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HANSARD

*Speaker: Honourable Scott Reid, MHA*

Wednesday

October 28, 2020

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Admit strangers.

### Orders of the Day

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

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

I call from the Order Paper, Order 2, Committee on Ways and Means.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Ways and Means.

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.

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

### Committee of the Whole

**CHAIR (Brown):** Order, please!

We are now debating the resolution and Bill 47.

### Resolution

"That it is expedient to bring in a measure to authorize the raising from time to time by way of loan on the credit of the province, in addition to the sum of money already voted, a sum of money not exceeding \$1,000,000,000."

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

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

It is a true pleasure to see you sitting in that Chair and guiding these discussions. It is a wonderful experience and thank you very much for doing it.

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

**MS. COFFIN:** Mr. Chair, last night, we were here until midnight discussing the inequities that we are seeing in our economy. Last night, we talked about the growing division of income in our society and poor decision-making that is making that a greater reality for individuals.

Mr. Chair, we have seen individuals who are not earning a living wage. We see people who have been on a picket line for eight weeks trying to earn enough money so they can support their families. These are the individuals who have worked long and hard during COVID, were deemed essential workers. They are now fighting for the right to go to work and be paid appropriately for that.

Mr. Chair, last night, we found that police were brought to the picket line where there was no injunction and it was a peaceful protest. Individual workers and the union were trying to stand up for labour rights. What we thought was going to be a simple dispersal escalated at midnight to 30 riot police showing up at that picket line so that bread could be delivered to fast-food chains. That is an abhorrent abuse of power.

Mr. Chair, these individuals are simply trying to make a living for themselves. They are simply trying to show how important it is to abide by the collective bargaining process and they are being escorted out by riot police. Can you imagine what it was like for an individual who is possibly getting part-time hours, earning less than \$15 an hour, less than a living wage with no chance of a pension, with no guarantee of full-time hours? They are simply there defending their right to go to work and provide an essential service and they are met with riot police when they are simply trying to defend their rights.

Mr. Chair, that is abhorrent. Can you imagine the little old lady who is trying to just top up a little bit of income for herself so she can have Christmas gifts for her children. She is being escorted off a picket line by riot police. How are

they going to try to explain to their grandchildren? How do they explain an arrest record when they want to apply for something?

This is unconscionable. It is an abuse of labour rights. It is an egregious breach of trust and it suggests to me that whoever decided to call the riot police was not acting on behalf of the people who provided us with food during a pandemic. They risked their lives for this.

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

**MS. COFFIN:** The \$2 they got was clawed back when it was deemed that they are no longer essential. They are simply fighting for a right to go to work. These are the people who fed us and they cannot afford to now feed themselves. I can listen to the individuals on this picket line and they said: I work here. I provide this food, but I can't afford to buy it because I am not making enough money. I have to go to a food bank.

Mr. Chair, we've all heard about the individual who's working part-time hours and getting a little bit of top-up and had to receive income support to help her be able to raise her family. A single mother who walks to work for shift work, who needs to pay for child care and just wants to have a little bit of money for herself is being subjected to this type of authority and is having their – just the ability to provide for their children, to create a safe home for them, to be able to give them the clothes they need to go to school. Maybe if they're lucky they'll get a new winter coat for Christmas, and we're saying: No, you can't do that; no, you don't have the right to defend your own job. You do not have the right to ask for reasonable increases to your pay.

Mr. Chair, what we have seen going on is the corporation has chosen to cut hours, not allow individuals to work full-time. They're not giving full-time hours. There are no pensions; there are no benefits. What they want to do now is tie any increases to a share of the cost of living allowance. How is that reasonable? How are people supposed to get ahead when we are going to try to keep them down?

First of all, they don't have a living wage and then we're going to say: Well, you can have some increases, but not quite as much as it's going to cost you to live the same way you were

before. You'll have an increase, but not quite as much as everybody else. Not enough to be able to afford that same bundle of food that you were trying to provide for your children last week; you won't necessarily get it this week.

I spoke to a lady on the picket line who was working for 20 years. Twenty years they dedicated their life to working for Dominion. And do you know what they were making? Fourteen dollars and 10 cents an hour, after 20 years. There was no pension for this individual. This person was still not making a living wage after putting that much time and experience into the work she did.

Don't you tell me that these individuals are not skilled and trained in what they do. If you go into any grocery store and ask where is something, not only will they tell you exactly where it is, they will tell you what the expiry dates are, how much of that product is on the shelves and when it's going to be delivered again and who is going to deliver that. They do inventory control; they do security. They ensure that those stores are clean and safe for us, Mr. Chair.

Now we see our thanks to them is to call the riot police at midnight to come and move them because, again, they wanted to deliver bread and bread products to fast-food chains all across St. John's. How on earth do you think that is? What does that tell these individuals about how we respect labour rights?

Mr. Chair, if myself and the Member for St. John's Centre weren't there, we would not have believed the amount of force that was brought in to address a peaceful protest. Can you imagine what it was like for somebody who was just sitting there saying, I want to earn a living, I want to have a living wage, and you're sending 30 riot police in full gear with weaponry and a paddy wagon to move them out of that?

How do you go home and tell your children about that? How do you explain to yourself that you are just trying to provide for your families and you are being threatened? You are being threatened with arrest; you are being intimidated, just for standing up for your own rights. Mr. Chair, I was up half the night trying

to imagine how bad these individuals must feel for defending basic rights.

Mr. Chair, we need to do more. We need to legislate a living wage. We need to encourage a better dispute resolution. We need to protect these individuals. We do not need to subject them to excessive force.

