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*Speaker: Honourable Scott Reid, MHA*

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The House met at 2 p.m.

**MR. SPEAKER (Reid):** Order, please!

Admit strangers.

**Statements by Members**

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today we will hear statements by the hon. the Members for the Districts of Windsor Lake, St. John's Centre, Topsail - Paradise, Placentia West - Bellevue and Torngat Mountains.

The hon. the Member for Windsor Lake.

**MR. CROSBIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I recognize today Ruwei Liang who opened their restaurant in the middle of a pandemic. Now this family can't keep up with the business.

Ruwei says his new business in Airport Heights has been getting hundreds of calls a day for takeout orders. A small staff at KungFu restaurant keep food orders filled at the new spot, the only restaurant in the neighborhood.

Ruwei has been working toward opening a Chinese restaurant in St. John's since 2018, and it finally came together right as the COVID-19 pandemic started spreading around the world. I didn't expect that many people would support me during this so difficult time. I'm so thankful for our wonderful community, he says.

Liang said he has a small staff, a cook and two waitresses, along with him and his wife, and he has two restaurants just outside of Hong Kong. He came to Canada in 2013, and after travelling through different provinces settled on Newfoundland and Labrador to continue his culinary dream.

"I only got three hours sleep," he laughed. "I've been cooking for 20 years so far, so I love cooking. I love people enjoying my food."

Mr. Speaker, this shows that small business can survive and can thrive in a pandemic. Please join me in congratulating Mr. Ruwei Liang and his family for ongoing success.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, families provide love and support – a home; in difficult times they also provide, to use the words of Bob Dylan, shelter from the storm. For individuals and families outside the metro region who've received a diagnosis of cancer, Daffodil Place is that shelter from the storm.

Despite medical advances, a cancer diagnosis is still able to turn a person's life upside down. To the Canadian Cancer Society, it's more than just a disease.

Daffodil Place is operated by the Canadian Cancer Society NL division for cancer patients, and caregivers, who must travel to St. John's to receive treatment. For a low daily fee, patients and loved ones may stay at one of the facility's 24 rooms for the duration of their treatments. They also receive three hot meals and snacks, and transportation to and from treatments.

And there are emotional needs. Daffodil Place offers cancer support group meetings, telephone information and support lines, as well as an online support community. Practical supports in the form of turbans, wigs, temporary breast prostheses, and information kits are also available.

As we emerge from the world of COVID-19 and restrictions begin to ease, it's important to continue to support the work of Daffodil Place – a place to call home when it means the most.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I'm very honoured today to wish Mrs. Ida Peet a happy 100th birthday, which she celebrated on April 27, 2020.

Mrs. Peet was born in Grand Falls, one of nine children. Her father worked at the mill and her mother was a stay-at-home mom. After completing high school in Grand Falls, she moved to St. John's and entered the Grace Hospital School of Nursing, and received her RN in 1943 and worked as a delivery room supervisor for many years. She married a townie and raised two children in St. John's.

Mrs. Peet loved to garden and sew and purchased her last new sewing machine at the age of 96. For 50 years she was actively involved in volunteer work at George Street United Church. She is a very loving person and was always involved with her family and extended family.

After her husband passed away, she lived alone for 15 years and at the age of 90, when she could no longer drive her car, she sold her house and moved to Meadow Creek Retirement Centre, where she resides today.

Mrs. Peet specifically asked me or wanted me to acknowledge her niece that she is so fond of. That's former minister of Health, Susan Sullivan.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members to join me in wishing Mrs. Ida Peet a happy 100th birthday and wish her continued health and happiness.

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

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

**MR. DWYER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I humbly recognize in the House today and speak of a very honourable woman.

Mr. Speaker, on May 21 of this year, I had the opportunity of going to Arnold's Cove to celebrate an amazing lady, Mrs. Jessie Wareham. Family and friend organized a social distancing event, allowing with Mrs. Wareham to know how much we all really care for her. Over this past year we have become friends. I adore her commentary. She speaks of the challenges of resettlement, Confederation, the war and especially electronics. These are some

of the biggest life-changing events she has experienced.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Wareham is a mother, a grandmother, a great-grandmother and a great-great grandmother – something many strive to accomplish. She has helped nurture and shape many generations hailing from the Arnold's Cove area.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this time to congratulate one of Arnold's Cove's icons, Mrs. Jessie Wareham, on the occasion of her 100th birthday.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join and help me acknowledge this 100-year-old Newfoundland woman, Mrs. Jessie Wareham.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MS. EVANS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today I pay tribute to Toby Andersen, 33 years of dedicated service to the Labrador Inuit, first as land claims negotiator, then deputy minister of Nunatsiavut Affairs.

Thirty-three years of working to advance the rights and living standards of the Labrador Inuit. A gruelling 33 years is how Toby described his years of advocacy for his people. Every victory was hard fought.

He did not want to disappoint his family and his people. That was his reason for working hard every day. Expectations were high for land claims and the repercussions far reaching.

Nunatsiavut Inuit are the first Indigenous group in Canada, to date, to have an agreement with Canada to self-govern. An Inuit self-government that exists today due to determination, long hours, long periods away from home and family; the stakes high and the work gruelling. To accept his role of land claims negotiator, he moved his family to Nain, a tremendous sacrifice to the large Andersen clan. Toby

credits his unwavering support to his wife, Maxine, for his success.

Your family is proud of you, Toby. Your voice is greatly missed throughout the government you helped create. I am proud to pay tribute to you and your dedication to the Labrador Inuit.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Statements by Ministers.

**Statements by Ministers**

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

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

In mid-March, in light of the ongoing efforts to help contain COVID-19, Service NL discontinued regular counter service at Motor Registration Division in Mount Pearl and all other Government Service Centres throughout the province.

Although counter service was suspended due to the public health emergency, Service NL continued to provide the majority of services to clients through alternate service channels, such as online, email, teleservices and drop boxes.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that as of today, in-person services for written and practical driver examinations are resuming with safety measures in place. However, I would be remiss if I did not recognize the incredible uptake of our online services available through MyGovNL.ca.

Since the COVID-19 public health emergency, more than 98 per cent of vehicle renewals have been conducted online. That is compared to 75 per cent during the same period in 2019. There is also a significant uptake in the number of driver's licence renewals conducted online, with over 92 per cent of drivers renewing via the web – an increase from 47 per cent during the same time last year.

While Service NL is beginning a phased-in approach to various in-person services today, we ask residents to continue to use government's

online service available at MyGovNL.ca. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the staff of Service NL who have continued to provide services through the pandemic. I would also like to thank clients for their patience during this time and, as services resume, encourage continued safety practices.

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 minister for an advance copy of his statement.

Mr. Speaker, many of the services provided by Service NL are very important, and I would like to add to my appreciation to the staff who continue to provide these services to the public. The statistic quoted by the minister regarding increased uptake in online services are interesting, but certainly not surprising, given the circumstances we have found ourselves in in recent months.

I do have concerns about how difficult this move online has been for those people that don't have Internet or computer access or skills. And I certainly hope that measures are in place to assist and accommodate these individuals.

Mr. Speaker, it is positive to see the resumption of some in-person services today, and we also encourage everyone to continue the recommended safe practices to stay safe.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

It does signal a move forward in people's use of technology for everyday needs. It is one of the good things resulting from physical distancing. But we mustn't forget those who don't have resources to take advantage of online services.

For many reasons, some will still need human contact. Government needs to continue a level of counter service and phone service to make sure that nobody is forgotten or left behind.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further statements by ministers?

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

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

I am pleased to be in this hon. House to advise that applications are now being accepted for the new Tourism and Hospitality Support Program.

This \$25 million program will provide financial assistance to eligible tourism and hospitality operators impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, conversations with industry and stakeholders made it clear that businesses and operators are facing many critical issues, such as cash-flow challenges, cancelled contracts and loss of down payments for events due to travel restrictions.

The Tourism and Hospitality Support Program will allow eligible tourism operators to apply for a one-time, non-repayable working capital contribution. Those with less than \$100,000 in gross sales will receive a \$5,000 contribution, while those with greater than \$100,000 in gross sales, will receive a \$10,000 contribution.

Mr. Speaker, we know that a mix of supports is required to tackle some of the industry challenges arising from the pandemic, which is why we developed this short-term program to complement the existing emergency supports announced by the Government of Canada to address the impacts of COVID-19.

The tourism and hospitality industry provides over 20,000 jobs, and supports more than 2,700 businesses throughout our province. Our government recognizes the tremendous value of the industry in Newfoundland and Labrador and this new program commitment aims to provide some relief to many operators.

I encourage eligible operators to visit the Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation website to learn more about the program and apply.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

The tourism industry is a bright spot in the province. Our hard-working and sincere operators welcome visitors into the province each year, offering a one-of-a-kind experience. However, it is unfortunate that tourism operators will not be able to offer the same experiences this year.

While the Tourism and Hospitality Support Program will indeed help some eligible operators, there are many who are not eligible and are left with no support for their businesses. Additionally, with no staycation marketing campaign and no certainty about an Atlantic travel bubble, operators are left wondering if they will even be able to open their doors this summer.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest to the minister that operators need help. They need help marketing their services to provincial residents and they need an answer on an Atlantic travel bubble soon, before individuals in other provinces make their vacation plans and we are left out.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

It's great that these businesses are getting some help to restart. All around the province they have been built by the bare hands of the people after the collapse of the ground fishery. We need to support these mom-and-pop businesses. This is a renewable resource at the root of our province. We need to nurture this industry because it's an industry that can last forever.

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:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A question for the Minister of Finance: Will he commit to making full disclosure of the province's books during this sitting?

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member for his question.

Obviously, the finances of the province is a concern for everybody living in the province. I say to the hon. Member, it is simply not possible at this particular stage.

I know the officials in Finance put a considerable amount of time in place readjusting numbers to provide the fiscal update on the close of 2019-20. They have been working diligently towards putting the best effort for a budget

forward. They're currently working on those numbers but they're simply not ready.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** Is the minister telling us that the officials of his department don't produce an estimate of the current financial condition on a monthly basis?

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

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

Mr. Speaker, as we have seen the uncertainty in the economy – the changing finances of several provinces, we've seen the prime minister – I say that it's impossible to put an accurate forecast forward at this particular time.

Most recently, we had our oil forecasts tell us that we anticipated oil being somewhere between \$30 and \$40 for this fiscal year. That's quite a \$10 spread. We've seen oil now over \$40. Hopefully it will stay there, but the reality is things are still changing. We have no indication as to what the economy is going to look like.

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** Mr. Speaker, the Department of Finance surely does the best it can with the information it has available. The problem is that the minister is unwilling to share it with us.

Does he expect the PC Opposition to collaborate on economic recovery without showing the public the books?

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

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

With great respect, I will say that it's an unfortunate view of officials in the Department of Finance by the Member opposite. It's impossible to do a month by month accounting

of the books in this province, most especially now. I mean a budget takes several months to put together, Mr. Speaker. Officials in Finance have been working on this. To try and produce this on a month by month basis, to produce a budget on a month to month basis in a normal year would not be possible. It's certainly not possible as things are still fluid.

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** I expect the Minister of Finance, as the months go by, to be telling us that he won't be able to do a proper fiscal forecast until the year is over.

What is in the books that he wants to hide from the public?

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, I think the people of the province, as we've seen through COVID and working together, appreciated the collaboration. I think the people of the province also believe it's time to put petty politics aside. I'll ignore the comment by the hon. Member opposite.

In the spirit of collaboration, Mr. Speaker, when we produce the Estimates that is line by line, there is nothing hidden. We produce annual reports from every department. The Auditor General reviews everything. There are Public Accounts, Mr. Speaker.

We will do a budget. Officials in the department are working on that now and when they do, the Estimates will be put forward which is line by line by line of every department.

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

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

**MS. EVANS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A surveillance flight reported between 2,000 and 3,000 litres of pollutant on the surface of the water near Postville on Monday. The Canadian Coast Guard is now saying that by yesterday,

that dissipated to about 980 litres. The weather was cool and overcast, that's poor conditions for dissipation, Mr. Speaker.

Most of that 2,000 litres that's no longer on the water probably ended up on nearby beaches. I know spills are a federal responsibility, but I have to ask the minister: What steps are being taken to clean up the spill that's impacting Inuit-owned lands?

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

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

Service NL officials have been working with Environment Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard. This is a very unfortunate incident. I would agree with the hon. Member that it is very concerning, and as time goes on the diesel in the water does dissipate.

I know there is a Coast Guard vessel on the way to Postville, it should be arriving actually this afternoon, to start clean up of what is still there. Federal officials have been looking at all land-based possibilities to either determine or to eliminate them as possibilities for the leak.

