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HANSARD

*Speaker: Honourable Scott Reid, MHA*

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September 17, 2020

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**MR. SPEAKER (Reid):** Are the House leaders ready?

Government House Leader ready?

Opposition House Leader ready? Yes.

Third Party House Leader ready? Yes.

The independents ready?

Okay.

Admit strangers.

Order, please!

Okay, we're going to open the broadcast now.

### Statements by Members

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today, we have Members' statements from the hon. Members for the Districts of Lake Melville, Stephenville - Port au Port, Conception Bay East - Bell Island, Labrador West, St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

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

I'm very pleased to advise that Muriel Andersen has just made a wish and blown out the candles on her birthday cake, and she did it in typical independent style – all on her own. She also raised her six children on her own, in Makkovik, as her husband had passed away at a young age.

The respect for her determination is such that she is known across Labrador as Big Gram or Aunt Mu.

Born before the 1918 pandemic, she grew up feeling the devastating effects of that outbreak. She is now living through another at the long-term facility in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Usually, members of her family and friends gather to celebrate with this remarkable woman on her birthday. I have attended previous events bringing greetings and, most importantly, her favourite – root beer. While visits in recent

months have been limited, she continues with her positive outlook and infectious smile.

Ms. Andersen has also shaped the composition of this House of Assembly, having been the mother or grandmother of three MHAs, including the present Member for Torngat Mountains.

I therefore ask all my colleague in this Legislature to congratulate Muriel Andersen on her 103rd birthday.

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

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

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

The local food bank had closed due to COVID-19. Our Lady of Perpetual Help Council 3742 took on emergency food distribution in our community. At the height of the pandemic, they saw a need and, without hesitation, created an efficient and effective drive-through food distribution operation.

This small team – Clyde Russell, Bob Miller, Conrad Benoit, Joe Eckert, Paul Kane, Garfield Jesso and Tom O'Gorman – assumed responsibility for fundraising, financial accounting, food ordering, donations, publicity and the safe operation of the program. The team expanded the service to the Bay St. George area, where food banks had also closed.

The team networked regularly with a wide range of community partners and sponsors, including Rotary, Town of Stephenville, Royal Canadian Legion, St. Stephen's Parish, the Lions Club, Bay St. George Status of Women Council, Stephenville emergency services, Food First NL and others. Throughout, our Food for Families Program received outstanding community support with individual donations both large and small.

Starting April 17, the program ran for 12 weeks, served 572 families, distributed 13,500 pounds of food, costing \$32,000. Volunteers expended 876 man-hours. This is a prime example of community-minded people and organizations filling a critical need in times of crisis.

I would like all Members of the House to congratulate this wonderful group of volunteers and all the people involved with this program.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island.

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

I acknowledge a leader from my district who, for his entire adult life, devoted his life to the spiritually, socially, educationally and physically well-being of our provinces citizens. I speak of Archdeacon Ron Lee, who in his 86th year is still a very active citizen in our province.

From his days as a young boy fishing in Petty Harbour to travelling the province as an employee working on the Newfie Bullet, to travelling the Coast of Labrador aboard the *Kyle* as an educator, Reverend Ron Lee has been a pillar of strength and guidance, not only for the parishes he served in, which number in the dozens, but for every other citizen of those communities.

He has been a leader in serving the people of our province in Labrador, the West Coast, South Coast and Central Newfoundland, but it was the leadership role he took after returning from retirement to serve the people of Bell Island as the Anglican minister that I got to call him a friend.

Ron not only was a major part of the building of a new church in the community, but was a driving force in promoting inclusion of all citizens through the church's outreach centre. Never one to shy away from making his views known, Ron would look beyond the religious boundaries to ensure that all citizens' issues were addressed on the island.

I ask all Members to join me in thanking Archdeacon Ron Lee for his dedication and service to the people of Bell Island, and our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Today I recognize Peter Blackmore, an outstanding member of our community who has dedicated his life to spreading kindness and generosity in any way he can.

Peter is known for his love of fishing and is a pro at catching ouanancihe. Recently, Peter was gifted fly-tying supplies from the family of a community member who had passed away. Peter saw this as an opportunity to give back to the community. He tied salmon and trout flies for a pay-what-you-can donation and all proceeds would go to the Janeway Children's Hospital. His original goal was to raise \$500.

One day he ran into a friend who told Peter about the birth of his son. Peter's friend expressed that he was forever thankful that his son, who is now living a healthy life, thanks to the role the Janeway Children's Hospital plays in the lives of the people of this province. Hearing this, Peter decided he would do more. To date, he has raised over \$3,000.

Today, I would like to acknowledge Peter Blackmore. I encourage all Members of this hon. House to join me in recognizing his kindness and generosity and thank him for his dedication to Labrador West and the greater community.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

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

Today, I honour a gentleman in my district who has been bestowed the Newfoundland and Labrador Award for Bravery, Mr. Gary Briffett.

On August 15, 2015, three children were playing on a raft on Terra Nova Lake. Wind took the raft to the center of the lake. Two children were able to get back to shore. One child, Jenna Phillips, was thrown into the lake and managed to hold on to the raft for a little while.

People on the shore were unable to get to the raft. An onlooker, Nelson Rose, had noticed a WaveRunner on the beach in front of Mr. Briffett's cabin and went directly there to ask for assistance. They launched the WaveRunner and raced to the area of the incident.

By this time Jenna had released her hold on the raft.

Mr. Briffett jumped into the water and secured Jenna to his life-saving vest. Due to the high winds, the WaveRunner overturned, sending them back into the lake.

Eventually they were able to get control of the WaveRunner and were able to get back to safety.

I ask the House of Assembly to join me today in giving Mr. Briffett a round of applause for his heroism.

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

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

#### Statements by Ministers

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

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

I want to acknowledge in this hon. House a gentleman who has dedicated his life to sport in this province.

Carl Lake has been a pillar in our provincial sporting scene since his early days as a ballboy at St. Pat's Ball Park in St. John's in the late 1950s. After a brief tenure as a player, Carl found his true love on the baseball field in 1967 when he began umpiring games. From that point onward he became a fixture at St. Pat's, either behind home plate or on the bases.

Local games, provincial contests or national championships, Carl has been umpiring baseball games in this province for 53 years. And on September 1, Carl officiated his final contest at his beloved St. Pat's Ball Park.

Inducted in 2006 as a builder in Baseball Newfoundland and Labrador's Hall of Fame,

Carl recently told the local media St. Pat's was his heaven. We should all be blessed with Carl's advocacy for baseball and provincial sports in general, through his time with local media and on his own website, SportspageNL.ca – please check it out; it's a gem for local sports in our community.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating my friend Mr. Carl Lake on 53 years of dedication to the sport of baseball and for his continuous promotion of local sports in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

On behalf of the Official Opposition, I join with the minister in congratulating and thanking Carl Lake on his contributions to local sports.

Mr. Speaker, Carl Lake is a pillar of the sporting community in this province. His love and passion for all sports, especially baseball, has inspired many. Mr. Lake recently retired after 53 years as an umpire in the province's baseball community. I know players, coaches, fans and sports organizers will miss his dedication and professionalism on the baseball diamonds.

Mr. Lake has spent his life promoting local sport; thus, I believe it would be suiting to take this opportunity to encourage all residents of the province to also support local and amateur sport. From the soccer field to the hockey rink to Mr. Lake's home on the baseball diamond, we should all follow his lead to encourage volunteers and cheer on athletes whenever possible.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

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

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

Congratulations to Mr. Lake on his contribution to sports in the province. His long career and commitment to the sport are admirable. He's an inspiration to all athletes and umpires and I am delighted to know that the little bit of heaven that is St. Pat's exists in St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and play ball.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, today I acknowledge September 21 to 27 as International Week of the Deaf.

This occasion is celebrated by deaf communities around the world – individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing and who share a common visual language. In Canada, Mr. Speaker, that language is American Sign Language.

Newfoundland and Labrador deaf culture and American Sign Language enrich our province's colourful personality. As Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities, I am pleased to see this year's theme is "Reaffirming Deaf People's Human Rights."

Our government recognizes that accessible communication is paramount in ensuring a fully inclusive province where all citizens have equitable access to information and opportunity. Access to sign language and services in sign language are critical to the full realization of deaf people, and our province has shown true leadership in this area.

In keeping with our commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which strengthens linguistic and cultural viewpoints of deaf people, we were one of the first jurisdictions in the country to include American Sign Language interpretation at COVID-19 media briefings.

During International Week of the Deaf, I invite all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to recognize the language and culture of the deaf community, as well as accomplishments and contributions that the deaf community make throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite my colleagues to join me in signing happy International Week of the Deaf.

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

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

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

I would like to thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement and for teaching us a little piece of the American Sign Language to celebrate this week.

As the minister already acknowledged, September 21 to 27 is known as International Week of the Deaf.

This year's theme of "Reaffirming Deaf People's Human Rights" allows citizens who are part of the deaf community to know that their rights are respected and that they have our support and there's a good system in place for them.

The province has made great strides to include American Sign Language in all government media briefings. Access to government services for people with disabilities is critical and we still need to continue to do more for this sector that is so important to our society.

I join the minister in inviting all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to recognize the language, culture, contributions and accomplishments of the deaf community right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker

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

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement and join him in recognizing September 21 to 27 as International Week of the Deaf.

Reaffirming deaf people's human rights is essential in creating an inclusive and a just society. I compliment the government's recognition of the importance of accessible communication and its inclusion of ASL interpretation at COVID-19 media briefings.

With this in mind, I call on government to go one step further and to take concrete steps to address the systemic deficiencies outlined in the recent report by the Child and Youth Advocate with regard to deaf education.

Thank you.

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

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, COVID-19 has tested the limits of small business in our province, across the country and around the world. In the face of such challenges many local business have been working hard to adjust – proving their resilience by pivoting in innovative ways to continue to reach clients and serve both here and abroad. I would like to take a moment to just highlight a few of these remarkable companies.

PolyUnity, a medical tech start-up formed by three Memorial University medical students, has shifted its product offerings and are now using its technology to develop personal protective face shields for front-line health care workers.

JRAS Medical Inc. has recreated a version of its product which originally assisted congestive heart failure patients in a clinical setting to now allow patients to use it from home, reducing the risk of exposure to COVID at a clinic and reducing patient load.

BioAtlantic Medical Services has recently increased its focus on automating ventilators to help hospitals prepare for COVID-19. And TotaliQ has offered a free version of its software aimed a sharing health and safety information related to COVID-19.

These are just a few examples of the adaptability of our local communities and companies. We commend these leaders for their creativity and ingenuity to find solutions together and adjust to our changing world. We will continue to work with our province's innovation ecosystem.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

On behalf of the Official Opposition, I thank the entrepreneurs and the innovators in this province for acting quickly and modifying their products and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The modifications and new products are helping people live in a COVID environment, while the new services are helping ease service delivery for many medical professionals. PolyUnity, JRAS Medical Inc. and BioAtlantic Medical Services are just three examples, they are a true testament how our homegrown talent can offer world-class needed products.

In this COVID environment, creativity and flexibility has become a mantra of many. I'm pleased to see our innovators leading the way.

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 the advance copy of his statement.

I would like to commend these companies for their efforts at stepping in and finding ways to improve technology to help patients and health care workers maintain a safe working and living environment during COVID-19. In light of the pandemic, it's important that we increase our focus on local manufacturing solutions and stimulate the growth of these innovative industries within our province.

Thank you.

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

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

Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister suggested I was not doing my job as an advocate for the offshore unless I had written to Mr. O'Regan. Knowing as she does that writing to O'Regan is useless, I wrote to the prime minister instead on May 28.

Would the minister table her request for specific offshore actions, along with the federal responses?

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

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

This is a very important issue to the families and to the workers offshore and, indeed, to everyone here in Newfoundland and Labrador. We've been very focused on trying to find solutions to this. We've written to and spoken with Minister O'Regan who is the minister of Natural

Resources, federally. We followed up with a letter in April, which is all on our website by the way – followed up again in April; we had multiple discussions over this period of time. We had a press conference in May. We followed up again in June.

I'm glad the Member finally wrote to somebody back in May, after our press conference, but I will say while he's been focused on solutions, we've been focused – while we've been focused on solutions, he's been focused on politics.

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

**MS. COADY:** There's your politics again.

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** It's interesting to note that my reference to writing to O'Regan being useless didn't receive any rebuttal.

Yesterday, the Premier said every single day I phone the federal government and hold their feet to the fire. Yet, he has no reassurance for offshore workers worried about their jobs.

Is the Premier getting a live person on the line or is he just getting voicemail?

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

**MS. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, I think it speaks volumes to hear the laughter from the other side. I will say, and it's been public, Minister O'Regan who is the federal minister of Natural Resources, has said repeatedly that there will be aid coming, that there will be solutions coming, he said that publicly. I take the man at his word.

The Premier has been very public in his support for the oil industry. He's been speaking with Ottawa as well. We do anticipate something.

These are very stressful times for workers, very stressful time for the industry. And while we're focused on solutions, they're focused on politics.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** It leaves offshore workers and construction workers to wonder when this government will stop taking Minister O'Regan at his word. Is six months long enough? Ten months? How long?