Mr. Chair, our role here is to protect citizens. It is to ensure that everyone has the right to access reasonable services and to be able to create a life for themselves. Our role is to protect these individuals, not intimidate them.

Mr. Chair, I look forward to having a prolonged debate about what happened last night.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

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

I applaud the previous speaker. Certainly, when I heard it last night on the news or on the way in this morning, it was a bit appalling what happened last night. I won't go down that road now, because I think the Leader of the Third Party has done a very good job on that as well already this morning.

It was interesting to come back here last night. I was out in my district. I was attending an event – consultation, actually, on a community park, and I emailed back because I knew we were sitting in the night. I asked our House Leader, do you need me back there, or do I need to be back? His response, well, if you have something to say, if you want to talk, yeah, come on back. I'll never turn down the opportunity to get up and speak on behalf of the residents of Topsail - Paradise and on other issues that affect everyone across this province.

As we proceed along with normal proceedings, there are not many opportunities to get it all in. So when we talk a money bill then we get that opportunity. I certainly don't look at it as holding up progress, as was suggested last night, because what we do and what we progress to do

is on behalf of residents of our districts and residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. So we take whatever time is necessary to ensure that their issues and their views and their concerns are brought forward.

What I'd like to just touch base on this morning affects all of us, and we've talked about it as workers in this province, and that's the community benefits agreements. We are going through an unusual time. We have dealt with unemployment in the past and we've come out of it, but there's a time where we really have to stand up for the employees and the workers and jobs in this province. When we look at community benefits agreements, making sure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are the beneficiaries of job opportunities here on publicly-funded projects is certainly a place to start.

People will argue, or others will argue, you can't do that because what happens in another province that won't let us go in and work? Well, I can tell you we have gone to work in other provinces because we are very highly skilled and competent workers. That's why we go elsewhere, because they know the work that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can do. They go where there are no workers currently available to fill those roles. When you're in a province that has the highest unemployment rate in the country, has an aging population, we need as much work as we can here in the province.

I go back to 1995, when the Agreement on Internal Trade came into power. That agreement was essentially in place to ensure the free movement of services and workers and labour between different provinces. So you couldn't put up what were called barriers or unnecessary barriers to prevent the movement of goods or services, or to prevent workers or qualified employees to enter a province.

I know under that act, when it first came in, there was a section where you could have a legitimate objective; you could be contrary to that act in terms of labour mobility if you had a legitimate objective. That might be you have a program for under-represented groups. It may be a public safety issue that prevents some trades or professions from coming into the province. There are a number of those.

When that agreement first came out, one other legitimate agreement or objective that was there was labour market development. You could keep it to your own employees because you're working on labour market development. It's interesting because that came out around the same time as we were getting into the oil industry and you wanted to develop your skill set for that industry. It was very, very applicable at that time.

Somewhere along the lines – because in 2017 it became the Canadian Free Trade Agreement – that particular legitimate objective is no longer there. That does not take away from the fact that the intent was initially there. I think policies, programs, agreements, they're not static; they have to change. They have to change with the times and what's happening.

Some would suggest other jurisdictions are going to complain. Under this agreement, there is opportunity for dispute resolution. I would just look back through the agreement. They actually recorded all the times there's been a dispute made. I go back through that and I can't find really anything there in terms of labour mobility that some other jurisdiction founds problems with.

If we are going to really work on our economy and set the stage for coming out of this pandemic that we're in, increasing our workforce and creating long-term meaningful jobs, then we have to look at things like this. As I mentioned last night, I spoke about the flexibility of our LMDA funding. We have to really start to think outside the box when it comes to programming and stand up for the people who elected us and ensure that their futures are secure.

When you see groups like Trades NL out there lobbying for community benefits agreements, the immediate employment is one thing, but there are also far-reaching circumstances here as well. We have an aging workforce, especially in our skilled trades. If anyone knows anything about the apprenticeship program, in order to proceed through to a journeyperson status, you have to be an apprentice under a journeyperson. You have to be mentored; you have to move from a first-year apprentice, to a second year, to

a third, some to a fourth and then your challenge exam for your Red Seal or your Blue Seal.

The problem here is, with an aging workforce and individuals not getting work, we lose those mentors and we lose those journeypeople. You cannot proceed through your apprenticeship unless you have a journeyperson mentor – you can't. So the long-term issues when it comes to community benefits agreements, the initial things is, yes, we're getting jobs, but it's also the future of our tradespeople in this province, and with a Red Seal in the world, wherever they can go.

We need to really start looking at the underlying issues around things like the community benefits agreement; it's very far reaching. It creates long-term, meaningful employment for people in the province, yes. It contributes to our income in terms of taxes, yes. There are all those, what I would call, more obvious issues that are addressed by having people working. One we'll talk about later is poverty. It addresses poverty by having people working. More income, more taxes in the revenue that we can apply to what's needed in society. I think we do miss the point in terms of if we don't have these jobs, if they're not created and journeypeople are not working, then the apprentices are not getting the on-the-job training that they require to proceed through.

It was only the other day we talked about trying to get so many mechanics and so many staff. The government has advertised positions and they're not being filled or people aren't applying. Well, there's a reason for that, and that's because they may not be there. They may not have the qualifications in which to come forward and apply. When we talk about major projects, like Hibernia when that started, I can guarantee you when they come in and they're looking for world-class tradespeople who are qualified and meet all of the criteria for those jobs, then we have to ensure that continues on and we have to ensure they get the opportunity to continue in their education

Community benefits agreements will certainly help in that respect; it's an outcome that we don't always recognize.

Thank you.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave.