Mr. Speaker, at this stage we believe it is water based, not land based, but there is a Service NL official who should be arriving in Postville very soon as well to help with the research.

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

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

**MS. EVANS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As most people know, the North Coast is a pristine environment. Right next to Postville, right next to the spill is English River, a very, very productive salmon spawning river. There is much char, trout, smelt and water fowl that frequent the area.

In most places in Canada now that area is no longer possible, those resources, so we need to make sure we're protecting the resources.

I ask the minister: What is he doing to ensure the spill is properly investigated? Who's responsible? Who caused the spill? What caused this spill? Why wasn't this spill reported originally?

Thank you.

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

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

If the spill originated from on land, it would be provincial responsibility. At this particular point, all indications look like it's a water-based spill, which would be federal responsibility.

Having said that, the province is deeply concerned about what has happened and we will continue working with federal officials.

I don't know why it wasn't initially reported, but I thank the people of the area, the community residents. I know government is working with individuals in the area; residents, the mayor and so on. This is very concerning.

Anytime we have a pristine environment that's affected, Mr. Speaker, it concerns us all.

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

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

**MR. WAKEHAM:** Mr. Speaker, given the recent comments of the Minister of Finance just a few minutes ago, and yesterday's comment that Interim Supply of \$4.8 billion runs out at the end of September, I wonder: Will the minister table debate and pass a budget before Interim Supply expires?

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

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

That is certainly our intent. It's our hope that the budget will be prepared. Officials in the department are working on that, and as soon as we're able to present the budget we will.

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

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

**MR. WAKEHAM:** Yes.

I would like to ask the minister: Is that a yes?

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

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

If things remain relatively stable and we don't have any other unforeseen shocks, then I would say it's a yes. With the uncertainty that we face right now – I mean, if there's another shutdown in the oil industry or if we get a second wave of the pandemic – it may complicate things; but if things remain relatively stable, I can absolutely say it's a yes.

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

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

**MR. WAKEHAM:** I thank the minister for his answer. Certainly the people of this province deserve to know where we are and where we're going.

A recent study determined that 48 per cent of small businesses in this province need help paying their rent. This government has done little to ensure that these small businesses will not be evicted or buried under debt. The current announced program is not working for most businesses.

I ask the minister: Why doesn't he listen to the concerns of these businesses and make changes to the program to allow the money to flow to the hands of the tenants?

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

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

It is a federal program. Those decisions are made at the federal level. We have brought those concerns to the federal minister of Finance.



At current, I can say to the hon. Member that we have approximately 300 tenants that will benefit from the program in this province. There are many, many more. We are looking at what other provinces have done in terms of preventing evictions. We're reviewing that now with a view to what we're able to do in this province.

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

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

**MR. WAKEHAM:** I thank the minister again.

Over half of our province's small businesses have laid off employees and 11 per cent have deemed that they will not be able to hire the employees back.

I ask the minister: Where is the employment plan to get Newfoundlanders and Labradorians back to work?

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

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

I would just like to clarify some of the statements of the hon. Member across the way. The provincial government has done significant work with the small businesses. Is there more to be done? Absolutely there's more to be done. We have deferred fees and permits; tax payments have been extended; deferral of loan payments; \$10 million in utility credits; a new \$25-million tourism program we just talked about earlier; procurement thresholds have been increased; \$30-million Residential Construction Rebate Program that has been announced; and there's more to come.

It's all a culmination of working together with your federal colleagues and having a tool belt or a tool kit that allows businesses to avail of services or programs that are going to best serve them. There are gaps in the system. We're working with our federal colleagues to try to address those gaps to ensure that those businesses that are there (inaudible) –

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you for your answer.

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

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

**MR. WAKEHAM:** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, a series of announcements is not a plan.

The oil and gas is an economic engine of our province and it has now stalled. Without federal support for the industry, over 24,000 jobs are at risk.

When can we expect real federal support with exploration incentives for the offshore industry?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

**MS. COADY:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I certainly want to acknowledge the support of Members opposite in pursuing our federal government partner in our offshore, because I want to remind everyone in this province that the federal government is a partner in our offshore and we have indeed requested of our partner their investment to accelerate exploration and to assist businesses with financial liquidity, as have other countries done. I particularly point to Norway, which has most recently announced additional supports for the industry.

We want to be able to develop the 650 leads and prospects we have offshore Newfoundland and Labrador. We have 52 billion barrels that we know under seismic. So, Mr. Speaker, we're encouraging the federal government, we're asking the federal government as a partner to assist.

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

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

**MR. WAKEHAM:** Mr. Speaker, 11 per cent of small local businesses have indicated they will not be able to bring back employees, as I just stated. An additional 24,000 more jobs potentially in the offshore at risk.

Again, what does the minister say to those families who are worried about employment and job uncertainty?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

**MS. COADY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would say to the families that are concerned about continued growth and development of our oil industry to continue to ensure that they send encouragement and request to the federal government, as they have been doing. And most people in the province, Mr. Speaker, have stood up and said the federal government should be involved in ensuring a vibrant future for our offshore oil industry – as have other countries, such as Norway.

This is very important for our industry, it is very important for employment, it is very important for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and we should all be doing everything possible to encourage that investment that will yield not just jobs and opportunities for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, for the country as well.

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, many people are suffering because they cannot get the health care they need or they cannot be with a family member when they are in hospital. There are hundreds of heartbreaking stories. The people of the province deserve to know when health care will return to normal.

Can the minister table in this House the regional health authority's plan to address the backlog for specialist appointments, procedures and surgeries due to the cancellation of non-urgent elective health services.

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, a very important question.

The regional health authorities, as of probably an hour ago, have released their updated plans for workload under Level 3, as well as a completely revised visiting policy for long-term care and for acute care and the various areas in it.

With regard to clinical work, blood work, for example, is going back now to chronic disease management. They are not yet ready to ramp up to routine work yet. That will come with Level 2. There are indications of significant improvement or increase in bed occupancy as more of the procedures that were deferred are taken up.

I could go on at some length, Mr. Speaker, but I see my time is up.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, your department was able to establish guidelines to allow my family pet to have her fur cut weeks ago, but people are still waiting to find out when their appointments will be rescheduled.

Once again, will the minister commit to tabling an intensive, detailed plan developed by the regional health authorities to address the backlogs? A simple yes or not – will that be tabled in this House?

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

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

The issue around health care relates to PPE. There is a comprehensive plan to ramp up back to normal and the next phase of that will be a plan to address the backlog.

Indeed, discussions around this have been ongoing for some time. There are challenges with regard to this because of the uncertainty of

PPE. It would be rash of me to give a promise with dates and times that was predicated on things I cannot control.

We are burning through PPE at the rate that matches our deliveries and until we can increase the volume of our supply, it is unlikely that we will be able to significantly ramp up beyond around 75 per cent bed occupancy in acute care at the moment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can guarantee you the people of Newfoundland and Labrador need some reassurance of when they're going to get back to some normality around health care, particularly what's been backlogged that does have a life-or-death impact on families in this province.

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** On March 4, the minister said, and I quote: We have used shared services to adopt a provincial approach with PPEs and stockpile. And that we were as ready as any province in the country and better prepared than some. Later, we learned that there was no stockpile and we weren't ready.

When did the minister learn that there was no stockpile?

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

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

There was a much reduced stockpile that had been run down progressively since 2009. We are in as good a position as regards to PPEs as many jurisdictions and better than some. The challenge is around procurement. We now have two local sources for face shields. We have a local manufacturer who is the final stages of getting

Health Canada certification to produce level 2 gowns within the province.

We need 3,000 a day and, currently, our deliveries are around 30,000 a week. We have not yet had the ability to build up on those and until such time as we can guarantee a supply for acute care and the acute services, it would be rash of me to make any predictions about when a particular procedure can be done.

Any patient whose condition has deteriorated can talk to their doctor and have their priority changed by the clinician.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That just tells me that we weren't ready, Mr. Speaker, and that, unfortunately, has had a major impact on the people of Newfoundland and Labrador over the last three months.

The department's official pandemic plan of November 2007 outlined a requirement for stockpile of PPEs. The minister recently said in the media that one of the lessons learned of the pandemic is the need for a stockpile.

I ask the minister does he now have a plan to establish a stockpile and can the minister give the specifics of this plan. When will it be in play and how much of a stockpile will be held?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, we do have a plan for a stockpile.

The challenge was, in 2007, a pile of stuff was bought, stuck in a warehouse and basically rotted on the shelf because it was never used. Our plan is to incorporate the stockpile into a supply chain so that as material is used it is replaced and we keep a buffer. How big that buffer is, is yet to be determined because, quite frankly, nobody knows how big it should be,

how big will the next wave be, how tall and how long.

It is there; we have already started that. We have that in process with our ICU critical drugs for COVID, for example. We have \$250,000 worth of supply in our inventory in our supply chain ready for next time.

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, you had five years to replenish that stockpile that would have guaranteed that Newfoundland and Labrador would have been far better equipped to address the pandemic that we had, Mr. Speaker.

Will the minister admit that the delay in reopening health care services is caused by the lack of personal protective equipment right now in Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We are in a good situation as regards to PPE when compared with a lot of other jurisdictions. Are we where we would like to be? No. The reason for that is because the source of 80 per cent of the supply chain for PPE is in the very place that COVID-19 began and came back as a second wave, and is still, even now, the principal source of the bulk of PPE in the world.

Until we can change that model – and we are working with the federal government to do that, to have a made-in-Canada, homegrown solution where we grow our own PPE – until that happens, we are vulnerable and we will always be. We are working to remedy that, Mr. Speaker, and we have local businesses doing it.

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

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

**MR. PARROTT:** Mr. Speaker, we have been averaging about 150 tests a day for COVID. We're conducting the lowest number of tests per day per capita in Canada, but apparently, according to the minister, we have the ability to do anywhere from three to eight times that amount depending on the flavour of the day.

Does the minister have a policy against testing for COVID-19 in the community?

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

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

The testing is driven by symptoms. That test is a diagnostic test. It is not a screening test. We follow the broadest testing criteria of jurisdictions in Canada. We are way better than some and worse than none as far as Canada is concerned.

The facts of the case are there is no screening test for COVID-19, except 14 days of symptom-free isolation. Until the science and the research community can come up with a different tool, we are exactly where we need to be with testing, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. PARROTT:** Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Is the reason for the low testing rate because of insufficient supply of PPE?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** No.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Time for a quick question.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

**MR. PARROTT:** The absence of more widespread testing in the community means we have no direct knowledge of the presence of the virus in the community.

Has this been holding up decisions about moving forward through to the next Alert Level?

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

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

The decisions on moving to the next level are made by public health experts, clinicians. They are their recommendations and they make them on best evidence and best practice. There is no one factor. Testing, PPE, symptoms, the epidemiology of the disease in the province, the epidemiology of the disease in other provinces and around the globe, all of these are factors which are taken into consideration in determining what the next safe step is.

There is no playbook for this. There is no playbook for this virus. It's only been here six months, and everybody is still learning, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The federal government is about to cut crash rescue and fire services from Wabush Airport.

I ask the government: Are they okay with their federal counterparts making such cuts to this province that have such negative impacts?

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

**MR. BRAGG:** Mr. Speaker, that's information that's very new to me right at this moment. I look forward to working with officials in my department and with the officials in the Town of Wabush to work with this ongoing or possible situation.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, on the Fight Back against WERAC Facebook page, of which the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour is a member and actively engages other members, there exists a disturbing level of misogyny, hate speech and treats of violence directed at WERAC volunteers. One person proposed putting a bounty on the heads of WERAC volunteers to – quote – break out the banned guns and shot guns and send them the eff on their way, never to return – end quote.

WERAC members have emailed these concerns to the minister and to the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

I ask the minister: Why, after having this pointed out to him, does he continue to publicly interact with the people on this page and why he hasn't publicly condemned such speech and will he do so now?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I certainly do not condone any of these types of activities or behaviours by members. One of the members of the WERAC committee actually wrote me making me aware of contents of this particular group, in terms of some of the members and their postings. I had responded to the member and to the page administrator highlighting that it's highly inappropriate for any individual to make commentary that would take a personal attack or could be anything but the particular issue. It's unacceptable and that is something that I raised with the page administrator on more than one occasion.

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

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

**MR. J. DINN:** Mr. Speaker, during Question Period the Minister of Fisheries and Land

Resources made it very clear that the Natural Areas System Plan is WERAC's plan, yet two WERAC members resigned because the minister refused to release the plan.

Under the *Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act* it is the minister, not WERAC, who has the duty to develop and release the plan. The Premier's 2019 mandate letter to the minister directs him, not WERAC, to work on a Natural Areas System Plan.