If the Premier calls Ottawa every day, does he brief the minister on the call and can she update us on today's call?

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

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

I'm very pleased to have the Leader of the Opposition and the PC Party finally – finally – involved in this file. We've been involved for the last six months working with industry, working with unions, working with workers, trying to find solutions.

This is a global pandemic and a global problem for the oil and gas industry. I'm glad to have as much support as everyone in this province coming together to try and support the oil and gas industry and the workers.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I will say that we have been very focused on finding solutions. They're very focused on politics.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** It leaves us to wonder where we are getting with these daily calls.

When the media asked the Premier about support for the offshore, he said: That's with Ottawa, not with me.

Is the Premier giving up on those hard-working offshore and construction workers who are about to lose their homes?

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

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

That was totally disingenuous. I think the people of the province understand that. Again and again and again we have said to the Opposition –

actually, we have said to the people of the province, we've spoken with industry and we've talked to workers. We've been working on a solution, and we've found some solutions. Everything that we can do provincially we're doing. The Premier has said he's looking to Ottawa for their support as well. They are a joint venture partner in our offshore. They reap benefits of our offshore. As a matter of fact, all of Canada does.

Again, I say to the Member opposite, focus on the solutions like we are, not on the politics.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** Speaking of solutions, the Premier's Liberal friends in Ottawa are stalling on three major files: rate mitigation, fiscal stabilization and help for the offshore.

If the Premier can't deliver support for the offshore, how can people trust him to deliver anything on the other major files?

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

**MS. COADY:** I tell you what's really stalled, Mr. Speaker, is their involvement on any of these major files.

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

**MS. COADY:** I can tell you right now, Mr. Speaker, they have not been involved in anything to do with rate management. They put out a plan that didn't even add up. They have not been involved in the oil and gas industry over the last six months. And I will say this: We put out a plan last year on rate mitigation that was very fulsome. We have met with the federal government. The federal government came out in February of this year. We did an announcement on the cost of service delivery. Officials all throughout COVID have been working.

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



**MS. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, I can hardly hear myself speak, the chirping from the other side. I guess we're getting to them.

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

**MS. COADY:** But, Mr. Speaker, I will say this: On every single one of those files we're very active, we're working for solutions and we're finding them.

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

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

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

Minister of Finance, people are listening and they're getting tired of these empty answers, empty questions, empty promises. People need more than what they're listening to. You're pre-paying; you're empty, empty, empty.

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

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

**MR. PETTEN:** Listen to the word, it's empty; there's nothing coming back. They're waiting for answers.

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

**MR. PETTEN:** Your question, yeah, right on.

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

Order, please!

**MR. PETTEN:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday evening Minister O'Regan was –

**MR. SPEAKER:** Proceed.

**MR. PETTEN:** – touting the federal investment for a safe tree planting during COVID-19 and said: There have been many priorities in the past several months. While I understand the environment is important, I suggest the minister's time would be better spent supporting our offshore workers.

I ask the provincial minister: Who do you agree with, Minister, Mr. O'Regan or me?

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I could give a very glib one-word answer to that, but I think this debate deserves a bit more. What I would suggest is that we continue to work for solutions on these very crucial issues. It wasn't lost on any of us on this side about the fear that's felt by the workers out in that sector. I know it's not lost on the federal government and I know it's not lost on the Members opposite as well.

One thing that I would strongly suggest is that this is a matter that's beyond politics and if you truly want to help the situation, I would appreciate maybe some concrete solutions or suggestions and not just the politics that's going on.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I guess he agrees with me. If we're playing politics – we're trying to get answers, we're trying to work on solutions and all we're getting back is leave it with us, we're working on it. People are getting tired of those answers, Mr. Speaker.

The federal Liberals are promoting tree planting and other green initiatives, but this will not put our workers back to work, Mr. Speaker. Liberals are Liberals, whether they're in Ottawa or in our province.

Is the federal minister lending assistance or is he unwilling to support his own province? Which is it, Minister?

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

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

I'm glad to see that the Member opposite sounds very pro-environment when he complains about tree planting. One thing I would say is that we continue to work on this, continue to –

**MR. PETTEN:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. A. PARSONS:** You asked a question, I'll give you an answer. Please stop chirping.

Mr. Speaker, we're continuing to work on this, but what I can tell you is that they're complex issues and they require complex solutions. We're working with the operators, we're working with the federal government and we'll continue to work on getting solutions to this.

I say to the Members opposite: I have yet to hear during one question or one debate this week, one simple suggestion or solution of what you would do to help fix this problem and that we all face.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Outside of the environment, I'm also worried about people losing their homes. Maybe the minister and his government could share the same concern.

I say to the minister, there's no shame in admitting you're over your head. Have you spoken to the federal minister since his three-day Cabinet retreat, and was the offshore even on the agenda?

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, if you want to talk about politics, we're three questions in and now they've resorted to lobbing insults. I'll come back to the same point; these are all very complex situations. We're all facing this together, yet I have not heard one suggestion from the Members opposite about what they would do to fix this.

**MR. PETTEN:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. A. PARSONS:** The Member wants an answer, yet he can't stop talking long enough for me to try to give him an answer.

**MR. PETTEN:** (Inaudible.)

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

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

What I would say to the Member: I challenge you to stand up and ask the question and say one thing you would do to help fix this situation.

**MR. PETTEN:** (Inaudible.)

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Go ahead, ask the question – ask the question. You know nothing.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** You know nothing. One solution – one. One concrete thing. What are you doing?

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

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

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

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

I ask Members to restrain themselves.

We're going to proceed with Question Period, and I ask Members to restrain themselves a little bit here. Members have a right to ask questions and Members have a right to answer and be heard in doing both.

Next question.

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

**MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Mr. Speaker, there has been a concerted effort to ensure that women have jobs in the skilled trades. With the crisis in the oil industry, jobs for women in the industry are especially vulnerable.

What specific plan does the minister have to ensure jobs are protected for women in the skilled trades?

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

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

Again, I would go back to an answer that I gave earlier in the week when I responded to the Member because I appreciate the concerns that she's hearing from members of her community and, certainly, I appreciate the ones that I'm hearing from members of my community.

Right now we need to continue working on getting a fix to this. When we talk about job creation, we have to realize that the financial ask that has been made of this province is simply too substantive for this province to take on. We will continue to work to ensure that jobs are out there for the women and men of this province, but they have to be within range of something that the province can actually do.

Thank you.

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

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

**MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Mr. Speaker, that's no answer to whether there is a plan.

At the rally yesterday, I spoke to two women. One, she lost her job on West White Rose. The other, who fears her job is in jeopardy.

I ask the minister: Do these women have to worry about their future, or will you commit to actually instituting a policy of community benefit agreements?

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

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

What I would say to the Member opposite is that we have some good news. Everything you suggested is actually already in place. There are

women's work plans that form part of these community benefits. There are women's work plans that fall under Transportation and Infrastructure when it comes to these projects.

The fact is that these things are already there and we'll continue to work to ensure that women are getting these jobs.

Thank you.

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

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

**MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** He asked for concrete suggestions and solutions. I've offered one. They are not in place.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, studies prove that women have been the hardest hit by the COVID pandemic; yet, ironically, the new Premier has made the decision to remove the stand-alone Status of Women department.

I ask the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women: How can a decision to water down such an important department be justified at this critical and vulnerable time for women.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

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

I do take a little bit of exception to the question. What I'll say to the Member is since I've been in this portfolio, the 19th of August, I've been travelling quite a bit around this province. I have sat down with 11 of the 13 Indigenous organizations, a number of women's centres and do you know what I heard? People were very pleased. They recognized the intersectionalities between the Status of Women and Indigenous women talking about important topics like missing and murdered Indigenous women.

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

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Just lunchtime, Mr. Speaker, I sat down with my federal counterpart discussing gender equality.

Back to the Member's earlier question, Mr. Speaker, when she says there is none. I was the individual that sat down with three Atlantic ministers and Newfoundland and Labrador was the lead on the gender equity diversity employment plans. Mr. Speaker, we led that for our offshore and our resource-based.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I have a constituent who's packing up his young family and leaving the province to find work elsewhere. My constituent worked on the West White Rose Project but, as we all know, the project has shut down and its future is in question. Fortunately, he found work at the fluorspar mine.

Mr. Speaker, my constituent, a resident of this province with a young family, the future of this province, was replaced by an out-of-the-province worker allowed to come back under the guise of an essential worker.

Can the minister tell me why a willing, capable resident of this province cannot find work?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was summoning your attention. I appreciate your patience.

This is an important question. I cannot speak to specifics of an individual case, but if there is a particular breach of a labour standard, if there's been a replacement of a worker that's in contravention of labour standards, this is a matter that can be brought forward. The specifics of this particular case on its face are disturbing; however, we would have to identify the pure facts and examine them on their face.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, our initiative and our priority here in Newfoundland and Labrador is to train Newfoundlanders and Labradorians for local jobs; that training initiatives have been very successful. While I'm very pleased to hear

that the hon. Member's constituent was able to find alternative work, we always want to make sure they're able to keep that employment and that they're trained in the best possible skills to be able to do so.

If there are specifics around this employment circumstance which need further investigation, I would be happy to receive further information from the hon. Member.

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

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

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

Obviously, the minister did not hear what I had said. This gentleman was replaced by an out-of-province worker.

Why is it that we continually hear stories of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians not being able to get a job in their own province because they are replaced by out-of-province workers? Minister, how do I convince this individual and the thousands of others like him not to leave our province?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Transportation and Infrastructure.

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

I thank the Member opposite for the great question. As the minister before me spoke, if this is an individual case you want to discuss and take it outside this office, I'm more than willing to talk about that.

I don't know the qualifications of the person you're talking about. I don't know the job that they were looking for so I can't speak to the specifics, but yesterday in this House I did outline some numbers that showed that 95 per cent of the projects we have ongoing in this province are being employed and worked on by local Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. PARROTT:** Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Since the middle of March how many individuals have been granted exemptions to enter Newfoundland for work?

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

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

The travel exemption is all I can speak to. We don't have a breakdown comprehensively of the reasons from the early days. We are collecting that now. I can certainly go back and supply that figure.

The last exemption figure I saw for all travellers who were allowed into the province over the course of the entire pandemic is 16,000 or thereabouts, but I can provide a detailed breakdown to the Member opposite without any difficulty.

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

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

**MR. PARROTT:** Mr. Speaker, of those individuals who have been granted an exemption and entered Newfoundland for the purpose of work, how many were allowed to proceed directly to the workplace?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** Again, Mr. Speaker, that depends on the nature of the work. If they were essential workers and deemed essential, then they are required to isolate for 14 days, with the exception of the period when they are on site. At that time, they are required to observe COVID-19 precautions. There is an occupational health and safety oversight and a requirement for them to do that. No one is allowed to roam freely.

I do not have the breakdown of those figures as to which might be essential workers. I can certainly try and get that for him.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. PARROTT:** I would expect if people are entering this province to work, that the Department of Health should know where they are – they're working alongside Newfoundlanders, Minister.

If individuals are permitted to enter our province to work, I ask the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure: Where exactly are they working?

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

**MR. BRAGG:** Mr. Speaker, that's a bit of a broad question. Where would they work? It could be in the medical field, could be in the labour field, could be knitting, could be sewing, could be cooking – any number of areas, I'm thinking, Mr. Speaker. Unless they call me and tell where they were reporting to exactly, I would have no idea in this world.

I trust the Department of Health medical people that would give the proper exemptions to the work site in which these people go, but where they actually go –

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

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

**MR. BRAGG:** They could be a lightkeeper, Mr. Speaker. They could be someone who works on a boat; they could be digging a ditch – any number of options in this province where people could come in and work.

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

**MR. PARROTT:** I would suggest that they're probably knitting stones for the Premier to turn.

I ask the minister: Is he okay with the amount of carpenters that are working over in the Corner Brook facility? Does he think that it's okay for carpenters from Quebec to work in that facility

with so many unemployed carpenters here in Newfoundland?

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

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

I thank the Member opposite once again for his question. We went down this road yesterday, Mr. Speaker, in which I gave a number, but this was quite specific in the West Coast hospital. This number, as I stated yesterday – and I'll table this; I'll actually take a picture and text it to you if you like, if you don't want to wait for the tabled document.

The West Coast hospital: 30,265 hours worked; 27,901 hours were worked by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, 92 per cent. I do not have the actual breakdown of who picked up nails or who drove in nails, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

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

This is a fairly straight-forward question so hopefully I'll get a simple answer to it. This past February Trades NL wrote the then minister responsible for Labour requesting a jurisdictional scan across the country to look at best practices for Labour Relations Boards. He got a response that this would be taking place as soon as possible.

A similar letter was written to the current minister, so I ask the minister a very simple question: when will this scan be completed? I'm just looking for a month, one of the 12 months and perhaps a year.

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

**MR. BYRNE:** I think the hon. Member, Mr. Speaker, is trying to ply me into a glib answer or to a funny answer which I will not provide him because it is a serious, serious issue.