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

It is certainly good to see you there in that Chair, and I commend my colleague as well from last night, the Member for Bonavista did a great job. It certainly is an example of everyone working together. As we know, the Speaker's office is a non-partisan office and we certainly are demonstrating team work here today and last night.

I also just want to go on record today, to wake up to that news, what happened with those workers certainly is heartbreaking. I have two Dominion stores in the region where I live. One in Bay Roberts and, of course, one in Carbonear. They've been out there for so long. They've been out there several months picketing in all kinds of weather, day and night.

We know they're in the private industry. We know the negotiations are happening, of course, with Unifor, with their union and the private company, Loblaw, but to drive by and to see those men and women there, young and old, all ages, it's heartbreaking.

One night I met with the Town of Bay Roberts and I had to run up the road to the Shopper's Drug Mart, and I saw those people. It was a wet night, it was a cold night and I went and picked up some food. I went to the picket line and I said: Guys, I can't offer you a deal, I'm not in the position to do so, but as your MHA, as your friend, as your neighbour, I support you. I went up there and had a chat with them. Enough is enough.

I thanked them on behalf of our government. I thanked them on behalf of the district that I represent, Harbour Grace - Port de Grave because let's just think back in March when this unprecedented pandemic struck, not just our province but the entire world, those men and women went to work. They didn't stay home in the safety of their own home like most of us did. They went to work. They had a decision, they didn't have to, but you know perhaps the situations, how they lived their lives and the

things they considered in the lives they lived, they had to go to work, but they did.

Imagine where we would have been, as a people, as the province, if we didn't have our food stores to provide us the essentials that we need. Just imagine the situation.

Amid the hustle and bustle of profit and making money and being successful and getting the best business deal, what about goodwill? My grandmother always said, you can make as much money as you want in this life, but it's the life that you live, the decisions you make, how you treat others, how you treat yourself, and you can't take it with you when you die.

I just wanted to go on record here today. I did hear the minister on *Open Line* this morning and I commend his support of encouragement for those parties to get back at the bargaining table. I understand that the Sheraton Hotel, there's a reservation, and I understand the workers, the union are inviting the company back to the bargaining table. I can only speak for myself as an individual, as a human being. I encourage them; let's find a resolution. Because those people, let's face it – actually, it's a constituent of mine who made news. She works at one of the stores. I think she's a single mom, and she needs to rely on our provincial program for income support to make the ends meet.

Imagine, Mr. Chair, if you had to go take a second job for the work that you do here as an MHA; yet, the pay wasn't cutting it, so you had to go and take up another job or you had to go and ask for help, ask for support. Now the situation that this individual is facing because she's striking, because of the policies, she can no longer avail of that income support. She's literally between a rock and a hard place, or she's up the creek, as some people would say.

Again, I can only speak for myself here, but let's remember the basics in life. We're human beings. When we die, when we leave this world we're all the same and we will be judged accordingly. I sincerely believe that.

I just wanted to add my voice as an MHA, as a friend to those people in my district. Again, a shout-out to those essential workers in Bay Roberts, as well as Carbonear, the region where

I come from, Conception Bay North. Thank you so, so much because without your support, without your dedication, without you getting up and going to work everyday, this situation that we're living in now, what we know as life in this pandemic with COVID-19, would've been much worse had you decided to pack it in and say, you know what, I'm looking after myself.

Please, if you're listening out there, to the company, to the union, get together, let's make it work. We have a lot to be grateful for. Although the hardship we're facing, the challenges we're facing fiscally as a province, we are very fortunate to live where we live in this corner of the globe.

We're leaders in how we've handled the pandemic; how our residents of Newfoundland and Labrador have taken the guidelines that have been given by our public health officials, including my friend, of course, Dr. Haggie, the Member for Gander. Let's do our part. Again, I support them and I hope to see a resolution. They deserve it because we're all the same, Mr. Chair, when it comes down to it. I just wanted to put that out there.

Again, if there's anything I can do for my residents out there to support them and to help them, please call my constituency office. I'm here for you; I'll do whatever I can within my power. The number for our office is 786-1372. Again, I hope they get everything they deserve because they certainly do deserve it.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

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

It's good to see one of our own in the Chair. I know you'll do a good job. Certainly, you do a good job of trying to keep the caucus in order as well.

There are times when you go home and you figure you just shouldn't look at the phone. Last night as I was going to bed, the phone lit up and this was the Member for St. John's East - Quidi

Vidi, our leader, saying: You need to come to Loblaws quickly. That was a call at 1 o'clock last night. It was disturbing, and I'm going to come back to that. As to why it was disturbing: We need to put this into context with Loblaws.

You might remember, I think it was in 2019, that Loblaws received \$12 million of federal money to install new freezers. That's taxpayers' money. That's our money – \$12 million to install new freezers. I listened to the debate here about helping workers and so on and so forth. We may have differences here in the party in terms of how we deal with climate change and the oil industry, but I will tell you this: You support your workers here. You support the people in this province – but that's \$12 million to a company.

Keep in mind, too, that Loblaws was also part of a 14-year bread price-fixing scheme. They pleaded guilty. Some of you might have even gotten the little cards, a \$25 card for bread. That was Loblaws. That's what we were into last night; it was about we couldn't get the bread trucks out. It reminded me of let them eat cake in many ways. It was just horrendous, and I'm going to come back to that.

Also, Loblaws was involved in a Tax Court battle from 2015 to 2018 and ordered to pay back taxes of some \$368 million, basically, in an offshore banking scheme. This is the company that made such a big deal in advertisements – I saw the ads of Galen Weston of how important its essential workers are – yet, it's willing to leave the workers out on the picket line. It's been two months. It's also willing to allow them to be accosted by police.