I ask the minister: Why is he shirking his duty and why he and the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour seem determined to distance themselves from the plan and throw the volunteers of WERAC under the bus?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the hon. Member for the question.

It is definitely a valuable role that WERAC provides to advise the government as to their position and their thoughts and views as to a Natural Areas System Plan. They've been at this work for a considerable period of time, which we are all well aware of, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the committee members for doing the work that they've done. This is WERAC's plan; this is what they've brought forward and now what they're consulting. They will, as part of their plan, report to the government as to the findings resulting from the consultations that they're now undertaking. Government will then assess the overall situation and determine next steps forward.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, but I would hope that there's an opportunity for me to condemn the unnecessary rhetoric and the vile words that have been said on social media against members of WERAC. This is unnecessary, unproductive and, quite frankly, unacceptable.

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

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

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

**MR. LANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I did have a couple of questions for the Minister of Health about the plan for getting back, not just to normal but to dealing with the backlog. Unfortunately, for me I guess, the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island has hijacked those questions and we have a response. I'll now address a couple of questions to the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance recently announced changes to the *Public Procurement Regulations* to provide a 10 per cent variance for local business, thus providing it with an advantage when it comes to bidding on government contracts. I certainly applaud him for that move.

I ask the minister: Would you be willing to take this concept further and explore breaking down large contracts into smaller components that local companies have the capacity to bid on, as well as revisiting current tender bundling processes in order to provide further opportunities for local business?

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member for his question.

This is important. Yes, to answer the question, I'm willing to look at that and any suggestions that any Members of this Legislature or any member of the public can make on improving and increasing business locally.

I notice the water on our tables, Mr. Speaker, is not from a Newfoundland and Labrador producer. That's no slight to anybody, but I think everybody in this province has to get our mindset on buying local and supporting local if we're going to recover from this pandemic.

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

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

**MR. LANE:** Mr. Speaker, it's great that the Minister of Finance has taken this initiative to support local business, but even when it comes to procurement of products and services which require three quotes, for example, or for purchases which can be sole-sourced, I continue to hear from local business about these purchases going to large mainland-based companies, even though there are local providers able to supply the products and/or services at competitive rates.

I ask the minister: What direction and/or education is being given to employees of core government agencies, boards, commissions and Crown corporations to ingrain the mindset, as he says, to support local business at every possible opportunity?

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

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

This is a topic near and dear to my heart. I think even ordering online, which became the norm for people during the pandemic, we've got to get back to supporting local business. We've got to find ways of supporting online purchasing for local businesses.

Mr. Speaker, the point that the Member raises is very important. I will have a discussion with him after Question Period on this and seek further input from him, and any Member of the Legislature, any Member of the public on ways that we can support local business and to ensure we strengthen our economy within trade provisions and following the rules. We obviously need to follow the rules, Mr. Speaker, but in providing local preference, it's something that is very important to me.

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

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

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### Petitions

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

**MR. TIBBS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on May 14 it was brought to my attention by some very concerned citizens in Grand Falls-Windsor and surrounding areas that an RFP went out to make changes to the lab in the Central Newfoundland Regional Centre in Grand Falls-Windsor. After raising the question, I was told by officials that eventually positions would be lost over time. The Minister of Health went on to say on May 27, the hub would be located in Gander and it will mean very little to Grand Falls-Windsor.

Therefore we petition the House of Assembly as follows:

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure that there will be no positions lost at the lab in Grand Falls-Windsor in any form and there will be no reduction in services as to keep the Central Newfoundland Regional Health Centre the main hub lab for services in Central Newfoundland.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important issue to residents of my community and many, many more residents outside the community as they depend on these services. The minister said that changes will mean very little to Grand Falls-Windsor. Very little is very subjective. One position lost or any reduction in services could mean very little to one person, but to a family that could mean their whole world throughout my district.

Mr. Speaker, many people are behind this issue that myself and the Member for Exploits raised last month, including the Grand Falls-Windsor council who are holding a rally tomorrow to make sure that nothing else gets taken from our town and our district in Central Newfoundland. Over the years they've raised money for the

health sector services inside the hospital and the Lionel Kelland Hospice. They brought data centres to the table.

Many of these things seem to be getting lost along the way, and I'm here to say now that the residents aren't going to take it anymore and neither am I. We're not going to stand for this. I would like to call on government to make sure that these essential services will not be changed whatsoever – nothing will be changed – including positions, whether it be through attrition or whatnot.

We want the government to have transparency when it comes to this, especially post COVID, Mr. Speaker. We do not need to lose any positions or any services throughout my district. We'll stand for that until we get that transparency.

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 welcome the opportunity to clear the air because it's been really thickened by misinformation lately. There will be no change to the level of service for patients in Grand Falls-Windsor or their physicians as regards to laboratory services. There will be no job losses in the Grand Falls-Windsor lab as a result of these changes.

What will happen is that they will get some state-of-the-art equipment and some new backup equipment as part of an RFP. The reason the RFP has gone out now is that we felt it would be best to do a provincial RFP as there are four centres across the province whose lab equipment is so old it will not last to the end of the year.

This was done as part of a provincial lab reform service. It involved pathologists, it involved laboratory scientists and it has been done with the intent of providing the best possible service to everybody. It will, in actual fact, enhance the service in the more rural areas of Central West.

Mr. Speaker, I make no apologies for doing this at all.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

**MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Mr. Speaker, affordable, reliable and safe child care is, as we all know, a necessary component of a functioning society, especially one that's, in our case now, trying to create employment. We're trying to decrease out-migration, increase in-migration, increase our population and bolster our workforce. These are all essential for a growing economy.

This petition today is presented to urge the government to develop a child care strategy that will provide this type of affordable, accessible and quality child care for Newfoundland and Labrador parents of different economic and social backgrounds. Mr. Speaker, we know that affordable, reliable, safe child care are keys to a healthy society. We know that affordable daycare is not only essentially; it's necessary. If parents are going to be able to go back to work, they need daycare; they need affordable daycare. There is no way around that.

Mr. Speaker, we know that during the COVID pandemic, parents have been struggling to meet the demands and the needs of being at home, and particularly for some women, work has moved home. Often, women are responsible for juggling two jobs, child care and their paid work throughout the day. In many cases, spouses are not at home to assist. For some families, there may be some help from a spouse, but generally for many, especially single moms, they must now juggle the child care responsibilities and home schooling on top of their paid work.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard from many parents and many mothers pulling this double duty. One mom was staying up, we heard from, until 2 in the morning doing university assignments, getting up with her five-year-old at 8 in the morning because schools are closed. Her husband was working on rotation. She's desperately hoping that schools are going to reopen in September, but the pressure is on.



What we're looking at is women in our province urgently need access to child care, and a lack of supports can negatively impact their careers, their mental health and well-being of their children. We have a stand-alone department of the Status of Women. Quite frankly, it's sad and unsatisfactory that the minister responsible for women's issues has been so quiet, silent. That silence is deafening and it has been deafening for many people and many women across this province.

Mr. Speaker, we are asking for the government – they have to come up with a plan, a long-term, sustainable plan to increase the number of quality, publicly funded child care spaces so that women can fully participate in the workforce. As well, we know that June 26, in short two weeks from now, we're going to see the end of the subsidies that are provided for essential workers. We want to know what's going to happen then.

Mr. Speaker, these are all very relevant and critical issues that have to be addressed, and women are waiting for answers to these questions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

**MR. WARR:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I certainly appreciate the comments from my hon. colleague across the way. She brings up a very good point, Mr. Speaker. I guess until I got into the position of Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, I had no idea how important child care was to this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We certainly understand the importance, Mr. Speaker, of supporting young families, actually supporting the sector of early childhood development. We've made significant improvements in the quality, accessibility and affordability of child care and services within the province.

Mr. Speaker, the last report on child care fees from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives stated that child care fees in St.

John's have plummeted 24 per cent since 2017. We're continually investing in child care, some \$17 million annually. We just put \$14.7 million into the compensation grant during COVID-19.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, that's scheduled to finish on the 26th, but it's not lost on me, the importance of child care within the province and we'll do everything to ensure that families have the right to affordable and accessible child care.

Thank you.

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

### Orders of the Day

#### Private Members' Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** We're approaching the time when the Standing Order say we have to go to the private Member's motion, so we don't have time for another petition today.

I'll call on the Member for Lake Melville to present his private Member's motion

**MR. TRIMPER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the extra minute. I'm sure we're going to use it wisely here today in this very important topic.

To start, I will reread the resolution for today that I entered in yesterday:

WHEREAS Newfoundland and Labrador's offshore oil is one of the least carbon-intensive extractive crudes and emits significantly less greenhouse gas emissions than other oil-producing jurisdictions per barrel of oil extracted; and

WHEREAS upon completion of the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project and the forthcoming closure of the Holyrood Generating Station, 98 per cent of electricity consumed in the province will be generated from renewal energy; and

WHEREAS in March of 2019, the provincial government released The Way Forward on Climate Change, a five-year action plan which outlined 33 actions to reduce provincial greenhouse gas emissions and 17 actions to build resilience to climate impacts;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House supports the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador in their commitment to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

I am moving that and this is seconded by my colleague the MHA for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

So with that, Sir, I will start, and to my colleagues, I thank you all for the opportunity to introduce this PMR today on what is truly a very, very serious and important topic.

I'm going to start with a definition as to what we mean when we talk about net zero. First of all – and reading straight from a definition – net zero refers to a striking of a balance between a jurisdiction involving greenhouse gas emissions produced and greenhouse gas emissions eliminated or taken out of the atmosphere. These terms I'm sure just a few years ago we may not have been as familiar with, but we're all understanding the role of GHGs, the role of carbon in our energy, in transportation, in so many other aspects of our life, and the unfortunate harmful effects of these GHGs on our environment and how that leads to global warming.

This really culminated just in recent years. It was in 2015 – I think it was December, just after I was first elected – some 196 countries reached an agreement in Paris, France, called the *Paris Agreement*, a very important international agreement. The intent of it is to limit and to commit to limiting global warming to 1.5 to two degrees above pre-industrial levels.

That refers approximately back to the 1700s, 1800s, so we're measuring everything on that benchmark on what has happened over the last 200 years, 300 years – about 200 years I'll say. Nations, countries, subnational governments, Indigenous governments and many others – organizations, industry, communities and so on – are all working very hard on this. Until this pandemic occurred it was the preoccupation of the world, frankly, in terms of emerging issues.

At a recent PMR that I did on electric vehicles and some of the moves of government, I talked about the importance of understanding what 1.5

degrees or two degrees difference in temperature is to all of us. We all like sunny days; we all like warmer weather, but I can tell you that when you think about what has already occurred in the world and what we're talking about in trying to limit global warming, I'll give you this perspective: Five degrees colder than pre-industrial levels, that was the ice age that we experienced in this province about 9,000 years ago. So two degrees warmer, going in the opposite direction, you can just imagine how substantial – and I'll even use the word significant – a change and effect that would be on our environment. In fact, we are already feeling this now.

It's interesting in our province, and given we have this long longitudinal occupation in the world's geography, if you look to northern communities such as Nain, where I live in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and so on, projections from as recent as 2018 have indicated that the – and by the way, I should just backup for a second. When we talk about limiting the average temperature in the world from 1.5 to two, we're talking about the average temperature all over the world. The unfortunate thing for our province and for Labrador and other northern areas is that it is more heightened, more accentuated and a greater problem.

For example, by the middle of this century – that's just 30 years from now – we're anticipating that Nain will see winters which will on average be 7.3 degrees warmer. Where I live in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, it's calculated as being six degrees warmer. Here, in this city, St. John's, it's 3.4 degrees warmer. For those who would like to go gardening and maybe some extended seasons, yeah fine, but you can just imagine what that will do to our oceans, to so many other systems around us and the change. We're talking 30 years from now.

Mercifully, we have started to make some progress and I'm pleased to be part. This is a collective effort, because the legislation that has been passed tackling climate change has always been passed unanimously in this House. I think that's a good thing. We can all take credit for it.

I was pleased to serve as minister of Environment and Climate Change in 2016 when we passed the first bill dealing with this, limiting

greenhouse gas emissions to large industrial emitters as Bill 34. It was passed in June of 2016. In October of 2018, we finally, after a couple of years of interesting arm wrestling with the federal government, saw an agreement for this province's climate change strategy. It was accepted by Ottawa as striking a clear balance between the economy and the environment and it did, most importantly, put a price on pollution.