What I will say is that I respect and appreciate the hon. Member's intervention. It is important to keep apace of best practices in other jurisdictions. In fact, I would suggest that we do this kind of analysis on an organic or a rolling basis. It's not meant to be a one-off.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I'm engaged in that right away. As soon as I have a result, rather than give a specific tombstone timeline, what I'll say to the hon. Member in respect to the office that he holds and the service that he provides to this House, I will share that information with him directly as soon as it's done.

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

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

**MR. P. DINN:** I thought it was a simple question. Even give me a quarter. If it's going to take place in the third quarter, next year, whatever.

When will the scan occur? Because it's apparently been happening since February.

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member does catch at a disadvantage in the sense that if I were to say that I knew the exact date of the completion of a task, then the task would have to have already been completed. If you say that you know exactly when a job will be done, it means that you know when the job will be finished.

I would like to do this as soon as possible, but for me to give sort of a rhetorical flourish of, oh, I can guarantee you it will be done by December 1, that would be disingenuous, Mr. Speaker. It will be done when it's done properly and done right. If it's worth doing, it's worth doing right. I will share that information with him at its earliest opportunity.

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

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

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

People are worried about their homes, their cars and their families' future. How would you feel if you were in this situation? In almost all provinces in this country, some level of unlocking pensions prior to the retirement eligibility has been opened. Consultations finished September 30.

With so many people waiting desperately for an answer, how long will it take to see action on this issue?

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

**MS. STOODLEY:** Thank you very much the question.

To date, six jurisdictions in Canada allow some form of unlocking. No provinces have made special accommodations for COVID-19. This is a very complex issue. The last time we did consultations, for example, most parties were not interested. Again, we've received over 70 submissions and I look forward to receiving the recommendations of the consultations. I'm confident then a report will come to the House, and changes to legislation, if recommended.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, recently the Labour Relations Board accidentally sent the names of Grieg workers who signed union cards to Grieg, and several of those workers were let go before the vote could take place.

I ask the Minister of Immigration, Skills and Labour: Will he commit to introducing an amendment to the *Labour Relations Act* to reinstate automatic card certification, which was removed in 2014, so workers who want to unionize are protected?

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

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

There is an independent investigation of a potential privacy breach. I would not, as a minister, wish to prejudge what the outcome of an officer of Parliament's investigation would be. However, there is clear evidence of a serious situation enough that the chairperson of the Labour Relations Board itself did indeed provide communication of an action plan related to this incident, as well as the Privacy Commissioner conducting an investigation.

However, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, the electronic versions of certification cards were a COVID-19 response. As I understand it, if there is a suggestion that a privacy breach could not have occurred if there was card certification in some form, then I don't think the hon. Member has an awareness of the circumstances around this.

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

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

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

On Tuesday, I asked the Minister of Education when was the English School District's May 27 report discussed at the Cabinet table. The minister replied he didn't believe it was discussed. The report indicated the district needed three inputs from the government to design a plan, and that a return of all students to class would require additional staff and infrastructure.

I ask the minister for clarification. Is he telling us that given the calls for a plan at that time, and given that a report existed seeking government input with significant financial implications, this report was never discussed by Cabinet?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, the report that was provided, (a) on the cover letter, (b) on the conclusion of the report, states very clearly that the report was intended for further dialogue, further consultation with other stakeholders in

the development of a plan. That's exactly what happened.

The report went to the Department of Education on May 27 and the first week of July there was a plan introduced, Mr. Speaker, that took the wide spectrum of possible solutions that were contained in the report and analyzed those, consulted with stakeholders and put a plan together.

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

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

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

I'm still no further ahead on that one, but considering that it specifically asked government for input, I would assume it's one of the stakeholders: government.

I ask the Minister of Education: Is he content that in at least one classroom in this city, 24 students and their teacher are crammed into a poorly ventilated small, windowless classroom with a little over 16.5 square feet per person, which I believe is less than what is permitted by fire regulations? How is this safe? How is this even acceptable under COVID-19 measures?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, I believe the Member, in his pursuit of asking people for pictures of unsafe conditions in schools, was presented with this particular case. I know that he brought it to the attention of the English School District.

He was advised that the classroom had mechanical ventilation. I remember in a conversation that the Member had with me that he was saying are windows a good substitute for mechanical ventilation. Well, this classroom has mechanical ventilation. It seems like he's had a change of heart, Mr. Speaker.

The English School District had gone in, made alterations in that classroom, made changes in the classroom and have indicated that it seems

that both teachers and students were happy with the changes.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

**MR. BROWN:** Mr. Speaker, Labrador West's economy is growing. The problem is that our hydro capacity is maxed out. We need more electricity.

The former PC government started the third-line project then cancelled it, while this government sat on its hands on the issue for years. This project will bring many jobs to both construction and the mining industry.

I ask the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology: Will he commit to the project to help our economy grow?

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

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

I appreciate the question from the Member opposite. I know how passionate he is about it because he came to my office an hour and a half early for a meeting the other day.

In saying that, we had what I thought was a really good conversation about this. He explained to me in great detail the demands that are being faced by Lab West and I know that I've seen them first-hand from being up there.

What I can commit to right now is understanding more about the needs, working with the providers and trying to do more, but I fully realize that whether it's data centres, whether it's mining – you name it – there's great opportunity there and we need to maximize it.

Thank you.

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

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



Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

### Tabling of Documents

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Finance.

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

Yesterday I was asked to table the report by a consultant entitled *COVID-19 Economic Response Initiative Summary Report: Engagement Process, Themes, and Responses*. It's dated July of 2020. I did get a copy of it to ensure that this House has a copy.

As Members opposite and people around the province know, I did table earlier this week, of course, the contingency analysis, the money that we've spent on COVID as well. I'll be happy to put this before the Legislature.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### Petitions

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

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

The maintenance and upkeep of the roadway through the community of Cold Brook is the responsibility of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure. Sections of the roadway have been in a deplorable condition now for over five years and need repairs and resurfacing. Children are required to ride school buses twice daily over the roads where sections of the paved road are actually missing. There have been a number of close calls where vehicles have had to swerve in order to avoid driving over a section of roadway where the

pavement is totally missing. The residents of Cold Brook deserve better.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to consider repairing, upgrading and maintaining the paved road through the community of Cold Brook in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot of discussion around school busing in different communities and children not being able to get on the bus. I'm happy to report that in Cold Brook, every child is able to get on the bus, the problem we have is keeping the bus on the road. That's the problem. It's a little different problem. In saying that, I want to thank the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, who acknowledged the issue and my petition last time and has agreed to look into this matter. I look forward to a favourable response.

Thank you.

No comment.

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

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

**MR. BRAGG:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member opposite for the petition. I look forward to working with the Member to see what we can do to rectify the situation there and other parts of the province. Can't guarantee anything at this point, but guaranteed we'll look at it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

This petition is regarding the Route 520 roadwork. Route 520, also commonly known as the North West River Road, has been in dire need of significant repair and upgrading for many years. The communities of Sheshatshiu and North West River use this road to work,

shop and access health services at the Labrador Health Centre. The road is in dire need of upgrades in various sections along the Route 520.

In the spring of this year, these communities were advised by Transportation and Works that work would be tendered for this construction season. September 1, local leaders from Lake Melville were advised that the work to be tendered this year was cancelled.

Community leaders are extremely disappointed and feel this cancellation will even lead to further deterioration of Route 520 of the North West River Road. Route 520 is alive with potholes, unsafe shoulders and ruts that create the potential to hydroplane. This leaves portions of Route 520 unsafe to travel at various times throughout the year and commuters really are concerned for their safety.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to address safety concerns along Route 520, and that these portions of roadway can be repaired and upgraded before the end of the 2020 construction season.

Going back to petitions, why is this important? It's important for two reasons: one is about lives and the other one is about respect, Mr. Speaker. Safety is a huge factor. I've driven this road myself. It's really unsafe; it's riddled with potholes, hydroplaning potential and sheets of ice. It's very hazardous.

A couple of years ago I was driving down to North West River; I was in the passenger side in the winter. We were driving; we weren't speeding. We hit this sheet of ice and we actually ended up swerving and turning 360. The reason why we weren't injured was because there was no other traffic on the road. Sheets of ice, very, very hazardous.

It's not just about North West River and Sheshatshiu accessing services in Goose Bay, as this petition talks about, it's about connections. North West River and Sheshatshiu have heavy connections to Goose Bay. These strong

connections really force people to travel back and forth on this unsafe road.

That gets me to the second thing: the delay. This means another winter of unsafe travel. That actually leads to respect. Why should Labradorians have to endure unsafe travel? I'm going to use the words that were mentioned by the government, the words: this matter is beyond politics. That was said about, what, 15 minutes ago. You know something? The safety for our people to travel back and forth is basically a matter that's beyond politics and something needs to be done.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, with a reply to the petition.

**MR. BRAGG:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member opposite for the petition.

Her parting words or the shot across my bow was safety. Safety is considered to be the number one priority in our shop, the safety of everybody who uses the roads. The Member talked about turning around and doing a 360 or a 720 in the road. Snow means slow, as does ice. I drove that road this year and the Member is right, the contract was called back. The contract was cancelled because the contract came in at almost double the price – not good value.

Mr. Speaker, to find good value next year we're going to do more than what we anticipated to do. We're going to bring that farther, we're going to upgrade more of that road. It's not possible to be done this construction season and the Member opposite would know that. We're into the middle of September now; you're talking about a month. We cannot pull it together in a month, but we'll give them our assurance that next construction season we plan to actually put a tender out that would do more than was anticipated, so it will be better.

**MS. EVANS:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. BRAGG:** I did not heckle the Member opposite when she was speaking. I would expect some respect. I'm glad that the recordings did not pick up what the lady said, because it's very

personal to every section of this highway that safety be paramount.

We know by the memorials by the side of the road sometimes that things happen. We don't accept all that responsibility. People have to drive to the conditions. They have to. This year, more than ever we've seen higher speed limits than we've ever seen before. You've seen it on the news. People need to maintain and drive the conditions of the road, and pay attention to the conditions and the posted speed limit.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

WHEREAS many students within our province depend on school busing for transportation to and from school each day; and

WHEREAS there are many parents of school-aged children throughout our province who live inside the English School District's 1.6-kilometre school zone, therefore do not qualify for busing; and

WHEREAS policy cannot override the safety of our children;

THEREFORE we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to eliminate the 1.6-kilometre policy for all elementary schools in the province and in junior and senior high schools where safety is a primary concern.

Mr. Speaker, I presented petitions like this many times in this House. My colleague from Conception Bay South has done the same. My colleague from Conception Bay East - Bell Island has done the same and others have done the same from Harbour Main.

If anything though, this whole COVID pandemic and the schooling issues – which there are many and I do commend government on trying to deal

with it, but the busing has highlighted the importance of safe transportation to and from school. It's also highlighted the many pressures it puts on families and their children.

A gentleman was on one of the talk shows earlier this morning, from my district actually, and spoke about the areas where there are no sidewalks. Whether it is eight or 10 or 12 kilometres or 1.6 kilometres, safety becomes a huge issue getting to and from school, especially in the winter months when snowbanks are high and there is absolutely nowhere for the children to walk.

I realize, talking to others who I've spoken with, that not every school zone or school district is created equal. There are some that have well-plowed sidewalks for getting to and from school, but there are others where the walk to school is really treacherous and dangerous.

We've heard the word safety in this House already today. This is hugely a safety issue. It would be terrible if a child is injured or killed trying to get to school. It's not just about the 1.6, it's also about the families, maybe a single family, a family working shift work. Getting children to and from school in a safe manner has to be paramount.

I call on government, while we have had a great chance to look at the busing situation, to now take a closer look at the 1.6 and the areas within this province where it is not a nice to have but a need to have.

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

**MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, individual residents, municipal leaders, including the Conception Bay North Joint Council, have spoken to me repeatedly over the months about the deplorable road conditions in the District of Harbour Main.

WHEREAS the district is made up of many smaller communities and towns like Holyrood, Upper Gullies, Seal Cove, Cupids, Colliers, South River, North River, Roaches Line and

Makinsons who have roads in desperate need of repair and paving; and

WHEREAS these roads see high-volume traffic flows every day and drivers can expect potholes, severe rutting, limited shoulders and many washed out areas along the way;

We, therefore, petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned call upon the House to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to immediately take the necessary steps to repair and repave these important roadways to ensure the safety of the driving public who use them on a regular basis.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to hear our Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure just state a few moments ago how safety is number one priority for him as minister. If he truly means that, then I would expect to see some immediate action with respect to the conditions of the roads that I have mentioned.

In the past 15, 16 months since my election one of the biggest issues I hear about from my constituents are the roads. Many people, motorists, residents are getting increasingly frustrated by government's inaction to address these concerns. Individuals are upset with any lack of real assurances to them that necessary restoration work will be undertaken, that work will be given the priority it deserves. It's not only individuals I hear from. I have people calling, emailing my office, but I also hear from municipal leaders.