We're not talking about the ordinary police officer in a cruiser coming out and having that chat with them. We're talking about people in full body armour. I'm having a hard time imagining how our essential workers, our most valued and most cherished – and I'm going to talk a little bit about that – have come to the point where we're ready to move in on them with heavily armed riot police, basically is what we're talking about, in full body armour. I don't know what they expected these workers to be throwing at them. Muffins? What?

Seriously, we weren't talking about a civil uprising. We're talking about people who are fighting for a decent wage, a decent salary. It's interesting that some of the workers a few weeks ago – because like the Member for Harbour Grave, I do have a Loblaws in my district and I do bring food to them every chance I get. It's interesting; one of the things they told me is that while they were getting \$2 an hour extra for the pay, some of the managers were getting up to \$5 or \$7. The managers, the people we're talking about, weren't unionized.

Then again, I can tell you there were people there for 30 years plus. Full-time, they weren't making enough necessarily to even have a house. They were renting. I can tell you that when it comes time for them to retire they won't have the benefits they need to continue renting in a safe, secure home.

Here we are again two months in and what are we going to do about it? We saw the strike out in Gander. I think it was D-J Composites, two years, was it not? How long are we prepared to – I think it's time for government to have that hard talk with Loblaws and say: Start doing something here. Start applying pressure and not about getting a deal, but I can tell you whatever deal comes, it's not like Loblaws is in the red. As I had one person explain to me, often they'll set a forecast and if they're not making that forecast, profits are down by this much. We're not even talking about whether they're in the red or that they're bleeding, profits are down.

I think we always have enough to pay people a living wage. Over the years – this started a long time ago, where people often talk about these jobs as entry-level jobs. In university, I worked at the theatres, as did my brothers as well. It was a great job, free movies and good pay. It was unionized. It got me through university, helped me get through university, that's for sure, but here's the thing, all work has merit, all work has honour. Should it not be for the person that, yeah, do you know what, this is the job that's going to sustain me for the next 30 years. This is the job.

I'll tell you going into a store where you can go up to someone and say that's over in this aisle and they know exactly where it is and they give you the details, that's worth gold. But if that's

what their job is for their life, that's where they are, should they not be paid a decent wage? We can see a model in Costco. I heard Costco mentioned here the other day but Costco pays its workers very well. It also takes from local producers as well.

What's wrong with paying a decent wage, of giving people health benefits, so that they can retire comfortably? What's wrong with that? There's nothing wrong with it. Instead, at midnight, in the dark of night, under the cover of darkness, we have police in riot gear brought in. Maybe it was simply to avoid the media attention.

I don't know who or how it escalated to this, but when we showed up there was no one there with weapons. You could pick the Loblaws workers out. They had the vests on, the reflective vests. So they weren't trying to hide, they weren't trying to be subversive, but what they were doing there was fighting for their rights: a living wage.

Do you know what? I don't know about any of you, but it's not the most pleasant experience to go into a store to shop anymore. I go in and I come out, but for the worker who has to be there behind the plastic shield, they're not only serving people but sometimes they're taking the abuse of the customer who is just totally frustrated with wearing the masks and everything else.

I'm union all the way. I always have been because that's how you ensure that your rights are looked after in the work environment.

If anything here, I think we should all be prepared in this House to stand in solidarity with these workers if they show up here at the Confederation Building or the next picket line because it has to be very clear to Loblaws: You have enough from public money. You've taken enough. You've sucked us dry. You've tried to evade taxes. You've sucked what you could out of this country; it's about time you give back. How do you give back? You give back to the workers. You pay your fair share of taxes. You pay people a living wage.

How many people would \$368 million have paid?



**CHAIR:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you.

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

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

I appreciate the opportunity, and also congratulations on your ascension to such an esteemed Chair.

May I begin by saying that all of us, as parliamentarians, are very concerned about any labour dispute where parties are impacted and impacted negatively. We're always concerned when the community at large is impacted. Labour disputes are a mechanism to resolve labour disputes. There is a collective bargaining process which leads in the vast, vast, vast majority of times to a resolution.

Recognizing that this is a dispute, which encompasses over 1,400 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians as employees and the employer having a significant footprint throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, it was incumbent upon me to reach out, in an act of hand in glove with our conciliation officer from the Department of Labour, to both parties, both the national president of Unifor, Jerry Dias, and as well to the CEO of the Weston group of Loblaws, Sarah Davis, to encourage both parties to get back to the table. Because it is not an opinion, it is a fact; a resolution cannot be achieved without the parties at the table. That is the basis to collective bargaining, when there is a dispute they have to get back to the table in order to achieve a resolution.

I did indeed reach out; I encouraged both parties to get back to the table. I hope that is successful and fruitful. Again, the Department of Labour, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, I'm sure partnered with and supported by this Legislature, we have enabled a conciliation officer to help facilitate that process, but, at the end of the day, it is both parties that need to come forward and seek resolution with each other.

I also want to acknowledge that while it may be construed by some that the police authorities of our province are directed by the Executive of government – they are not. We all know that as parliamentarians it would be absolutely wrong and, quite frankly, dangerous for that expectation to be expressed or for that assumption to be made, that activities of police authorities are directed by government – they are not.

That is an important clarification to make in case there is some confusion about whatever activities may occur. The police authorities do act and are accountable and responsible for their actions. That is the basis of the division of powers of our government. The Executive does not direct the judiciary, the Executive does not direct police authorities and police actions and the judiciary does not direct the Executive. So there is a very, very finite division of powers.