Just last year, it was in March a little over a year ago, this province – and as I indicated in the preamble for the PMR – we released *The Way Forward on Climate Change*. This contains, as I said, several actions across the economy. It stimulates clean innovation and builds resilience to climate change. We've also had other moves on electric vehicles, home energy efficiency, transportation fuel efficiency and many other initiatives. So we are getting there. We certainly have a long ways to go. As I said, who would have thought that it would have taken a worldwide pandemic to really see serious progress around the world on reducing emissions?

I'm going to drop a little number here that people – for those that are listening here and in home, as infections of COVID-19 have surged around the world, guess what? Worldwide daily emissions of greenhouse gas emissions have dropped 17 per cent. Just think about it. Just because industries have shut down as a result of everything we have actually made greater progress on this problem than, I would say, over the last 10, 20 years.

It's also interesting that the UN suggests that we'll need to be reducing our GHGs about 7.6 per cent per year, starting now, going into the future, if we are going to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. So the virus itself has actually caused a bit of a positive feature. If you've been looking at some of the news reports of aerial photos of emissions over some of the larger industrial cities of the world you can see the air is actually clearing up, and it's quite dramatic.

It's interesting that Newfoundland and Labrador actually has a very interesting opportunity to play a key role here; hence the nature of the PMR today. We do enjoy relatively clean hydrocarbons. We have a strong regulatory

oversight, and we have a tremendous industry providing clean growth technology. This supports all aspects of the system of extraction through to production through to retail and so on in our province. And we certainly have among the lowest carbon intensity facilities in the world.

Just last month, the Premier and government and Minister of Natural Resources and many others joined the petroleum industry, the environmental industry, academia, labour all came together in support of the province's oil and gas industry. It was a great gathering. It was certainly unique; I have not seen anything like it. And there were a variety of interesting and important statements that from all those perspectives, they all saw the importance of – and I've heard it today in questions – the importance of the oil and gas sector.

Some 30 per cent of our GDP comes from this industry. It is incredibly important to us. I think the Opposition identified some 20,000-plus jobs – 24,000, I believe I heard – tied to this sector. So we need it to thrive. We need it to thrive in a way that we can demonstrate to the world that it can be done and we can keep on working towards net zero.

There's a key quote that I'd like to repeat by a colleague of mine and someone that I've worked with in the past by Kieran Hanley. He's now serving as the executive director of the Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Industry Association and I think puts in perspective what we're trying to do here today.

The success of Canada's offshore oil and gas industry is not just critical to the economy of our province, but it's also a centrepiece of our clean growth strategy. It is within our reach to set the global environmental standard for the offshore industry and the solutions we develop here can be exported worldwide for the betterment of the planet. There are opportunities for immediate investments that can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and set the stage for Newfoundland and Labrador to become an international leader in offshore clean tech.

Yesterday, I was noticing, I think it was the Third Party who was challenging the Premier in Question Period about the partnership that our

government is seeking with Ottawa. I would suggest that the partnership we are talking about is really about the role that we play in Confederation. It's interesting that the role we play in Confederation – and since 1949 we have shared with Canada. I often used to say, when Canada joined Newfoundland and Labrador in '49 – but we have, since that time, shared our history, our culture, our resources, our geography and our skill sets have all contributed to a great nation and we've played a great role in it.

The challenge we have is that we have this tremendous offshore resource, we have a tremendous industry which is frankly among the leaders in the world and it can help us get to the net-zero focus and objective of this PMR today. We need to do it and we need to do it in a way that we can all help tackle this worldwide problem because, unfortunately, what we are facing with climate change and global warming is way more serious than COVID-19.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to pause. I'll look forward to the debate and hear from the rest of my colleagues in the House of Assembly.

Thank you very much.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for his remarks and for moving the resolution.

On this side of the House we have no problem in supporting the resolution, which is that the "House supports the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador in their commitment to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050." This, of course, Mr. Speaker, comes from the well-known – or we all know the term at least – Paris accord which was signed generally in 2015, as I understand it, and ratified in 2016.

It's worth pausing a moment about that accord. It does indeed contain that requirement that signatories reach that state of net zero by 2050. That's 30 years down the road. It also has

another agreement in it, another requirement, which is much closer – it's only 10 years down the road. That is that signatories are required to – and Canada is a signatory – reduce their emissions by 30 per cent below the levels they were at in 2005. That's 15 years ago. Thirty per cent below the levels at 2005 and we're also signatories to that.

Of course, the hon. Member well knows, because of his involvement with environmental matters, that steps have been taken toward that object. In fact, there's data published by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador attempting to mark our progress towards the longer term goal of 2050 and the shorter term goal of 2030.

The thing about 2050, of course, is that being 30 years into the future, it's an easy thing to be in favour of because it doesn't threaten in any way anybody who's making a living and is employed; they'll be finished their career in all likelihood by the time 2050 comes along. It's a little bit like motherhood: It's easy to be in favour of it. The goal of 30 per cent reduction to 2005 levels is more of a stretch goal. That actually requires us to do a lot of things that may be somewhat painful in the meantime and it's only 10 years away.

I'm looking at a table here, which is from the government website. It's called *Management of Greenhouse Gas Act* Greenhouse Gas Reporting. We have data here up until 2016, but at that time it's just interesting to look because these are industries that are going to have to do something with their emissions if we're going to have a chance of meeting our goals, whether it be 2050 or 2030.

Who's the biggest emitter? It's Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, mainly at the Holyrood generation station. That's well over a million tons of greenhouse gas emissions per year. The next one is NARL Refining, about to change ownership; in other words, the Come By Chance oil refinery. That, again, is well over a million. The next one is not quite a million; it's Rio Tinto – Energy & Minerals. After that, it drops down to the hundred-thousand level and below, but the three biggies are the ones I just mentioned: Holyrood Thermal Generating Station, NARL Refining and Iron Ore Company

of Canada. Obviously those are the money shots right there.

It seems, Mr. Speaker, that the data could be more up to date because it's not yet updated to 2019 – in other words, last calendar year – so it's hard to tell whether we're actually making progress there and tell whether the large emitters have been able to achieve reduction or not. I hope the government will be updating the information. We are halfway through the following year, 2020, and we don't know what happened in 2019. If we're going to judge and milestone our progress towards these goals, then it behoves the government to post up the data that tell us if we're making progress or we're not.

I just take, in the limited time I have, the three WHEREAS clauses and pause on those before I get to the resolved clause. The first one says that “Newfoundland and Labrador's offshore oil is one of the least carbon intensive extractive crudes and emits significantly less greenhouse gas emissions than other oil-producing jurisdictions per barrel of oil extracted ....” I think we all agree that is a fact on the ground. That is factually true. It should be and is a boasting point about our offshore and the product that is produced on our offshore.

However, we shouldn't kid ourselves that it's well understood in the rest of Canada or that it's well understood by the Government of Canada. Which I fear tends to lump us in with what goes on in Alberta and doesn't recognize the important distinctions between the kind of product we produce and what typically gets produced in Alberta. The country needs to know that and I don't think the country does.

We need more exploration because the world still requires oil. If it's going to burn oil or use oil – and used for many other things than burning – ours is the most carbon-friendly oil for the world to be using. The world needs our oil. We're not flipping a switch and changing over to some other form of energy, away from oil and gas. That doesn't happen that way; we're going to need time for that. Our product should be at large in the world and in demand in the rest of the world for years to come as we carry out that transition.

The next clause deals with the dreaded Muskrat Falls. I'm pleased to note that the hon. Member's motion, the government-supported motion, actually has kind words for Muskrat Falls. It says –

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** I'm drawing attention on that one.

It says: “WHEREAS upon completion of the Muskrat Falls Hydroelectric Project and the forthcoming closure of the Holyrood Generating Station” – let's hope that can be accomplished – “98 per cent of electricity consumed in the Province will be generated from renewable energy ....” That, of course, is referring to Muskrat Falls.

Unfortunately, Muskrat Falls was conceptualized and construction started at a certain budgetary amount. Had it stuck to that amount, we'd probably still have a consensus in Newfoundland and Labrador that it is a visionary project in the way described in the WHEREAS clause in this resolution. In other words, it's visionary in the sense that it is part of the transition that this country, this province and the world must go through towards green energy.

Muskrat Falls plays an important role in that for this province. There's lots more work to do on that, of course, as the Minister of Natural Resources well knows and the mover of the resolution well knows. For example, electrification of our vehicle fleet and many other things that have been studied by the Public Utilities Board.

Had the project remained on the mark of the budget that it was budgeted for – which I think was in the vicinity of \$7.2 billion with interest costs, I believe – instead of doubling in cost, then we would probably feel differently about it and view it as a visionary project. Regrettably, that didn't happen. So you could say the concept may have been sound but the execution was poor.

Who was responsible for the execution? Nalcor. The execution was bungled by an outfit called Nalcor. We know all about that and the details

of it from the report of the commission of inquiry so recently tabled in this House.

It's not a secret that most Newfoundlanders and Labradorians did support the concept of Muskrat Falls back in the day. As the mistakes in the construction and the cost overruns piled up it lost favour more and more and more; but, as I say, the failing was in the execution, arguably not in the concept. It would've helped matters had the Public Utilities Board been mandated to use the most recent financial information and do a full review of the costs and all issues surrounding Muskrat Falls. That is, after all, the institution of democracy that we have for carrying out that kind of protective function for the public purse.

The Public Utilities Board has expertise in public utilities matters, power generation and the like, and it is my opinion and was at the time, because I signed a letter along with a number of other prominent lawyers asking that the government submit the whole case for Muskrat Falls to the Public Utilities Board. This, of course, as we know, never happened. Had it happened, it may well have been that the Public Utilities Board would've found enough matters of concern and even alarm about the project at that point in time that it would not have gone ahead. But that is speculation, it wasn't done. So that important safeguard of the public interest was not applied.

In any event, I come back to the point, which is simply that many on the government side back in those days – and I include the Premier in that – supported the concept, supported the principle. The problem arose in the execution, and that lies at the feet of Nalcor.

Now, a brief remark on the third WHEREAS clause. It remarks, as government resolutions are want to do, it congratulates the government on *The Way Forward on Climate Change in Newfoundland and Labrador* five-year action plan which outline various actions.

Regrettably, it's hard to tell, because of the data on the government website being out of date, what progress this five-year plan has had. We're all behind the goal of meeting our targets, as Canada has agreed to meet, both for 2030 and 2050, but what we need is we need measurable

goals and then we need to measure them and measure progress towards achieving these goals. Right now, with out of date data, that's hard to do.

Mr. Speaker, I just summarize by saying the public thinks that this is an issue, and since reference is made to the government's action plan, it's of interest to note that a major national poll was released this week. That poll said, "Percentage of residents saying the provincial government has done a 'good job' of handling each of the following natural resource and environment issues," and it's broken down by province. When you come to Newfoundland and Labrador, under environment and climate change, only 45 per cent think that the government has done a good job of handling the issue – only 45 per cent – which means a majority of people appear to think the government has not done a good job. So let's just say there is lots of room for improvement over there on the government side.

I have appointed myself, as Leader of the PC Party of Newfoundland and Labrador, a committee of eminent persons in the community, and they're charged with reporting to me – and they will do that by the end of July – on what is to be done to enable this province to meet its climate change goals by 2030 and, of course, by 2050. I'm looking forward to receiving that report.

Thank you.

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

**MR. BRAGG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is an honour and a privilege to speak on this private Member's motion before the floor this afternoon. There are a couple of things I would like to outline. The Member opposite who just spoke from the Windsor area – is it Windsor area? Yes.

**MR. CROSBIE:** Windsor Lake.

**MR. BRAGG:** Windsor Lake.

He made some reference to some data that's on our website. The most updated data we have is

to 2016-2018. I think he quoted from prior ones, so it is updated: 2018's are online; 2019's will be available in October of this year. It was correct on the major causes of emissions in our province, so the ones that came forward.

As I look around this room and I look at the many Speakers that are posted on the wall, I just wonder at which point did we talk about net zero in this House. If we look at Speaker Osborne, and Verge and then Wiseman, beyond that, I don't think net zero was even a term that was probably common in this House, or even the province for that matter, but net zero is something that is very important to us.

Net zero is defined as "where there are no carbon emissions, or where emissions are completely offset by other actions that remove carbon from the atmosphere, such as planting trees ...."

For us to reach net zero by 2050, we seriously have to look at the way that we conduct ourselves. The Member for Lake Melville talked about where we've been, and since COVID-19. It reminds me of the old saying that there's not a bad wind that don't blow someone good. COVID-19 has lowered emissions.

If you look at the airline industry, that's cut by 95 per cent, I'm told, Mr. Speaker. I live in a community which commonly you would look up and you would see a half a dozen airlines at any given hour of the day flying over our community. Today, it's a rarity, during the COVID-19 event, to see. Not that we need COVID-19 to continue any longer, but it just shows how something can affect the world in which we live to be so dramatic.