I have letters upon letters, Mr. Speaker, from so many municipal leaders throughout the district. They are very concerned. They have reached out to the previous minister of transportation and works indicating there has been an ultimate – and a disregard for their legitimate grievances about the roads. Members of the Conception Bay North Joint Council have also spoken to me. They've written at length to the minister and yet there's no action.

Mr. Speaker, we're calling upon this government and this new minister, who claims the number one priority is safety – let's prove it and have some work be commenced on these

deplorable roads in the District of Harbour Main.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, with a reply.

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

I thank the Member opposite for the petition. Safety should be number one in everyone's mind, not just mine and the department I represent. Safety should be number one and you should drive to the conditions of the road.

I'm sure the hon. Member living in her district would know Route 75 this year has seen a substantial upgrade. Ten thousand cars a day use Route 75. We are investing in Route 75 in the Member's district.

I drive this province; I realize the conditions of the roads. There are over 10,000 kilometres, 700 kilometres in my own district alone, Mr. Speaker. If we could do all the roads overnight and flick our fingers like that, we would. The thing is we are tied to budget constraints.

As everybody would know, we are going to debate a budget here on the 30th of September. At that time, you will see actually what we have in our roads budget. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the questions in Estimates. There's a five-year Roads Plan coming out now; EngageNL, go online. I encourage everyone here, all members of the public to get out, say your part about the condition of your roads.

But if you look at it, if we can do the main trunk roads, the main priority roads, you know the roads have to come back. We need to get where the traffic is. It's vitally important. Route 75 is vitally important to be upgraded and I'm glad we're investing in the Member's district.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I have a petition here to ensure schools are safe for the return of students in September. In 2008, the provincial government introduced a provincial teacher allocation model to address the educational needs of students by providing class size caps for Grades K to 9, and additional administrative time for school leaders. This new allocation model was to be reviewed in 2011.

Following the implementation of the class size caps, government instituted a soft-cap policy which allowed classrooms to exceed the caps established in 2008. Adding onto that, certainly with inclusive education, we saw the integration of students with complex and special needs into larger classrooms with fewer supports and we have seen certainly an awful lot of complications and challenges that schools, teachers and students have faced.

With the new physical distancing expectations and school classroom health and safety protocols resulting from public health guidelines, class size and composition matters more than ever. On July 29, Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children recommended smaller class sizes should be a priority strategy as it will aid in the physical distancing and reduce the potential spread of any index case.

Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to take immediate action to ensure schools are safe for the return of students in September. I understand that the NLTA has a similar petition with over some 12,000 signatures on it and I'll present both to the minister at the end of this.

I will say that there's a concern that I've heard from parents and teachers alike – I heard it yesterday on *Cross Talk* – with regards to the safety of schools at this point in time. I will again go and say to the minister the measures and the investment of computers, of the extra teachers and all these things are welcome. They are a good start but one of the key things that need to be addressed, Mr. Speaker, is clearly the whole notion of class size. It's creating significant challenges in our schools at this point in time.

The 2016 budget saw the introduction of combined grades, but it also swelled the size of

single-stream classes. So we do have issues in this school year that are basically coming down to the inability to physically distance. We do need the resources to make them safe and I'll give you one clear example: not only allocation but the allocation of resources. In one school in this city – and I've spoke to the administration – 700 children, eight wings, four floors, a gymnasium, they have one cleaner on from 7 in the morning to 3 in the night who is expected to make sure all the high-touch surfaces are clean. It's impossible. That's in addition to other equipment.

What is definitely needed here is that while we've made a good start, Mr. Speaker, certainly we need to address these issues in a lot more detail to make sure that they continue to be safe.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Education with a reply to the petition.

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

As the Member would know, under the *Education Action Plan* that this province brought in, the accumulated numbers of additional units in school this year are 343. That includes 200 teacher learning assistants, 104 reading specialists and 39 reading resource teachers. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we've had the 25 additional guidance counsellors, the 15 administrators and the 10 teaching positions dedicated to virtual learning, as well as the term contracts for the 70 substitute teachers.

In terms of having schools open safe, there have been safeguards put in place in high-traffic areas: the additional disinfection materials, cleaning supplies and so on, as well as cleaning supplies being provided to busing contractors. The English School District provided masks to both teachers, students and other staff.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other things that have been put in place, such as the occupational health and safety resources that we put in place this year for the safety of the people working within our school systems, as well as public health nursing positions.

Mr. Speaker, we've put a number of additional resources in place this year, over and above the 343 additional positions that are in place as a result of the Education Action Plan.

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Orders of the Day, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Orders of the Day.

### Orders of the Day

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, I call Order 3, second reading of Bill 41.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture, that Bill 41, An Act To Amend The Insurance Contracts Act, be now read a second time.

Motion, seconding reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Insurance Contracts Act." (Bill 41)

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 41 entitled, An Act To Amend The Insurance Contracts Act, be now read a second time.

The hon. the Minister.

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

Today, I'm going to chat about the amendments to Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Insurance Contracts Act. It's a relatively short bill, two pages, but very important to protect residents of the province.

As I'm sure we all know, insurance is kind of a complex financial instrument. When you buy insurance, particularly home insurance, you're really buying a claims experience, really. It's not

like a coffee that you have or a car that you drive around, sometimes when you buy insurance it's all about the price. You don't really look at all the nuances of what you're getting. It's very complex, even for people who know what they're talking about; very complicated, especially when you get into tenant and home insurance, all the policies and deductibles and riders. I feel like you need an education to really understand it.

Most people, also, do not read their insurance contracts. I, having worked in insurance, also did not read my insurance contract. Even if you do read your insurance contract, it's hard to understand exactly what you're buying and you can't really compare apples to apples. It's not easy.

In Digital Government and Service NL, it's our responsibility to help protect consumers, particularly when they're buying financial services products such as insurance. We're here today to talk about the *Insurance Contracts Act* which governs the terms and conditions of insurance contracts in the province.

Every day people in Newfoundland and Labrador buy insurance from insurance companies and brokers to help ensure a degree of protection and for remuneration should situations out of their control arise. Again, this is a form of protection against a possible risk. Specifically, when we're talking about home insurance and tenant insurance, these are not mandatory unlike auto insurance. The transaction you're buying is when you have that you're protected and then you're compensated for your loss if you have a flood or your house burns down or depending on the limitations in your policy.

In the past, we've seen insurance contracts that contain an intentional act exclusion. This means an insured person may not recover for any loss arising from their own intentional or criminal act. In this instance, a policyholder or a dependant of a policyholder would have to be listed in their home insurance contract – it would have to be listed as an intentional act exclusion. I actually looked at my policy and it's not in my policy, and, as far as we're aware, it's not common in policies at the moment.

The main thing we're talking about here is this intentional act exclusion. In our proposed legislation today, we are, I guess, prohibiting the use of that in insurance contracts for people in the province.

Historically, we've seen this used to prevent wrongdoers from benefiting from their own wrongful actions. However, there is kind of a knock-on negative effect of this. It could be controversial and could have significant unintended consequences where an insurance policy covers multiple insured individuals. It prevents one insured from committing insurance fraud for the benefit of another, denies coverage to all insured persons on a policy and this can result in an injustice where one of the insured is victimized by another.

In 2017, Mr. Speaker, the Board of Directors of the Insurance Bureau of Canada recommended to all its members operating in provinces and territories without such legislation that they voluntarily align their insurance policies with other jurisdictions in terms of offering coverages for innocent co-insureds.

At the moment, there is nothing in our legislation to prevent an insurance company dealing with a home insurance claim in Newfoundland and Labrador from denying coverage to an innocent co-insured. So with this change, we are hoping to remedy that today.

Although these situations would be infrequent and, again, as far as we understand, this is not a common occurrence in insurance policies in the province but if it happened, the repercussions to the innocent parties would be significant. We believe that most, if not all, insurance companies currently operating in the province already follow this intention but this change will protect home insurance customers from malicious acts on behalf of their co-policyholders or dependants.

This also harmonizes our legislation with other Canadian jurisdictions. It aligns with other legislative changes that have been made to offer a degree of protection for individuals facing complex and difficult family situations.

As far as our research goes, we believe this only applies to home insurance. Our teams looked

across Canada and we have not found these types of exclusions explicitly in, for example, auto insurance contracts. In the legislation, it doesn't specifically apply to home insurance, but as far we're aware it will only apply to home insurance policies.

This is focused on consumer protection. That is the primary means of this. Insurance companies, we believe, are already following this, so there won't be a burden on the insurance companies.

I just want to give two examples to illustrate how not having this could play out. Let's say two siblings are co-owners and co-policyholders on a home with home insurance and let's say their policy contains this intentional act exclusion, or an exclusion for intentional acts. Let's say the siblings have a heated argument; one maliciously burns the house down for the insurance money or something. If it's proven the house was maliciously burned down, neither would get any insurance compensation if this clause was in their insurance contract.

The legislative change would mean that only the person with the malicious intention would not get any, but the other innocent individual would get a prorated amount of what the insurance contract would be. If one individual was not involved in that malicious act, let's say if they were 50 per cent policyholder, they would get 50 per cent of the value, rather than neither of them getting nothing.

We also saw this in a Supreme Court case, *Scott vs. Wawanesa Mutual Insurance*, where parents and a son – the 15-year-old son burned their house down. They had this clause in the contract and they didn't receive any compensation. They took it to the Supreme Court, where the Supreme Court maintained this exclusion policy, which meant the parents could not get any compensation.

We believe this legislative change will increase consumer protection around insurance in the province. If we pass the change, we'll be aligned with other jurisdictions and better protect residents to ensure they get the financial protection that they are paying for.

I ask my colleagues to support these amendments to help protect consumers.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

First of all, I'd like to thank the department for the briefing we had on Monday. It was much appreciated and it just shed some light on it. After listening to it, we certainly will be supporting the changed legislation.

Just to give some background, and you did most of it, but I'll just run through what we have here and just give an example. You nearly gave the same example I was going to give, but I will go through it.

The *Insurance Contracts Act* comes under the purview of the Department of Service NL, obviously, is where we're to. As the name suggests, the *Insurance Contracts Act* contravenes the terms and conditions of all types of insurance contracts in the province.

Department officials noted that the Insurance Bureau of Canada, which is IBC, which represents 90 per cent of the auto, home and business insurers in the country, have been pushing for this amendment since 2017. Insurance companies in our province are supportive and have been aligning in the direction of offering coverage for innocent co-insured.

As the example my colleague across the way had used, if you have a couple that's married and someone decides to have some domestic abuse and go back and destroy the house, the victim, I'm going to say, doesn't get the right to be able to get their house back in order or get things fixed, I guess, would be the easiest way to say it. With that being done, it seems pretty unfair, and I'm sure it's happened a lot in this country and in this province. And we'd like to see that changed. With that change, I certainly agree with that.

Sometimes I think when I look at it and saying they're going to get half the amount back, I nearly think the unintended person should nearly

get her full amount back. She's still going to be in her house and she still has upkeep to do and kids to raise or whatever the circumstances may be. Sometimes we look at getting half back; sometimes they deserve to get back to where they were and be able to live their normal life. That doesn't happen and probably left out in the open with our legislation now. Hopefully, this legislation moving forward will correct that, and by all means we'll certainly like to see that.

The proposed amendments consist of two sections being added to the *Insurance Contracts Act*. Section 18.1 is added to permit loss recovery by innocent persons, meaning if the contract contains an intentional act exclusion, the exclusion coverage will apply only to the person whose act or omission caused the loss or damage, who abetted or colluded in an act or omission, who consented to the act or omission and who ought to have known the act or omission would cause the loss or damage, and who is not the actual person.

Again, we support this motion and this legislation and look forward to getting into Committee and just asking a couple of general questions and see how it goes from there.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

I agree with my colleague here, as well as the minister, that this is an important piece of change in our legislation. It's another housekeeping thing that has come before the House. It is unfortunate we're one of the last provinces to correct this in the system, but it's being corrected. That is the main thing.

We speak to the importance of innocent peoples in situations of joint insurance and stuff like that. The two examples that my colleagues have given are excellent examples of the loophole in the system where individuals are left holding the bag when someone else's actions have harmed them. In this case, it's great that we are moving forward, that innocent parties in these joint



situations are not harmed or dinged or whatnot. I'm glad to see that this is being adjusted, and the housekeeping of these acts is good.

It's good that these things get reviewed and checked. We find these loopholes and correct them as best we can, but unfortunately, of our sister Houses across the country, we're the last again, but hopefully we'll be the first on something else.

I'm glad to see this. We'll get to Committee and ask the questions there that need to be asked. I'm glad to see that this is before the House and we can correct this and keep people from being victimized in some cases as well.

Thank you, Minister, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

**MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, reviewing the *Insurance Contracts Act* and the specific amendments that have been proposed, I support the amendment. These types of amendments are important, even though, as has been noted, it is not really a common occurrence that we see in play here. It's somewhat infrequent. However, it still affords protection to innocent parties. As has been stated, this specific clause that is of concern here is the intentional act exclusion clause. As has been stated, it's sometimes inserted in insurance contracts. Basically, what it does is it excludes coverage for an insured person for any intentional conduct, whether it be criminal or otherwise, or actions that have unintended consequences.

