culture events, I'd go to The Rooms for events on the minister's behalf – members of the arts community would always come up to me unsolicited and they'd say how happy they were with the minister. They would say how much they respected him and how the minister had done a significant amount of work for the arts and culture communities in the province. That was directly from the members of those communities.

I think more so than I would be if I was in that position. I think the minister placed particular importance to culture and arts in the province. I'm personally sad for my friend, that this report now has potentially damaged their reputation.

I would like to raise some of the facts in the debate and I would like to walk you through them, Mr. Speaker, in detail. I'd like to go to Allegation 1 first. As we know, there were five allegations and two of them were found remaining. I'd like to go to Allegation 1 and I'd like to refute some of those facts from within the report – all staying within the report, Mr. Speaker.

Allegation 1, as we know, "Minister Mitchelmore directed staff of The Rooms ... to hire Ms. Carla Foote as Executive Director of Marketing and Development without competition or a position description, in violation of generally accepted human resource practices, including the application of the merit principle to hiring within the public service."

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. STOODLEY: Firstly, as my colleagues has already mentioned, the clerk of the Executive Council has already mentioned that Minister Mitchelmore did nothing wrong, that Minister Mitchelmore followed all of the – sorry, the minister followed all of the – on page 5 of appendix SR-3: "In my opinion, the information provided above demonstrates that the Minister did not support any actions that deviate from government policies and practices." So the clerk of the Executive Council is stating that the minister was following government policies and practices.

I'd also like to speak to the point around when the role was posted in 2016 and 2017, Mr. Speaker. So 2016 was two year prior to this happening. There was a role posted two years prior, but a lot changes in two years. In my former life, we would post a job, we'd decide not to hire and the needs of the organization could completely change in two years.

I personally don't find logic in the argument that because there was a position posted in 2016, that there were candidates for, that they were never hired. That is almost unrelated to the current situation. The needs of the organization would have changed, and we don't know why they didn't hire someone in 2016. That was not mentioned in the report. We do not know why they did not hire someone in 2016. That was two years prior to this. So I'd like to clarify that.

Moving on, then, to the next point under the allegation, this is where the CEO hired an individual on a nine-month contract. I have a particular issue with this point because, two pages later, the Citizens' Representative himself indicates – I direct everyone to page 30 of the Citizens' Representative report, on the bottom of that section it says: The minister has every right and indeed responsibility to order the rescission of the contract.

So as we look in the legislation, the CEO of The Rooms did not have the authority to hire someone on a contract – did not have the authority. They needed the minister's approval and the CEO needed to go through the government's HR practices. That is very clear in the legislation and that was outlined in this report, which is why Allegation 2 did not stand. I take particular, I guess, exception to a justification of Allegation 1, the issue around the nine-month contract.

Many of my friends and colleagues I've seen on Facebook recently have said: How dare they fire someone just to hire this other individual? I have an issue with that because, in this situation, the CEO had no authority to hire that individual on a contract. If this report hadn't come out – for example, this report could easily say the CEO did not follow the practices and procedures that they were supposed to. That was a mistake the CEO made that is clear in this report.

The Opposition could and should have very well stood up and said if we hadn't terminated that contract, we allowed someone to be hired using the incorrect policies and procedures. Which, as soon as we found out, my understanding – and based on the report – is that contract was terminated because the CEO had no authority to hire that individual. It did not go through the proper HR procedures and the minister did not sign off on it. The ministers have to sign off on every hire at The Rooms. Mr. Speaker, that is that point.

I'd like to move on then, to the point later down the page. I'm at page 27 of the Citizens' Representative office: "There was no evidentiary basis for the Board to elevate the position from 'director' to 'executive director'" in "2018, but for the intervention of the Minister."

I would like to remind the House and to anyone listening that the board, in consultation with the minister, elevated another role. There was an executive director of galleries and museums. The board was already planning on elevating another role, so I take exception to this argument as well.

Moving on to the next section, in terms of the part of the application form that was not completed, so this is, again, lower on page 27: "That Form was not in compliance with explicit Human Resource Secretariat instructions, in that the section dedicated to outlining the rationale for staffing was not completed." That's accurate. I can't argue with the accuracy of that, but what I can argue with is the clerk indicates that was very acceptable.

The clerk is the top civil servant in the province who oversees our 47,000 employees in the province. Air Canada is one of our largest companies in the country and they have 30,000 staff. The clerk of the Executive Council oversees over 47,000 employees, so the clerk is saying herself that it's normal for this section of the form not to be completed.

I direct Members to Appendix SR-3 on page 4 where the clerk indicates there is no requirement for this to be completed unless the signing authorities are not otherwise satisfied that they have the right information they need to determine whether or not it should be approved.

The clerk herself is saying that is not a requirement, so I disregard, or I have challenge with the fact that this is an argument against the minister in this instance.

I would like to then go to Allegation 3. Allegation 3 on page 30 of the Citizens' Representative report, I also disagree with the Citizens' Representative's use of the words "the uncontradicted evidence," because the Citizens' Representative contradicts himself multiple times during this report. For example, when the Citizens' Representative uses the nine-month contract as an argument, when in fact later on the next page, on page 30, the Citizens' Representative indicates that that was very acceptable that the nine-month contract was not a legally binding valid contract.

So under Allegation 3 – and the Citizens' Representative uses this again here for an argument, the second point: "The contract of employment negotiated ... A.B. to act in the Director of Marketing and Development position for an eight-month term provided for an annual salary of \$85,513."

I'd like to refer everyone back to the previous page, page 30, where the Citizens' Representative indicates that the minister "had every right, and indeed responsibility, to order the rescission of the contract." So that was not a valid contract, because the CEO could not, should not have created that contract with the individual, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to refute some of the other facts that my colleagues have mentioned. Yesterday we heard from the Member for Windsor Lake and the Member for Windsor Lake argued that the candidate who was moved into this role was not qualified for the role because she had a communications background and the role was in marketing.

I have a Bachelor of Commerce in co-op, with a concentration in marketing, I have a master's in political science and I did my thesis in political marketing. I have worked in marketing communications for Memorial University, I've worked in marketing communications in the UK, and I would like to assure the Members that the argument that because the individual was in communications and moved into a role that had

marketing in the title is not a valid argument. As people who work in marketing and/or communications will know, the areas are very similar. There are marketing elements required for communications, there are communications elements required in marketing, and the job title does not dictate someone's suitability or unsuitability for the role. As an expert, I take a strong disagreement in that area with the Member for Windsor Lake. This was raised again by other Members, so I refute the grounds that Ms. Foote was not qualified for the role.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe the minister followed the process outlined by the public service. As the executive clerk indicates on page 5: "In my opinion, the information provided above demonstrates that the Minister did not support any actions that deviate from government policies and practices."

The clerk of the Executive Council indicates that. I think it's also telling that – we have this Office of the Citizens' Representative; we also have the Office of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards. The Commissioner, on reviewing the report of the Citizens' Representative, has deemed that the most serious punishment is reprimand.

I personally disagree with the finding of gross mismanagement, but I support the minister in his apology and I support the motion. I also do believe that the minister is an excellent minister. I personally have a lot of trust in his integrity and I would support the minister. I wouldn't say that for all my colleagues, I have to say, but I will say that for the minister.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I believe the minister and the teams followed the processes outlined and I support the motion and the minister. I feel for him; it's a very difficult situation. As some of my other colleagues have mentioned, though, we need to look at the process and I support that as well.

As a new Member, new to public service, it's been very challenging trying to figure out all the rules that are unwritten. I don't envy the role of any minister navigating through the web of unwritten and written bureaucratic rules, but I support the minister. As his former parliamentary secretary, I believe the minister

has a great deal of integrity and I would be happy to chat with any constituents or anyone else about that at any time and go through the logic.

Having read the report three times in great detail, I can point you to any section at any time. So I do support the motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To speak to this report, from my gathering, from my reading of it, there's a lot of lack of oversight; oversight in the minister's department, oversight of the DMs, oversight of individuals.

Most notably, when you look at Appendix E, the draft letter to the CEO calling for the termination of someone who was hired, who was qualified for the position, even reading that draft letter, it sends a lot of lack of oversight; especially that it wasn't even on the correct letterhead of The Rooms organization.

When you read some of this report, where was the oversight in decisions made? Where was the oversight in actions carried out? It's very concerning, it's very troubling that these allegations are made asking for deletion of emails, things like that. This is where good quality oversight would come in and make sure that these kind of things would never, ever happen.

From the Member for Mount Scio who said that the CEO never had authorization to hire an individual and the minister never signed off on it, wouldn't the minister take into consideration the 15 years of Mr. Brinton's work at The Rooms? I'm sure if he didn't have the authority to hire, I'm sure his advice would be soundly recognized in the fact of hiring. I would definitely listen to the advice of someone who had 15 years running an organization.

Lack of oversight is very, very concerning to me. It's very concerning that we're even in this position to actually have to do this. The checks and balances should have been in place. I think the checks and balances are in place. I'm sure the Citizens' Rep, when going through this, has noticed that the checks and balances were there. They were just not adhered to – lack of oversight.

So we need to continue on with that. When you have a recommendation on those job requests and a whole section dedicated to the qualifications of an individual completely left out, yet still makes its way through the system, another lack of oversight. Why was the system not followed to the T, as it was supposed to be met, in place?

The research is done, everything is done, why do we have to do it again? This is where we have to think. There are so many errors in our ways with this. There are so many errors that have come up with this, so we have to look at that.

When we come to this, we have to look at the fact that is a simple apology good enough, that the ministers never followed procedures, the oversight was lacking there. We've never really come to it. I have to agree with my colleague behind me here for Mount Pearl – Southlands, that an apology is not good enough.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to move the following amendment to the current resolution being debated: That the resolution respecting the Member for St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows be amended in the last clause –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. BROWN: – by adding immediately after the word “Assembly” the second time it appears, the following: and furthermore instructs the Premier to remove the hon. Member for St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows from his Cabinet; and direct the board of The Rooms to vacate the position of executive director of marketing and development, reassess the position, and fill it using the proper human resource procedures.

This is seconded by the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: This House will recess and review the proposed amendment.

Recess

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

We have reviewed the proposed amendment and ruled that it's not to be in order, as it exceeds the scope of the current amendment.

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

MR. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That will conclude my remarks for this.

Thank you.

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

MS. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When I got elected to be MHA representing my district, I anticipated a lot of emotions, stuff like fear, speaking publicly; being nervous, intimidated. A lot of different emotions I expected. I also expected to feel joy at being able to put forward concerns, not just for my district but for the whole Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, issues and concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today with two emotions. One of them is actually anger. I'm actually feeling anger at what's going on in this House today. I also feel ashamed; ashamed at the defence of the indefensible, as my fellow colleague pointed out.

There's a report here with findings in black and white. I find it difficult to actually sit through a lot of these proceedings where people, actually good people, rise and defend bad behaviour, people that I actually respect across the House. Unfortunately, it's not the first time that I witnessed that. I find that very disheartening, which gets back to frustration, anger and

actually shame because the actions of this House affects all of us, whether we're innocent of wrongdoing or whether we're actually guilty – I don't know if I'm allowed to use that word – of wrongdoing. Because eventually the public tars us with the same brush.

As my fellow colleague pointed out, we're here to represent the people. We're here to try and better the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, the living conditions, the life that we want for our fellow Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and I find it difficult.

I had to actually sit yesterday and watch the Premier stand and defend the hiring of Ms. Foote – a good woman, and of course the Lieutenant-Governor, her mother, another really good woman who's put in a lot of time and service to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. So why would you have to defend the hiring? Why would you talk about how good a person is at their job, from his personal experience? That's our premier.

The reason why he had to defend it is because the proper process for hiring was not followed, and whatever can be strung together from this report to try and fabricate acceptable excuses is wrong.

I'm just somebody from the North Coast of Labrador. I actually was very, very pleased and I felt honoured to get elected and to stand here and to look at the behaviours here, that's shameful, shameful.

I'm going to say right here, right now, I'm not going to be a part of it. I will not be shamed, I will not be shamed by the behaviour of this House and to have respectable people stand that I respect and have to actually defend the behaviours, it's not right. There are acceptable human resources practices for hiring within the public service. This book outlines in black and white that that wasn't followed, and stringing together pieces of report to defend it, to try to make it sellable, we're going back to Trump. Everybody knows about the Trump government. It was pointed out by actually our Leader because, with his government, he doesn't expect his biggest supporters to read the documents. All we can say to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador is in here in black and white.

Looking at the hiring process, the board of directors from The Rooms, very decent people – that’s why they’re on the board of directors; we expect them to be decent people – they expected the hiring process to be based on merit, the merit-based principle of recruitment and selection process. In this book, in this report, in black and white, it says it wasn’t followed. So what’s wrong with this picture? Why are we going into two days now, wasting the money?

My fellow colleague talked about somebody who can’t afford glasses. I know people who can’t afford glasses. I know people who can’t afford to get their dentures replaced, and those are our senior citizens, our elders that we’re supposed to look after. The reason why they need dentures is when they were growing up, we didn’t have the funds, we didn’t have the benefits that we take for granted now. So we need to look at who are the most vulnerable in the province and we need to look after them. We shouldn’t be here wasting our time. It’s shameful.

I want to say, some of the defence that was said – lateral transfer. As my fellow colleagues pointed out, this book outlines it was not a lateral transfer. There is no way to justify it. Why are good, decent people rising at ministerial levels and defending it? I don’t understand. It’s there, it’s in black and white.

Also, too, is there is and has been in the past the ability for an appointment. In this book, it talks about appointments: “The *Executive Council Act* gives the premier and cabinet the ability to appoint deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers within the government departments.” It’s right there in black and white. When you read, it says here that in actuality, it wasn’t followed, the conditions to meet that requirement. I can go on.

To actually listen to the Premier stand and defend why Ms. Foote was hired is not right. Ms. Foote’s character, her ability to do a job and to do a job well is not in question. Basically, what’s in question is why did she get that job? Why was the process not followed?

Also, I have to listen to the Premier stand and defend the minister in question. The defence was: he’s a good guy, he’s a constituent person,

a hard worker. You know something? None of that’s in question. Because if you’re a minister in Cabinet you have to be a hard worker, you have to be a good guy. You have to be a constituent man in order to get elected, in order to keep your seat and in order to keep your job. But what I found here that’s really, really, really shameful is in this book it outlines how it was an abuse of a ministerial position.

So my biggest concern is how this is being perceived to the people who actually elect us, to our constituents, to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Do they actually believe in us? Do they have respect for us? Is there any credibility? Because when we defend bad behaviour, when we defend things that are not defensible we lose our credibility and we all get tarred with the same brush. This is not the first time I had to sit and actually listen to good, decent people stand and defend bad behaviour. I just wonder, how can they justify that? Because we’re all being lowered when that happens.

The thing is – I might get in trouble here – the House Leader stood yesterday and defended it. I have a lot of respect for the House Leader, and I still do. I was taken aback and I felt really uncomfortable listening to it, because I read this book. I started outlining, highlighting in yellow until the pages became all yellow and I had to stop. But the facts are here in black and white, and to listen to somebody that I have a lot of respect for stand and be forced to defend it, I think that’s very unsettling. I think it should be unsettling to everybody here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. EVANS: Now, when the Premier got up I didn’t have high expectations. I did not have high expectations and I wasn’t disappointed. I listened to what he said – I didn’t believe what he said – but I tell you right now, right here, I had low expectations, the Premier of our province. And I’ll say that right here, right now.