In fact, if anyone were to have a contrary point of view to that position, we are in a minority Legislature today; you could pass a resolution that the Legislature of Newfoundland and Labrador be granted powers to direct police authorities. That would be very ill advised. We on this side of the House would not support that and I don't think anyone else would.

The basis of the resolution to a very, very important and serious and difficult labour dispute that's occurring right now between Loblaws and Unifor, as the bargaining agent for 1,400 Loblaws employees, is best resolved at the bargaining table. That is why I reached out to both the national president of Unifor, as well as the CEO of Loblaws, to see if there is a basis for the parties to come to the table. Beyond that, Mr. Chair, I'll obviously leave those conversations in private, but that effort was made.

With that said, Mr. Chair, we do appreciate the fact that we have a labour relations environment in Newfoundland and Labrador where our conciliation officers have been very successful in helping to broker a successful resolution to several deals. My initiative was a hand in glove effort with our conciliation officer, and that is important to note. It does not overstep the boundaries nor does it suggest that there is a prejudicial or discriminatory action on my part towards one party over the other. Such event

would cause an imbalance of power and potentially protract the strike. It did not happen. It was simply to encourage parties to get back to the table. I hope it is successful.

Now, Mr. Chair, on a more pleasant note, benefits agreements. This is something that as a minister, I personally, but as well the government, is actively engaged with organized labour, with the labour movement, with Trades NL, with our business community, with those who have important special interests, important interests in gaining employment and, as well, skills and certification in our province.

This is something that is worth doing. There are examples of this in some respects, based on some of our other resource projects that we can employ, but it is not directly comparable to individual resource projects. Because what's being proposed by many within our community is an all-encompassing benefits agreement that would be a standing agreement. It would not be tied to a specific project; it would be a standing agreement.

I note to the Legislature that there is significant approval of changing the workforce of Newfoundland and Labrador at our major construction sites and resource projects. Changing the face of our construction projects; changing the face to stronger involvement by women; changing the face of our work sites by including greater participation by apprentices; changing the face of our construction sites and resource projects by including more women apprentices; changing the face of our workplace and our construction sites and resource projects by including more Indigenous participation; changing the workforce and the face of our resource and construction projects by including those with disabilities, making sure that is included in the consideration.

Mr. Chair, this is a very, very broad project. It's a very important project and one that cannot be done without strong consultation and legal basis.

One of the considerations, which is paramount, which is being discussed and I'm very interested in, is the notion of residency requirement. Mr. Chair, this is an important issue that has to be handled carefully but thoroughly. We obviously have many, many workers in our province that

transit the country seeking employment in other provinces on other major construction projects and resource projects. So we want a reasonable assurance that our actions do not prejudice their ability to find work in other parts of the province. I can tell you that is a preoccupation of mine as well.

With that said, we also have a basis in law, a basis in trade policy that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has signed on to. It was alluded to by a previous speaker that we have the Agreement on Internal Trade which is now broadened; it's changed its scope a little bit. It was negotiated in 1994, enacted in 1995 and with significant subsequent amendments in 2008. One of the issues – there was a chapter on labour mobility within the agreement on trade, and that included residency requirements.

Very quickly, I'll just read what was amended in 2008 to further clarify it. Article 705 of the chapter states, no party to the Agreement on Internal Trade “shall require a worker of a Party to be resident in its territory as a condition of: (a) eligibility for employment; or (b) certification relating to the worker's occupation.” This means that no department of government, corporation or agency of government shall require a worker to be a resident in its territory as a condition of eligibility for employment with that organization. There are exceptions but they're on a specific basis.

Mr. Chair, unfortunately my time is up, but this is a very worthwhile discussion. We are going to provide best benefits for Newfoundland and Labrador within the context of a lawful framework.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. Member for Ferryland.

**MR. O'DRISCOLL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and it's good to see you up in the seat. Congratulations.

I'm going to touch on the labour dispute this morning as well. It's a bit upsetting, and it ties into all the stuff that we've been asking. These

people are in there now for eight weeks and not getting paid; I guess, strike pay. Bills are due; again, house payments due. I think we, as MHAs, really have to put ourselves there. What if we don't have a job tomorrow? That can happen to any of us. No money. How do you make your payments?

We're not in that position right now because we're here, for however long, but we have to think about those people and put yourself in their shoes. I know we have all those questions, and we've all been there answering for our constituents, but just try to get in their shoes. That's all I'm saying, just try to get in their shoes and think on the panic and the frustration they're going through.

We spoke on the locked-in pensions as well. It ties in to the same thing. They're struggling and sometimes – we forgot, they put us here. So we can't forget them. We have to get right back to the people, and I said that since I got in here. You have people messaging you; you have people that you'll call back. It's heartbreaking, really, to watch it go ahead. It really is.

Just take a step back and put yourself in their shoes. That's all I'm going to say; I'll leave it at that. We have to do whatever we can to help them get out of this situation and hopefully move it forward. Listen, it's a private industry but whatever we can do. We should be able to jump in and help and push it as much as we can. I know the minister made a call and did his best, but maybe push a little harder here. I don't know what the answers are but whatever we can do. I'd just like to leave that there.

Just sitting here and looking at where we are right now in our economy and talking about jobs. I was just listening to everybody speak since last night, and I try to sit down and listen to everybody and pick out some points. It's hard to believe we're in the situation that we're in. We have fishing, we have oil, we have minerals, we have electricity, we have forestry, we have agriculture, we have aquaculture, and it doesn't seem like we're in control of any of it.

I don't know if there's another province that has as much as we have and we're in as little control as we are. Listen, I'm not blaming anybody over there or anybody here because this was all done

before we got here. If you sit back and look at it, it's hard to believe we are not in control of what we have. It's mindboggling.