I think the important example for me is the one when we see that multiple people who are insured under policy, sometimes there's a danger that coverage for all of those people can be eliminated, even if the loss or the damage that has been caused by only one of the insured by an a commission of an intentional act. This means that even though there's an innocent insured,

they're still going to be excluded from coverage. They're not going to be compensated, yet they are innocent of any wrongdoing or any kind of intentional act that resulted in damage or loss. Mr. Speaker, that's an unfair consequence, that's an unjust result and that's why I would say that this is a good amendment to remedy any kind of outcomes that would unfairly prejudice innocent parties.

Another point that I'd like to make with this relates to incidents of family violence or domestic violence. For example, if we have one individual or one partner who caused damage, the other innocent party, innocent victim, may end up also being denied coverage, being denied compensation. That, of course, would be a true injustice. That is why this is an important protection for innocent parties.

The one proviso, though, I would make here is in regard to the fact that it appears that the innocent co-insured must co-operate with the insurer's investigation of the loss in order to be awarded benefits. The only comment I would make about that – and this has to be carefully monitored – is would this present problems for people that are innocent and victims of family violence? What would the consequences of this be for that victim if they are co-operating with the insured against their partner?

I just wouldn't want to see the innocent party being put in any danger, especially if it's a volatile domestic violence situation. I would ask that be given extremely careful attention to ensure that innocents are protected in these kinds of scenarios, innocent victims, and that they are not placed in further jeopardy against their, perhaps, abusive partner.

Other than that, these amendments are important, I think, even though they may not apply and they're not often inserted in insurance contracts. Even if they're there occasionally, we still have to make sure that they're corrected and remedied so that no one is left with an unfair outcome.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's.

**MS. GAMBIN-WALSH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The last time I spoke in this hon. House about insurance it was auto insurance but today it is home insurance. Mr. Speaker, this amendment to the *Insurance Contracts Act* will provide an increased protection for innocent co-insured policyholders.

The *Insurance Contracts Act* governs the terms and conditions of insurance contracts in Newfoundland and Labrador. Intimate partner violence is often accompanied with assault, threats and property damage, and the abuser knowingly harms his or her partner. This person tries to control or to overpower the relationship by using intimidation, threats and physical force. Most victims of intimate partner violence are women, but men also can be victims and have been victims, Mr. Speaker. I know since I became a politician that I have worked alongside two men who are victims of intimate partner violence.

The amendment we are introducing here today aims to address a gap. It's a huge gap in insurance coverage and protection, and it aims to prevent unintended consequences from hurting various parties, in particular where incidents of family violence are involved.

Mr. Speaker, this is very important because this is something we are adding to the other things that we have done around residential tenancies and we've done some work in Justice and Public Safety over the years. So here we are again today doing an amendment that is going to assist individuals who are victims.

Mr. Speaker, what it really means is this amendment can prevent an angry spouse from hurting the ex-wife or the ex-husband by destroying the family home when they're on the way out the door, so to speak. If a partner or a past partner were to damage the home or burn it down – arson, for example – and your particular insurance policy had this coverage for the innocent co-insured, the homeowner would be covered.

Intimate partner violence can affect anyone, Mr. Speaker, it's any age, any gender, race, sexual orientation. It does include, usually, behaviours that are meant to control a partner.

This amendment is very important here today, Mr. Speaker. While every relationship is different, intimate partner violence typically involves an unequal power. Hurling insults, as I said, threats and emotional abuse wear a person down. To destroy their home, that would be the ultimate defeat rendering them helpless.

Some perpetrators may use the threat to destroy the home as leverage to get their victim to do what they want. So insurance contracts often include intentional act exclusion clauses that basically do a disservice to others who as part of the contract did not benefit from the coverage done by another co-holder as a result. Such clauses had the effect of denying the coverage to a holder as a result of the wrongful actions of another. It was here that an injustice could occur. It is that injustice that we want to address with this amendment. Insurance is meant to help you in the event of an accident and in the event of need. It's not meant to deprive you of the very protection you need at one of the most vulnerable times in your life.

Mr. Speaker, parents could separate, for example, but the home is still in both their names. The one living in the home decides they're not letting the other have any profit from the sale of the home. So, again, we see arson. They burn the house down, and normally with arson there would be no coverage. However, with the amendments, the one who didn't cause the damage and wasn't engaged in the crime will receive a benefit.

This amendment addresses unintended consequences; it addresses a gap in our insurance coverage and protection and it brings us in line with the rest of Canada. PEI will be the remaining province without this coverage if we adopt this amendment today. The Insurance Bureau of Canada supports this amendment, as the minister has indicated.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this amendment, as you can tell, and I think it's a really good thing for us to do here in this House of Assembly today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Any further speakers to this motion?

The hon. the Minister of Immigration, Skills and Labour.

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

I trust my light is on.

This is a very important piece of business the House is engaged in today. Insurance is not a small matter for Newfoundland and Labrador families, for the financial well-being of all of us. The changes to the *Insurance Contracts Act* are not small changes either, when you take into consideration and in perspective of the evolution of the insurance product as a whole and the insurance industry as whole. There is a matter of political economy related to insurance, as well as natural finance and economy, and statutory reform is sometimes seen to be an intrusion on the capitalist system or the financial markets, and unwelcomed.

Mr. Speaker, this is very welcomed by very many and it is a break from past consideration. Normally, an insurance contract holds a clause that says for the acts of intentional or criminal nature – for any act which is intentional or criminal that causes a loss, those losses are automatically excluded.

In fact, in the past those who held insurance contracts on homeowner's insurance faced losses from those who were dependants who were not necessarily perceived to be members of the contracting party itself. Minor children, for example, who committed intentional, even criminal acts within the household itself, one would have expected in the past that that would have been insurable and the payout would have occurred based on the nature of the loss, but insurance companies held firm on the view that intentional acts and potentially criminal acts would be excluded.

Mr. Speaker, the study or the sociology of insurance is just as important as the study of its

political economy. I want to refer to some very important work from Ericson, Doyle and Barry called *Insurance as Governance* where they kind of give a framework for how important insurance is to each and every one of us but how little it is understood.

They write: "Although the insurance industry is among the most pervasive and powerful institutions in society, the sociology of insurance remains nascent." They go on to express the view that: "In spite of its significance for people's lives, insurance is a product that most buy with little appreciation. They spend large sums of money to purchase something they have little knowledge about and therefore cannot adequately assess with respect to price and features. The only material thing they obtain at the outset is a piece of paper: a legal contract that they rarely read and even more rarely understand" and hope they never have to.

Mr. Speaker, in the evolution of our society and the perspective that we expect our institutions, including the insurance industry, to respond to modern-day concepts of fairness and respond to modern-day concepts of political economy, this legislation is the right legislation. It acts outside of the contract itself and provides a statutory requirement that nullifies the policy; that does not respect that at times an intentional or criminal act can still be insured if the balance or an interest of the parties are not equal. This is a very, very important point because it gives fairness to multiple parties to an insurance against the actions of one of the parties.

Mr. Speaker, when we think of the modernization of insurance, it is one of the most important products that are available to us as a financial product, as a security product. As we look to the fact that the environment in which we are insured is changing, climate change is making greater impacts on insurance, insurability and payouts, when we look at the fact that society is modernizing, when paternalistic ideas within insurance policies are now becoming more and more exposed to a more modern, a more open version and the law is following suit, these are important sociological phenomena that this Legislature now is acting upon.

It's incumbent upon the fact that we have a responsibility to do that, for the legislatures of our country, to act in the best interest of its people. While the insurance industry may at times very much dislike government intrusion into its affairs, I can tell you the insurance industry often calls upon government intrusion into its affairs. For example, in the products that it sells there was a concerted lobby from the insurance industry to prevent banks from selling insurance because they felt it would be an imbalance for the consumer.

While at times it may be voiced that the insurance industry does not like unfair government intrusion in terms of their underwriting and their risk management of policies, it affects their risk management portfolios, let's be clear, the insurance industry calls upon government, more often than you might appreciate, for government intervention for their benefit. Mr. Speaker, it's the responsibility of this Legislature to act in the interest of the consumer, to act in the interest of the insured and to ensure that there's a balance of parties who are subject to the contract in question.

Those who expect to receive a benefit against risk, against a personal loss through collective risk management, deserve to have that enshrined in law because at times, as we've seen through the courts, through the adjudication of insurance policies, that does not always happen by insurance companies.

In a modern context, Mr. Speaker, there are other reforms that could be contemplated for example. Is it fair and reasonable that those who are of an interest to the contractor or to the management, the adjudication of risk, those that have a direct interest, should they be a part of the adjudication of the risk?

Adjustors, for example, Mr. Speaker, more and more often are becoming a wholly owned entity of the insurance companies. They are not disconnected or disinterested parties in the outcome of a claim. Other things, for example, we think of whether adjusting occurs at a local level or whether there's telephone adjusting.

We look at employment levels. I know the previous administration, for example, had a

significant program to a particular company to provide incentives for employment here locally which now is – I understand the term of that contract is now closed with marginal results.

The president of a major insurance company operating not only in Newfoundland and Labrador but throughout Canada, RSA Canada, just announced that – the CEO indicated there would be significant changes in their workforce structure and that more and more telephone work, as opposed to retail outlet work, is being contemplated within that company. The footprint of insurance companies, therefore, is changing, and the impact and the overall benefit of insurance company activity in small jurisdictions like Newfoundland and Labrador is changing as well, and not necessarily for the better.

This is one example of a reform which I believe is very, very welcomed by consumers, by those who are disadvantaged in a power imbalance in particular. That is breaks strong, significant history and jurisprudence, former jurisprudence which always was in favour of the insurer for acts of deliberate negligence or intentional criminality. That is a break in pattern which cannot be overstated.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this legislation, and I applaud the Minister of Service NL for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Her work is very much appreciated and she's showing she's very much on the side of consumers.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I'm not going to take long this time. I'm really not going to take long.

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

**MR. LANE:** I guess, as usual though, as opposed to simply voting on something, I at

least like to have the record say how I voted on it and have it stand.

I'll be supporting this piece of legislation. I think it's a good piece of legislation. I didn't realize this kind of situation actually existed, that it would be a thing, but after hearing it explained, I can see why it's something that we need. We have it in other provinces, and, again, it's just a protection to individuals. I'm not going to repeat everything that's been said, but I looked at it and when I had it, I asked for an example.

Basically, just so I'm clear – and I'm pretty sure I am – what this piece of legislation comes down to is if, for example, you had a husband and wife, they owned a property and they had insurance – both names were on the insurance – and they had some marital issues or something and the husband moved out or whatever but the house was still insured in his name, and god forbid he came back to the house one night or something and did serious damage to the home and so on, maybe burned the house down, who knows? Things can happen. Worse things have happened.

The bottom line is we would have a situation then where the house would be gone and because of the intentional act, the insurance wouldn't cover it. Here would be the spouse left with no home and no insurance on the home. Based on what we have here, he would get nothing, but she would get half the insurable value for the home.

The same thing could happen in a business partnership, not in a corporation. If I had a business and it was a partnership, two of us owned the building, and my partner decided they were going to burn the building down – it was an act of arson or something like that – and the investigation determined it was arson and I didn't know anything about it and I was no part of it, under the current rules, the business would be gone and it would not be insured.

Obviously, the partner who was involved, besides going to jail, he would get no insurance money, but me, as the partner who had nothing to do with this act and knew nothing about it, my business would be destroyed and I wouldn't get any insurance either. Once again, this particular clause allows in that particular

scenario that if I wasn't involved and I'm a partner, I would get half the insurance.

That only seems like justice to me, seems like the right thing to do. It's happening in other jurisdictions. I'm surprised that it wasn't covered off here before now. I don't know if something happened here that made us aware of this or if it's just a jurisdictional scan that picked up on this. I'm not sure how that occurred, but it seems to me like a good amendment nonetheless.

With that said, I'll be supporting the amendment, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** If the minister speaks now she will close the debate.

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

**MS. STOODLEY:** Thank you very much, everyone, for your feedback, particularly the Member for Ferryland; the Member for Labrador West; the Member for Harbour Main; the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's; the Minister of Immigration, Skills and Labour; and the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands. I think you all brought up excellent points.

The Member for Harbour Main, you asked about innocent co-insureds and that they must co-operate with legislation. That is consistent with how all the other provinces also have their legislation. Currently, insurance companies are operating in this manner, in the spirit of this legislation. I have no reason to believe that it would be an issue, but it's certainly very important to consider. As well, the superintendent of insurance also oversees all disputes with insurance companies that individuals might have as well, so they're kind of an extra check and balance that residents or consumers have in dealing with insurance.

I just wanted to clarify. I think I used the word prohibiting when I was speaking, which probably wasn't a good word to use. Just to clarify, we are exempting the application where a clause is used where there is an innocent co-insurer. The word I used, prohibiting, probably

wasn't the best word to use, so I just wanted to clarify that.

Again, thank you very much everyone. I look forward to answering any questions and discussing further in Committee.