I’m elected from the Torngat Mountains, probably the smallest district. No roads, totally isolated. The thing about it is my communities are in chaos right now, chaos, wondering how they’re going to be able to actually feed themselves this winter, and we’re spending two days discussing this.

I have to say, my district has been treated unfairly but the whole Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has been treated unfairly by the farce that I see. Not the first farce since I got elected either, the second one.

When people make mistakes – I was taught at an early age, when we make mistakes we own up to it. Also, it's not just about apologizing. You have to know what was wrong and, you know something, sometimes you have to take the consequences. That's the way we were raised. That's how I was raised.

Another thing, too, I was watching a documentary on behaviour of children, and in the schools there was a problem. When they did an investigation, it was a problem with bad behaviour. What they found is when the children did something wrong or harmed another child or did something really, really, really bad, they were forced to apologize. There were no real consequences because they didn't understand what they were apologizing for, so there was no deterrent. An apology was empty.

So what they did is they worked with the children to change the behaviour, to understand the consequences. When we were small and growing up, we learned that. I was from a small community, if we did any harm we lived with that. We saw it everyday, the harm we caused, whether it was intentional or not.

What we're saying here is that an apology really is not enough, because it's so blatant and it does so much damage to our credibility as MHAs.

When I got elected, I thought I was going to be working on doing some good, but it's very, very important for us to understand. I think what my fellow colleague talked about is the need of the people in this province.

This morning when I was getting ready to come into this House, I was listening to the news and they were interviewing somebody, a heart attack patient who spent the night on a gurney. Did you hear that? Two nights on a gurney. During the interview process it came out, that wasn't the only person on a gurney in the hallway, there were other people.

So when we look at our health care, when we look at all our resources, when we look at all the things that we need to be working on for the betterment of Newfoundland and Labrador, this is the second time that this House has been derailed by bad behaviour. I say derailed because good people stood to defend the bad behaviour by, I would actually say, fabricating things. Fabricating things to justify, to make it believable that it wasn't as bad as what it was, but in this report it says it's bad – it's very, very bad – and it shouldn't be tolerated. Good people should not stand to have to justify this bad behaviour and, you know something, I'm not going to do. I'm not going to be tarred with this brush. The thing about it is if I do something wrong, I'm going to own up to it and people who know me know that. I'll be the first one to admit when I'm wrong, but not only will I admit that I'm wrong, I will actually try to find out what was wrong and how I could right it. An apology really is not good enough.

There's one other thing that I wanted to get to was I was wondering why some people are thrown under the bus and I have to listen to it. People talking about being thrown under the bus. Then there are other people who are sent to the backbenches after the apology, willing to work on improving things, making a difference. Contrite, remorseful and still very, very decent people who may have made a mistake, but are willing to work to improve the betterment of people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. EVANS: The way this is operating is why do some people – in black and white: “We conclude that Minister Mitchelmore's actions in intervening to facilitate the hire of Ms. Foote at The Rooms not only breached his Code of Conduct, but grossly mismanaged his obligations under that Code.” Yet they're still trying to have him sit as a minister while other people are thrown under the bus, while other people are sent to the backbenches. The thing about it is I was raised to believe that everybody needs to be treated fairly and part of that fair treatment is equal treatment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. EVANS: The last thing I'm going to say is I was also listening to the news about this independent review on how executives move around. Why do you need an independent review, another one? How much is that going to cost when this report in black and white outlines what went wrong. That's all I'm going to say.

This document here basically shows what went wrong. A review is not going to solve that. Cleaning up your government will. That's all I have to say.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Considering the hour, I move, along with my Minister of Health and Community Services, that we recess until 2 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: In accordance with paragraph 9(1)(b) of the Standing Orders, the House is in recess until 2 p.m. this afternoon.

Recess

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Reid): Are the House Leaders ready? Is the Government House Leader ready?

MS. COADY: Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes.

The Opposition Leader ready? The Third Party ready? Yes.

Order, please!

We have several guests today with us, some in the public gallery and some in the Speaker's gallery.

First, in the public gallery, I think I see Mr. Calvin White. He's the former chief and current elder in the Mi'kmaq community.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Dr. White has also received a doctor of laws from Memorial University. He's a recipient of the Order of Canada, the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as being a recipient of the Human Rights Commission Champion Award.

Joining us in the Speaker's gallery today for a Member's statement, I'd like to recognize Mary Martin and Eileen Field.

I would also like to welcome Mary Dinn, mother of the Member for St. John's Centre and Topsail - Paradise. Mrs. Dinn is here today for a Member's statement and is joined by their sister, also named Mary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Before we move to proceedings today, I wish to rule on a point of order raised by the Minister of Natural Resources following Question Period on Monday, December 2, of this year.

The Government House Leader raised a point of order in relation to remarks made by the Member for Terra Nova. I have reviewed the *Hansard* and I found that the remarks were contrary to Standing Order 49; first, in that they were offensive to the Member and, second, in that they commented or revisited a vote already taken in this House. I'm going to ask the Member for Terra Nova to withdraw his remarks.

MR. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the remarks.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today, we'll hear Members' statements from the hon. Members for the Districts of Windsor Lake, Placentia West - Bellevue, Torngat Mountains, St. John's Centre, Topsail - Paradise and, with leave, the Member for Virginia Waters - Pleasantville.

The hon. Member for Windsor Lake.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

I rise to honour the accomplishments of fourth-year student Elizabeth Tuck of Mount Pearl, who has been awarded the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship to pursue post-graduate studies at the University of Oxford.

Her honours thesis at STU, “United States Workplace Harassment Jurisprudence in the era of #MeToo,” explores modern understandings of workplace harassment, specifically in California and New York where state laws have already begun to evolve.

“I love law, and I’m passionate about gender issues; how the two relate to one another is evolving so rapidly. It’s important to be studying this now,” she said.”

In addition to her academic success, Elizabeth’s community and leadership involvement has been extensive. She’s completing a B.A. with honours in human rights and majors in political science and great books. She plans to continue her research on how different social identities, particularly gender, affect policy during her studies at Oxford.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSBIE: (Inaudible) material on the reverse here, quickly.

In 2015, she was selected to represent the Girl Guides of Canada at the Sangam International Guiding World Centre in Pune, India, where she participated in a women’s leadership development program.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating Elizabeth Tuck on receiving the Rhodes Scholarship to pursue her post-graduate studies at the University of Oxford this fall.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. DWYER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to represent the beautiful, well-maintained District of Placentia West - Bellevue.

I rise in this hon. House today to tell you of a team. A soccer team, Mr. Speaker. The soccer team of St. Joseph’s All Grade School in the Town of Terrenceville, the Timberwolves.

On Wednesday, October 23, the Timberwolves were unbeatable and became gold medalists of the regionals held at Parkers Cove.

During October 25 and 26, the Timberwolves competed in three games on Friday, followed by another game Saturday morning and the championship game that afternoon against King Point School. The Timberwolves became the silver medalists of Division 2A at the provincials held at St. Lawrence.

These team members range from grades seven to 12, and their names, in no particular order, are: Laytoya Layhey, Morgan Bolt, Jasmine Bolt, Olivia Layhey, Gabrielle Hickey, Gracie Cox, Abigail Bolt, Kailey Hickey, Alexis Hodge, Marissa Bolt, Chloe Labour and Keisha Evans.

The coaches of the Timberwolves are: Mr. Hayse, Mrs. Mitchell and Mr. Gill.

I ask that all my fellow colleagues join me in sending a great big congratulations to the Timberwolves on their victory.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today in the House of Assembly to pay tribute to the life of Mary Jane Nui, a true advocate, noble leader and vital member of the Innu community.

Born in 1952, as a young girl she witnessed great change in how the Innu lived, including the settling of Davis Inlet and Sheshatshiu. As the lives of her people changed, she worked to ensure the Innu culture and practices remained.

Mary Jane Nui successfully pursued formal education and became a public health nurse aide at Peenamini McKenzie School. In the early days, there was no infrastructure and services such as running water, yet Mary Jane ensured youth had access to programs, services and supplies essential to good education and health.

Her role of advocate evolved when she worked with the children, youth and family services. She believed that all Innu youth needed to know their culture and those in care did not lose this knowledge. After retiring, she continued to share her Innu culture.

She served many positions, including Innu Nation board and the Sheshatshiu First Nation band council. She is most remembered for her strong advocacy for Innu youth, education and culture. She raised concern regarding the children in care and their need to return back to the Innu communities of Labrador. A true life of service to the Innu of Labrador, I ask you to applaud her legacy with me.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today in honour of our mother and our late father. Our father was a railway man and our mom worked at home raising seven of us.

It's safe to say that neither my brother, nor I, held lifelong political ambitions, let alone serving as Members of the House of Assembly. Certainly our mother and father never held those ambitions for us. They instilled in us a sense of service and giving back to our community but not necessarily political service. Yet, they sowed the seeds nevertheless.

When I think about it, rearing seven children required a considerable amount of political skill in balancing needs, personalities and, of course, the family budget. However, it was the values instilled in us by our parents that mostly likely prepared us for our current roles.

Chief among those values was education, evident in the fact that all seven of us completed at least one university degree; five of us went on to become teachers. Our parents saw education as a key to success and success at school was non-negotiable – made clear in the hours spent doing homework with us, learning multiplication tables – how I remember that – attending parent-teacher interviews and concerts, or providing the opportunity for music lessons. It wasn't until I had my own three children that I fully appreciated what my parents helped us accomplish.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. P. DINN: Mr. Speaker, I cannot allow the Member for St. John's Centre to blatantly lobby to become his mother's number one son. So let me speak to our loving parents, who have sacrificed so much to raise seven children on a single income.

Our father was a hard worker and we were never in want for anything. His work ethic was evident and he was recognized as a trusted friend to many. At his funeral mass, for a person who wasn't in a prestigious job – he worked at the railway – St. Patrick's Church was packed, and I was in awe at the number of people that were, in some way, affected or connected to my father.

Both our parents were strong in faith and instilled values in us, including respect for everyone and anyone, regardless of background, job or social standing.

Since the passing of our father, our mother, though small in stature, has been the pillar of strength for us all and has always provided guidance. Like our father, Mom is well respected within the community and volunteers frequently.

Mr. Speaker, our story is not unlike many in this hon. House. With the ultimate family season fast approaching, I would ask all Members to stand in recognition of our mother but also those special people who have shaped each and every one of us.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Virginia Water - Pleasantville, with leave?

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

MR. SPEAKER: With leave.

The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters - Pleasantville.

MR. DAVIS: What a tough act to follow, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to recognize two senior women who live in my district – Mary Martin and Mary Moylan – for the work they are doing to raise issues related to seniors in our province and Canada as a whole.

I met with Mary Martin and Mary Moylan, among other members of the advocacy group they have formed called Support Our Seniors – SOS. They raise important issues of seniors in poverty and near poverty in our province and specifically highlighted programs that they feel are not adequate for many seniors. SOS is making a significant contribution by bringing these issues to the forefront, and I thank them for that.

It's important to hear senior voices – from the women and men who built our province and continue to work, volunteer and provide a positive example for younger generations. I am proud that the House of Assembly has appointed the province's first Seniors' Advocate, Dr. Suzanne Brake.

I ask all hon. Member to join me in recognizing Mary Martin, Mary Moylan and Eileen Field and all members of SOS for their contribution and advocacy on behalf of seniors in our province and across Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight National Safe Driving Week, which takes place every year from December 1 to 7.

National Safe Driving Week is an opportunity to promote defensive driving habits, raise awareness of potential road hazards and prepare for winter driving conditions.

Mr. Speaker, public safety is a top priority for our government, and the *Highway Traffic Act* is constantly reviewed to identify opportunities to enhance safety. Our government will continue to modernize the act to ensure it meets the needs of all road users.

With winter approaching, it is important to be prepared. As road conditions deteriorate, ensure you have winter tires on your vehicle and drive according to the weather. Keep a shovel and road salt in your trunk in case your vehicle becomes stuck. To ensure proper visibility, clear windows of snow and, in case of an emergency, place a first aid kit in your vehicle.

Mr. Speaker, we all have a role to play in keeping our province's roadways safe. I invite all my hon. colleagues to join me in promoting road safety awareness in our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the hon. minister for a copy of her statement.

We, in the Official Opposition, also recognize National Safe Driving Week. It goes without saying that winter driving comes with extra challenges, but enhanced road safety is critical in every season and every day of the year.

I agree that we all have a role to play in keeping our roads safe, and we certainly support every

effort and opportunity to encourage safe driving practices on our province's highways.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

As a rural MHA in Labrador, my constituents travel hundreds of kilometres each way through their communities. Road safety is important in all seasons, especially on the remote Trans-Labrador Highway.

It's paramount and important and always top of mind. I hope to have continued discussion with the minister's colleague, Transportation and Works, on expanding Wi-Fi access for the travelling public in our province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

MR. BRAGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to highlight the importance of practicing fire safety throughout the year and particularly during the Christmas holiday season.

As we enter the festive season, there are countless gatherings for family and friends to plan and host, and it is important to remember to keep safety top of mind during the preparations.

Whether you are baking, using candles, lighting a fire or finding the perfect place to put your freshly cut tree, take the time to ensure there are no potential hazards and to prepare in case of emergency.

Ensure your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are installed correctly on each floor of the home and in all sleeping areas. Alarms should be properly maintained and tested and the batteries should be changed regularly. Make sure you and your family know two ways out of every building in case of a fire.

Beginning on Monday, December 9, my department will launch the annual 12 Days of Fire Safety public education campaign. Each business day until Christmas, we will provide helpful tips through public advisories and on social media.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our first responders, both volunteer and paid, who risk their lives daily to take their time from their families and put forth extraordinary efforts to help residents and communities in their time of need, regardless of the day of the year.

With that, I'd like to wish everyone a safe and happy holidays.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the hon. minister for an advance copy of his statement.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the holiday season can bring with it an increased risk of fire. Public education is very important and the tips provided through the annual 12 Days of Fire Safety campaign can be a useful resource in promoting a fire-safe holiday season. I commend the minister and his department for doing that. I encourage everyone to share these tips with your families and your communities to help promote home fire safety and to help reduce the risk of holiday-related fires.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the first responders for the very important and selfless work that they do in assisting and protecting our residents in the holiday season.

We in the Official Opposition would also like to wish everybody a happy, safe holiday season.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

As a former volunteer firefighter in Labrador West, I join with the minister in emphasizing the importance of fire safety as this holiday season approaches. Our paid and volunteer firefighters and first responders take time away from their families over the holidays to protect our citizens, our communities. We recognize their courage and dedication.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, will the Premier confirm that he has a deal with the minister subject of the *Mitchelmore Report*, that in return for the minister staying silent on who ordered the hiring of Ms. Foote he will keep him in Cabinet?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, I have to be honest with you. I've listened to a lot of debate over the last couple of days, answered a lot of questions. No, there's no secret deal. There are no secret conversations. The minister has made it quite clear of what his intentions are.

Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of theatre and the kind of politics that's occurring in this House. We've been accused of many things; we've been accused of not agreeing with the report. One of the first things that we said was that we would concur with this report.

The minister has offered his apology, Mr. Speaker. I've been accused of – when we talked about this – not accepting the report. Then the writer, the author, has been saying that there has been a very comprehensive review of what's happening. Then all of sudden when he makes the recommendations, now we're in a situation where there are all kinds of questions on what that would look like.

Mr. Speaker, it's very clear. There is no deal with the current minister.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: The Premier says that he's willing to keep a minister in Cabinet who has committed gross mismanagement.

If he is a hard worker, why didn't this standard keep the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands in Cabinet?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, it is two different situations.

Right now – and speaking to all Members of this House of Assembly, these were decisions that were made at the time. I've often said, Mr. Speaker, publicly that the Member for Bay of Islands, a colleague of mine, went through a review and issued the apology. As a matter of fact, there were conversations that would've occurred with the restorative justice process, a willingness to work with caucus Members.

There would be absolutely discussions and ready for this caucus to actually move forward on embracing people in a situation like this. There was a restorative justice process that offered participation. It's yet to be taken, Mr. Speaker,

but this is working in collaboration and co-operation.

Regardless of which party they're working or if they're independent or not, we're committed to working with all Members of this House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that two Officers of this House of Assembly have found the minister liable for gross mismanagement in the squandering of public funds, who will be paying the minister's legal fees?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, there has been no discussion about legal fees at all. That would not be a discussion that I would be encouraging or having with anyone.

I will want to go back to the other question as well. When we speak of the Member for Bay of Islands, if I remember, when that debate was occurring in this House of Assembly, you, as Leader of the Opposition, or your party were putting in amendments wanting harsher penalties to that resolution. All of a sudden today, Mr. Speaker, they're here now suggesting that process was wrong.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier was adamant yesterday that he did not order or promise Carla Foote the job at The Rooms; however, this is contradicted by the evidence in the reports.

I ask the Premier: Will he waive the gag order on the former CEO of The Rooms so that person can speak in the public interest?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, when I've been listening to the debate over the last couple of days, it's very clear that many Members of this House that are weighing in and speaking to this have not even read the report. If you read the report, the evidence has already been supplied by and provided by the CEO.

The CEO, in providing that evidence, never once said that this was a direction from me – not at all. That was not said. As a matter of fact, that is in another part of the evidence here, but that was no conversation that I had with those board members.

How those board members actually – where that came from, it certainly didn't come from me, Mr. Speaker, because I had never given direction to the minister. In the uncontradicted evidence – and when you look at the findings and the report as it's been reviewed by the Commissioner for Legislative Standards – it is not suggested that direction came from me at all and the CEO did participate already in this report.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In his report of June 11, 2019, the Citizens' Representative stated on pages 29 to 30: "We conclude that Minister Mitchelmore's actions in intervening to facilitate the hire of Ms. Foote at The Rooms not only breached his Code of Conduct, but grossly mismanaged his obligations under that Code."

Does the Premier accept these findings of the Citizens' Rep, an Officer of the House, that the minister grossly mismanaged his obligations?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, we have already said in part of the resolution that we're putting forward there – concurring with this report. This resolution is in and be it resolved, we'll be debating that again, I guess, tomorrow. That resolution is already in about concurring. I said this many times last night.

What is really becoming the question of what we're arguing here in the last few days, is the recommendation on a reprimand, Mr. Speaker. There are four options that the review Commissioner had in determining what the consequence would be. There were four options. The Commissioner himself said that it would be a reprimand. That was his suggestion in this report.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So the Premier agrees that there was gross misconduct here by the minister. He can do the right thing and remove him from Cabinet as he has in the past. That would be the right thing to do to start, to bring integrity back to the House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Does the Premier have confidence in the Citizens' Representative, an Officer of this House? If he does, why is he rejecting the Officer's conclusion that the minister grossly mismanaged his obligations?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, going back to the previous reports and reviews that have been done, when these people were removed from Cabinet at the time, it was pending the review that would be ongoing. This review has now been completed.

The consequence, or the recommendation of what the action should be following the review has been articulated and described. That being one of four, that being a reprimand. There are five areas of allegations, two of which are mentioned, and where the consequence or the reprimand that the Commissioner actually suggested it should be.

So that is what we're debating here in this House today, the reprimand based on the Commissioner's review.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to read again, in his report of June 11, 2019, the Citizens' Representative stated on page 30, and I read: "We conclude that Minister Mitchelmore's actions in intervening to facilitate the hire of Ms. Foote at The Rooms not only breached his Code of Conduct, but grossly mismanaged his obligations under that Code."

So I ask the Premier: How can you keep such a minister in your Cabinet who grossly mismanaged his obligations?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, what we've seen from the reports that were done by the Citizens' Representative and then referred to the Commissioner for Legislative Standards who would then determine what the suggestion would be based on the findings in the reports – suggestions came out of that, Mr. Speaker, of a couple of things, really.

One was a reprimand, which is one of the four, as I just mentioned. So a reprimand was what was suggested.

There was one other thing that was suggested, and clearly when we listen to the debate today, one of the things that I mentioned yesterday was doing a review of the movement of executive around government. I spoke yesterday quite often about why that was important.

Ironically, today, people getting involved in the debate today were suggesting there should be something very different. But clearly, the author of that report said it should be done by the clerk of the executive. Mr. Speaker, those are some of the things that are getting clouded in today's debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In his report on June 11, 2019, the Citizen's Representative stated on page 30, and I quote: "Specifically, we find that Minister Mitchelmore fundamentally mismanaged his obligations pursuant to the" Code of Conduct provision 2, which states: "The fundamental objectives of his holding public office is to serve his fellow citizens with integrity in order to improve the economic and social conditions of the people of the Province."

How can the Premier justify keeping this minister in Cabinet who fundamentally mismanaged his obligations?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, I've worked with this minister for quite some time. We all know what's being debated and what's being questioned here too is not just this one action, but what's being debated here is really a process that has been around for decades.

Mr. Speaker, I said to some Members here in this House this morning, if we went in and did a complete review of all RSAs over the last 25 or 30 years, I think every Member in this House of Assembly that would have had experience, whether you would've been involved in government or not, would have known that these RSAs have been something that we all would have questions about appointments that had made by prior administrations.

That is the reason why, yesterday, we will be putting together terms of reference; hopefully, they can be completed today. It's been suggested in this report by its author, the Commissioner for Legislative Standards.

Mr. Speaker, we want to fix this and we will.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to quote the Premier now. In this House of Assembly on March 10, 2016, the Premier stood in the House and he said: "Our objective here is to give Newfoundlanders and Labradorians the confidence in the actions of their government. It is now time to take the politics out of these government appointments."

Will the Premier concede he's failed miserably to take the politics out of government appointments, as now confirmed by the two independent officers of this House?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, once again, we're getting politics mixed up with some of the decisions that are (inaudible). What the Member is referring to there is IAC, the Independent Appointments Commission, and these are about tier-one and tier-two appointments.

As I mentioned yesterday, over 2,600 people have been included in that process, and over 600 people that would never have had an opportunity in this province to be sitting on one of those boards and commissions, because in the past they were appointed politically.

That's the change that we have made, Mr. Speaker. We are seeing more women, we're seeing more Indigenous people participating on those boards as a result of that position we took in 2016, as the Member was just referring to. That reference was not to these reports that we're discussing here today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In his report, June 17, 2019, the Citizens' Representative stated on page 8: On September 21, 2018, The Rooms executive committee stepped out of the room while Mr. Brinton received a call from the minister and the deputy minister. When they returned, they were advised that the minister and the deputy minister had said that the Premier has offered Carla Foote the position of executive director of marketing with The Rooms.

Premier, did the minister lie when he told Mr. Brinton that the Premier had offered Carla Foote the job? Because that's what we're being told. That's what the public are hearing.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, when you look at the evidence that was provided by the CEO, that was not there. The minister has already said, Mr. Speaker, and I can clearly tell you that there was no direction given by me to hire Ms. Foote. That is not the case, even though I know the politics around this all sounds great and you keep asking those questions.

What I do know is in the past we have clearly seen direction that's been given by many people that have sat in the chairs, and ministers of prior administrations that did give direction, clearly gave direction to put certain people in key positions. Not in this case, Mr. Speaker. That direction certainly did not come from me and the CEO is not in these findings as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I guess he's saying the minister is lying. We live in the present and the public today are looking for answers. The Premier and this government are not giving them.

Ms. Foote was a senior official of the Executive Council, an official office under direction of the Premier. Who offered the official job at The Rooms if not you, Mr. Premier?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, right now there was a process that I was not involved in at The Rooms that put – that Ms. Foote went in there. What I will say is that Ms. Foote, as I said yesterday so many times, is clearly qualified for this job.

On that day there were two executive director positions that were put in place: one was about museums and galleries and the second one was

the marketing and development, which Ms. Foote eventually is now that executive director, Mr. Speaker. These decisions were made at the time. Of course, the RSAs, as they've now become very publicly known, these were executed and Ms. Foote is in that position today, as well as the other executive director.

We've seen tremendous advancements at The Rooms within the last year, Mr. Speaker, all as a part of the great team that's now in place there. The board is now stronger. We all need, collectively as a province, to see The Rooms as a much better institution.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is astounding. The Premier needs to tell – someone needs to tell us who offered her the job. She just never showed up at The Rooms' doorstep one day and said I'm here to work. Somebody did this. You're here telling us – we're being led to believe that no one approved it. It's incredible. I'll leave it at that. The public can decide on this.

According to the narrative the Premier is putting forward, when did the Premier first find out the Cabinet Secretariat official working under his direction was offered a job at The Rooms? Who told him?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, I want to address the preamble again, because once you look at the report and read that report, how that was executed is all clearly in that report. We talk about the Cabinet Secretariat that would have signed off on that, the CEO, the board and so on; all of that is clearly outlined in that report.

Mr. Speaker, this is the way that it was executed and implemented at the time, but the direction did not come from me.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to remind the Premier I'm not totally green, I was on this other side. I wasn't in this Legislature but I was in the backrooms. I know these positions do not get offered without the blessing of the Premier. That's just the way this works. You come from Executive Council; it's the minister and Premier in conversation. Someone has to tell the people the truth. This is not fair to the people of this province. They deserve better.

Final question, Mr. Speaker: Has the Premier ever had discussion with Ms. Foote's mother about Ms. Foote's position at The Rooms?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, well, clearly what the Member just said is one of the reasons why we might need to go back a few years. We might need to go back a few years, put that spade in the ground and see where the skeletons that the Member opposite just said that they were part of. He just said then, clearly, to his own admission, talked about how appointments were being done. He just said clearly that it was all done by the Premier's office or the minister's office, whoever was responsible, Mr. Speaker.

We're not saying here that this process was perfect. No one is saying that. That is a reason why the review has been done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER BALL: We have agreed to the concurrence, and the minister has agreed to apologize based on the recommendations of a reprimand that has come out of these findings, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know what else we can say about this. Clearly, I'm not going to agree with what the Member opposite is saying because that's not the way it happened.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Mr. Speaker, no one on the government's side is talking about the employee who was personally impacted by the decision to hire Ms. Foote.

I ask the minister: Is there a statement of claim filed against government by the former employee who was dismissed to make room for Carla Foote?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

MR. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question.

I'd just like to talk about some of the positive things that are happening at The Rooms today. We've had the opportunity to make several changes at The Rooms over the last year or more. We've had two executive directors put in place. If you don't want to hear it, that's okay.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the protection.

We've had two executive director positions put in place: one that handles museums and galleries and one that handles marketing and development. We've also expanded the board of directors, all in an attempt to make the relationship between government and The Rooms stronger and better for the people of this province.

The Rooms has seen 123,000 people go through the doors this past year. That's impressive. It's increased over the previous year. There are exhibits that have been done. Retail sales have been up at The Rooms, 15 per cent over last year. It's amazing to see how improvement is. It's a full team effort down there of highly skilled –

MR. SPEAKER: We're going to move to the next question.

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Mr. Speaker, we need answers to these legitimate questions.

I ask the minister again: Please answer the question. Is there a statement of claim filed against government by the former employee who was dismissed to make room for Carla Foote?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can't speak to individual HR matters that happens at The Rooms from day to day. I'm a new minister in the role. All I can speak to is the impact that has happened at The Rooms over the past year. It's been positive. There's been an increased number of visitations at The Rooms, more exhibits and donors have increased. It's an impressive situation that's happened at The Rooms and it's all about the highly skilled staff that we have at The Rooms and the great work that they do each and every day.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Harbour Main.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Mr. Speaker, perhaps this question can be answered: Given that there were 77 applicants applied for the original competition for the director of marketing and development, have any of these individuals filed court action, made complaints to the Public Service Commission, or asked any other Officers of the House to investigate this gross misconduct?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

MR. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question.

One of the things that we're getting confused here – and I'd like to highlight it for the people

in the public – this is a competition that happened two years ago which we have no viewpoint in and have no reason why the CEO at the time would have stopped that competition. Seventy-seven people applied for a job. That's great, it's awesome to hear, but we have no view to why the CEO stopped that at that time in 2016.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, we just heard the Premier stand up and talk about going back 25 years for RSAs. The current government has been in – this is their fifth year I'll remind him.

Are they only now looking at doing a review of these policies because they got caught in a lie?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

To refer that way to another Member is inappropriate. I ask the Member to withdraw those remarks.

MR. PARROTT: I apologize.

Mr. Speaker, the chair of the board of directors for The Rooms has spoken out about the flawed process to hire Carla Foote and the resulting damage done to the reputation of The Rooms.

Mr. Speaker, is the minister concerned that the government's gross mismanagement has permanently turned away donors and volunteers?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

MR. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, I have to correct some of the statements. The Rooms is in a very good spot with respect to a relationship with the government. We've seen expansions of 123,000 visitors coming to The Rooms, up 5 per cent over the previous year; retail sales up 15 per cent in the gift shop that's downstairs. This is impressive. There are exhibits that have been in place.

It is the cultural epicentre of our province. It's important that we support it. I know the individuals in our province support it and I'm going to continue to support The Rooms each and every way I can. I know fully how much the previous minister supported The Rooms.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, corporate sponsorship at The Rooms has dropped by over \$100,000 under the Ball government's current gross mismanagement.

Is the minister going to replace the lost revenue?

MR. SPEAKER: I remind the Member that he can't refer to Members by their name, but we'll move for an answer.

The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

MR. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, I've highlighted some of the successes that we've had at The Rooms just in this past year and many, many more over the years. We've had \$480,000 in financial contributions and previous commitments. This is impressive. We've had \$500,000 in donated materials, artifacts that The Rooms have had. This is a success story.

We have a great facility for the people in our province. Many, many residents and non-residents visit The Rooms. It's a cultural epicentre for our province. I'm proud to represent The Rooms and I'm proud that it's in our province.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Since we're talking about apologies, let's talk about some other apologies we need. Labrador's residential school survivors have now been

made to wait over two years for an apology from this province.