A pandemic throughout the world, believe it or not, effects our climate change, and to see that our temperatures may rise as much as the hon. Member mentioned. It may sound appealing that you're going to look at a seven degree temperature increase for a community in the northern part of our community, but look at the effects. Only earlier the hon. Member talked about an oil spill and the effect that would have upon their community of Postville. Can you imagine what seven degrees would mean to the Arctic, to the North, to the ice cap?

We have to compete and we have to do our best, and each and every one of us, in this room and who's listening and who is not listening, everyone in the world, not even the province, have to their part because 2050 needs to be a reality. It's a target we need to achieve for.

Someone may say net zero, is net zero achievable? Do you know what? If you don't have a target and you don't make something achievable, there's nothing to reach for.

In this province, we're looking at installing units where electric vehicles can travel the province. If you look back at 20 years ago, if someone said electric vehicle, it was a small toy that someone would have gotten for Christmas. The biggest electric vehicle in everybody's house is probably the vacuum cleaner or anything that moved around, but right now if you look at where we're changing.

We look at our transportation industry and where we need to go there. Then let's look forward to the new technologies because we can laugh and say, well, we won't have that many new technologies. Let's look back at the last 20, the last 50 years.

I remember a time, Mr. Speaker, when we watched Maxwell Smart and he had a shoe phone. Look at how the world is changed here in technology. Yes, we struggle in the province right now when it comes to opportunities for Wi-Fi and cellular service, but we have come so far in this world, it's unbelievable. It's unbelievable that companies like Tesla will launch a satellite over Africa that gives everybody in Africa Internet service and cellphone service. This is where we are. So to look at us for net zero, it's achievable.

Thirty years' time puts me at 86 years old. I hope I live to see it that we're at the point that we're at net zero or very close to it. Without aiming for this and without making a move on this, Mr. Speaker, what we really need – and my notes here says that 77 nations have made aspirational statements related to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 or earlier. What we need is a plan because, to date, no country – even including Canada, although we've announced it – does not has a comprehensive plan. What we need is a plan so that we all achieve for net zero.

We all do our thing. If you look everywhere now you'll see zero idle. A lot of people would laugh at me going through the drive-through. I only go through the drive-through now because of COVID-19. That forces me to go through the drive-through. I always park, shut off my vehicle and walk inside. Unbeknownst to me, I am making a difference.

If we can reduce the emissions in this province and throughout this world, and save this environment of ours for future generations to come – because you have to look at it, we talk about oil industry for our province. Yes, we're highly reliant on the oil industry but much of the world are reliant on the industry.

There was a time when coal was master. Coal was where everybody was – burning coal. I challenge anybody here if they could remember the last chunk of coal that was burned in their house or in their grandparent's house.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Greenspond.

**MR. BRAGG:** Greenspond might have had the last chunk of coal. I know gold was in Greenspond, I don't know about coal.

If you look at it, the opportunities we have to make a difference falls on all of our shoulders. Every single person in this Legislature must do their part, must promote it. I had a chance to speak on electric vehicles a few years ago – or last year I think it was – and talked about the (inaudible) energy. I've even changed both of my vehicles now to be lower consumption vehicles so I'm getting good gas mileage. I'm no longer into the one that's burning 20 and 22 litres per kilometre; I'm down to 6.5 and 8 in my vehicle.

It might still sound like I'm a terrible guy but I can't wait for the technology of the electric vehicle so I can go in peace for 400 kilometres, which I would need to get home. For us to do our part is vitally important.

I can't see anyone here who couldn't be challenged. I look and there are Members in this Legislature that probably came from a fishing enterprise or came farming. Those are other areas where we're looking at there are lots of opportunities for electrification.

If we look at our major buildings. The Member opposite talked about Muskrat Falls – clean energy. If nothing else, we can have clean energy right there. That would reduce Holyrood. Can you imagine what that would reduce our emissions in this province?

So we have to challenge ourselves, we need a plan, we have to get a plan out there. We have to be serious, and that has to be not political, it has to be personal for everyone. Everyone in this province, everyone in this country, everyone around the globe must make it their part to do their part to lower greenhouse gas emissions for this world that we live in.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would relinquish my chair to the next hon. speaker.

Thank you very much, Sir.

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Bennett):** The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John's Centre.

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

It's interesting when you look at this private Member's motion – I'll just call it up here. We like the resolution, especially the part: "... commitment to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050." It's the preamble and the WHEREASes beforehand that trouble us. Especially when we're describing oil as the least carbon intensive or we refer to Muskrat Falls with its problems and *The Way Forward on Climate Change in Newfoundland and Labrador*.

It's interesting because the Member across the House referenced the drop in emissions, and we've all seen the pictures of just how clear the skies have become. If there's anything clear about that – pardon the pun – is the fact that it shows how quickly we can probably turn the environment around in many ways, at least from the point of view of breathable air, acid rain, you name it.

Years ago it was the ozone, hole in the ozone. You might remember the whole notion of CFCs in aerosol cans. You may not realize that McDonalds at one time, certain fast food outlets,



served their food in Styrofoam packs. Now, they went to paper and, basically, because a lot of people at the time started saying serve it to me in a paper napkin, and I guess there was that grassroots approach to changing action and changing the environment, so you've gone to a renewable resource.

Net zero is achievable and I agree – our party agrees with the fact that net zero is achievable, but there are plans and there are plans. There are the plans that say, I plan to retire someday and then there are the plans that say, I plan to retire someday and here are the steps I'm going to take along the way, the hard targets to show that I will retire someday. There's no use saying I'm going to retire someday, well if I don't invest in some sort of a pension plan, along those lines. That doesn't work out, never does.

Britain set a target 10 years ago to be coal-free. They're coal-free for generating electricity. Things can be done and the turnaround can be done much more quickly. Now it appears that many jurisdictions such as Denmark and Norway have signed on or are signing on to the net-zero 2050. This target is grounded in hard science and from the intergovernmental panel on climate change; it's a noble aspiration. The commitment is largely optics for the most part in public relations if it doesn't have a detailed and concrete plan behind it.

For us to support this government's commitment, we would need to see a plan with benchmarks and targets in five-year increments. Who knows, maybe we'll be net zero long before 30 years. I have a funny feeling, long before 30 years comes up, we'll be into a greener economy and oil may be obsolete. Keep in mind at one time before oil, there was whale oil; that's what they used. Then oil in the ground was discovered. That industry died out relatively quickly.

If we were convinced by the past environmental and sustainability record of the government that you were indeed truly committed to this project, we might be more inclined to jump on board right now, but the track record has not been the most encouraging. I'll give you some examples of what causes us concern: the lobbying efforts and the recent decision to cut environmental assessments for oil exploration which has an

impact – or what the FFAW's fear, it basically has impact on their renewable industry. They have felt ignored and disrespected as a result of it and this is a sustainable industry. The refusal to entertain independent offshore environmental and safety entity – you might remember a motion in this House previous – fish harvesters being left out of the loop on seismic decisions.

More generally, we have the current troubling behaviour of ministers concerning the natural areas system plan and the Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council. There's the lax attitude toward salmon aquaculture, impact on marine environment and wild salmon. Then, there's Ragged Beach and the East Coast Trail getting no protection, even though it could be easy to do so. Let's not forget the methylmercury mitigation at Muskrat Falls. And what about the all-in-one-on-oil news conference that was a snub to the thousands of young people in this province concerned about climate change and their futures?

Think about the marches we have attended that have been out here. Young people are looking for change; they are concerned. We have heard the comments: Well, they're foolish; what do you think this province is built on, this world is built on? But you know what? I have a lot of faith in this group of young people that they're not bound by these fears; they will set the future for us whether we're on board or not – period. They will be the innovators. If I find a way to get off oil, they will be off more quickly than we think, so part of it here is we have to tap into that resource.

We cannot sweep all this aside, about the actions and inactions, by simply saying that we're now all in or we now like net-zero 2050. We need more. We are having trouble supporting this as written because it will condone weak behaviour and we don't wish to be a collaborator to weak behaviour and weak action. To be clear, our party believes in green jobs and a sustainably economy. We want to see a sensible plan – I'm going to say that again – a sensible plan to ween ourselves off oil, not all at once but a plan with hard targets and measurable outcomes.

That is where the 2050 commitment is simply kicking the can down the road for 30 years. You've heard that phrase usually in terms of the

economy. We have to do something about the fiscal problem now. We can't kick it down the road for 30 years for our children. In effect, if we are inactive on climate, that's exactly what we're doing for our young people. We're solving a fiscal problem by creating an environmental deficit.

With teeth, this plan could be very important and even critical; otherwise, this plan, without commitment, sounds more like a recipe for waiting and stalling. How does simply announcing a 2050 deadline without details qualify as fast moving?

If this is about showing the federal government that we're all in on oil and we need to show that the NL NDP are supportive of federal efforts, then we will say unequivocally to the federal government we cannot support this motion as written because it does not go far enough. It's missing teeth. We want benchmarks and targets. We want programs and incentives in five-year measurable plans.

We have offered and will offer to continue to work on building concrete initiatives such as this. We are the party to make the concrete proposals on how to go and do it through a Select Committee on economic recovery. So far we have not been taken up on this.

We are not prepared to write a blank cheque. It's not going to happen. Someone must keep their eye on the ball of sustainable development and that task appears to fall onto us.

With that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I put forward the following amendment. I propose the following amendment to the private Member's motion, seconded by the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi, as follows: that the final clause of the motion be amended by adding immediately after the year 2050 –

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, please!

Your seconder is not in.

**MR. J. DINN:** Then the Member for Labrador West.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**MR. J. DINN:** I figured that. I was waiting to see if someone was going to call me on it. You never know what the rules are here sometimes.

The final clause of the motion be amended by adding immediately after the year 2050 a comma and the words, "which will include detailed multi-year plans with clearly defined hard targets. I believe we have the support of the party moving this motion." Whether you need to take this under advisement, Mr. Speaker, I'll leave it to you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** This House will recess shortly to review the amendment.

### Recess

**MR. SPEAKER:** Are the House Leaders ready?

Order, please!

We have reviewed the amendment and found that the amendment is in order.

The Member for St. John's Centre.

**MR. J. DINN:** I don't always win amendments but when I do ...

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

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

I will call upon people to support this amendment. To continue, net zero 2050 assumes that Muskrat Falls will counteract the emissions from areas such as offshore so we don't have to impose the maximum emission reductions on the oil patch. It assumes that we won't need the Holyrood Thermal Generating Station, so what's the plan in relation to that?

Of course, we know that the rationale for Muskrat Falls is that it would eliminate Holyrood's high emissions, but right now we're not sure when Muskrat Falls is going to be up and running. We know when the first payment is due. We're not sure when it's going to be up and running.

Part of the whole aspect of developing a plan is the contingency plans, the what-ifs, the Plan A, the Plan B. I think it was in *Rare Birds* you have

to have a Plan B. We know that in February the Nalcor CEO, Stan Marshall, said that the reliability concerns with the Labrador-Island Link software could cause the company to continue extending the life of Holyrood, the power plant, for the foreseeable future, certainly longer than 2021. We know there are always going to be reliability issues with the Labrador-Island Link, especially in the winter.

In a recent excerpt from Prime Minister Trudeau's campaign speech he noted that putting a price on pollution, protecting our oceans, the phasing out of coal, the banning of single-use plastics: these aren't piecemeal policies but crucial parts of a larger plan. I guess that's the other aspect here. We don't want a piecemeal approach; we want to see some coordinated plan, realizing fully that plans, once they hit the road, might necessarily have to change.

We wonder how does the recent loosening of environmental protections on seismic testing protect our oceans exactly? What about the FFAW concerns? They do not feel that they are protected. We know that Prime Minister Trudeau said that businesses are stepping up too, but not fast enough. We need them to act, because as a government and as citizens we can't do it alone. Are oil companies doing their part? Will they do more? We know that other companies are moving faster than the oil companies in resolving this issue.

We do have to move faster than before. We have to be like the young people, the generation coming after us. They're hungry for change and we need to make sure that this world is there for them. We know that federally the New Democratic Party climate change plan talks about creating at least 300,000 new jobs and building the clean energy future.

Part of this plan should be about building this clean energy future. Not about simply reducing to net zero, but how do we capitalize on it and create the employment here. There has been much talk and much discussion here about how do we start growing our own economy, everything from PPE, Mr. Speaker, to tourism here at home, to even the bottled water. How do we turn a green economy into something that benefits us? We can't just simply say we need

oil. Yeah, but, you know what, we have to have confidence in ourselves to do a bit more.