Thank you very much.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Is the House ready for the question?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Yes.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that Bill 41 now be read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**CLERK (Barnes):** A bill, An Act To Amend The Insurance Contracts Act. (Bill 41)

**MR. SPEAKER:** The bill has now been read a second time.

When shall this bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole House?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Insurance Contracts Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 41)

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

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

I move, seconded by the Member for Mount Scio, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 41.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

#### Committee of the Whole

**CHAIR (P. Parsons):** Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 41.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Insurance Contracts Act." (Bill 41)

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

**CLERK:** Clause 2.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 2 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, clause 2 carried.

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

**CHAIR:** Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

**CLERK:** An Act To Amend The Insurance Contracts Act.

**CHAIR:** Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

**CHAIR:** Shall I report the bill carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the bill without amendment, carried.

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. Deputy House Leader.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I ask that the Committee rise and report progress on Bill 41, from the Committee.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that I rise and report Bill 41 carried without amendment.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Reid):** The hon. the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave.

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

The Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 41, An Act To Amend The Insurance Contracts Act, without amendment.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee has considered the matters to them referred and has directed her to report Bill 41 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

**MR. CROCKER:** Tomorrow.

Now, sorry.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now?

Now or tomorrow?

**MR. CROCKER:** Now.

**CLERK (Barnes):** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

When shall the said bill be read a third time?

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, third reading would be tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, report received and adopted. Bill 41 ordered read a third time on tomorrow.

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 2(a).

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that this House resolve into a Committee of the Whole on Supply to consider a resolution and Bill 40 respecting the granting of Interim Supply to Her Majesty.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that I should now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply to consider a resolution and Bill 40.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

### Committee of the Whole

**CHAIR (P. Parsons):** Order, please!

We are considering the resolution and Bill 40 respecting the granting of Interim Supply to Her Majesty and the amendment to clause 2.

### Resolution

“That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for

defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2021 the sum of \$1,560,324,100.”

**CHAIR:** Shall the amendment to clause 2 carry?

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

**MR. LANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm glad to have the opportunity to speak again. Madam Chair, as we've said in the past – we all know but for anyone who is watching – we are doing Interim Supply, which is a money bill, which provides flexibility for Members to bring up basically any issues that they wish. I've certainly had a number of constituents and individuals throughout the province reach out to me on a number of issues, so I want to take this time to address a couple of them for sure.

Madam Chair, the first issue I want to address is the issue around the essential worker top-up program. The money, I think, primarily if not totally, is federal money. It's for essential workers who worked during COVID-19 and provided us with all the goods and services and so on that we required.

It was put in place for workers at the lower end of the pay scale and there's a whole list of people who could qualify for it. I'm not going to get into the whole list but we think of home care workers, we think of workers who are working at the grocery stores, other retail outlets and so on that had to work through COVID-19. I think we appreciated through COVID-19 just how essential a lot of these workers are to us all. I know that everybody would agree in this House that we owe them all a great debt of gratitude in getting us through so far.

This program, of course as I indicated, is federal money, but it was left to the provinces to design the criteria. They were given parameters by the federal government, the provinces would be, and then they developed their criteria. I think that then had to be approved by the federal government. Then the province could move forward in administering the program and the money.



I'm absolutely sure and confident in saying that this program was put in place by both our federal and provincial government for the right reasons, to help those that required the money at this time and those who put themselves and their families at greater risk than many. The intentions on behalf of the federal government and I believe the intentions at the time, and still the intentions of the provincial government, are honourable and everybody wants to do the right thing by these essential workers.

Unfortunately, it's like any program and, particularly, these programs during COVID-19. A lot of them are, let's face it, somewhat reactionary and perhaps did not take the same amount of time and scrutiny as other programs would take because we were in the middle of a pandemic. That's totally understandable.

Given the fact that we are in a pandemic, I think that all parties involved did a great job and their heart was in the right place. Unfortunately, though, there are a number of issues which have arisen in this program that I'm sure a lot of them probably were never contemplated, and there are unintended things that have happened that have now come to light. I know that the minister is aware of a number of these things. I have chatted with him about it. I've had discussions with officials in his department about it and I know that they are working on solutions. I know they have and I have told everyone who's asked me, people in my district and others. I have told them that and I'm confident that they're going to work to resolve a number of these issues.

Some of the things that have happened, Madam Chair, that are of concern – and I've heard from employees and I've heard from employers as well. There were definitely some challenges with the compatibility issues, if you will, with the software system, the LaMPSS that government is using. I've heard from employers that was a bit of a nightmare for some of them – compatibility issues.

I heard that there was issues with once they sign in they need some sort of a password. They'd request a password and had to wait a long time to get a response and get those passwords. There were other administrative issues around providing the information that they felt were somewhat onerous. I have to say that in speaking

to officials in the department this morning they recognized there were some concerns and they tell me that a number of those things have been addressed. I'm glad to hear that.

I've also heard that there are employers out there who have not applied for the money. This is a big one – employers who have not applied for the money. The money cannot get into the hands of the workers for which the money was intended, unless the employers actually apply for it. It's very, very disappointing to say the least, to hear that there are employers out there who just didn't bother to apply for the money.

That doesn't mean that's the case in all cases because I also know there are employers, like small employers, that were so busy just trying to keep their businesses afloat and dealing with the federal government on programs just to keep their own businesses alive, who may not have been in tune with everything that was on the go. This may have passed them by and they didn't even realize. That's a possibility as well.

There are also situations I'm told, or is being alleged, where employers have applied for the money, they have received the money and even though that money is supposed to be distributed to the employees immediately or at least within I think 10 days – I stand to be corrected on it, but I think it's 10 days. There have been allegations made to me of employers who have had that money in their hands for an extended period of time and have not paid it out to the workers.

Why they have not done that, I have no idea. I can't speak for individual circumstances, nor will I. There may be some reasons that are valid and there may be some reasons which are absolutely unacceptable. I don't know, but these are things that I have been told.

I guess the purpose of bringing this up now – and the minister is aware of it; I thank him for his commitment and his department's commitment to work on these things, but I did want to have it on the record in the House of Assembly that these issues do exist.

There are other issues as well. Here's another one I've forgotten, and probably one of the more important ones that have happened. We've had situations, Madam Chair, where – and I'm going

to use home care as an example. Here you have, say, home care workers and when COVID started there were a number of workers who said to their employer: I'm not going to work. Perhaps they were immunocompromised, they had family members who were immunocompromised or whatever the case might be. So they did not go to work.

As a result, here you have situations where there are people who require home care who now don't have that home care. So the home care employers would say to the home care worker: Listen, I'm in a bind here and this lady is not getting care, can you work some overtime? Can you work some additional hours to get me out of a bind to provide care for this lady? The workers took it on at additional risk to themselves.

As a result of taking on those extra hours, they didn't qualify for the program because the program is \$3,000 gross or less a month to qualify. So if you had a home care worker who was making, say, \$2,500 a month and they would have qualified, now they're working overtime to help out the employer provide the service and they made \$3,200, now they're being punished for actually stepping up when the time was needed.

There were cases where there were, say, a husband and wife, for argument sake, and one of those people got laid off, they needed the extra money at the time so they cashed in on their vacation time or money they had banked with their employer, got that extra money and that was enough to put them over the top that they did not qualify for the program because now they went slightly over \$3,000. Even though, under normal circumstances, they would have qualified, because they took that one-time extra payment, they didn't qualify.

These are the kinds of things, Madam Chair, that are going on. The minister is aware of it. The department is aware of it. I know he is going to do his best to address it. I thank him for that.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

The Member's time has expired.

**MR. LANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John's Centre.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just want to make a few brief comments with regard to the Interim Supply and budget. I guess if nothing else, it's about setting priorities as to where we're going to spend our money and how we're going to allocate it.

Often we get asked the question: Where are you going to come up with the money? And certainly the Third Party has often said it's not a matter of coming up with the money, it's about what are our priorities and where do we allocate it.

One thing that's become abundantly clear – and I think we all recognize – is certainly with dental care. Any of us who have worked in any unionized area or any company that has a dental plan, you know that part of that insurance plan is about dental care. It's probably one of the most expensive yet one of the most necessary health insurances to have.

We also know that not everyone is fortunate to have that, and it has a significant impact on not only on their dental health but their physical health, their own self esteem, their own ability to go out and get a job and so on and so forth. It has repercussions throughout.

It's certainly an issue that the national party, NDP, has advocated for the adoption of a national dental care program for uninsured families who are making less than \$90,000 and do not have access to dental insurance. But it became very clear when I was campaigning as well, and even since, how seriously the deficit in dental health is.

One issue has come up to my attention recently and has come to the attention of Jack Harris, who's the Member of Parliament for St. John's East. And I'll read from his letter, Madam Chair: "One issue recently brought to our attention was the fact that individual children who are beneficiaries of the Children's Dental Health Program have aged out as beneficiaries of the subsidized dental services during the lock down mandated by government ... after mid-March when dental offices closed."

So there is a concern that has been brought to our attention that those children who aged out during that time may not be covered. That they've lost that time when they could have dental appointments or services provided. But as a result of that since that time, now that dental services have been reinstated, they're unable to avail of those appointments that they would've been able to take care of during that period.

As I said, in effect COVID-19 – Mr. Harris goes on to say: the COVID-19 pandemic prevented these children from receiving dental care that they need. This letter he writes is to the Premier and the government to extend the eligibility of this program for a period of time to permit them to obtain the services that would have been missed.

In terms of priorities, this is very much – certainly, as we debate this, I'm hoping that – as I understand it, no decision has been made on this as to whether it will be extended. I'm hoping government will see this as a priority to make sure that those children who aged out during the pandemic will have an extension of time so that they can have their dental needs taken care of.

As a said, it's the key to not only dental health but also other health issues and also to a person's self esteem. I have the letter here to table if you wish.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

If the Member wants to table the letter, if he has leave he can certainly do so.

Does he have leave? Does the Member have leave?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Leave.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

**MR. JOYCE:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'll just speak on this motion also. I hear a lot about the offshore here recently, and you hear a lot of bantering back and forth. Some of it is political, some of it is concern trying to get issues done. I don't think there's either party here that wouldn't want to see a resolution to it, no matter who you are in the House.

I remember back, I'm going back to 2002, and even earlier than that with the FPI hearings, when we had a major issue with the fisheries, and this is just a suggestion – maybe it's gone too far in the Legislature here now. I remember when that happened they set-up an all-party committee, that everybody would come together as one and go to Ottawa as one.

At the time it was an all-party committee with the Liberals, who was in government, the PCs and the NDP. They picked two people, three from the Liberals, two from the PCs and one from the NDP. They combined, they had hearings and they went as a unified voice to Ottawa. I'm just throwing that out there because I know on the FPI hearings that I was on – that once again reunited to go all across the province to have public hearings. We went into a lot of areas, we heard a lot of emotion and then we came out as a unified front on what we should do.

That's just something that has been done in this House on several occasions, that when there's such a major crisis people would unite together and have a united front in Ottawa on that. It's just a suggestion to the Deputy Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Third Party that if there's any way you can sit in a room where there are no cameras and nothing around and see if there's some way you can go together, if you can come up with a good solution, because it has been done before. I remember the all-party committee going together as a group, staying as a group, getting their vision together as an all-party committee and going to Ottawa.

That's just a suggestion, because you always hear it in Question Period and I think everybody would like to see a solution to it. But if we can stand together with the offshore workers, if we can all stand together and go as a united front, I think it would do us all much better. It would definitely do the families of the workers, the

people who are working there and the families that depend upon the offshore, we would do them a much better service if we decided to do that.

That's just a suggestion for the Deputy Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Third Party if someone wants to, as we all used to say, put a bit of water in your wine and give a call, just have a look at it and see what we can do. It has worked. Trust me, it has worked. I know there are people here that were a part of it back in the days when there were times that we really came together as legislators and really came together as people of the province for the betterment of the province. Not the betterment of your party, not the betterment of yourself, but the betterment of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I'm just throwing that out there because I was a part of it on one occasion for that. I offer and I hope someone will make the first call to meet in a private room somewhere and see what we could do as a united front.

The second thing I'm going to bring up – and I say to the Minister of Transportation, I know the Member for Terra Nova has brought it up. I just want to say to the Minister of Transportation, there are workers in the last couple of days that have come in from Ontario and Quebec. They're doing drywall at the hospital in Corner Brook. I know the Minister of Transportation has listened attentively. If you want to go out on the site, I will gladly bring you out in the area and watch them coming on and off the site.

The question I have to ask is – and I know the Minister of Health is here and I'm not sure if he's the right person to answer this – who deems people essential? This is where I have the problem with it. Who deems people essential? How can you deem a drywall worker essential for Newfoundland and Labrador?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** They work for Marco.

**MR. JOYCE:** That's the other thing I was going to bring up. If you notice all these cases, it is Marco. I know John Allan was very close and I know Dwight Ball was very close with Marco. How can people coming in for construction of the hospital, the long-term care – get it very

straight, I'm glad the hospital is going ahead. I am glad but no one yet has informed me how you can deem a drywall worker, a drywall labourer, as an essential worker in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. He can walk in and walk on the site and work without going through the normal restrictions of a person coming into the province from Ontario and Quebec. The government, all they say is: deemed essential.