How much longer will the Premier and Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs delay this apology?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, this apology is very important to me and very important to Indigenous groups within Labrador. We've been working very closely with them for quite some time. They've been included in the process all along the way.

What's more important and what they continue to keep saying to me is they want to make sure it gets done right. Until we get that process that they actually all agree to – Mr. Speaker, this is coming from the direction and the input they have into this. This is not driven totally by me at all. I will be available once we determine how this process should all unfold.

Mr. Speaker, I am really looking forward to actually meeting those Indigenous groups to discuss this very important part of the history of this province that all of us, collectively, need to apologize for. I will be doing that on behalf of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, on behalf of all of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

From L'Anse-au-Clair to Nain, the 2019 ferry season in Labrador has been an unmitigated disaster.

Will the Minister of Transportation apologize to the people of Labrador for these unsuitable boats?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

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

The hon. Member needs to really put in perspective what this season has been. We've had many challenges, primarily shore based.

Mr. Speaker, right now the vessel is, I believe, in Nain en route south. The next trip – we have about a half a load to go – will be it, will be all the supplies delivered to the North. I might add, the earliest in the last number of years. We've had a great season.

I've messaged just recently with the Member for Torngat Mountains. She's going to join us in January and February on a Committee to look at this year's season and ways that we can improve going in the next season. I look forward to those meetings this coming winter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In 2015, the government campaigned on a pledge to hold an inquiry into the tragic death of Makkovik boy Burton Winters, and the family is still waiting.

I ask the Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs and Intergovernmental and Indigenous Affairs: Will he apologize for the continued delays?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

This is a very important topic. It's an inquiry that's been promised and will be delivered.

We've actually been speaking to the lawyer for the family of Burton Winters and we have promised that this will happen. What I can say is that the delay has not been just solely based on the provincial government; in fact, the lawyer for the family has indicated he's been working with us to finalize terms of reference and we're

still waiting on the federal government commitment.

What I can say is that even though the death of young Burton Winters was the catalyst, this will be involving search and rescue for the entire Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. There is work to be done, but we have committed to the inquiry and the inquiry will happen.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Third Party for a quick question.

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the government has offered various excuses for the failure to do wetland capping, alternatively blaming Environment Department to Nalcor.

Will the Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs and Intergovernmental and Indigenous Affairs apologize to the people of Labrador for the disrespect and disregard his government has shown on this issue?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, there's been a Muskrat Falls inquiry, and the information regarding wetland capping was then outlined through that process – clearly outlined. The recommendations will come forward by the end of this month, based on that inquiry that was important to all of us.

We've met with the NunatuKavut and the Innu. Nalcor has been working with them, Mr. Speaker, outlining what that process would look like in lieu of wetland capping. The results are showing right now that when you look at the level of methylmercury in the reservoir downstream, very little impact.

Clearly, right now, we'll wait until the Muskrat Falls inquiry is completed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Premier, during the election, you had a conversation with Meadows fire chief, Colin Clarke. You indicated to him that you were not aware of any improvements of the firefighting equipment and rescue vehicles. Under access to information, this was proven false. Your chief of staff, Greg Mercer, senior official, yourself and the minister met and discussed it. Greg Mercer confirmed this in a telephone call.

This meeting took place April 11, 2019. On April 12, approval letters were signed off and sent to the towns; however, a town in a certain minister's district received approval for a fire truck with no application in the system. No ranking evaluation was completed. This particular application was only received by the department April 16 by email and stated as per your request and was backdated to April 12.

I ask the Premier: How can you put safety of first responders and residents in jeopardy for your political gain?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

MR. BRAGG: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. Member opposite for his question. I'd like to remind the Member opposite and, actually, anybody watching, the responsibility of all fire departments in this province are the incorporated towns in which they lie or the local LSD under which they lie. The responsibility for fire departments falls underneath all municipal categories.

We have three great programs in this province; the budget is only \$1.8 million. We have three programs: we have the new vehicle program, we have the good used vehicle program and we have a program in which the town can get \$100,000 towards any vehicle of their choosing.

We support the fire departments as best we can. I, as the minister responsible for fire departments, would love to have a much, much, much bigger budget. Mr. Speaker, as you know, our province is in a time that we will spare out

and share out the fire trucks and fire equipment as best we possibly can in this province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LANE: Once again, Mr. Speaker, myself and the Minister of Finance voted for Muskrat Falls.

Now that we have established that government has no intention of holding any of the Nalcor executive team accountable for their part in the Muskrat Falls debacle, and are instead allowing them to simply walk away with a fistful of cash, I ask the Premier: What changes will your government be implementing to the employment contracts of future executives, not just Nalcor, but all agencies, boards, commissions and government corporations to ensure there are serious consequences for those who fail in their duties and responsibilities in these high-powered positions?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member opposite. This is a very important question.

I can say to the Member opposite that this government has done a tremendous amount to bring the Muskrat Falls Project somewhat on track, Mr. Speaker. We all know the storied history of Muskrat Falls. We have been working diligently and methodically to get that project finished.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that since 2017 there have been no changes in the schedule and no changes in the cost. So at least this government has now been able to get a control of this project, just like we're going to get control of the actual expenditures on personnel and human resources. We have been clear to the people of this province saying that we expect Treasury Board guidelines for our agencies, board and commissions. We've said it not once, but repeatedly, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

MR. SPEAKER: As required under section 51 of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, I'm pleased to table the annual report of the House of Assembly Management Commission for the 2018-19 fiscal year.

Further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I give notice that on tomorrow I'll move that in accordance with section 8(8) of the Standing Orders, the fall 2019 sitting of the House of Assembly extend beyond Thursday, December 5, 2019, until it adjourns at the call of the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

MR. FORSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Great Northern Peninsula Joint Council is concerned with the lengthy delay of the Crown Land application for their Crémaillère bay Great Northern Port project. This project has potential

for significant economic development opportunities for our communities, businesses and residents.

This application was filed in May 2017 and the environmental assessment completed May of this year, but there has been no approval on this project. The people of the Great Northern Peninsula are anxious to see the potential of this project come to fruition.

Therefore, we urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to adhere to their application approval guidelines and have the project approved immediately for the greater good and communities of the Great Northern Peninsula.

Mr. Speaker, this is an ongoing concern again regarding Crown Lands, tie-ups with applications in Crown Lands. We've heard stories from two to five years. I think all the MHAs keep getting the story two to five years before applications are approved. If that was filed two years ago, this should have been under construction by now.

The Great Northern Peninsula needs this. The Vital Signs on the Great Northern Peninsula show that they have rapid decline, they have an aging population and youth are moving out. Stimulating growth would be a great asset to this part of the region, especially on the Great Northern Peninsula.

Through Crown Lands, this can be done because it opens up opportunities for businesses and people to get to work. That's not the only one tied up with this department, apparently there's another one up on the Northern Peninsula that's still tied up and no work being done.

Mr. Speaker, the people on the Great Northern Peninsula would certainly like to see this application go through and the work started for their region.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: For a response, the hon. Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Member opposite for support of this particular project. What I will say is that the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources and the Crown Lands division has done a sweeping amount of reviews to get rid of all of the backlogs of applications that have been amassed under the previous administration.

When you look at such a project of scale, Mr. Speaker, just like when you look at bigger projects, you need to make sure that you do your due diligence. It's about getting this right so that economic development can happen and happen in a way that makes sense so that people will have jobs, that there will be business investment attraction and that we will not see things happen like the bulk logistics type of measure that was supposed to happen in Botwood.

Where is the Member opposite on matters for forestry in Central Newfoundland and Labrador and Exploits? The people of Exploits certainly need to see representation when it comes to these particular matters. These are important economic developments as well for Central Newfoundland and Labrador. I met with them, Mr. Speaker, and I certainly see where we can advance great projects for Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise on Standing Order 49. During Question Period at approximately 2:37, the Member for Conception Bay South shouted across this room: Tell the truth.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask the Member to withdraw that comment.

MR. SPEAKER: We've had points of privilege on the matter of that phrase in the past: Tell the truth. The ruling at that time was that it's not out of order to encourage someone to tell the truth.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The distinction here is that we won't accept anyone implying that someone is deliberately misleading the House. I would ask all Members to use temperate language to keep things in context. While there's no full list of words and phrases that are out of order, the context is important. So because something has been ruled not out of order at this point, in a certain context, it might be ruled that this would be a point of order.

I caution Members about using particular phrases in that manner.

Thank you.

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

MR. CROSBIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is a petition. It reads as follows:

In May 2016 in this hon. House a petition to explore recall legislation was debated in a private Member's resolution. Recall legislation is the democratic reform that enables voters to require a district by-election to take place when the Member of the House of Assembly for a district has lost the confidence of the people. Recent events indicate the need for this democratic accountability reform to be debated and considered once more in this Legislature.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to present to this House recall legislation prior to the end of the spring sitting of the House in 2020.

Mr. Speaker, this is a democratic reform and we're going to hear much more about democratic reform subsequently this afternoon in response to a private Member's resolution. I, myself, when I campaigned for the leadership of the party I now lead, the PC Party of Newfoundland and Labrador, put forward, as a useful democratic reform, the need for recall legislation.

I was consistent in that in the election campaign six or seven months ago and I remain consistent in believing that this is a useful and salutary innovation to our democratic system, and I would table the petition.

Thank you.

Orders of the Day

Private Members' Day

MR. SPEAKER: Given the time, pursuant to our Standing Orders, we're going to move to the motion.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is an honour today to rise in the House and raise my very first private Member's motion.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Windsor Lake:

WHEREAS democratic reform is an important issue facing our province; and

WHEREAS many individuals and organizations living in our province believe our democracy can and must be reformed, modernized and strengthened; and

WHEREAS the All-Party Committee on Democratic Reform, struck before the last election, has too narrow a mandate, and is not the best mechanism for achieving meaningful non-partisan democratic reform; and

WHEREAS a better approach to democratic reform would be to establish a non-partisan Select Committee on democratic reform that works on behalf of and reports directly to the House of Assembly;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House urge government to disband the All-Party Committee on Democratic Reform;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this House establish a Select Committee on democratic reform, with a mandate to review and make recommendations on: voting systems and

methods; voting age; funding of political parties; the role of third party groups in election campaigns; timing and date of elections; and other items at the committee's discretion; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that given this Select Committee needs to be, and must be seen to be non-partisan in nature, that the Select Committee consist of the following: two Members of the government, two Members of the Official Opposition, two Members of the Third Party and an independent Member, and that the chair of the Select Committee be elected from within; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the House consider how to ensure this Select Committee has the resources to conduct its work.

Mr. Speaker, I reflect back on February 25, 2019, a press release from Justice and Public Safety. On February 25, 2019, two short months before a hastily called election, we were given an All-Party Committee on Democratic Reform.

I think the best way to start this proposition is that democratic reform must be democratic. If you look at the composition of the All-Party Committee on Democratic Reform, you will note that it rests in the Department of Justice, so right off the bat, it is partisan in nature. It also has three additional Members of government, MHAs, which makes four. We then have two Official Opposition Members and one Member of the Third Party. As you can see, this is quite obviously biased on the part of the sitting government.

Our proposition is that we have two Members of each official party, and to represent the newly elected independent Members and their role in our House of Assembly as well as the important special piece that they offer, we want to see an independent Member also sit on this Committee. We would like to see the Chair elected from within that Committee. This will make it a truly democratic Committee with respect to representation on the board.

To speak briefly of the final resolution that the House consider how to ensure the Select Committee has the resources it needs to conduct its work, you will also make reference to the press release of February 25 where it has a

secretariat. It does say that the secretariat is housed in the Department of Justice and Public Safety. I would like to see that secretariat removed from Justice and Public Safety and perhaps report directly to the Committee and/or the House of Assembly as appropriate.

That Committee is to ensure that the integrity of data generation is maintained, the logistical requirements of the Committee are in place and that the Committee has access to relevant information and background materials. I would like to see the role of that secretariat be transferred over to the Select Committee we are proposing.

In addition to that, I find that if we look at the terms of reference for the All-Party Committee on Democratic Reform, we'll find that the scope and terms of reference of the Committee is very limited in nature and was, in fact, dictated by government, which, again, is not democratic. Certainly, if we want a democratic Committee, that democratically appointed Committee should democratically determine its terms of reference.

Right now, what we see in the original Committee, it has to study and consult on ways to ensure fair and accountable financial practices – so it's quite focused on its intent – and look at priorities related to democratic reform for residents, including public engagement, changing and broadening methods of votes, reducing barriers and methods to increase public access.

The Committee that we are proposing is much broader in scope and nature and, in fact, has some latitude for bringing up issues that have not been addressed in the All-Party Committee. Certainly, I would strongly suspect that if you have a broader range of individuals represented on such a Committee, you will have a broader scope of responsibilities and mandate for that Committee, which in itself is more democratic.

I would also like to point out that my party campaigned on a platform of democratic reform, and it is truly an honour to be able to stand in this House and bring forward such a motion. Certainly, anyone who's been following along on social media – and I'm sure that many of my other hon. colleagues here have also gotten numerous emails on the need for democratic

reform. The antics of the House in recent weeks may suggest that is even more problematic and we require it even more urgently now.

The reason for this private Member's motion is to improve on, or fix a problem that government made when they had a majority in the House of Assembly. In having that majority they created an All-Party Committee on Democratic Reform which was, of course, closely tied to the government. What we see is a partisan committee on democratic reform, which is, in its very self, contradictory. We also found that the terms of reference were limited in scope.

The people of the province in the last election resoundingly sent us a message by electing a minority government. They wanted to see us cooperate. They wanted to see greater accountability. They wanted to see greater transparency. They wanted to see a minority government that actually works for them. They like the idea of having a broad range of perspectives represented in the House and they want us to make a difference.

People do not want to see a minority government behaving like it has a majority and pushing through or passing only what it sees fit as democratic reform. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador want all MHAs to work together on reform. This is why we call for our Select Committee, which proposes a very different and specific non-partisan composition of that Committee.

We have seen too many incidents of government being out of touch with the public mood. This fall we saw 5,000 people, many of whom were youth, march on the Confederation Building to express their concerns about climate change. Of course, many of these young people were lower than the province's voting age. Does that mean these individuals do not have a right to say who they want representing them, who they want to run the province?

We believe that we ought to consider lowering the voting age to allow for these individuals to have a say in their futures, because far too often we have seen government transferring its responsibilities in terms of debt, in terms of policies and in terms of our environment. We are

seeing that transferred to our younger generations and that is inappropriate.

For example, I'd like to point out that a former Liberal premier, who was rewarded by this government with the position as chair of the C-NLOPB, not only did not respect the views of these young people, but actually warned executives by saying – and I quote – better watch out for those people. We should not be wary of our young people. We should lower the voting age and allow them to have a say in their future, especially when we are passing our responsibilities on to their lives.

Young people are regularly showing up – that we need more public engagement, like in the structure and operation of our political system. They are not the differential people we may have seen or assumed in the past.

The tendency to challenge authority and call out bad governments has been growing around the world, in part because of higher literacy and education levels and in part because of the growth of social media, which has created a long-overdue political discussion and civic engagement. I look forward to more of that.