For that reason, seeing that you're looking up at the clock, Mr. Speaker, and I know my time is running out rapidly, I will basically say a plan with hard targets is something that – we can support this plan, this motion. Also, hopefully we can come up with a plan that not only gets us to net zero, but also turns our economy into a robust, green economy.

Thank you.

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

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the Members who have spoken on the private Member's resolution already. I want to thank the Member opposite for the amendment, which is one that I think we'll be supporting, as you know.

However, there is room I think for clarification, some of the comments that would have been by some Members. I just want to talk a little bit about the regional assessment and why that was important both to the industry, to the province and really of a national interest. This was about, as the Member opposite mentioned, about oil and gas exploration. I wouldn't want anybody to think that this doesn't come without the appropriate amount of assessment that would be required to protect our environment.

I think what makes us unique, Mr. Speaker – and this is really around a net-zero-by-2050 resolution that we want to support here and we should support unanimously as a Legislature. Getting to net zero by 2050 is not something that has been just talked about recently for us. There's been a lot of planning that's gone on, a lot of work that has taken us from where we are today, from either where we were back, even as late as 2016. I'll go over some of the key things that have been happening already. This is just not a recent response, this is indeed discussions we've been having as a government going back to early 2016.

Mr. Speaker, I would say if you look at our platform that we ran on in 2015, this was all part of this. We implemented many of the actions that would have come out of this. I think all of us, as we look at our economies and our society in a general sense, even from our Members here, there are not a lot of people, not a lot of electric cars that I would see, vehicles that I would see in the parking lots. As a matter of fact, I think there's probably only one of the 40 Members here, so there's lots of rooms for improvements, even with the comments we would see that are made even within our own Members.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak a little bit about the regional assessment, just to clarify some of the comments that have been made. If you look at the resource we have offshore Newfoundland and Labrador – and even though this particular resolution is how we get to net zero by 2050, I want to mention that the world today, as we know it, still has a significant demand on oil. That is something we must take into consideration as we transition a society, an economy, from where we are today as we transition to net zero by 2050. It has taken many, many decades to get us where we are today, where 60 per cent of the energy demand in the world is determined by some kind of oil.

Mr. Speaker, what we refer to here is this is really a transitional period as to getting us from where we are now to where we want to be in the future. It will take some time. So when you look at the areas that must change, if you look at large industry, as an example, in Newfoundland and Labrador, it's about 35 per cent of our greenhouse gas emissions. So it goes without saying, to get to net zero by 2050, there is a significant focus we must put on large industry, and that is exactly what we're doing.

As an example, if you look to our oil and gas industry – and I think all countries, including Canada, back in 2015 and prior to that were making decisions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. So either we look at the Paris accord or Copenhagen, all the resolutions and decisions that were made in place by world leaders, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is what we all want. So we must put in place a mechanism to allow that to happen.

In the backdrop of all of this we are using oil. We are using oil, some 90 million to 100 million barrels a day, to support the energy sector. It's not that we can replace oil overnight, so we must transition out of oil. If you're looking for a way to do that, you must look globally to the jurisdictions that actually can have a least carbon footprint per barrel on oil. Offshore Newfoundland and Labrador does that. We've been able to do that, and from a carbon-per-barrel intensity we have some of the best resources in the world, and other people that actually monitor this stuff would verify what we're saying.

So that is the reason why this regional assessment, to allow industry to go out to make sure that some of the best transition oil that we would have available to us would be able to use to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from a global context. That is why this regional assessment is important to us.

The focus of this private Member's resolution is on net zero by 2050. I've already said that large industry in Newfoundland and Labrador is about 35 per cent of the greenhouse gas emissions. Transportation, by the way, which is what we would see in just about all jurisdictions, is about 34 per cent. So this is about all of us here, as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, how we move about, how we access services. That is about 34 per cent. One way we could actually reduce that is to have more electric vehicles available.

When you look at decisions and programs that we have put in place just recently by putting up charging stations, making that available – and I think one of the Members who spoke before me made mention of this – this is important as we transition from gasoline driven and diesel-driven vehicles, we move into an era where there will be electric vehicles. These are some of the things that we've been able to do.

Also within Newfoundland and Labrador, from an electricity point of view – so these are people that were using, let's say, diesel generators, Mr. Speaker. There's an RFP that has been put out from the Department of Natural Resources as part of the plans that we've been putting in place to get those communities, those 20-odd communities, primarily in rural and remote

communities, to get their carbon emissions reduced as well. We can do that, whether we use a complement of solar, wind and so on, or looking for small hydro projects.

Mr. Speaker, this work is ongoing. We know that this takes time, but this is part of the plan we're putting in place to get to net zero by 2050.

Buildings; we still have a number of buildings – and even our residential dwellings in Newfoundland and Labrador that use amounts of home heating fuel. Mr. Speaker, over time, part of the plan would be to switch those residences and those large buildings that we have in our province, to get them into a greener option. They could be a combination of hydro, could be a combination of wind, solar and so on.

So you know where I'm coming from when I talk about this, this is in a transition period. This is the reason why some people might think that 2050 might seem like a long time but when you look at our world and the economy that's so dependent on oil and gas in its day-to-day business, it will take some time.

We have a lot of creativity within our minds and young people in Newfoundland and Labrador. It has been mentioned already, about some of the people who have been joining in in reducing and looking for an action plan. Mr. Speaker, I met with many of them. I met with quite a few of them. The ideas coming from them was in recognition that this is the state of the world today and that we are dependent on fossil fuels, but they agree that this is not something that can happen quickly. We must transition out.

I would also say, Mr. Speaker, we look at it as a source of fuel, but it's not just fuel. When we look at what drives our vehicles, we can replace that with electric vehicles, but you look at this room itself, if you look at the things we see just right in front of us, the things that are using the petrochemical industry. Some would argue somewhere around 50 per cent of the oil and gas that's produced in the world today will go to support the petrochemical industry. It could be the chairs we're sitting on, it could be the desks we're using, it could be even some of the clothes that people wear, still come from the petrochemical industry. Let's not forget, it's just not the fuels we use to drive our vehicles or how

we use energy within our buildings, there are many other components of fossil fuels and the petrochemical business that we see.

Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. We've been putting a plan in place, which started, really, back in June 2016; whereas, as a province, we announced our greenhouse gas emissions reductions. I think the mover of the motion mentioned this today. That was just six months into our mandate, Mr. Speaker, we were able to put together our greenhouse gas emissions reduction plan.

This was all part of looking at a calendar that got very busy in 2016, because I know I was very proud to be able to chair one of the early meetings on behalf of all the premiers within the country, early in the spring of that year, when we started laying the framework for the Pan-Canadian Framework, which took place in December of that same year. Within one year of forming government, we were able to put in place a provincial plan and be part of a signatory where 93 per cent of Canadians, as a population, were part of a Pan-Canadian Framework for greenhouse gas emissions or for climate change. That all happened in one year. It didn't stop there, Mr. Speaker, as our march to net zero by 2050 continued on into 2017 and into 2018.

The frameworks took some time in the making, but, as a province, we must all be proud of the people who live here, in support of the people who are coming behind us, the next generation of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, two things: safeguard the future, safeguard our environment for the next generation and for future generations; but also we much keep in mind that we put this plan in place, safeguarding the people that we have who use those services today. There are a lot of people in our province who rely on industries like the oil and gas industry for their livelihood today.

To think that we can actually put in place measures to take net zero that can happen within a few years would not be prudent; it would not be responsible. So we do it over time, remain competitive and also think and never forget that we are not in this world alone; we are a piece of it. We are one province, a component of greenhouse gas emissions, but it doesn't stop within one province. When that gets emitted into

the air, it has a profound impact all over the world.

We can have a part to play when producing and putting in place good transition oil, as an example, that the world will still use, with a lower carbon footprint, where in a general sense, we put in place measures to reduce everybody's greenhouse gas emissions.

I want to talk a little bit about that, why that's important because that continued. I took you from 2016 to 2017 into 2018; there were a number of initiatives that were taken. Mr. Speaker, in 2018 and 2019 some big decisions were made on behalf of all of Atlantic Canada when the four premiers agreed that Newfoundland and Labrador were producing more hydro at the time. We were a green province when you compare to the use of electricity but we could help other provinces.

As the four Atlantic provinces, we agreed to look at options of opportunities in Newfoundland and Labrador; as an example, how we could get places like Nova Scotia off its coal energy. What a lot of people wouldn't know is that Nova Scotia currently uses 1,400 megawatts of energy but it's driven by coal. New Brunswick would be around 400 megawatts of their electricity comes from coal. We could help them, working together by putting in better transmission infrastructure. We can use the hydro opportunities, the potential that we have in our province here in Newfoundland and Labrador, to help them get off coal which would make the whole Atlantic Canadian region greener, getting them closer to net zero.

When you look at all these options – putting in charging stations for vehicles, getting our 34 per cent down and lower, making sure that the offshore industry we work with them, work with that industry to advance 2030, understanding that if they're going to do business in this province they, too, would have to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. As large industry work with places, as been just mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition with North Atlantic as a refinery, work with them to get their greenhouse gas emissions, Mr. Speaker. Do it over time, do it strategically, industry at a time and do it, making sure that we protect the jobs of

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and continue to attract investment, but also keeping in mind that we have potential to help other provinces reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Speaker, I can remember conversations that I would have had with the prime minister, many federal ministers and other premiers and I can envision a Canada where from Quebec to Newfoundland and Labrador it could be net zero and we could do that by 2050. Newfoundland and Labrador would play a significant role in getting Atlantic Canada down to net zero by 2050.

We have the untapped resources right here in hydro, Mr. Speaker, in wind power and other resources. I can tell you, with the innovation and the creativity that we have and some of the great, brilliant minds that we have in Newfoundland, there are a lot of opportunities in clean, green energy growth that we see within what we have in our province. We can actually do this as a population.

We cannot be followers but we can be leaders in all of Canada. That is the reason why this legislation today, we need to send a message, not only to this province but to this country that we can be net zero by 2050. We can do it strategically and we can do it with a plan, because we have the resources and we have the people here to make sure that this plan is successful.

Mr. Speaker, like everyone else in this Legislature, I want to make sure that we leave this province to a generation who is able to protect its environment, leave it in a better place, making sure that we will always be prudent and keep in mind that we're always vigilant about the greenhouse gas emissions that we put into our atmosphere.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for this opportunity. I thank this Legislature and I ask you to unanimously support this resolution. Send the message that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians want to hear. Send the message that Canadians want to hear.

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

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

**MR. LESTER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is a topic and PMR, of course, that plays dear to all of us. Over this past three months I had the opportunity to speak many different people about the environment. There is, I guess, a silver lining within this pandemic cloud – and the Member for Lake Melville alluded to it – that because people are not travelling, because we're not conducting what we consider normal business, the environment has been the benefactor. So it does show that this planet, this mother earth that we all live on, can repair itself if given the chance.

When we talk of climate change, this is not inevitable. We can reverse the effects of our existence on this planet. I was at the municipal dump just checking out how things are going down there – the regional dump, sorry – and one of the workers – I was speaking with him, of course, at a safe social distance – and I said: What are volumes doing at the dump these days? At that time dump volumes in receipt of trash or garbage were down about 50 per cent. He said to me: It makes you wonder what is the real pandemic on this earth. It's actually humans.

Within our quest to become neutral or net zero by 2050, there are many challenges, but within every challenge you will also find an opportunity – an opportunity to do things better, to be creative, to be innovative and to rise. Just as the Premier said – and it's a message that our party has been pushing over and over again – it's time to be leaders. It's not time to do a jurisdictional scan; it's not time to be a follower. It's time that we show what we're made of and how we can be the leaders reaching to the net zero.

If we are, indeed, going to be a big contributor to our country, our nation's goals of reaching net zero, of doing better, of becoming more environmentally sustainable, there's a cost that is going to come with that. If we have to bear the cost for the rest of the country, we should be duly compensated, and that brings us right to Muskrat Falls.

Muskrat Falls is a nation-building project. Muskrat Falls is a green project that is going to remove one of the top 10 single biggest producers of pollution and greenhouse gases in North America. Many people don't realize it but that's our own lovely Holyrood generating plant, who, for far too long, has been spewing pollutants into the atmosphere, but we usually don't see it because it goes out over the ocean, poisoning our atmosphere unbeknownst to us with, unfortunately, I guess, the experience of the few local neighbours in the Holyrood area that are constantly covered in soot and ash.

That's an embarrassment to our beautiful province. That's an embarrassment to us as a people. We have to do better. Yes, without a doubt, going to 2050, we need a plan. We need a direct work plan, which I'm happy to accept and support the amendment brought by the Member for St. John's Centre. This is not something for a political stage. This is not one of those pie-in-the-sky targets. We have to have a defined plan with small incremental steps towards that 2050.