The question has to be asked: Who deems them essential? How do they deem them essential? Is there influence in there that as by luck someone from Marco got these workers coming in because they have a contract signed with someone in Ontario or Quebec, companies they work with all across Canada, however it's done? Is there influence involved here? I don't know, but it's just strange that these individuals – and I said it before and I'll say it again because I was hoodwinked by Dwight Ball, by John Allan and Marco. I got hoodwinked on the long-term care facility because I was guaranteed there were going to be local workers.

I went on *Open Line* on John Allan who said he spoke to Dwight Ball, there will be local workers being hired. I went on NTV with Don Bradshaw on a Friday night and said: I just got word, just spoke to John Allan who was speaking to Dwight Ball who was the premier –

**CHAIR:** I kindly remind the Member not to name individuals by their name inside the Chamber.

Thank you.

Continue.

**MR. JOYCE:** Why not?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Because it's a rule.

**MR. JOYCE:** Where's the rule? What are you talking about? You're allowed to talk about who you're talking about.

Anyway, I went up there on a Friday afternoon and was told –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

I'm going to call order. We're going to do this and we're going to do it respectfully, everyone in the Chamber. This is a very important topic we can all agree, so, please, let's keep the levels to a respectful level. While Members are speaking, let's give them the respect.

They have the floor. Continue.

**MR. JOYCE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I know it's getting a bit rough.

I went up on NTV and said: No, they're going to hire local people, put your résumé in. On Monday morning, I made a call and they said: No, we're not taking them. I can tell you – I said it then and I said it in this House – they would not hoodwink me. John Allan and Dwight Ball would not hoodwink me on the hospital. I presented petition after petition after petition after petition.

I can tell the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, you can stay there and say, okay, there's 8 per cent not. That number is creeping up. They started coming in this week. I ask the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, you have to step in there. There is still two years of work left for those labourers out in Corner Brook – two years. I don't care if they're just from Corner Brook. If they're Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, however the union decides I'm fine with it. The least of my worries.

If you take the other side, forget work-wise, but who deems someone essential as a drywall worker to come in and not have to go through the restrictions of COVID? I can't get that answer. This is where the people in the province can't get answers. Is it connections somewhere? I don't know but I can tell you that the workers that I spoke to, standing at the gate where people were driving in, just got in and going right on the site. There's no question that is happening – absolutely no question that is happening.

I say to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, I say to the government: Please, these workers don't want to go away. The rotational workers then, if they go away, they have to come back here and isolate for another two weeks while there's work right up.

Anywhere in the province they can drive to. They can rent a house in Corner Brook, don't have the restrictions and come home for a week or two weeks. If they're on rotation and want to come over to St. John's and rotational back and forth here two or four or 14 days on and off, they would still be with their families. Yet we have it here and we can't as a government – I ask anybody on the government side. Someone stand up and say how a drywall worker is deemed essential.

What are the qualifications to be deemed essential? I can tell you and I can tell the people from government that when it comes to the people of Humber - Bay of Islands, of Corner Brook and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, if we're going to stand up and say we're doing this, let's just do it. Let's not say people are essential and use that word essential and then, all of a sudden, let people come in with other people here who could do it, and no one can explain what essential means and no one can explain how the process works to deem these people essential.

I'm asking anybody from government who's a part of this here – because I can tell you one thing, Madam Chair, on my last few seconds, if that was someone in the government, if they were needing to go away they would be asking the same questions I'm asking right now. Why don't we just find a way to keep local workers working and not let people come in and explain what essential is and who deems them essential.

**CHAIR:** The Member's time has expired.

**MR. JOYCE:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

Seeing no further speakers –

**MR. LANE:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

The Chair recognizes the Members for Mount Pearl - Southlands again.

**MR. LANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and I'm glad to have the opportunity to speak again

Madam Chair, I have a couple of issues. The first one I just want to speak to is the idea of rotational workers but before I do, I do have to say this based on what my colleague has just said. Every one of us in this House – every single one of us – can attest to the fact when election time comes and you're going around, how often do you hear people say can't trust politicians, looking after your buddies and everything else that's going on, you're all alike and we all end up wearing it.

You wonder why people are skeptical like they are, when as my colleague just so eloquently put it, there are Newfoundlanders having to leave, go away to work, doing rotational work, coming home, having to isolate, can't see their families and everything else associated to it. At the same time that's happening there are people coming from outside the province, in this case coming to Corner Brook, working on the hospital.

I don't care if it's 8 per cent, 2 per cent, 1 per cent or a half per cent. I don't care but coming in here not having to self-isolate, coming from Ontario, coming from Quebec and taking jobs that Newfoundlanders here are quite capable of doing. They're on the unemployment line or on CERB or whatever they're on, or they're having to travel away to work and they can't get a job and these people come in. Can you imagine a drywaller putting up a bit of gyprock and plaster and so on? You're telling me there's nobody here in the skilled trades in Newfoundland that can do that, we have to go bring them in from Quebec? Absolutely ridiculous.

When the question has been asked over and over again as to how did these people get deemed essential? Who decided that there's nobody in Newfoundland able to do the job? Can't get an answer, Madam Chair. Why can't we get an answer? Could it be that the real answer is not something that anybody over there wants to say? Could it be that what is being thrown out there is absolutely what's going on? You wonder why people are so skeptical and so angry all the time with everybody in this House. I'm not talking about the government, all of us. That's why because of that kind of stuff. People are sick of it. They are sick of it.

Anyway, staying on the topic, I guess, of rotational workers, we all understand the

restrictions that are in place due to COVID-19. We really do. I've been on record numerous times in the media, social media, in the House of Assembly that the Minister of Health and Community Services and Dr. Fitzgerald – I don't agree with everything – by and large, they have done a fantastic job in getting us through this pandemic. They have. They've been great communicators and everything else, and people are generally pleased. They really are.

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

**MR. LANE:** Yeah, absolutely.

I do recognize and thank Dr. Fitzgerald and the minister that they did make an announcement recently on rotational workers, to make it a little easier on them. The rotational workers would say that more could've been done, that we could be doing more testing and so on like has been happening in other provinces. Let's do more testing and, by doing more testing, possibly reduce the self-isolation time so they can have some quality time with their families when they return.

Be that as it may, there was some movement made for rotational workers, but there was another group of rotational workers besides the ones that go to Alberta and BC and Ontario for work. They are what would be known as international rotational workers. There are a number of them in Newfoundland and Labrador; there are a number of them in my district. I spoke to a gentleman last night. He's in the oil and gas industry. With everything that's going on, he's out of work so he had no choice. He works over in Africa. I can't tell you the name of the part of Africa. He did tell me; I forget the name.

Anyway, regardless, he's over in Africa and he rotates; he comes back and forth. When he comes back, he arrives here, has to go up to his cabin. He's up there self-isolating for two weeks and then he has a week left to spend with his – he doesn't even have a week left to spend with his family because in addition to the isolation time, it takes him two days to get from Africa to Newfoundland, two days to get from Newfoundland back to Africa, so that's four more days gone. He really has no time at all to spend with his family.

His question is, what is the difference between me coming from the work camp in Africa than somebody coming from a work camp in Alberta? Specifically, given the fact, according to him – I'm only going by what he told me – the work camp that he's in, they have not had one case of COVID-19, not one. Since this started there has been zero cases, zero, in the work camp that he is in. Zero.

His question – I'm only asking this question. I'm not the doctor here. I'm not an epidemiologist. God forbid if I was but I'm not. He's asking the question, and it's a logical one to me. He's saying, we've had zero cases since this started; how am I any more dangerous than the guy that's coming from Alberta? What makes me any more dangerous? I'm leaving the camp, I'm getting on a plane and I'm coming home. I have to stop in the airport. Yes, so does the guy from Calgary.

We have people inside the Atlantic bubble now that they're in New Brunswick; they were supposed to go to New Brunswick, Halifax, home. Now the flights are changed: New Brunswick, Montreal then home, but that's okay. They're in Montreal. It's outside the bubble. They can come because it's considered in transit in the airport. What's the difference between them in transit in the airport and the guy who's working in the oil industry from outside the country being in transit in a couple of airports to come home?

This is very upsetting and frustrating. We have a lot of people in that boat. I understand that he is covered by federal jurisdiction. I know that. It's not provincial; it's federal. They have a different set of rules. All that man is asking for – and he speaks for a lot of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in the same boat – is can this be discussed and addressed.

He said to me, can you please go to the House of Assembly, raise the issue and ask the Minister of Health and Community Services. He's having meetings with the other health ministers across the country, with Dr. Tam. I guess Dr. Fitzgerald is doing the same thing. All he's asking, he's saying, can you bring this up? If it's not happening, can you please bring this up, the federal rule? Find out what makes me any more dangerous than a guy coming from Alberta,

given the fact that there are zero cases where I am. I'm not someone who's travelling here. I'm not a tourist. I'm a Newfoundlander. I live here. I haven't seen my family in six months, he said, other than a couple of days here and there – haven't seen them.

Maybe there's a very good reason for all this. I'm sure there is. I'm sure that the rationale is we want to keep us as safe as possible. We all want that. I understand that. We all want that. The workers do. They have mothers. Like he said, I have an 80-year-old mother. I don't want to come here and give her something. I don't want that to happen. Why would he? Or to give it to anybody else? He's coming from a place where there are zero cases, yet he's treated differently than the guy that's coming from Alberta, even though there are no cases.

Again, I know it's federal, Minister, I understand that, but he's just asking and I'm asking on his behalf. I'm not the expert. I know nothing about this, only what I read and I hear Dr. Fitzgerald say. I trust Dr. Fitzgerald, but on his behalf, he wants this issue raised with your other provincial counterparts, with the federal government on this federal rule to see if there is anything that can be done to – we're not saying throw the baby out with the bathwater and just have a free-for-all, but to work together to find some way to, hopefully, ease the restrictions a little bit so that this man and other Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can spend a little bit of quality time with their families the same as you and I do.

He has no choice; he has to work. He has to go there to pay the bills. If not, he's going to have to pick up and leave. He's considering that and others are too.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

The Member's time has expired.

**MR. LANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

**MR. JOYCE:** I'm only going to speak just two minutes. I said I was going to speak once, but I will speak just for two minutes.

I ask the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, because it's kind of personal when you know these people personally. If you want to come out, I'll arrange a meeting with some of the workers in the area that's affected by people coming in, I would have no issue with that whatsoever.

If you notice, Madam Chair – and I don't mean because the minister is only new in the position – that first there was 97 per cent, and then it was 95; now it's down to 92. It is creeping down, the percentage of local workers. I think it's at 92 now at the Corner Brook hospital. First it was about 98, 99.

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

**MR. JOYCE:** You can show it to me but it says 92, the Corner Brook hospital. That's what you read. I'm not here to argue; I'm here to save the jobs. I know the minister is, so if you have time and you want to come out and meet with some of those workers and just show that what they're saying is correct, I'll gladly arrange it because it is the families that we're dealing with here.

I say to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, if you go back and look at where it first started, the Corner Brook hospital, it was up to about 98 per cent. Then it went down to 95. I remember one time it was 95 per cent. I know the former minister – now it's down to 92. So what you're seeing is as the construction is picking up, so is the number of outside workers picking up also. The last couple were from Ontario and Quebec.

If you look at the trend, when you see that the amount of work is picking up, it's starting to bring in more people from outside. I guess they have contacts and they deal with suppliers and contractors from Quebec and Ontario because they do a lot of work across Canada – Marco – I'm asking the minister to keep an eye on that and come out.

I know it would be a worthwhile visit for you. I'll urge the minister, not just the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure but all the government Members, I urge you to sit down with Marco and say, listen, what can we do here. Like I said, there are two years of work left for labourers, drywall workers and other people in

Corner Brook. I'm just asking that we gradually – don't let it creep up, but let's bring it down as close as we can to zero. That's the type of thing that we need, because it's for the workers that we need it done.

Again, I offer minister the option of coming out and sitting down with some of those workers and having a chat with them. Please go back and look at the percentage because it is getting higher and higher every time that it is presented here in the House.

I'll close there, Madam Chair. I was at that protest yesterday, so was my colleague, the Member for Mount Pearl – Southlands, and so were all the PC Members, the Liberal Members and NDP Members; we were all together on it. So let's find some way, see who has the courage to pick up the phone so we can stand in this House, which we've done before, and we can stand up as a united front and say we want action from Ottawa and there's no dissention in this House of Assembly. Let's do it. It was done before, it worked before and we set up an all-party committee to meet with the prime minister and say to the all-party we're all into this together. We did it before, I was a part of it before and we got results.

Hopefully somebody is going to right now take the initiative to put everything aside, get in a room, take off your Liberal hat, take off your orange hat, take off your red hat, get in there and let's put on our Newfoundland and Labrador flag so that we can say we're going to go up and meet with the prime minister and, when we speak, there's not one dissenting voice in this House of Assembly, because we did it before and we can do it again. I hope someone is going to take this initiative and take this approach.