Society has changed. Let's talk about proportional representation. Support for proportional representation has increased dramatically across the country.

In a recent poll, 62 per cent of Atlantic Canadians said they would prefer a new system of proportional representation over the current first-past-the-post system. That is an 18 per cent increase since 2016, three short years ago, when only 44 per cent of Atlantic Canadians supported a new system. Perhaps they see the need for democratic reform so we don't find ourselves in situations such as these. This increase in support has been seen across all regions, all income levels, education levels, party preference, age and gender, leaving even more credence to the need for truly democratic reform.

Why have we suggested a House of Assembly Select Committee instead of an all-party committee? While our all-party Committee is a legitimate Committee, it is controlled by government rather than by the House of Assembly, so it rests with a department. It is not

responsive to all Members of the House of Assembly and, truly, we are all responsible for democratic reform.

Any Committee set up to look at democratic reform should come out of the most democratic processes we have in the House of Assembly, which is the Standing and Select Committee structure. An all-party Committee of the House is struck by the House and will report directly to the House. It is covered by the rules for Standing Committees; it can hold public hearings and briefings and call experts to testify.

This is a powerful Committee with a wide-ranging set of powers and, I think in this circumstance, this is the most appropriate use of such a Committee. This Select Committee we have proposed will take the partisanship out of democratic reform processes and make it answerable to the House – all of us here in the House. This is why we are proposing the non-partisan structure.

We also propose that our Select Committee would have considered a wider range of topics. In addition to voting age, our Select Committee would concentrate on voting systems and methods, funding of political parties, the role of third party groups in campaigns, the timing and date of elections – and I will point out that we do have a fixed election date, although we do not abide by it, which, of course, is why we have our minority government. So that seems to have worked out okay, well, in our favour, but not necessarily everyone's it seems – as well as other topics of interest to the Select Committee such as how municipal governments in our province can also be made more democratic.

For additional information there, we can look at the report of the Citizens' Assembly for Stronger Elections. I have had numerous municipal councillors reach out to me and suggest that this too be considered.

Financing; the emphasis of the all-party Committee was clearly on financial reform. Our proposed Select Committee will also address this. However, we need stronger regulations, more transparency in political party activities and a fair electoral arena for people of all incomes. We know that other provinces have more restrictions than we do.

A particular flaming that I will point out is there is relatively little accountability in terms of how district associations finance or maintain their finances. So that might be something we want to consider as well.

I would also like to point out that the Newfoundland and Labrador New Democratic Party, our platform in 2019, committed to ending corporate and union donations and capping individual donations at reasonable levels. Citizens are increasingly cynical that corporations have a bigger voice in our democracy than ordinary voters.

So that basically means they have bigger buying power for their political will. They see big-money dinners like the one the governing party recently held with corporate donations and donors and cash-for-access events behind closed doors where corporations and others get the ear of elected officials.

Major positive changes have been successful at the federal level in taking corporate money out of politics and placing size limits on donations. Parties have successively adapted to these new paradigms.

We need to address these issues as well: a new and improved method of robust public funding is needed to ensure a level playing field for all our political parties, and there are numerous systems across Canada and at the federal level that a new Committee can draw on for insight.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the ensuing debate on this and a passing of this motion.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

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

I appreciate the opportunity to rise this afternoon and speak about the PMR that's been brought in by the Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the PMR itself and the words that are in it, there are some words that stand out very quickly. I was getting

ready earlier today to write some remarks, but I think really what you only need to do is highlight some words in the PMR itself.

Words like important, which absolutely, when you think about democratic reform, democracies are ever-evolving. From time to time you need to take a step back and take a snapshot to see what we can do to change democracies and the way we operate them, and modernize, strengthen and actually reform. Mr. Speaker, that's very important.

The Member opposite says non-partisan, but the reality is when it's elected politicians sitting on a Committee, there is partisanship. It's multi-partisan, and I understand the structure of today's Legislature and how that would have changed.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to the beginning of this Committee. I sat on it, along with some other Members here in this House. Even though we didn't get to where we tried to go, there's been a tremendous amount of work already done by the Department of Justice and by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety. So I want to thank the Department of Justice for the work that's already been done. It's been done behind the scenes; there are multiple binders of work that has been done, that has been completed and I think would transition well into a new Committee, not work that we would have to redo.

The Member opposite referred to a secretariat. Actually, what we've done is we ran this Committee to date on a budget of zero because we used resources that were available at the Department of Justice and staff that were available through Justice. We will have to continue a conversation with the Department of Justice if we decide today to go down the way that we are suggesting. Again, there is work that has been done. I would support transferring that work into any new structures. We certainly wouldn't want to duplicate that.

We talk about voting systems – absolutely. If you think about the way we vote today and changes that have been made and how times have changed and access to voting. If you look at the recent federal election with advance polling, with voting, special ballots, we've

offered up a lot of new ways to vote, and there are ways to do this. In our party's 2014 – thinking back, I think it was 2014 – leadership, we actually used an electronic voting system. It was vote by phone with an ID, and it worked out. It worked fine. It's complicated. There are many layers. There are certainly a lot of layers here for how you would change a voting system.

Voting age; as a person that first got involved in politics at a young age, always been, I guess, a political watcher and somebody who enjoyed politics, absolutely, I've always encouraged my own –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. CROCKER: Absolutely.

I've always encouraged my children to take part. My youngest son actually just had his first opportunity to vote this fall.

AN HON. MEMBER: Who did he vote for?

MR. CROCKER: Well, I say to the Member – I'm going to go off on a tangent for a second. The Member said: Who did he vote for? Ironically, I didn't try overly to influence who my children would vote for. Actually, my youngest son did espouse some leanings towards a certain federal leader. Unfortunately, I can assure you it wasn't Mr. Scheer. But I would never influence my children any more than I would try to influence any voter when I knock on their door to support me or to support a political party.

I think it's something that young people should be involved in at a very early age. I think the education system has been doing a great job over the last number of years by having polling days in schools right down to elementary schools. I think it's fundamental that we teach children at a very early age to be able to make those decisions.

The Member opposite actually referenced some of the youth movement we're seeing around the world today and the Friday strikes. If we're not careful, or if we're not protective, or if we're not responsive, these young people – who will become the leaders of tomorrow – will become even I guess not careful (inaudible) I love to see

young people involved, but they're getting involved. I think we have to show a respect for that, and we have to make sure that young people continue to be involved.

I hear the Premier quite often refer to his Youth Council. One of the Premier's commitments in 2015 before forming government was a Premier's Youth Council. I can tell you that group meets in person once or twice a year. Young people, young women and young men from all across this province. They sit down with the Premier of the province for one day at a time, and the Premier takes his time and sits down and listens. I can tell you the involvement of young people in politics needs to be strengthened. Anything we can do to encourage more young people is something we should certainly be doing.

The Member referenced restructuring of district associations. I think that is absolutely something that needs to be looked at. I spent a lot of time personally involved in federal riding associations, and I'm not sure we need to go exactly all the way to some of the work that's there, because there are reasonable costs associated with this. But I think there is work to be done in how that's contemplated in the future, how leadership contests are contemplated in the future. There are lots of building blocks here of how we go forward with democratic reform.

The Member opposite referenced a Select Committee versus a Standing Committee, so I actually took some time to do some research. Since 1998, this House of Assembly has had six Select Committees. Only one of those Select Committees in 1999 was a Select Committee on the Standing Orders and that has been the only Select Committee of this House that has not had a majority of government Members on it.

That Committee back in 1999 consisted of three Members from what would have been the Official Opposition at that time, which would have been the Progressive Conservative Party, three Members from the government of the day, the Liberal Party and one Member from the NDP. The seven Members of that Committee back in 1999 were the only time that we've seen a Select Committee actually comprised of the majority not being on the government side.

Mr. Speaker, that being said, we have to be open to ways of doing this. One of the things from the previous Committee was reference to consensus. I think a Committee like this needs to be built around consensus. We're all mature enough to be in here. We need to make sure that as we do this we put the proper lenses on it.

If you think about democratic reform committees across the country I haven't seen a lot of success, I'm going to be honest. Not that we can't be successful, but I haven't seen a tremendous amount of success when it comes to democratic reform because, in lots of cases, changing a system and trying to get seven people or eight people to agree is tough. It's really tough, especially when you have such a broad range of issues.

I think it's important to actually pick off issues on a case-by-case basis in a lot of ways. It probably can't be a full package. I think there are things that we as Liberals would agree with Progressive Conservatives on, things that we would agree with New Democrats on and things that we would agree with an independent on.

I think, Mr. Speaker, if you look at Parliaments around the world, our Parliament is evolving to catch up, I think, to some of the other Parliaments. If you look at Canada as an example, we're seeing multiple minority governments. I don't think that's a fad, I think that's a trend. I think we're going to see more of it. I think we'll continue to see more elected independent Members. We have to make sure that voice is represented as well.

I know on Monday past we met as the Standing Order Committee. One of the things that we discussed on Monday was how we bring independent Members more into our Committees. I just reflect on the Estimates Committee and I know the independent Members opposite can come to Estimates and have been given opportunity to ask questions by the parties asking questions or by the government. I think that's important because, at the end of the day, we have to adjust to that. We have to adjust to more changes, more minority governments and how we get there is not going to be easy.

Who actually would fund this Committee and how we would do it, maybe we have to look at: Is there a role for political parties in funding this? Maybe it's something we can explore. Is there a role that instead of having a department or the House of Assembly, is there a method of cost sharing how we do this with political parties amongst a system to actually get to where we need to be?

The Member opposite referenced the ideas around donations. I firmly believe that we can certainly look at caps in donations. I've seen failures in other systems of voter subsidies, per vote subsidies work in some areas. I'm certainly not suggesting that as one for us. But again, just to come back – and I'm not sure how we would even bring in less partisanship because we are partisans in here, without a doubt. How do we bring in expertise from outside? What weight is given from that expertise?

There's certainly a lot to be considered here. How we get to a gender equity in these places, that has to be focus of how we get there and how we bring more diverse communities into these places.

So there is certainly a lot here that we're going to discuss this afternoon. I'm looking forward to listening to the debate. I know we've had a lot of discussion this week on this side about this PMR. I'm going into my sixth year and I think this is, again, one of those PMRS that there's been a lot of conversation around. When a PMR itself causes conversation amongst caucuses, I think it's always a good thing that we take that time to reflect.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to taking some time this afternoon to listen to what's being said here in the House regarding this private Member's motion. Again, I thank the Member opposite for suggesting this opportunity for us to possibly look at doing this Select Committee in a different manner.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Bennett): The hon. the Leader of the Opposition Party.

MR. CROSBIE: Thank you.

The Leader of the Third Party mentioned in her remarks to the motion, the taking of partisanship out of democratic reform. The hon. minister addressed the proposition that it's not entirely possible in a Chamber of this nature, which fundamentally is based on partisanship; however, there are degrees.

It was in the spirit of lack of partisanship that I agreed with the Leader of the Third Party to second this PMR. Also, I might add, a form of collaboration, which the Members of the government on that side might take note of. Yes, we are capable of collaborating.

In their 2015 red book on policy reform, the Liberals did make reform of democracy a priority. The first section in the policy book was titled: Restoring Openness, Transparency and Accountability. It included such things as a commitment "to take politics out of government appointments."

It included policy 1.4.2 of the 2015 red book: "A New Liberal Government will form an all-party committee on democratic reform. This committee will consult extensively with the public to gather perspectives on democracy in Newfoundland and Labrador, and make recommendations for ways to improve. The committee will consider a number of options to improve democracy, such as changing or broadening methods of voting to increase participation in elections, reforming campaign finance laws to cover leadership contests, and requiring provincial parties to report their finances on a bi-annual basis."

The responsibility for leading the fulfillment of this policy was assigned to the former Government House Leader, whose mandate letter included bringing a resolution to the House of Assembly to establish an all-party committee on democratic reform.

From November 2015 until May 30, 2018, that policy pledge was ignored. Finally, on Wednesday, May 30, 2018, a Private Members' Day, the former Government House Leader asked for unanimous leave to debate a government resolution instead of a private Member's resolution, and leave was granted.

The resolution read: "BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Assembly urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to establish an all-party Select Committee on Democratic reform." The term select committee generally refers to a Select Committee of the House. So the Official Opposition brought an amendment for the resolution to read: "BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Assembly establish an all-party Select Committee on Democratic Reform."

Given that the subject matter was democratic reform and should not be dominated by one party or government, the Opposition felt it was more appropriate to have a true Select Committee led by the House and not by a particular party in government. We understood that the independent MHA also planned to bring forward his own amendment to ensure his own involvement as a voting Member of the Committee.

Ironically, when the Government House Leader spoke to the resolution, he said he wanted to move swiftly. "What I'm ultimately hoping for is two things: (a) that this House will support unanimously our resolution to have an all-party select committee on democratic reform – that's the first thing that I want – and the second part is I look forward to moving quickly into having the committee, the panel, the makeup of the committee, the mandate established as quickly as possible so that we can move forward having these discussions."

Instead of bringing the motion to a vote, the former Government House Leader adjourned the House without a vote. Since the motion was not technically a private Member's resolution, it could have been called for further debate and a vote the next day, May 31, the last day of the spring sitting. There was already notice on the books of a motion that the House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on that last day, but the former Government House Leader did not call a motion for a vote. Instead, the House was adjourned on May 31 for the rest of the summer, with no motion passed.

This is also ironic because when he brought the resolution forward on May 30, the former Government House Leader asked reporters to tell their former colleague, *Telegram* reporter James McLeod, that he had done what he

promised in bringing forward the resolution despite McLeod's belief that he would not deliver.

After the Government House Leader cancelled the vote, James McLeod issued some scathing tweets saying: "Like, if you're going to do a touchdown dance, make sure you're in the end zone This sort of crap is why people are so cynical about politics So the Liberals get elected, and then they proceed to drag their feet FOR TWO AND A HALF YEARS while" the Government House Leader "claimed he was simply too busy to even start the process of striking a committee to study the issue."

This is still a quote from Mr. McLeod and his tweets: "And of course they'd be slow, because the Liberals were now in government and benefiting from those lax political financing rules, with all sorts of lobbying groups making donations in exchange for who knows what?... It's badly needed. The **political financing laws are laughably weak** and many other aspects of NL democracy are deeply lacking, as the Liberals have acknowledged." I add that none of this is really in contest.

This is back to Mr. McLeod: "So now the **Liberals have done literally the absolute** bare minimum, while failing to address a serious problem when it's in their own self interest to maintain the broken status quo." Now, the Government House Leader is on here blaming the Opposition for all this, while they've been yelling for two years about him dragging his feet. That's the end of the quote from Mr. McLeod.

Months later, in October 2018, debate on the motion resumed. A vote was called on the Opposition amendment on October 25, 2018. The amendment was defeated. PC, NDP and independent Members voted in favour of the amendment to make the Committee a true independent Select Committee of the House. Liberal government Members voted against the amendment in order to ensure the government retained control of the Committee.

About a month later, on November 20, 2018, the main motion was finally brought for a vote. Opposition Members felt it was better to have a government-led Committee than no Committee

at all, so support for the motion was unanimous. Even though these were the dying days of the four-year term, high expectations were created about what the Committee would achieve.