Do you know what? I'd love to see us get there a lot quicker, because, as I said, when you talk about mother earth, and I don't mean to personify an inanimate object, but I really believe that our earth is a living entity. She will only take so much abuse before she starts to push back. That's what we're seeing in climate change. That's what we're seeing in unpredictable weather patterns.

I know the Member for Lake Melville commented on global warming as it's maybe a benefit to gardening. I can guarantee you from a farmer's perspective, it hasn't been. Because not only have we seen our temperatures vary, we've seen all probability and predictability disappear. Our weather systems now are much more extreme. We have times in Newfoundland – I typically say as a farmer, well, usually the rain stops the end of June, early July and we won't get a drop of rain until the end of August. As a child, I can never remember that happening, we always had intermittent rain falls, but mark it down this summer and see, I bet you we're going to have the hottest, driest summer on record.

Yes, we have been able to grow different crops, largely it's due to the advancements in

agriculture and seed production. Our environment, as I said, has become more volatile. You can no longer predict when you can plant. Two weeks ago, I was planting in our fields, which is kind of unusually early, but not because of this cold, wet rain, I'm off the fields again. So there's no prediction to it. When people ask me what kind of a spring are we going to have, I always say, well, the way the weather's going, I'll tell you in July. That's the only way to really predict it.

As it comes to agriculture, it does present a massive opportunity to reduce our emissions, largely due to transportation. As many of you know, we produce very little food on this Island and the majority of our food comes in by truck and trailer from all over the country and all over the continent as far away as Chile, actually. Even just recently I heard of stories of carrots coming all the way from China. As we all know, the best place to grow carrots anywhere in the world is right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MR. LESTER:** It's going to take us a while to get to the point where we are self-sufficient, even in carrots. So what we have to do is we have to reduce the cost to the environment of transporting our food and goods here to the province. One of those ways would be is we have to look at an alternative means of transport versus our regional concept of going through Port aux Basques. You can ship far more in a large boat more efficiently than you can in multiple trailers. So the less time we can keep those trucks and trailers on our roads, the better it is for the environment.

The Member for Waterford Valley, the Minister of Finance, pointed out that the bottles we have here on our table are not a locally produced product. So let's look at this bottle and see what kind of imprint and carbon footprint this has on our existence right here in the House of Assembly.

The water was sourced in Grey County, Ontario. That's about 4,500 kilometers away or thereabouts. This bottle of water was put on a truck – well, first of all, it was packaged in a petrochemical-based bottle, in a plant that may

have been powered by either fossil fuels or nuclear energy. Then it was shipped all the way to St. John's, Newfoundland where it was redistributed to us.

Meanwhile, we have so much freshwater here in our own province. We have to put measures in place – this could be part of it – that this bottle of water is taxed environmentally so much that nobody would even consider looking at it. They would go to the tap, turn on the tap and fill up a glass.

For those who do not have safe drinking water, we have to make a more concentrated effort to make sure that everybody in our province, both Newfoundland and Labrador, have access to safe drinking water coming out of the tap. That would make a huge difference. It will make a small difference, but many small differences added together make that huge difference that we need.

It's often quoted that we are only 1/65th of the emissions created in our country, but can you imagine if we and 65 other entities managed to get to net zero by 2050? What a place we would all be at that point, all small initiatives that make up a big effect.

In speaking to our offshore oil, in order to eliminate the demand for oil, we have to replace its need by alternative product. Until that happens, there will always be a demand for oil. Our province can be leaders in developing those alternatives but at the same time, back to the situation, we are in a challenge because we are dependent on oil revenues as a large part of our fiscal reality in this province.

We need to make sure that our offshore oil production is the most environmentally friendly and sustainable practice in the world. We need to market that. We need to encourage that our own oil be refined here. We need to see that our own oil is enhanced into more value-added products. The whole idea of not in my backyard doesn't work because if there is a demand, it will be filled. It will be filled by somewhere else who may not have such a conscience. That's a serious danger that we are approaching.

The federal government has to support our offshore oil industry much better than it is. If



not, the oil will be produced in other areas. Not only do we have to look at conventional forms of sale and production, one of the big aspects that we are missing in our offshore oil industry is the use of the natural gas that our production platforms are either reinjecting into the ocean floor or burning off in their flares. We have to do everything we possibly can in this province to encourage the establishment of a liquefied nature gas industry. We should be the hub of North American, European and Eastern centre for distribution of liquefied natural gas.

While I was initially very pleased with the residential home construction program, I became a little bit disappointed that we did not see more of an emphasis put on energy efficiency and home renovations. I believe that we need to put more of a priority on making our existing facilities, our existing homes and our citizens more energy efficient. While we all think that electricity will be a boundless source once Muskrat Falls comes on, the reality is in our peak times of year we will just barely have enough capacity to produce the electricity we need.

We're all familiar with flattening the curve, but we need to flatten the curve of our electrical use so that we have more electrical capacity to substantiate the establishment of business, to establish the conversion from fossil fuel-based heating mechanisms and transport over to electricity. As it stands right now we do not have that capacity.

The Premier did happen to speak of our undeveloped capacity. In this time when we are looking forward to increased electricity rates, that's a little bit of a tough sell. We have to look beyond what we're experiencing today. What are we going to say to our children and our grandchildren when it may come to a time when the world that we know and enjoy is a far more morbid and dangerous place?

As a farmer, when I go out in my fields, I always remember what my grand aunts, uncles and grandparents have taught me. The land that I tread on and the land that I derive my income from is not mine, it is only on borrow from the future generations. That is how we have to look at this province.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. Minister of Natural Resources.

**MS. COADY:** Thank you very much.

It's a pleasure here this afternoon to listen to the people of the House of Assembly speak with such passion on why we all want to have net zero by 2050, Mr. Speaker. I'm only sharing my time with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment so I only have a few moments, but I did want to talk a little bit this afternoon about the balance and how net zero will be derived.

Net zero refers to achieving an overall balance between emissions produced and emissions removed from the atmosphere. We all know we want to achieve this goal by ensuring we have – and I've heard many speakers talk about – a vibrant and strong oil and gas industry.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to refer to what I consider is a really interesting and solid letter from the Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Industry Association, who recently wrote the federal minister of Environment, Minister Wilkinson. I want to quote from the letter because I think it does speak to how the oil and gas industry in the province is part of driving net emissions down, how it's part of the solution and part of the transition to a lower carbon economy.

I'm going to quote from a letter that was written by Kieran Hanley, executive director of the Newfoundland Environmental Industry Association. He says, quote: urgent action is required worldwide in order to meet the objectives of the Paris accord, but we need to understand that such fundamental changes in the economy, its infrastructure and the habits of consumers that will be required will not happen overnight. Oil and gas represents upwards of 60 per cent of the global energy consumption. If the world has any hope of meeting greenhouse gas emission targets, it is clear that changes within the oil and gas industry have to be part of the solution.

Canada can play a major role in helping to lead this shift. Its offshore industry puts us in an excellent position in this regard. The type of oil in our offshore is highly attractive because of its grade. Light, sweet crude is the least impactful from an environmental perspective to process. The activities involved in the extraction of Canada's offshore oil is among the lowest and least carbon intensive in the world, 30 per cent below the international average, in fact. It is within our reach to set a global standard for decarbonization of the oil and gas industry. There are opportunities for immediate investment and impact.

Further significant emission reductions can be achieved by powering our offshore via subsea cable with electricity generated by our vast hydropower resources. Alternately, Canada's first offshore wind farm could facilitate the electrification of offshore operations, a fitting and powerful representation of the energy transition underway. Beyond these major clean growth projects, there's a myriad of other clean tech opportunities throughout the industry's vast supply chain: zero-emission supply vessels, electrified ports, major energy efficiency opportunities and digitalizing remote operations. There are enormous clean tech research, development and commercialization opportunities that can be exported worldwide and expanded through different ocean industries once commercialized – unquote.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to raise this and quote from the letter from the Newfoundland Environmental Industries Association because I think it speaks volumes for what Newfoundland and Labrador has to offer in the way of oil and gas development that will help us continue to lower the carbon per barrel that is emitted. I would much rather have a barrel of oil from Newfoundland and Labrador in the global supply chain with a stellar human rights record, its strong environmental record and safety record, and the lower carbon emission per barrel. I think it's very, very important.

Mr. Speaker, I only have a few moments, but I do want to also add to what the Premier was talking about. The clean power roadmap that we're investigating for Atlantic Canada is very important. As you heard the Premier talk about, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick wish to move

to a more renewable energy source. Newfoundland and Labrador has an incredible energy availability and we're working towards that.

We're also working towards electrification, switching our buildings from fossil fuel to electric heating, moving from existing furnaces and boilers as they move toward the end of their useful life, switching then to electrification. Fuel switching, of course, is incredible important, using our incredibly plentiful low carbon emissions and as well our renewal energy. Electrification is something that we are actively pursuing, Mr. Speaker.

Renewable energy for the 20 isolated diesel communities, the Premier mentioned that as well. We've already done an expression of interest. We're moving towards trying to have a more renewal energy solution. I speak of this at the federal-provincial-territorial tables on a regular basis, how Canada could be a world leader in moving from diesel communities, moving to more renewable ways and manners.

Mr. Speaker, I know my time is growing short so I'll leave it at that, but I do say I do support the amendment that was put forward by the Member opposite of the Third Party. I think it does add value to getting to net zero by 2050 in that having those plans, making those plans – I've given some of the plans to Natural Resources. I've given some of the targets that we're trying to achieve. Having those hard targets are going to be important.

I look forward to the entire House supporting this resolution and its amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MS. COFFIN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to start with a quote by Maynard James Keenan: Mom's gonna fix it all soon. Mom's coming 'round to put it back the way it ought to be. Learn to swim, learn to swim, learn to swim.

This is a reference to mother earth having enough of the damage that we have bestowed on this earth and how Mom is going to come around and put our environment back to way it was originally was meant to be.

So, in that context, I think it is high time for us to commit to a sustainable environment and tangible actions to improve the world in which we live. I see this PMR as a good beginning to do that and I will support this PMR because I believe in our environment, I believe that we need to preserve our earth and that we are all in this together and we must protect the world in which we live.

In that context, I would like to point out that the former minister of Environment when he announced the ambitious Climate Change Action Plan proposed back in March of 2019, so slightly more than a year ago, he stated at that time and I quote: “We know that some of it’s ambitious. We have not been successful in reaching our targets up to this point. But we’re going to work very hard to try to close that gap.”

Now, I haven’t gone back and checked exactly how hard we’ve worked or if we’ve attained any of these objectives yet, but I am quite concerned. I’m delighted that we have an amendment where we have agreed that we will put in place a plan with tangible targets to attempt to achieve net zero in 2050.

However, I have some reservations. My reservations come when in questioning why are we doing this right now – why the urgency right this very instant? We know that climate change is very important. We have had ample opportunity to address it in this House and I know we’ve had numerous debates already in this House. I will point out that we have a great number of other issues that we do need to address more imminently and more urgently and they are also tied to the development of our oil and gas industry.

Our oil and gas industry, of course, comprises an enormous share of our economy and an enormous share of our provincial budget, revenues and expenditures. As Members of the House of Assembly we have a fiduciary duty to ensure that we spend our public funds wisely and well.

I realize that what we are doing here today is shoring up our arguments for the federal government as we go to ask for support for our oil industry. There are more urgent issues at hand that come as consequences of development of our oil industry that we have not yet addressed, including rises in divorce rates, increases in housing prices causing unaffordability for individuals who are not directly employed in the oil industry. We have had gross distortions in our income distribution. We have had an influx and an increase in the sex trade in Newfoundland and Labrador. We have had an increase in drug use and abuse. And we have had an increase in gangs. All of these issues are equally as imminent – in fact, perhaps more so – as well as far more urgent and much more tangible. Yet we are doing nothing to prevent that.

So in terms of the timing of this, it is solely in response to our negotiations with the federal government to sustain our oil industry. And now, I do support our industry. I recognize that we must responsibly develop it with the appropriate mitigations for the negative and unattended, or intended consequences of the development of this industry. So our support, the support of the New Democratic caucus, is unconditional for this motion.

However, I will not stand for this motion and our support of it to be considered any sort of collaboration of a minority government. If we are going to continue as a minority government where we collaborate on initiatives together and we work to resolve our immediate issue of economic recovery and social sustainability – if we are going to collaborate on that there must be a concerted effort to see the values of New Democrats, as well as every other Member of the House of Assembly, in any recovery plan and that must be done in a way that engages appropriately and properly, and makes sure that the values and views of all individuals are reflected in that.