Every industry is great. You have the fish. We had the oil, and you didn't control the oil, nor did we. The prices go down. We looked at that. We have minerals. That's great, going out in Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans and Exploits for Marathon, I think it is. It's great to see that industry down in Labrador with the iron ore. We have all that. Let's make sure that we don't give away all our rights to everything that we have.

We have a fishery here that the federal government – I can never get my head around it because I'm from a small community. I can never get my head around the federal government telling us how much we can catch, not our own government controlling it. I don't see how it got to that point. It's mind-boggling. They tell us, you can't do this, you can't do that. It's gotten to the point now, how do we reel that in? You'd have to work pretty hard and fight pretty hard to get it back. We gave away equity rights and they got the control. It's just so frustrating when you sit back and look at it. I'll just leave that where it is.

I'll get into a few more positive things that are happening in my district. I did have the privilege of going up to Fermeuse last week to visit a lady. Her name is Ms. Rita O'Brien. She's single and she lived to be 100. I brought her up a certificate. Of course, the joke in the home was they would ask her: How did you live to be 100? Her first answer was: I never got married. I thought it was pretty funny. She was as sharp as could be. I wish her congratulations on her 100th birthday. I said I hope I can come back and replace that slip next year when she's 101 and so on. In my district, that's the second person since I got in, in 17 months, that's 100 years old. That's a great accomplishment.

I'm going to try to touch on all the stuff that's going on in the district. I will say it out here that if I miss something, then it's not intentional. There's so much stuff that's going on in the district in so many communities, I'm going to say 15 to 20 communities that you try to visit and try to mention them all and try to get them in there.

We have another home in Witless Bay. It's called Alderwood Estates. If you haven't seen that on the news, then you're really asleep at the wheel, because they have been awesome. The recreation director is Renee Houlihan. They do a great job over there. She's just the recreation director. I know the owners as well, Debbie Dunne. Yesterday, they got the funeral parlour involved, the guy that is the undertaker in the community, to go over and get them dressed up and do them up for Halloween. I think it made the CBC news.

It's just so encouraging. They get them out to functions at bars downtown. They call ahead and book it. They take 30 or 40 people on buses. They keep them engaged. You think they're going down there having a cup of tea; they're going there having a drink. They're having a glass of wine. It's so fun to see.

The 50-plus clubs, I'll touch on those as well. I have one in Trepassey, one in Witless Bay – I'll call it a service area; I'm going to say down the shore from Bay Bulls to Bauline in the area – and there's one in the Goulds as well. Every year they run a winter carnival and put off an event in the recreation centre in Bay Bulls.

The BBAA runs a winter carnival and they put off a function that we pay for them to attend. It is 200 people or 250 seniors that attend. To go in and see it is unbelievable. They have a fellow that plays music. I'm sure in some districts here in this area, Brian Finn playing and he can play all – and it's in the middle of the day from 2 o'clock to 5 o'clock. There are 200 people that attend. They're not in there sitting down at the table; they're in there dancing. They can't wait to get there. They do a great job with all seniors. They have dart leagues in these 50-plus groups.

They're stressed this time of the year – well, they're stressed during COVID for sure. All those advantages that they had getting out and walking in the areas, in the recreation centres; they're all restricted now. COVID has put a lot of stress on the seniors. We always have to remember our seniors. When you see them, they can't get out, they're afraid to go out, so you have to remember them in your times for sure, you really do.

I'll touch on another one. The Minister of Fisheries was up last week, up to Smiling Land Farm. I was in there as well in the morning. It was unbelievable what's going on there. They're doing some planting. You have goats and you have horses. It's a state-of-the-art facility and trying to produce vegetables and trying to make Newfoundland sustainable.

If everything shut down here for a week and you couldn't get on this Island and there's no food production, in seven days we can run short of food, supposedly. Whether that's a fact or not, I'm not sure, but I've heard that many times during this.

When you tie that in to the essential workers that we have, and during COVID we had examples of people trying to go – we went to a supermarket when COVID first started. You tried to go once a week, that was the rule of thumb. If you needed something you didn't go, you waited until you needed five or six things, or at least I did. I went down; I said I'm not going to come down here every day. If I need a can of milk or a carton of milk, I'm not going to come down here. She said you might as well; most of the older people are trying to get out because they just go to the supermarkets and they try to make a trip every day.

It's so sad to see the essential workers being treated like this in on a picket line. They supplied us and stayed open while we were home in our houses trying to do what we could do from home. It's pretty sad.

Back to the Smiling Land, we were in there and it was so encouraging to see so many young people in there. We looked at bees; there were 200,000 bees. I don't know, 300,000 or 400,000 bees, Mr. Chair, that we looked at in there and had samples of the honey. It was incredible to taste and so much product that they're trying to put out and all the stuff that they're trying to do, so it's pretty encouraging to see something like that.

I'm sure that will be open to the public at some point in time. They will have tours and family events in there, like all the other stuff that's on the go at some of the farms here, like we see in Brookfield Road where they have corn mazes during Halloween and all the farm produce in

there that you can go in locally and get it. It's great to see all that stuff in the area.

I see my time is running out.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

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

**MR. LANE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to have a few words again this morning.

There are so many things we could talk about, but I think I have to make a few comments about what's going on with the Loblaw's strike, labour unrest and so on.