The Committee has proven to be very ineffective. It has even been called together since a meeting in June of this year. We even had plans such as – I believe there was a consensus around the calling of the editors of *The Democracy Cookbook* to give evidence to the Committee. Nothing happened.

It's time to get serious about democratic reform and take the lead out of the hands of the governing party, particularly when we have a minority government in office, which seems focused on survival to the exclusion of all else. One of the options we proposed was to have independent authorities appointed from outside government to chair the government's Committee. That was one option. It could still be considered as an option by the Committee, which is subject to the present resolution.

The alternative option is to return to the proposal we made in the spring of 2018 to create a truly independent, multi-partisan Select Committee of the House to take the lead on this. That's the purpose of today's resolution. Let's get moving.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Mount Scio.

MS. STOODLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm very pleased to stand today in support of this motion. I'm a Member of the Committee. We've had one meeting since I was elected, I believe. I was eager to get involved and so I asked to be on the Committee. I was very excited about that.

I, firstly, wanted to thank the Committee and the staff supporting the Committee, because I think the Committee has done an amazing job so far. There's a significant amount of research that was done. We did have one meeting this summer, but we spent a significant amount of time working with the staff on what would be a public engagement survey. That survey is almost

final and was ready to come to the Committee imminently. I'm hoping that the new committee can pick that up, dust it off and reuse that.

I just want to thank the Committee and the Department of Justice and Public Safety staff for all of their hard work. I had been working with them on this since I was elected in June. Part of that work was looking at, as the hon. Member mentioned, *The Democracy Cookbook*, which I have to shout out was edited by my master's thesis supervisor, Professor Marland – apologies if I should not have said his name.

In preparing for the Committee, I had reviewed that in depth so I'm going to speak to some of that today. I'd like to talk about some of the areas I think that are of particular importance and relevant to *The Democracy Cookbook* copy. I'd also like to shout out to Councillor Ian Froude who has joined us in the gallery today. We had talked about democratic reform and he had lent me his book – one of his favourite books on democratic reform, so thank you.

In terms of the different areas of democratic reform that I think part of the Committee had looked at – and I recommend the future Committee review as well – one would be around how to encourage citizen engagement. In *The Democracy Cookbook* on page 60, David Cochrane talks about “Patriotic Correctness in Newfoundland and Labrador.” We need to get society to participate outside the Legislature and open line. I welcome the Committee to review that particular item.

When I had been preparing for the democratic reform Committee I had been looking at – the United Nations has developed an e-participation index, where they rank countries globally in terms of how well they facilitate online citizen engagement in their democracy. This looks at how well governments provide online information, online consultation and online decision-making. Canada ranks 27th in the world in terms of their e-participation index on democratic reform and so I think, obviously, there's room for improvement. Denmark and Finland rank first. I looked to them for inspiration, formerly, for the Committee.

The next area I'd like to touch on is that – and we had reviewed this at the Committee as well –

other provinces have had referendums on voting systems, but the referendums were not successful. In PEI and BC this was the case. I'd like to highlight from *The Democracy Cookbook*, Mr. Jared Wesley. His article is about “four province-wide referendums have been held on electoral reform,” none of them came to fruition. That's from Mr. Jared Wesley.

One area of particular importance to myself is around how do we get more women in politics? How do we have more women in this Legislature? From my perspective as a women, but I think also in terms of diversity overall, how do we improve the diversity of candidates we have and the diversity of candidates who get elected?

Many of the articles in *The Democracy Cookbook* refer to that. I'd just like to highlight a few of those. The “Disability and Civic Engagement in Newfoundland and Labrador” article was written by Aleksandra Stefanovic-Chafe. She talks about increasing representation of people with disabilities and very excellent ideas of how to do that. I'd also like to highlight an article by Nancy Peckford and Raylene Lang-Dion: “Electing Women to the House of Assembly.” They talk about how to create a system that better increases women's representation.

I'd also like to highlight that the department of political science at Memorial University, their Gender and Politics Lab, recently had an evening session – I was very pleased that I attended – on women who fought and lost. There was a panel of local women who had run for political roles who were not successful, and that provided really good opportunity to discuss how we can get more women involved in politics. One of the things we talked about was political funding. We know that women currently are not supporting women as much as men are supporting women. I would challenge anyone listening today, any women in the House, to support other women who are running.

Myself, when I was running, Mr. Speaker, I was thinking about how much money I'd need. I was going through a list of all the people in my head that I could potentially ask. In my head, there were many senior women leaders I thought would potentially contribute to my campaign.

When it came time to run and ask, I had my campaign opening and I was surprised how many men had shown up with cheques in hand. I was very impressed and very honoured. Some men I had never met before were there ready to support my campaign.

I did have some support from senior women but, overall, I was disappointed. I didn't get the same kind of support from some of the women that I was expecting, when I had men coming out of the woodwork to give me support. I would suggest that women support other women.

Also, we know that's because women, in a lot of cases, deal with other systemic barriers. They're dealing with child care and they're taking care of their parents and families at home. Women have a range of challenges, I know, to get involved in politics and to contribute financially. I think a lot of times women just aren't in the habit and they don't think of themselves as political donors, but I would encourage any women listening and anyone to encourage their women friends to support other women.

The next area I'd like to refer to is around electronic voting. In my background, I've run online systems and so I can understand and appreciate how complex this would be, especially given how you have to get it right. There's no room to get it wrong essentially. I think it's interesting to consider electronic voting, how that could work should we have it.

Obviously, our current system isn't perfect, our paper, in-person system, but I would challenge the future Committee to look at electronic voting. I'd like to refer to one of the articles in *The Democracy Cookbook* by Peter Trnka. Peter talks about virtual democracy and how we can enable one-way communications and two-way communications with electronic voting. I'd encourage listeners to refer to that.

I would also like to talk about a few other areas that I would suggest the Committee look at. The community sector would be one. In *The Democracy Cookbook*, many of the researchers and contributors talked about how important the community sector is and the community sector's role in democracy.

An example of that: "Helping Rural Newfoundland and Labrador Flourish through Social Enterprise" by Natalie Slawinski. Natalie talked about how we should support social enterprises in rural Newfoundland to help increase democracy and reviewing the model of economic development in regions that would help participation in democratic reform.

I would also like to highlight one more example – I just have to find my number. I can't find number one. Okay, I won't have that example.

Then, Mr. Speaker, the next is improving civic education in our schools and for the general population. We know there are social studies courses, civics courses, but I think generally there is room for improvement in terms of the civic education of our students, our adults and our seniors and understanding how our system works and how we contribute to it, regardless of whether we keep the system as is or we have a new system.

There were authors in *The Democracy Cookbook* that referred to the importance of civic education. I'd like to highlight a few of those. Mr. Scott Matthews talked about: "Towards a Poll-Savvy Citizenry" improving citizen education of polls. I think that's very important to help our discerning residents and constituents in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I'd like to highlight Raymond Blake, who talks about increasing civic education in schools in their article: "Literacy, Democratic Governance, and Political Citizenship."

I would also like to mention Mr. John Hoben, who in his article: "Educating Tomorrow's Citizens ..." talks about increasing civic education in schools as well, and how do we engage students in the province to help us solve our democratic problems.

Mr. Speaker, the other item I will mention is – I just have to find it.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MS. STOODLEY: Thank you, Minister.

One of my constituents contributed to this report. I'm sure there could have been more, but

one that I'm aware of. Mr. Robert Thompson, former clerk of the Executive Council, has an article: "The Role of Public Service Executives."

Mr. Thompson speaks about increasing transparency of senior public service executives and increasing the transparency of the norms they operate by. I think that's relevant to the discussion we had this morning as well and will continue to have tomorrow, the norms that the senior public service operate by and how do we increase the transparency and openness of those norms.

Mr. Speaker, a final thought I have throughout this is, how do we pay for all this? I understand we don't have lots of money. Even as the Committee, the meeting we had, we talked about, how much should we pay to have engagement? We could have every kind of option for engaging residents in Newfoundland and Labrador. How much should we invest in getting that from them? I don't have the answer to that.

It's a difficult question because, obviously, if we invest millions of dollars in democratic reform or in the investigation of this, that's money we don't put into education or health care. So how much will the taxpayers – how much would they like us to invest in this? That's a question I think that the Committee will have to answer. Then, where does that money come from? I think that's a very important part.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank, again, the Committee. I would like to thank the staff of the Department of Justice and Public Safety for all of their hard work, research and dedication on the Committee work.

I would like to conclude with a quote from my former thesis supervisor, Dr. Marland, on page 38 of *The Democracy Cookbook*. Mr. Marland says: "At the simplest level, a democratic system of government involves little more than the following: non-violent elections, a legitimate choice of options, citizens having the ability to determine who should be in power, and voters electing people to represent them in a legislature."

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to say that I'll be supporting the motion today.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Speaker recognizes the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

MR. P. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to stand and speak on this resolution. I have to say, when I first was elected after working so many years in the West Block over there, coming over here, the first time coming into the House of Assembly, I never had any desire or need to be over previously, other than for Estimates. I'm on the other side of Estimates now.

Coming over here, I sat here and I was really amazed – not in a good way, I was really amazed. You're raised to listen when others talk, but it seems the reverse here. You talk while someone else is talking; but, anyway, that seems to be the nature of it here. So that has amazed me. There are other things that have happened that have amazed me as well. You get used to it; hopefully, not tainted by it.

That just highlights our need for democratic reform. I ran to be elected, to work for and help the citizens of Topsail - Paradise, like all of us have run to represent the citizens of our districts. You want to do that in the most effective and efficient way.

We always hear other countries talking about how it would be nice to be in a democratic environment. I think we have to think about democracy. It's not static. Democracy is ever evolving and you call that democratic reform. Democratic reform is simply changes to make us more democratic. It's as simple as that.

Some of the reforms that took place over many years – think about it, there was a time when women could not vote – imagine. To us now, we look back and say how could that ever be.

MS. P. PARSONS: They were not considered persons.

MR. P. DINN: The Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave: They were not considered persons.

AN HON. MEMBER: They are now.

MR. P. DINN: Yes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DINN: I can tell you from our Members' statements, myself and this chap from St. John's Centre, the biggest influence on us has been our mother, there's no doubt about it. I'm just saying, think about it: 1916 was the first time a woman was able to vote in Canada in the western provinces.

Then Quebec, I think, was the last one around 1940.

AN HON. MEMBER: It was the mid-1920s here.

MR. P. DINN: Yes, well, you were born then, I wasn't. So I can't comment on that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DINN: I wasn't even thought of.

The simple things, things we think of as being so simple, like freedom of speech, the freedom to vote, the rights of women, religious freedoms, they at one time were democratic reforms.

I don't want to go on about the Committee that we have in place, but I will touch on it. The Minister of Transportation and Works, who sits on that Committee – and that Committee eventually got off the ground. We're still flying pretty low; we haven't hit any heights in terms of that. We've had a couple of meetings.

There has been quite a bit of work done in terms of compiling information and data, there's no doubt about that, but we really need to have some mechanism in place, some process in place, some Committee in place that is dedicated, driven and will meet on a regular basis and try and move this through.

I'm not going to talk about what I think some of these reforms should be because that would be the business of the Committee that's established or the Select Committee, but there are many, many items out there that we could be considering.

When I was looking at democratic reform, I went online –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. P. DINN: No, that's another reform. We can actually google stuff now and go on and get it.

This talked about 11 pros and cons, this article I have. Keep in mind, it's talking about 11 pros and cons, and we're part of a representative democracy, where essentially people elect us to represent them in the House. So we're part of a representative democracy.

I'm going to read – these are the pros, believe it or not. List of pros for democracy: "It is efficient." That's a pro. Now, I can say in this House and it's no reflection on any side because it's been happening for many years, my definition of efficiency is probably a little different in what happens in the House. We do get involved in a lot of debate and we do get off track with things that are taking away from us doing our real work. The Minister of Tourism is agreeing with me over there. I see him shaking his head: yes, yes, yes.

When I look at a pro of this as being efficient, I think we can do better. So this goes back to our democratic reform. We need to do more to make what happens in this House more efficient, more effective.

Another pro: "It can come up with a well-balanced decision." We've talked about collaboration a lot in this House, especially under a minority government. I'm not always sure we come up with a well-balanced decision. I think taking the partisanship out of politics, which is not an easy thing to do, we probably can come up with an even more balanced decision-making.

"It lets the people elect their officials." I can't argue that, it does, but, again, there are some underlying issues there. Is it the one with the most sponsorships, donations? Is it the one who has the most signs on the lawn? All these come into play when you're trying to reform democracy.

“It ensures better citizen representation.’ Again, listed as a pro, and in a way it does. A lot of it falls down on the district Members, the elected officials. Are they, once elected, standing up for everyone in their district? I would hope they are. Again, we need to look at ways of reforming that.

“It makes it easier” – this is, again, a pro of a representative democracy – “for the government to address problems.” Again, I don’t know about that even. It probably does in relation to more archaic forms of democracy, but, again, areas for reform there.

“It encourages participation.” Now, the Member for Mount Scio spoke about women and getting more women involved, and I did attend the same session she did that was put off with the Gender and Politics Lab at MUN. Encouraging participation, I think there’s work that needs to be done there, because we need to encourage more participation, not just of women. There are women and men out there who I look at and I say, as a friend – they look at you and say, as a friend, I say to them: You’d be good in politics or be good out there representing the people.

We need to give politics a better name. People look at politics as being something to shy away from, but really, truly, politics is working for the people of your district. That’s what you’re doing. There are some good people who always say, well, I don’t know if I can go in there; I don’t know if I have a tough enough skin for it; I don’t know if I have the money for it; I don’t know if I’m going to have people to help me do it or put down signs. There are many things that deter people from participating, so we can make inroads there.

Those were the pros, believe it or not, from this article. I’ll go to the list of cons that relate to representative democracy. “It is misplaced trust.” That’s what they list as a con. So we run to be elected, and people are entrusting in us our ability to speak up for them. I always said when I was on the town council, I didn’t care if one person came to me or 500, you needed to do or give the same time and effort to either. No matter who they were, what their social standing is, whether they’re coming in with something that’s totally outrageous. If you respect the people and work for them, you gain their trust,

but there is a con that they’re saying is misplaced trust is something we need to look at. That’s a con. It allows representatives to end up not serving their jurisdiction.

Our Member from Torngat this morning spoke very well on that. I don’t get re-elected or elected because of the party. They’re great, a great bunch of people I know, on all sides. A great bunch of people to hang around with, discuss policy, talk about legislation, see what you’re going to do best for you. But at the end of the day, it’s the constituents in your districts that you’re there to represent.

Now, sometimes, of course, you know you have to toe the party line on something. Is it the sword you want to die on? But at the end of the day, you were voted by the people of your district to represent them and support them in the best way you can. Sometimes we get dragged out of that, and we have to keep that in mind. So that’s a con of representative democracy. It can encourage representatives to be deceptive.

In our Blue Book, when we ran, some of the things we talked about in that – and it’s pretty straightforward stuff when you think about it – trying to be honest and accountable. It’s not always the easiest thing to do, but in our Blue Book we spoke about honest leadership, honest government, effective, inclusive and responsive government.