I'll even speak on behalf of my colleague from Mount Pearl – Southlands. We're okay. If the three main parties want to go, we're okay to just go as the three main parties and we'll be just another Member. Please, please, please on behalf of all the workers in Newfoundland and Labrador who depend on the offshore, someone put a bit of water in the wine and realize this is bigger than everybody in this House of Assembly. This is about families staying home; this is about people keeping their homes. We heard the questions here, back and forth from



everybody, about families not keeping their homes, which is all true. We're all passionate on it. Some people here went through it.

Here's an opportunity for us to go as a united front, not as Liberal, PC or NDP, but a united front. It would be a happy day for me to stand up and say that we're going together and we all support it. We did it before in the fisheries; we did it before on the FPI; we could do it again for the sake of the offshore workers, so let's do it.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIR:** Seeing no further speakers, shall we now vote on the amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Division.

**CHAIR:** Division is called.

### Division

**CHAIR:** Are the House Leaders ready for the vote?

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

**CHAIR:** Yes? Okay.

All those in favour?

**CLERK:** Mr. Crosbie, Mr. Brazil, Mr. Forsey, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Wakeham, Mr. Lester, Ms. Evans, Mr. Petten, Mr. Kevin Parsons, Mr. Parrott, Mr. Pardy, Mr. Paul Dinn, Ms. Conway Ottenheimer, Mr. Tibbs, Mr. O'Driscoll, Ms. Coffin, Mr. James Dinn, Mr. Brown, Mr. Joyce, Mr. Lane.

**CHAIR:** All those against?

**CLERK:** Ms. Coady, Mr. Crocker, Mr. Haggie, Mr. Bennett, Ms. Dempster, Mr. Byrne, Mr. Davis, Mr. Osborne, Mr. Loveless, Ms. Stoodley, Mr. Bragg, Mr. Warr, Mr. Trimper,

Ms. Haley, Mr. Mitchelmore, Ms. Gambin-Walsh.

**CLERK:** Madam Chair, the ayes: 20; the nays: 16.

**CHAIR:** The amendment is carried.

On motion, amendment carried.

**CHAIR:** Now we'll vote on clause 2, as amended.

Seeing no speakers, clause 2 as amended.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, clause 2, as amended, carried.

**CLERK:** Clauses 3 and 4.

**CHAIR:** Clauses 3 and 4.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, clauses 3 and 4 carried.

**CLERK:** The Schedule.

**CHAIR:** The Schedule.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

The Chair recognizes the Opposition House Leader.

**MR. BRAZIL:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

With the consent of the House, I want to propose a rearranged schedule to replace the one that was in. Nothing changes on the amount of monies being requested of \$1,040,216,400 just the

amounts in the headings to reflect exactly what the Department of Finance headings amounts would be. I ask consent that we present this, replace the old Schedule with this one.

**CHAIR:** Does the Member have consent?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** Granted.

We'll take a short recess.

### Recess

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

Are the House Leaders ready?

The amendment is in order, so now we are debating the amended Schedule.

Seeing no further speaker, the Chair recognizes the hon. the Deputy Premier.

**MS. COADY:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

When we started this debate, I will say to the people who are listening in today, that Interim Supply provides funding for government to continue to operate while the budget process is ongoing. This is what we're discussing here today and yesterday. It is a normal part of the process to have a three-month Supply to be responsible, to ensure that Interim Supply is provided while the budget is ongoing. As I've said in this hon. House many times, it's a normal 50-day calendar cycle. That's normal. I think in 2018 it was 57. The year before it was little less than that.

*The House of Commons Procedure and Practice* does allow for a three-month Interim Supply. I have to understand the logic of going from the three months to the two months, but I have to assume that Members opposite will ensure that the budget is processed and concluded before Interim Supply ends, which will be in two months. At the end of the day, we have to have money to ensure the operations of government, to ensure that teachers are paid, to ensure that

schools can open, to ensure that health care is provided and to ensure that seniors have medical supplies.

It's the will of the House to go to two months, and we'll just have to live within that. I do implore everyone in this House to understand that in two months we might have to be back here, if the budget is not passed, to do another Interim Supply. I hope that is not the case. I implore you that that would not be the case. Everyone has to realize that Interim Supply rests as soon as the budget comes.

So as quickly as we can get that budget reviewed, analyzed and passed, that would allow for the continued operations and smooth operations of government. At the end of the day, we must have Interim Supply and that's what's important.

Thank you.

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

**CHAIR:** Seeing no further speakers.

Shall the amendment carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, amendment carried.

**CHAIR:** Shall the Schedule, as amended, carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, Schedule, as amended, carried.

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

**CHAIR:** Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

**CLERK:** WHEREAS it appears that the sums mentioned are required to defray certain expenses of the Public Service of Newfoundland and Labrador for the financial year ending March 31, 2021 and for other purposes relating to the public service.

**CHAIR:** Shall the preamble carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, preamble carried.

**CLERK:** An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2021 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

**CHAIR:** Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

**CHAIR:** Shall I report the bill and resolution carried with amendments?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. CROCKER:** Madam Chair, I move that the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 40 with amendments.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that I now rise and report Bill 40 carried with amendment.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Reid):** The hon. the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave and the Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

**MS. P. PARSONS:** The Committee of Supply have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have adopted a certain resolution with amendment and recommended that a bill with amendments be introduced to give effect to the same.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee of Supply reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed her to report that the Committee have adopted a certain resolution with amendments and recommends that a bill with amendments be introduced to give effect to the same.

When shall this report be received?

**MR. CROCKER:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Premier, that the amendments be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that the amendments be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**CLERK:** First reading of the amendments.

On motion, amendments read a first time.

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that the amendments be now read a second time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**CLERK:** Second reading of the amendments.

On motion, amendments read a second time.

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Premier, that the resolution, as amended, now be read the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the resolution, as amended, be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

*"That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2021 the sum of \$1,040,216,400."*

On motion, resolution read a first time.

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the resolution, as amended, be now read a second time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the resolution, as amended, be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**CLERK:** "That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2021 the sum of \$1,040,216,400."

On motion, resolution read a second time.

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, for leave to introduce the Interim Supply Bill, Bill 40, as amended, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce Bill 40, as amended, and that the said bill now be read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

Motion, that the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a bill, "An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2021 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service," carried. (Bill 40)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2021 And For

Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 40)

On motion, Bill 40 read a first time.

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Premier, that Bill 40 now be read a second time, as amended.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the said bill now be read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2021 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 40)

On motion, Bill 40 read a second time.

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Premier, that Bill 40, as amended, be now read a third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the said bill now be read a third time, as amended.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion, as amended?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2021 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 40.)

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

On motion, a bill, “An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Year Ending March 31, 2021 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service,” read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 40)

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Premier, that this House do now adjourn until budget day, September 30, 2020 at 2 p.m.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** A matter has just come up and I’m going to take a short recess to consider it. It won’t be too long, a Member wants to check something before he makes some comments in the House. I’m going to give him a few minutes to do that if we can.

The House is now in recess.

**Recess**

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

Are the Government House Leaders ready?

**MR. CROCKER:** Yes.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Yes.

The Opposition House Leader, Third Party House Leader ready and the independent ready?

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Yes, okay.

We’re received some sad news. I’m going to call on the longest serving Member of the House to make a few comments.

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

It is sad news. A former Speaker of the Legislature, Harvey Hodder, has passed away. I knew Harvey and Pearl personally, so it is sad news.

For those listening, Harvey was first elected on May 3 of 1993. He was re-elected three subsequent times: February 22 of 1996, February 9 of 1999 and October 21 of 2003. Incidentally, he was the first Speaker selected under the elected Speaker provisions of the *Standing Orders* of the House of Assembly.

I had the pleasure of serving 11 years with Harvey. I knew him prior to that when he was mayor of the City of Mount Pearl. Harvey served us four years, from 2003 to 2007, as Speaker of the Legislature. I think I’m the only Member in the Legislature who had actually had the pleasure of serving with Harvey. Everybody else here is post-2007.

From our side of the Legislature, and I’m sure I speak on behalf of all Members in wishing condolences to the Hodder family, to Pearl and all of Harvey’s family. He served his district well, the District of Waterford Valley, which incidentally is the name of the district that I serve. He did serve his district well. He was a proud Newfoundlander and Labradorian and, I know, fiercely proud of the City of Mount Pearl.

On behalf of myself and my colleagues, we wish condolences to the family. A very sad day, indeed.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** A moment of silence?

**MR. OSBORNE:** Yes, we will stand for a moment of silence.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you very much.

I understand there are a few other Members who would like to make some comments as well in relation to this.

I'll look to the Member for Mount Pearl North now.

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

I guess my relationship with – I'll call him Mr. Hodder, because that's how I referred to him when I first met him. He was my principal in junior high. That was back in the mid-'80s. I can remember I was going through the transition from boy to a teenager, and Harvey called me into his office. I remember him looking down over his desk – at that time he was a good bit taller than me – and he said: Now, young Lester, you're going to become a man and, he said, you better get on the right side of the track. So I took that advice.

Regardless of the situations at home or the demographics, Harvey treated every one of his students – as I said in my Member statement this past week, he treated every one of his students with the utmost respect and really helped identify the potential within every one of his students. I always remember him as a very fair man. He always looked at every side of every situation.

It's truly a loss to the community that such a great man has gone. Expressing condolences to his family, especially his daughter Marilyn, who is in Tennessee, and of course she's unable to get back on account of this pandemic that we find ourselves in.

I'm sure everybody will agree that Harvey may be gone but the positive influence on everyone within our province and community that he has worked towards will live on forever.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I'll now recognize the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

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

I too want to echo the remarks that this is certainly a sad day for us all here. It's certainly a sad day for the people of Mount Pearl, for Harvey's family and a sad day for me personally as well.

I moved to Mount Pearl approximately 26 years ago now. I didn't know a soul. I was employed with the provincial government at the time and was actually an activist and very much involved. I was local president of NAPE 7104, actually, the largest local representing everybody here in the Confederation Building.

During that time, we went through some turbulent times. We can remember former Premier Wells at the time and all the things that happened with the civil servants at the time. I was very much part of that. That's what actually got me involved in politics, believe or not. I had just moved to Mount Pearl, an election was coming and I was kind of angry about what had gone on and I said, well, who's running for the PCs in this area?

It's kind of funny, my parents were die-hard Liberals. They said: I can't believe you're getting involved with a PC campaign. Anyway, I did at the time. I didn't know the man. I said: Who's running? They said: It's Harvey Hodder, the former mayor. I said: Well, I'm going to go find his headquarters. Which I did over on Topsail Road, the old Paint Shop, and met him for the first time. I became, I think, his fiercest campaigner during that election and we became really good friends. He asked me then as some point would I be interested in being on his District Association. I was president of the District Association for many, many years while he was there. We had a lot of good times; had a great friendship.

One thing I can say is that Harvey was fiercely loyal to Mount Pearl, to the residents of Mount Pearl. That was something that we certainly shared. Besides being the mayor and the MHA, he was also a great community volunteer. He did so many things behind the scenes that nobody will ever know. I'm sure every Member in this House knows what I mean, because, as a Member, there is lots of stuff that we do for people behind the scenes and help them out. Nobody knows about it, but it happens.

Harvey was famous for that. He has so much compassion in his heart for people, for families and children, I guess as an educator. He always gave 100 per cent to his community, which he loved so dearly.

He will be dearly missed by many. I'm sure I speak for all the citizens of the City of Mount Pearl in offering our deepest condolences to his wife, Pearl; to his daughter, Marilyn; and all the other members of his extended family.

Rest in peace, Harvey.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** As a representative of the NDP, I'm going to call on the Member for Labrador West.

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

I, too, send out my condolences to the family of former Speaker Hodder. I know he was a long-serving Member of this House. He sat here long before I did but, clearly, his work is still remembered to this day in this building. Sitting as a Speaker for those years, too, is a very important task and it's not taken up lightly. I would like to thank him for the work that he did, previously, before we all sat here.

I send condolences to his family and his wife Pearl. We, here in the NDP caucus, all send our condolences to them. It's a very sad day here in the House, most definitely.

Thank you. Take care.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Before we close, I want to say a few words about Harvey as well. I didn't serve in the House at the same time with him, but I was here in the building as a political staffer for a number of years before being elected, so I was here while Harvey was here and while Harvey was Speaker. I got to know him well. I also lived in Mount Pearl for a number of years. I lived in the district that he represented and I know how respected he was as a Member. He had a long history of involvement in the community, distinguished career as an educator and as a mayor before entering provincial politics.

I think it's fair to say he was respected on all sides of the House as a Member and particularly as a Speaker. Members, people who knew him talked about his fairness. I think that was his distinguishing characteristic as Speaker. The thing that made him a great Speaker was the fact that he listened to all sides and he was fair.

Some of his rulings – we're dealing with matters that arise in the House and we look back at precedents and how things were done in the past and very often his rulings come up and give us guidance. I think that's a real tribute to his impact on his district and on this province.

I just want to add my condolences to the family, to his friends and recognize his contribution to this province.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I think we were in the process of making the adjournment motion.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that this House do now adjourn until 2 p.m., Budget Day, September 30, 2020.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that this House does now adjourn until Budget Day, September 30, 2020.

The House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, Budget Day, September 30, at 2 p.m.