First of all, Mr. Chair, I think it's important – and the Member from Bay Roberts, I know that's not the name of the district, but anyway she knows who I'm talking about –

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

**MR. LANE:** – Port de Grave, raised this. It's an important point she makes. This is really all about people and we have to bear this in mind. I wouldn't say there's hardly a district, there might be some I suppose, but for the most part every district has a Dominion store, either within their district or next to their district or close to their district, and probably –

**MR. BRAGG:** Not all.

**MR. LANE:** Yeah, I know. The Member there is saying no. But they all go to Gander though, from the New-Wes-Valley area there, they go to Gander and they go to Dominion, a lot of the people. There are a lot of Dominion stores all around the province, so many of us here have constituents that work at Dominion. We have workers at Sobeys and Colemans and other places too, but we're talking about Dominion; we're talking about Loblaw's here at the moment.

We all know these people. There are a lot of people who have family members that may work there, friends that work there and certainly

constituents that work there. These are the people that we come in contact with, certainly, on the election campaign. We're looking for their support then, for sure. These are people we know that have children going to the schools in our districts. Maybe they're friends with our kids' friends and so on.

These are people we see at our festivals and community events that we talk to in church and so on. They're just average, normal human beings, just like the rest of us. All they want to do is to earn a decent living so that they can support their families, so they can keep a roof over their heads, they can keep food in their bellies and that of their families; if they have kids, that they can outfit them for school and they can get them a few Christmas gifts, just like everybody else in this House of Assembly.

Now, we're very, very fortunate to be in the position we are in and the remuneration we receive and the benefits we receive. As the Member said, or one Member said, I believe the Member for Ferryland – sometimes we have to put things in perspective and try to put ourselves in their shoes because let's face it, our remuneration is a lot greater than what those people get. We don't have those same issues and concerns day to day that a lot of those people would have. At the best of times when they're at work, let alone at times when they're not working, but even when they are working, based on the meagre wages that a lot of those people receive, we really can't, I think, sometimes come to grips with how they have to live, but it's important that we try to and be mindful of that.

The issue around wages is just one issue, though – it's just one issue. I've had family members and acquaintances and people in my district that have worked for Loblaw's, and it's not just wages, the amount of money they make per hour. There's been much more abuse – and that's all I can call it is abuse. By any standard it is abuse, where people are hired and they're saying you're going to be a full-time worker. They're not full-time workers. They might get 15 hours a week, 20 hours a week, that type of thing.

You get situations where they're forced to do split shifts: come in the morning for three hours, then go home for five hours and then come back

tonight. Your morning is gone, your day is gone and your night is gone. Even between that, you still didn't get full-time hours. You're basically on beck and call for us from morning till night.

I've heard of situations where a worker goes in and they say, okay, you're coming in this morning now for four hours for argument's sake. They have to make plans, just like everybody else, to come to work, in terms of maybe if they have children, they have to have someone look after the child or whatever the case might be. They come in for their four hours: Oh, it's getting busy. You can't go now. But I'm supposed to be off at 12. No, you're not off now until 2. Yes, but I have – I don't care what issues you have.

Now all of a sudden, four hours turns into six. On one side you say, well, you're getting more hours, but the other side is they had to plan. They have families; they had to get picked up or dropped off for work, their kids or whatever. We don't care, that's not our problem. We need you for those extra couple of hours because it got busy.

Conversely, I've heard people who've gone to work and they were scheduled to work for five or six hours. They come in, make all their arrangements, have to get child care and everything else. They go in and they're working for three hours and then the manager comes over and says: Slow day today, go home. What do you mean? I was scheduled to work for five or six hours. No, we don't need you. Go home.

This is the kind of abuse, and that's all I can call it is abuse, beyond the hourly wage. It's much worse than the hourly wage. The hourly wage, that's an issue, absolutely, but it's much worse than that. This is how they're taking advantage of people. All you're doing is you're taking advantage of people.

The people that are in control of all this are multi-multi-millionaires. How much money is enough money? At what point in time do you say, I have enough? The old expression of more wants more, that's what applies in some of these cases. I'm not against anybody making a good living. I'm not against someone becoming wealthy. They worked hard for it; they worked

within the system. Now, sometimes they abuse the system.

The fact that the federal government, as the Member for St. John's Centre pointed out – I was disgusted at the time when I saw that. It was about a year ago or something when I heard that the federal government was going to give Loblaw's money to buy freezers. Are you kidding me? Fifteen million dollars taken out to give to Loblaw's to buy freezers, and they're reporting quarter after quarter after quarter huge profits. I said, this has to be a joke; this can't be real. I was like Donald Trump, I said this must be fake news, but apparently it wasn't fake news.

We have to really start looking at some of our labour laws. I really believe beyond the living wage, that's an issue, how we settle disputes and how aggressive a government should be to end that, that's an issue, but I also think we need to look at other labour laws about how somebody can abuse workers with this idea of split shifts. Come in for a schedule, I'll just change it on the fly. If I need you to stay longer, you're going to stay longer. If I want you to go home, you're going home. There are so many things.

We look at what happened with D-J Composites, how long those people were out – ridiculous. It should never have gone that long. There should be something in place, whether it's binding arbitration or something after a certain period of time.

We need to be lobbying the federal government on labour laws in terms of when you hear about what happened to Wabush, I believe it was, and the Sears. Remember the workers at Sears? Does anyone remember them? They got shafted out of their pensions. I know that's a federal matter but we should be lobbying the federal government to change that.

If a big business or corporation is going to go out of business, then before the banks and the other creditors get paid, the number one person on the top of that list to get paid should be the employees. If they have pensions and so on, they get paid first and the bank stands in line behind them, not in front of them. It's ridiculous. These are our own people. These are our family

members, our friends, our neighbours and so on. We need to take a stronger stance.