We asked for a democracy watch. We asked for honesty in politics and recall laws, and it goes on and on. All wonderful stuff, but we have to reform democracy. We really have to start working towards putting that back in there. According to these pros and cons, it’s in there.

We should be representing our constituency in an honest, open and accountable way, but somehow we’ve – not we here, but over the long run we’ve gone off track on that. So I think we need to bring that back. I think all of us here in this House, if we stuck to our core values of honesty, integrity, trying to do the right thing – you may not always agree – I think that’s somewhere we have to go with reforming democracy.

The other thing here it talks about is – a con, now, it’s for the majority. That’s no truer than

here when we talk about the composition of this Committee, this Standing Committee. Regardless of who you have on that Committee, you end up with the majority rules; especially if it's more of one party and less of the other. But I would hope that we would be able to have a Committee that sits down and takes into consideration everyone's views.

The Minister of Transportation and Works talked about consensus, and consensus is not always easy to get in these Committees, but it may be something you need to address in these Committees. Maybe you need to aim at where everyone is in agreement when it comes to electoral or democracy reform.

The last con – and, again, I guess you can go on with a whole list of pros and cons for representative democracy, but the last con talks about: it does not hold elected officials accountable. It's unfortunate, because we talked – a few things that have been happening in the House the last couple of days or the last number of weeks, it could be any one of us at any time.

I would hope – I would have said it when my mother was here, too. I would hope I wouldn't be caught up in that, but you never know what happens. The Finance Minister made a comment last week, he knew exactly when it came out of his mouth it wasn't the right thing to say, and he responded with an apology. That's the things we need to do.

I like what we see here in this resolution. I don't know what we're going to do with it, other than we need to come up with solutions, get this Committee up and running and really have a set schedule that we can abide by and come up with some real, real reforms.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Speaker recognizes the Member for St. John's Centre.

MR. J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's interesting, there's a little secret – before the most recent election, I helped with the candidate for Windsor, the NDP candidate, Kerri Claire Neil's campaign. I had also worked on – when my brother, the Member for Topsail - Paradise

was running, I helped there. I can't say I did that in the last election. It was all about me in the last election, but in many ways I had people who were the furthest removed from NDP helping me out, because in many cases we vote for the person and we work for the person.

I'll be honest with you, while we might be red, orange or blue, it doesn't really make a difference because there are overlaps. There are certain values that we all – we all have mothers. We all know the value of family, and in many ways we're going to find those commonalities.

So there is a level there when we talk about politics, about what politics is about because there is a partisanship when it's about the team. I always try to look at this when I got elected in terms of – I remember going up to this one house and they had PC signs on the lawn. They said: You did see the sign, didn't you? I said: Yes, it doesn't make any difference because if I get elected – well, I said once I get elected, I'll be representing you as well.

We offer a vision, but in the end, we have to represent all people within the district and within the province. It's interesting going around door to door because it's one of the best examples of professional development you'll ever have, because you get inside homes that you would never get into.

I've been told by one person: you're all liars. I said, well, the positive about that is this gentleman won't be voting for anyone. I don't vote, I'm not interested in politics. All of those comments, at least I could say: well, I don't have to worry about my fellow candidates getting their votes because they're not voting at all. They're totally disinterested, disenfranchised.

Even when I was with the NLTA and people would say, who is running against you? I'd say, no, we're not running so much against as we're running for something. I have to keep it that way. Here's the vision – not worrying about what the other person is doing, worry about the vision you're offering. But it's clear that an awful lot of people are turned off government, and I'm talking about all parties can be elected with maybe roughly half the people voting. There's something wrong with that.

To paraphrase a line from Martin Luther King's speech: I Have A Dream, it's sad when people feel they have "nothing for which to vote." I think the part of this Committee, what we're looking at here, is to make sure that those who feel they have no reason to vote, who think all politicians are liars, who don't vote, who are not interested, have a reason to vote.

It's a struggle, I can tell you, to get people to engage, to participate and to vote; yet we know in other countries people die for that right, just to get to the polling station.

When people would say to me: I have no interest in politics. I'd often say to them: Yes, that's great, but always remember politics will always have an interest in you – always.

So we're here making decisions. Whether the people are interested in what we're doing or not, we're making decisions that will affect their lives. I really do believe that somehow we have to find a way that people have that say. I don't care who they vote for, as long as you get out to vote. I would drive someone to a poll, even if I knew they were voting against me, or voting for someone else, I should say.

Politics has to be more about the truth and less about power. I think that's where this is coming from here, because it has changed. All you have to look at is any organization around and what you'll see is an organizational – whether it's service groups or whatever else, you'll see an awful lot of grey-haired people. Younger people are not replacing them, yet we saw at the climate march roughly 5,000 people show up of all ages. That's what we're after, that dynamic.

I know this is probably going to have a cost associated, but, then again, nothing that was ever worthwhile doing didn't have a cost; it always has a cost. We put our money on something we value. So this, to get it right, to make sure that we bring people in to get involved and to have a say in what we're doing – and more than just on social media – to me that's engagement, when they get up: I'm going to vote.

This is the other thing. It has to be more than just – as good as the engageNL website is it has to be more than that. It has to be more than clicking a mouse to get your views there. It has

to be more than that because not everyone is engaged that way. We're going to have to do this right. We can do it quick or we can do it right.

Society has changed. It's been transformed by social media. My colleague to the left will tell you as a former school principal, social media, the cellphone has created more problems. It's been a benefit, but it's created significant problems in terms of bullying, cyberbullying and so on and so forth. We know it's changed. We have to address that.

Look down to the south, our neighbours to the south of us, and you can see polarized and partisan – not just partisan, it's polarized where you can't even have a conversation. As I said here, I can envision many of us here going out for a drink after and having a chat. I just can't see it in our colleagues to the south where the emotions are so raw. Again, that's what we're after here.

We look at the Select Committee, and it has to be more than about finances as well. I do believe – and I would like to see this discussed – per-vote subsidy because in the end, I like to believe that every party here is owned by the citizens of this province, not to the donors. Whether they're wealthy individuals, capitalists or unions, it doesn't make any difference. In other words, we have to make sure that the people have ownership of this Assembly here.

No doubt about it – and I'm sure many of you can recount similar stories – a lot of people are feeling disenfranchised, and that's the question. How do we get them to be engaged and to feel that they have a say, that they have a reason to vote?

The Committee, in the approach that we took, was meant to mitigate against partisanship, and partisanship, like I said, is not a bad word in many ways, because we're going to offer a vision; we're going to come at things from a different approach.

I can tell you that in my previous life, I never played to the extremes. You always had to find a way to bring everyone ahead. You always had to find something that, not just to say nothing, but you had to move the organization, but how do

you do that? You have to find a way to bring people at the extreme ends to agree with what you're saying, that we're going to move forward. It's always about moving forward.

First past the post is not moving forward. Put it this way, when the two people who are not successful have more votes in total than the person who gets elected, there's something wrong with that. First past the post also encourages strategic voting. People in that situation are not voting for who they really, necessarily, believe is the best person, but they're looking at how do I prevent someone else from getting there. They vote out of fear.

We've seen voter fatigue. I can tell you right now, from my own experience, the only way – I finished up my job as president. I didn't have to take leave to campaign, but I know people who took leave to campaign. It has to be a huge expense. I had the advantage that I didn't have to worry about taking unpaid leave to take part in the election. There are a lot of good people out there who are not in my position, who cannot afford that, who will not be able to avail of this opportunity. So how do we make sure that we encourage all candidates, regardless of their financial standing, if they want to run here and they've got something to give? How do we get them involved? It can't be about money. It has to be about merit in many ways.

I'll finish with this, I don't know if you're familiar with John O'Donohue's blessing "For a leader," but I think in many ways there's a line or two that I liked from it and a little reflection I used to do myself which was, basically, I think, we as politicians, we need to be servants of the frontier here.

We've got to look at the past, draw enrichment from the old and we must never become functionaries. In other words, we've got to basically look at the frontiers. Where do we want this province to go? Where do we want this decision-making body to go? Where do we want people to be in terms of their engagement with politics, with the representatives in the House, with the situation affecting our province? How do we make sure we generate ideas that we respect the different viewpoints, that we get as many different viewpoints as possible? How do we have that dialogue?

I really think if we're going to look at this, this Committee that we're proposing may not solve all the problems but I do believe it's an attempt to recognize that do you know what? Let's level the playing field, let's make sure that we have as much equal representation that we can have on this Committee and start engaging in a way that the next time we're engaged in an election, we will not have someone saying to us: Well, I'm not interested in politics, leave me alone. I'm not voting for any of you. I want people saying: I'll be there at the poll. I'll be there to vote. I'm going to make sure we're engaged.

More importantly, I'm hoping this Committee is going to look at how do we keep people engaged between elections? How do we keep people engaged between elections so that we have the best informed population we have?

The education piece is important. Don't take anything away from that, but it's also about making sure that people feel, at the end of it, that they have a reason for getting out on a cold night or stormy night and voting. I believe this is what this Committee is all about. I'm sensing, certainly, around here, support for it and I think that's something positive. At least we can come here and we can move ahead in a positive fashion.

It's not going to be easy. There will be no silver bullet here, but I think if we're working together we're going to come up with something good.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to beat the hon. Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands. He looked like he was getting ready to jump up pretty quick.

MR. LANE: (Inaudible.)

MR. DAVIS: Excellent.

I'm very happy to stand here today and speak with respect to democratic reform and the private Member's resolution that's been brought forward by the Third Party. I see some people up in the gallery that are really passionate about democratic reform. I see Lori Lee Oates here. Welcome and thank you for coming and keep up the passion for this file. I see a colleague – in my previous life with council, a gentleman who represents an area that I represented when I was on council, Councillor Ian Froude. So I'm happy that they're both here to see the proceedings today.

I'd like to thank the Members that spoke previous to myself: St. John's East - Quidi Vidi, the Minister of Transportation and Works, the Leader of the Opposition – I was very happy to hear the Leader of the Opposition speak so eloquently about the spirit of co-operation that he feels so strongly about in this House of Assembly; I was so happy about that part – the Member for Topsail - Paradise, the Member for Mount Scio and the Member for St. John's Centre.

I must say with the Member for Topsail - Paradise and St. John's Centre, that was absolutely beautiful today to see you recognize someone that's so important, not only in your life but in many others. It's awesome. Everyone should give a round of applause for that for sure.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DAVIS: Mom is going to be happy. Mom is definitely happy for sure. I don't know who's going to be the favourite son, but both quick off the mark.

I am honoured to speak here today. On a more serious note, it's very important. Democratic reform is something that I've been speaking about a lot in the previous iterations. When I was city council I helped, along with my colleagues, changed some reforms from the election standpoint at city hall. Whether it be capping of donations, trying to tie donation limits to the amount you could actually spend in the district, trying to recognize in-kind contributions to the election campaign as being against your cap limit that you can spend, making sure every donation that you receive is catalogued and viewable from the general

public. I know that there are many councillors that ran in this last election that ran by some of those rule changes that we did on the previous council, so I was quite happy about some of those.

It's really important that we always talk about how we can improve the system. I know we've tried to get this going already. I'm happy that I participated in an All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, with great success. It came out of a private Member's resolution from this very House of Assembly, where we sat as a group, met with all the key stakeholders right across our province, had experts come in to let us know what they see as the major problems. We had lived-experienced individuals come in that are living this every day, when we talk about the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. It was a really rewarding experience, I think, for all that were involved because they had the opportunity to engage with so many different people on so many different topics, and see how it affects them personally.

The hon. Member for St. John's Centre made some good linkages there about politics is all about people. I couldn't agree more. It's all about the people we represent; it's all about ensuring that those individuals that we do represent have the ability to get out and vote, make it as easy as possible for people to vote and understand that so many people paid the supreme sacrifice to give us that opportunity to vote. That's the important piece that I haven't heard today, that there are so many people that fought for this right that we have to vote. I encourage people to go out and vote. It's important.

With respect to the private Member's resolution here today, just for recap sake – I know that hon. Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi did a great job of highlighting where we're to – I just want to highlight a couple of parts of the resolution that are really interesting to me. I'm really looking forward to delving in to it as a House of Assembly and getting behind it and supporting this.

The voting system and the methods, I think that's a really good point; the voting age; funding of political parties, it's great. One of the

things that my colleague, the Minister of Transportation and Works, mentioned in his remarks that I didn't take notice of until – sorry, I took notice of it there; I never thought of it before was how we could fund the Committee, something like this. Maybe there's a partnership that could be between the political parties to help fund this. They're the ones that would be reaping the benefits of that. I think there's something to at least have a conversation on how we could move forward on those.

The role of third party groups in election campaign. We don't have to look very far to see the impacts third parties can have on campaigns and the negative impact it can have on all of our constituents. In our last election campaign, there were robo-calls that were coming, I would say 15 a night to some of my districts, when I knocking on the door, 15 calls. They weren't happy with that. So maybe having a discussion in this form about this would be a great idea, and I'm very happy that's put in there. The timing and dates of election is important, and other items that the Committee sees at their discretion.

One of the things that I thought was very thought provoking when I was involved in the All-Party Committee on Mental Health was the co-operation that we had around the table. I know the Minister of Health is here – and it started over a couple of different administrations, this process did for the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. I always thought it was really interesting that we could have the theatre of the House of Assembly here during Question Period, but how collegial and how cordial we were at those meetings working to try to find a solution for a very big problem in our province, and this is no different in my mind. Having the ability to have a group of individuals get together, checking their partisan stripes at the door, we hope. We know that's a challenge and we've had many speakers today speak to that as an issue, but if we try our best to do that at the door when we walk in there, I think that's an important piece.

One of the things that I'd like to also highlight is the difference, sort of, between the all-party committees and the Standing Committees. The all-party committee – just so people understand – is a committee that is struck that reports to a

particular department like we have now and like the All-Party Committee on Mental Health did through the Health Department, but it exists through administrations, past elections. So that's one nuance that's a little different than a Select Committee, which exists only by resolution of the House that's actually sitting at the time, which is just a nuance that I want to make sure we understand.

I probably wasn't clear, I'm supporting the motion, of course, but I think there are some nuances that we should always try to figure out on how to get the best approaches we can.

The hon. colleague from Mount Scio talked about some youth voter turnout and how it's so important. In my own district, in Virginia Waters - Pleasantville, as my hon. colleague on the other side says, the beautiful district of, whenever he gets to speak and I would say that's the truest sense. I think every one of us represent a beautiful district in its own right, but mine is the most beautiful.

In all fairness, I had the opportunity to campaign –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. DAVIS: It's backupable, I guess.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible) similar.

MR. DAVIS: Similar.

But I think it's really important that the hon. Member for Mount Scio highlighted the fact of how we have to get it into the education system, which is important. I think we've done some good work on trying to move that forward.

One of the most interesting things that I thought during the last campaign, and even the previous one, I had the pleasure of doing a debate at one of my junior high schools, as well as one of my elementary schools. It was really funny how engaged the kids were on that process. I noticed after the fact that they – I didn't realize at the time, that they were voting later that cycle, later in the campaign. I thought it was always interesting how the youth, getting them engaged early like that, even though it may not be a

general election but to them it's an introduction to –

AN HON. MEMBER: Did you win?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, I did win; yes, both times.