If we are going to continue to negotiate with the federal government, we ought to have better collaboration that I will suggest will include the other mitigating effects of negative consequences of our oil industry. I am very willing – and my party is very willing – to work with every other Member of the House of

Assembly to develop a recovery plan that will see better social and economic circumstances in Newfoundland and Labrador now and into the future, but there must be a clear plan; we must all be in it and we must all support that plan, and it must be for the betterment of the province.

Collaboration is absolutely vital. We have been more than willing, but we will no longer be a partner that is touted out whenever we are needed and then our suggestions are not acted on; they are put off and they are not respected. I think that if we are to work together to do this, we need to very diligently protect individuals, businesses and everybody in our society. That means true collaboration.

I realize that is a little bit of a tangent, but that goes to the transparency of why we are here today, and I think that is absolutely vital. I think that, perhaps, this might serve as lovely stepping point where we can begin collaboration, perhaps, again. Maybe we can find a new way to resolve our economic and social woes and our environmental woes that are facing us right this very instant.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do believe that is all I need to say about this topic. I do wholeheartedly support this motion. I think that it is laudable that we can have net-zero emissions by 2050. That is very achievable. I am firmly committed to that. I will contribute to the development of that plan; however, I am very cautious about many of the other things that I have already addressed.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to share that with you.

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

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

**MS. EVANS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm speaking today just to show my support for this private Member's resolution. I think that it's good to see everybody in the House all supporting this, the importance of it, because the impacts of global warming is very, very destructive not only to our economy, but to our lives, to our security, to future generations. I

think as responsible adults and as MHAs of this House of Assembly we recognize the importance of that.

Before I get into the details of the resolution and why I'm supporting it, I would like to say clearly that I do support our offshore industry. As a biologist, as a person that worked in environmental affairs for so many years with so many different companies and knowing the value of environmental protection, it may seem like a conflict. In actual fact, there is no conflict for me, because it's very, very important for us to understand what a clean energy efficient industry our Newfoundland and Labrador offshore industry is. It's something that we should all be proud of.

When we look at other oil production industries throughout the world, when we compare what we have, it's something that we should be proud of. Not only that, not only for the way it's run but for its footprint. As my fellow MHA for Lake Melville said, it's a clean energy. Not only that, they are making strides to reduce it even further, which is quite surprising because I think they're leaders.

Just getting back to the resolution now, it talks about the offshore oil, one of the least carbon-intensive extractive crudes. It emits significantly less greenhouse gas emissions than other oil-producing jurisdictions. This is throughout the world, but as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, who are struggling financially, this COVID has made things worse for our province.

When we look to our federal government – and I have issues with that – and we see the handouts that they've given to Alberta. What did they do? Did they buy a pipeline? I have to laugh at that. I think I'm allowed to laugh in the House. I'm not allowed to sing, not moistly anyway.

When I look at that and I look at something that we have offshore, how least carbon intensive extracted crude emits significantly less greenhouse gas emissions, this is an industry we should be proud of. Then we turn around and see the handouts that the federal government is giving to Alberta, and then we look at what's being offered to us. I think it's something that we should hold them accountable for, because

why is that allowed to happen? I really don't understand that.

Just looking at the next part of the resolution here it talks about Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project, forthcoming closure of Holyrood generating station and, therefore, something for us to be proud of; 98 per cent of electricity consumed in the province will be generated through renewable energy. That's the point made by my fellow MHA. It's a really good point. It's something that we need to be proud of as people here in the province.

People are just kind of holding their breath because they're expecting me to talk about Muskrat Falls and the impacts it's had on my district. They're expecting me to talk about the fact that none of that good, clean, so-called clean energy is going to be going up to my district. Mr. Speaker, it's really, really difficult to be proud of these clean hydroelectric projects when we're stuck burning fuel in our power generating stations and we struggle with our bills.

A lot of our older people are struggling to heat their homes. It's difficult, but I'm not going to dwell on that because there's not a lot of time and I really want to support this private Member's resolution.

I do want to say – and the reason why I came back to speak – the district that I represent is in Northern Labrador and the environmental changes are already here, and because I don't have much time I'm going to tell you when I realized we were in trouble, when it came to changes in the environment.

I was with some co-workers, we were walking down the road in Nain, Labrador, the most northerly community and it was January 10. There were five of us walking down the road, none of us had gloves on; none of us had caps on. I have to tell you, January in Nain, a normal winter was, if you were riding around on Ski-Doo, you would have to close your eyes every once in a while because if not your eyeballs would freeze and your eyelids would stick onto your eyeballs. That's how cold it was. There we were.

That wasn't the best of it. When we looked to where the ice should have been, the water was

there, breaking on the beach, and the only ice we saw was what was forming between the rocks and the water – January 10. I knew then that we were in for a hard time on the North Coast, because our transportation is through snowmobile in the winter. That's how we get our wood to heat our homes; that's how we hunt; that's how we fish. That's how we actually live. Global warming is going to change the environment and it's going to affect the way we live.

Thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Reid):** The hon. the Member for Lake Melville now to close debate.

**MR. TRIMPER:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank all of my colleagues in this House of Assembly for their eloquence, for their commitment to their words and I believe their sincerity and contribution. It's been a very productive couple of hours. Hopefully, years from now and generations from now, people will reflect back on this PMR and the support that it enjoys here on the floor today.

I just wanted to touch lightly on each of the Members because they came at it as we always do. People put a lot of effort into these PMRs and it's good to see. Each came at it with a different perspective.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about 30 years, and how things could be put off and maybe we can just worry about it at some point in the future, but I think the amendment that came from the Member for St. John's Centre and the welcome support that it enjoys here on the floor, I think, will certainly address that, and we will certainly get to it.

My colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment, I thank him. I liked his comments about the shoe phones, but while it was made in jest, he also spoke about the advancements in technology. We can find solutions to reducing our emissions, but, unfortunately, I'm a little concerned, as my

colleague from Torngat Mountains just said, much of the damage is already here. What we're trying to do now is stop any further damage.

I do thank the hon. Member for St. John's Centre for the amendment. I welcomed it as soon as I heard it and saw it. I thank you very much. He also spoke about the importance of having measurable objectives and targets. I welcome that. I think that's the only way we will get there.

The Premier, he has had a busy day, but I was glad he was here. I did want to add a certain little detail. I'm just going throw quickly on the floor; I'm watching the clock. A few years ago, we did some calculations around carbon pricing, carbon taxes and what it would take to – well, I'm going to back up. In the fall of 2016, I recall some very tense discussions in Montreal around climate change; I was leading the province at the time.

The proposal from the federal government at the time was absolutely unacceptable to this province. It really would have put undue pressure on our offshore oil and gas industry. So I was very proud of the position we took that day because the calculation was that we would have to have a carbon tax in excess of \$130 a ton before we would find some efficiencies in actually doing further measures to reduce emissions on our offshore. We are already running one of the best operations, not just in the country, but in the world. I remember that very well.

I also liked the Premier's words today. I will remember it: transition oil. I think that's a good way to describe what we have, and we have that opportunity here in the province.

The gentleman for Mount Pearl North, a nice correction on agriculture. You're absolutely right, Sir. As with ice and snow, where I tend to live, you're right, the unpredictable nature of climate change and what we're experiencing certainly is not good news for farmers who are trying to count on moisture coming when they need it.

The Minister of Natural Resources was there with a strong voice, of course, and fresh off a good session just recently with – as I suggested

in my remarks – industry academia, environmental industry and many others, all recognizing and contributing their support for the oil and gas industry.

The Leader of the Third Party about mother earth recovering – I'm going to talk about that in a second – and also looking for collaboration. The collaboration here on the floor today has certainly been very important. My colleague and former work partner in a helicopter doing a lot of environmental studies over the year, she ran out of time, but as always her words were very well said. I'm going to come back to her in a second.

As I said and as I've remarked, time is also a very important commodity. To get to 2050, it is only 30 years away and to achieve this net-zero target that we're talking about here today, it is only 30 years from now.

I was thinking back, 30 years ago, in about two months from now, I started working in the Soviet Union. I remember it vividly. I remember starting in to this place; it was the other side of the Iron Curtain at the time. I watched a superpower crumble based around decades of very poor decision-making, where you saw a lack of commitment to sustainability and how we extracted resources, but, also and just as importantly, to the communities. I watched cities collapse. I watched industries collapse. It was truly a shocking situation based around, again, very poor decision-making.

I worked in areas such as Chernobyl, the Aral Sea, salmon rivers to the north. Some of those are able to recover, and as my colleague, the Leader of the Third Party was saying, mother earth has an amazing resiliency. I've seen salmon rivers, which were so heavily polluted by industry, once that industry stopped with perestroika and glasnost, they recovered. We found we had the salmon stocks coming back, but other situations, Chernobyl, Aral Sea, I'm very sad to see we will never see it return to any semblance of normalcy.

Back to my colleague from Torngat Mountains, I wanted to mention a project, it's called SmartICE. For many of you have heard about SmartICE, it's an amazing collaboration between advanced technology and traditional

knowledge. A very key feature of Labrador and especially on the sea ice of Labrador, that's our highway. I look at the Minister of Transportation and Works and he knows this only too well, the importance of the ferry system and airplanes and so on getting to these coastal communities, but for coastal Labrador and a lot of the interior, ice is our highway. We rely on it, we depend on it.

SmartICE has had to come about because that traditional knowledge of how we get places where we can cross safely, it's no longer valid. You talk about the economic and the social, psychological impacts of climate change and the lack of action, the lack of bad and poor decision-making in the past and how it's affecting the northern parts of our province, it is very devastating. Remember that 7.6 degree Celsius projection in increase of temperature just again by 30 years from now is a very scary number.

As we rebuild our economy we can certainly find new ways to do things. We can find a new way of decision-making. We do have the resources. We've talked about the light elements of our Brent crude that we extract from our offshore, the way that we do it, the skill set and determination. We can make a great contribution, not only as the Premier and the Minister of Natural Resources were just saying, to our own jurisdiction, but certainly to our colleagues in Atlantic Canada, the rest of the country and, frankly, other partners internationally, the United States, where we can export some of this green power.

I've said this before and I want to reiterate it again today because I think, again, here's a key issue that we're facing, and it's around decision-making, and one that I've always been struck by, it's an Indigenous philosophy of decision-making. Decisions today need to be thought about and considered seven generations out. To me that's the best definition of sustainability that I think one can put out there. I think you instantly understand what that means: I need to think about the generations to come, what we are doing today and how it will affect those generations to come. It's really what sustainability is all about.

So when it comes to climate change, however, we're not just talking about the availability of resources; we are speaking about, frankly, our

own existence and that's seven or even fewer generations out when you start to look at some of the projections that are out there, and what may happen and what we're already seeing, unfortunately, happen.

Here's a name you haven't heard in a little while, Greta Thunberg and her Fridays for the Future, this amazing worldwide movement that was happening, and it was ramping up until this pandemic hit. She's been somewhat arrested, her and her colleagues, all around the world, including right in this city, right in my town, this province, across the country, and this youngest generation crying out to all of us in this room, all leaders in this country, to say we need to be thinking now about them. They're saying we want to enjoy a world like we have enjoyed, even with its warts, even with its challenges, even with its issues. They at least want to be able to enjoy much that we have taken for granted. They are screaming at us.

Once we get back to allowing large groups to gather, I'm sure we will hear from them again and I welcome it. There are many wise words from this young generation and several of my colleagues have spoken about that today.

I'm going to weight in on another issue here, I want to do it in as delicate way as I can. I see it very similar to the debate that's on the floor now about the Natural Areas System Plan. It's not about taking from anything, it's about giving to the next generation. What we're trying to do is celebrate, ensure that the biodiversity that we enjoy in our province is there for the future generations. We need to consider our own individual collective provincial carbon footprint and what it means for the future. We do need to act now.

As I said, I think that we all have thoughts for reflection. I thank again the Member for St. John's Centre for the amendment. I feel it is actually the teeth that we're going to need for all of us to be able to look and say: yes, we did that decision that day; we supported that decision and look, lo and behold, we made progress.

To that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you and I thank my colleagues for a very interesting PMR.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** We first have to vote on the amendment, moved by the Member for St. John's Centre. It's been read into the record of the House and Members have had an opportunity, if they wish, to get a copy of that amendment.

If the House is ready, I'm going to call the vote on the amendment first.

All those in favour of the amendment.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, amendment carried.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now we're going to move to vote on the main motion, as amended.

If the House is ready?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

Given the hour of the day and in accordance with our Standing Orders, I now adjourn the House until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.