But one of the things is getting them engaged in the process, getting them to try to understand some of the nuances of voting, trying to figure out what the individual stands for, because that's important. I want an educated voter, and most people would want that to make sure – I always said to people at the doorsteps when I was campaigning: I don't mind if you don't vote for me, I just want you to vote.

I think it's important that you understand who the people are that are running, and if they don't match your ideology or don't match what you want representing you, then I would encourage you not to vote for that person. That's the important piece. Make sure they match your ideology, make sure they match what you want in a representative. I think that's an important piece. Starting it at a young age, like we've had the ability to do in a school system, is really, really important.

So anything we can do to reduce the voting age – I don't want to presuppose what the Committee is going to come back with, but I'm really interested in the voting age. Because we don't have to go very far, other than a couple of Fridays ago, to see a couple of thousand young people on the front steps of Confederation Building here taking a climate action on making sure we do something about the climate catastrophe we have that's happening globally. To see the engagement of those young people really warms your heart. It did for me when I was there. I know other colleagues were there as well. It's really important we give them an opportunity to get engaged in that process.

I think all of the information I've looked at says it's a positive thing to lower the voting age to allow more people to get engaged in the process. Most jurisdictions have seen an increase in that, and then once they do it the first time, then they're more likely to do it again and again in the future. We all know there's a lot of voter apathy out there, and the more we can do to combat that the better it is, in my opinion.

I think the important focus for us on this Committee is getting it right, as my hon. colleagues have said before me, making sure we get it right. I think this is a step in the right direction. I look forward to seeing how the Committee gets going and look forward, even more importantly than that, to the opportunities that exist after that.

With respect to financing of political parties, I highlighted where I stood on that with municipal politics, and I stand in the exact same place as I do here. I think there's an opportunity for us to do a bit better for that.

I come from a background that's not independently wealthy, and sometimes politicians – in the past that has been the card-carrying side of it, that you had to be independently wealthy. We want to make sure it opens up the doors for everybody to have the ability to run.

Honourable colleagues on both sides of the House talked about how important it is to engage individuals that are not normally in this House of Assembly or not normally running and seeking offices; whether that be young people, whether that be women, whether that be Indigenous individuals, whether that be individuals of any background. We want to make sure they have the ability to come here, and we don't want to have finances to be an obstacle or a barrier to allow that. So I think anything we can do as a group to try to help that process, I think would be a step in the right direction for the people of the province.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on on this, but I'd be remiss if I didn't say a thank you to all hon. colleagues that spoke to this. I'm very happy to be supporting this PMR and look forward to the results of it even more importantly than just supporting it here today.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Reid): The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is absolutely a pleasure to stand this afternoon and speak to this particular PMR because it's certainly something I have been very interested in and it's something I have raised in this House on numerous occasions. It's something I have raised with people in my constituency. I even had it in some of my, I believe, campaign material in the last election as well.

The first thing I want to do is I do want to certainly thank the Leader of the NDP, and the party, for bringing it forward. I want to thank the Official Opposition, I believe they seconded the motion, which was great to see, and it seems like we have support from the government. All around, I think we all agree that this is a good thing to do.

Obviously, when you look at the resolution, one of the biggest things that stands out to me, something that – I don't know if we've ever seen it before in this House of Assembly, I stand to be corrected, but I would say this is the first time we've actually seen a Select Committee that actually identifies an independent Member, and to have representation from an independent Member.

I think that's very, very important because I think it recognizes – and I believe the Deputy Government House Leader talked about the fact that this is something new that we're seeing and I don't think it's going to be the end of it. The concept of independent Members and even other parties and so on – certainly, federally if you look at it. There are numerous parties out there that run federally now.

We saw a couple of additional parties on the ballot here in Newfoundland and Labrador in this particular election, albeit they may not have been successful, but they did have candidates. We saw a number of people run as independents. It's different from in the past, I suppose, where traditionally we've had Members sitting as independents who may have been elected by a particular party but found themselves sitting as an independent, either on their own accord or on the behest of their party; but in this particular Assembly, we actually have two Members, myself and the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands, who are actually elected by the people of their district as an independent.

So the people of two districts have spoken and have said they want independent Members representing them. I think in a democracy we have to respect the wishes of those citizens who are all taxpayers, who are all contributing to the province and are all entitled to have their voices heard, not just on the floor of the House of Assembly in the normal course of business, but also through the other various processes that take place outside of the formal sitting of the House through the various Committees.

I heard the Member opposite just then talk about the all-party Committees. I really think we need to, as part of this, look at this whole concept even of an all-party Committee. I think the name needs to be changed. They all need to be called Select Committees, or whatever the case might be, to recognize the fact that not everybody is necessarily going to be part of a party who is elected and is going to be on these Committees.

So I'm very thankful for this resolution, very glad to see that an independent Member will have the opportunity to serve. I haven't really spoken to my colleague about it yet. I'm not sure what interest he has, but I have said many times, I definitely have an interest and I will definitely put my hand up to be involved for sure. If I have to flip him for it, so be it. I have a feeling I may not need to but if I do, we will. We'll do rock, paper, scissors or something.

I really believe, Mr. Speaker, there is a need for reforms. I don't want to get too repetitive with some of the things that have been said, but certainly a number of things that jump out to me, one of the big ones you hear all the time – I've said it, other Members have said it, you hear it out there in the general public, in the media, is the idea of taking money out of politics and how we can find a way to take some of the big dollars out of politics, whether it be co-operations, whether it be unions. I'm not necessarily sure that means that the taxpayer has to somehow subsidize or fund it.

They do already to a certain extent. You can get a certain portion back after the election. Whether that should be increased or not, obviously that would be up for consideration. I'm not sure that the taxpayer would be totally interested in that idea. I do know that one of the ways that we can eliminate the amount of money that needs to be

raised is by eliminating the amount of money that is spent. That is something we can absolutely do.

I've been elected now three times, provincially. The first two times I was elected, I don't have the exact figures, but I spent somewhere between \$20,000 and \$30,000, somewhere in that neighbourhood. There are Members who spend more than that. There are Members who I think can spend up to \$40,000, \$45,000, whatever it is, and there are people who have reached those limits.

This particular election, I spent approximately \$8,000. That's what it was. I went from \$20,000 to \$30,000 down to \$8,000. Guess what? The result is the exact same. I'm still standing here, with \$8,000.

When you don't have that money raised, you quickly realize – it's like when you're running a household or anything, you start thinking about: What is it I really need? Do I really need this; do I really need that?

I quickly came to the conclusion: Do I really need a headquarters? Do I need a headquarters? How many people are actually walking into this headquarters? How many citizens are walking off the streets and coming into this headquarters to speak with me or whatever? How much coverage, how much profile am I getting out of a headquarters?

I came to the conclusion I'm probably not getting much, if anything. If anything, it's more of a hindrance in terms of time and having to have volunteers to be there all the time, to man the headquarters. I say "man" in the general sense, but you know what I mean. It's just a headache, actually, so I had no headquarters. The headquarters was my home. That was it.

In terms of signs, I reused the signs I had the last time. Now, I realize a new candidate wouldn't have that ability, but in my case, I reused the signs I had. I just covered up the party logo and the name of the leader with a great, big yellow sticker that said independent on top of it. There were a couple party supporters who contacted me that weren't very happy that I was stealing their colours, but anyway, too bad, that's all you

can do. Actually, it did happen. I managed to do that.

In terms of wood and stuff like that, I had to buy some but I also managed to scrounge some wood up that I had in the garden and cut it up and whatever to do that. I didn't go glossy on the brochures. I had brochures; I went colour, but I didn't go glossy on all of them. There were a number of other things that I was able to cut and trim and cut and trim, things that you would say, are they really necessary.

We used phones. In terms of phones and stuff like that, I didn't have a headquarters and bringing in all these phone lines and paying for all that. Volunteer stuff, we used cellphones. People used that at the house, calling from their homes. On election day, we had two or three or four homes in different parts of the district with two or three people on their cellphones making calls and that type of thing.

The bottom line is we didn't need to spend all that money. I actually had a larger margin in terms of the results. I actually did better and won by a larger margin, on \$8,000, than I did in the last two elections. I understand that if you're a new person and you're not necessarily as known, there are some issues around that, but the point of the matter is do we really need to be spending all this money. Do we need all these election signs? We can put them on personal lawns, but do we need to be in a big sign competition on every single corner? Do we need to? I don't think we do.

I think that we should have something set, for example – and I just use it as a random example – particularly in a rural area – I'm just saying as an example. If you go into the Town of Branch – I'm just using that as an example because I'm looking across at the Member – every candidate puts a sign at the beginning of the town in each direction. That's it. No more allowed. Now, if someone wants to put it on their lawn, you can't stop someone from putting something on their personal property. As far as public property goes, one at this end coming this way into town so people know who the candidates are. That's it, end of story.

These are the types of things we can do, and I'm sure that every Member here would agree, the

headache, never mind the environmental impact and the cost, but the headache of putting them up and taking them down. They blow down or someone kicks them down, or someone steals them or someone draws a moustache on your face, if you have a picture on your sign or whatever might happen, it's an absolute pain. Do we need to be at it? We don't. We don't need to be at it.

So if we want to talk about all this money that gets raised, the best solution to it and to put it on an even playing field is to say you're only allowed to spend so much. You can't spend \$40,000; \$10,000 is the limit. I'm saying \$10,000. I don't know what the number is going to be, but \$10,000, no more, nobody is allowed to spend it.

On the provincial side of things, do we really need a big, giant bus? Who has the biggest bus? My bus is bigger than yours. Do we really need it, going around with your face on it? I know that maybe if you're the leader you feel right good and important like a celebrity because your face is going through the town, but do we really need to be spending all that money on these buses? I don't think we do. I really don't think we do.

There are a number of leadership debates that the whole public can tune in and they can hear what the party's platform is. They can listen to the leaders and so on. They can find out what the leaders stand for. Of course, there's the old-fashioned way of knocking on doors. But do we really need TV ads, radio ads, things in the paper, big buses – do we need it? I would argue no, Mr. Speaker, we don't need it. It's a total waste of money, and everybody here knows it's a waste of money. So let's cut the amount of money that can be spent and then we're going to be cutting a lot of the big donations because we don't need them any more.

Whether these donations – now, I would say someone who has gotten – I got some donations this time around as well from different sources, smaller ones mostly, and they're not going to sway my vote. People think you're going to be bought and sold. If someone writes me a cheque for \$100 or \$200, if they think I'm going to come in here and do something wrong or underhanded to help them out because they gave

me a cheque for \$200, they can take their \$200 and we'll leave it at that. But you know what I'm saying, it isn't going to happen.

I do understand that when it comes to really big donations and the \$5,000-plate dinners and all this stuff, whether it has an impact or not – and that's arguable. I would say that sometimes it does but, whether it does or not, it certainly is perceived as having an impact – absolutely perceived as having an impact.

A lot of people out in the general public really believe that politicians are bought. They believe that.

MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to our Standing Orders, I know the Members still has a couple minutes left on the clock, but according to our Standing Orders with Private Members' Day, we move to allow the person who moved the motion to close the debate, so we'll do that now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, this is wonderful. I'm hearing that everyone seems to agree with the private Member's motion, so I do look forward to working with everyone to build an effective Committee that respectfully seeks consensus at all times. While we may not always achieve consensus, we must always be willing to strive for it.

So contributing to the debate today, I'd like to thank the Members for Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde; Windsor Lake; Mount Scio; Topsail - Paradise; St. John's Centre; and Mount Pearl - Southlands.

Certainly, I've heard reiteration of some of the points we've talked about. I've heard some wonderful new ideas for sure. I was buoyed by the fact that there is a possibility of transferring the work of the secretariat and there are some options on how we might actually make that secretariat work. I do think that may require some costs associated with it, but we have to recognize that there will be a minimal cost

associated with this, but this will have a substantial, significant and very important benefit to everybody in the province. So the cost associated with this is minimal for the result that we'll get.

Speaking of youth, I would like to point out that the hon. Member for Labrador West, when I was up talking to individuals in his district, the returning officers pointed out that they were amazed, absolutely amazed at the number of youth getting out to vote. We are delighted to see that and I guess we want to work to have more youth out there, but we also want to make it easier for younger individuals to take part in the election process and to have more younger candidates contribute. I'm delighted to hear that the restructuring of the district associations is necessary and certainly would be on the table.

It was very interesting to hear the Member for Mount Scio talk about the problems with women donating and that she found that less women were donating. I think this is a good time to point out that the wage gap and gender parity has not been yet addressed. I think that once we address the gender wage gap, perhaps we will see more women donating because more women will be able to donate. So that might be a nice time.

It was nice to hear the discussion on signs. That's something that I hadn't considered, and I think that goes to the importance of including the independent Member or an independent Member on this Committee. We will get different perspectives. Having those different perspectives brought to the table is absolutely vital.

I look forward to putting forth meaningful ideas for improving our democracy that are supported by the public. While we may not change or improve everything, certainly we can make a positive change together.

I have heard a side conversation about the possibility of including an external facilitator or mediator or conciliator, or someone who can bring consensus to this Committee. I don't really see them as being a member of the Committee, but I do see them working with the Committee to help us move our work forward.

Having this balanced Committee will be very important, despite the fact that, historically, most Standing Committees had a majority of government Members. We particularly need balance for this Committee and if we want these recommendations of this Committee to be broadly supported.

Independent Members, again, so, so important to accommodate them in the House. Their voices must be heard. They represent a portion of our population and of the electorate, and this is absolutely important to have them included here, and this is what we are trying to achieve with our Committee.

I would also like to point out – and again, kudos to the Member for Mount Scio for pointing out *The Democracy Cookbook*. I think that will form a wonderful guidebook for us. It has great suggestions in it. As a little aside, I will point out that I also have an article in *The Democracy Cookbook*. Mine is titled: Taking Politics out of Governance. So I think that might be something we can also use as a baseline.

In terms of funding – just to touch on that again – if we really value democracy and believe democratic reform to be important, working together, we will find the money for this. This is too important to ignore.

We know that there are many experts around the world on democratic reform, and we should look at what they have said. So not only *The Democracy Cookbook*, not only people involved in the Political Science department here at Memorial University and people who are politically active across a wide range of disciplines and professions, but around the world as well.

Now, we also need to look at our system here. What can we fix immediately and what requires more systematic changes, and what needs more long-term work? We haven't done much in Newfoundland and Labrador in terms of democratic reform. We do need regular dialogue and some concrete attempts to make our reform our democracy.

To close, because I think it is about time to close this debate, and I look forward to the vote. People have said in this House today that they

want to collaborate to have this done. We can be ground-breaking, we can be visionary and we can lead Canada and possibly the world in our democratic reform. We just need to have the will and the impetus to do that. I think we are here.

To end, I would like to use – I say, the hard work will be done and must be done. And to end, I'd like to use a quote from President Kennedy: We choose to do these things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: It being Wednesday, in accordance with Standing Order 9(3), the House stands adjourned until 1:30 o'clock in the afternoon tomorrow.