I will finish off by saying – and I hope this is asked in Question Period, by the way, if anyone is listening. I hope someone asks, in Question Period today, the Minister of Justice if he's had a conversation with the chief of police to understand how riot police ended up there last night. I hope someone is going to ask that question because it's a very important one. What happened last night is very disturbing.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and congratulations on your ascension to the Chair.

The topic of the day appears to be the issue that we're having with the Dominion strike. Unfortunately, that incident did happen in the district which I represent. We do have a fairly large Dominion store in the area. The warehouse is located in Mount Pearl North and the incident that did occur last night at the other business was indeed in Mount Pearl.

I've seen many on-the-job labour actions and rarely does anybody come out a winner. We have to find mechanisms and ways to make sure that we do not get to this situation. I am fully sympathetic to all the workers, many of them are my children's friends or my friends or constituents of mine.

I can guarantee you just as those people on the picket line last night were nervous, I can say that the men and women representing our police force were also nervous. They were also out there just doing their job. I'm glad it did not escalate any further, but we have to, as a society and as leaders within this House, find means and ways that both the worker and the employer are not put in situations where someone can truly, truly suffer.

My grandfather and great uncle were having a conversation one time and I was just listening in. They said prior to Confederation, our food and grocery needs were largely provided by small, individual grocers. They said when we joined

Confederation and the arrival of the big stores, that was going to be the end of private grocers.

I can remember even as a young adult or in my late teens delivering vegetables and products to different stores around town that are no longer there like Murphy's out there on Rawlins Cross and Noseworthy's out on the Southside Road. Thankfully, there are still some that have held on; be it Bidgood's, Belbin's, Colemans, all those proud local enterprises. But as we look to the larger takeover of the corporate and, I guess, grocery world, we are going to see increased focus on small-margin profits. The agenda of large corporations and chains has always been profit. Yes, there has been community contribution and building, but the reality is, it is on profit.

If you walk around our local grocery stores, everybody from Costco, Sobeys, Dominion and even some of the local ones, how much of those products do we actually produce? It's all about supporting our own people. It's about supporting the workers on those lines. It's about supporting the producers and products that we produce here in our province.

It's often said that our people are our greatest asset. What is an asset? An asset is an item or, in this case, a resource of value. As a business owner, an asset only has value if it's productive. If an asset is not productive, it is a liability. So we as legislators, community leaders, we have to enable all of our people, which is our greatest resource, to be productive in order for it to be truly an asset.

How are we going to do that? How are we going to turn a potential productive asset into a productive asset? As I've said many times before in this House of Assembly, it is by supporting our own. It is by supporting the people and resource sectors that we have – and we have an advantage over every other province in Canada.

How long has our iron ore kept other provinces and other cities and other labour forces employed? We do not need to expand our economy. We do not need to expand the exploitation of our resources. We need to maximize the value we get from our resources.

That is where we have perpetually failed the people of this province.

We have not enabled industry to establish. We have always had a perception of the faster we can get it out of the ground or cut it down or pull it out of the water, the better it is. That has not been a profitable way for us. It has subjected us to the will of international commodity prices. Whereas, if we were able to increase the value of our resources, that is where our future truly is.

I know I've taken a few shots from across the way as my perspective of how we need to reduce spending. And do you now know what? I've done that twice now; said the same comment twice, because instead of, I guess, a criticism of my comment, I was looking for a solution to the problem. This administration has had five years to come up with solutions to our problems, and now we're embarking upon another round of consultations. Mr. Chair, I don't know where we're going with this, but the reality is there's a \$3-billion gap between what we spend and what we bring in. Now, how are we going to pull that together?

The first thing we have to do is we have to stop denying it. We have to stop denying that we have issues that are as plain faced as I am looking at this microphone in front of me. I would love to see everybody be able to stay in their homes, stay in their communities and stay in this province, but, as it stands now, we can't support everybody and we have to change that. We have to shave off our expenses and increase our revenue. We have to look at the investments we make into our economy and we have to look at the return on that.

My colleague there in front of me, the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port, he had said if he had a million dollars. I remember the first time the Barenaked Ladies ever came to St. John's. I was going to university at the time. My cousin Gary Clarke, he was the head of the student union centre at the time. That's probably not the right title, but he was the head of the union; he was employed by the union. There were about 25 of us at that concert in the whole gym because nobody had heard of them.

If I had a million dollars, I can tell you what I wouldn't do. I wouldn't spend it on 200

overpriced cattle. I wouldn't spend it on investing in one potato farm. I wouldn't spend it on putting a million-dollar facility in Pynn's Brook when there's ample capacity at Wooddale to house greenhouse production there. Yes, those are wants. We have to look at what we need and what we want. We are not in a position to want. We are in a position to satisfy people's needs the best we can with the limited resources that we have without leveraging our future.

We're coming to a point where next year we're going to have to borrow money again. Are we going to be able to do that and at what interest rate? Because we have not been able to rein in our spending and maximize our income, we are going to be subject to a credit review. I'm sure everybody in this House is familiar with a credit review. We've probably all pulled our credit reports at times. Even everything from loans we apply for, mortgages, even right down to our car insurance is based on our credit rating, what we pay for those services. Can you imagine what kind of effect it's going to have on our ability to service our debt if we are downgraded from our current level? We have to take responsible actions now.

The Member for Burgeo - La Poile last night spoke and said: What are we doing here at this time of day? Everybody in this House, everybody in this whole Confederation complex - East Block, West Block - knows that right now people in the Department of Finance are working on next year's budget. So if you ask me, this is the time we should be debating the budget, not after the budget is already done and inked up. We need to look forward to the future, plan for the future, debate for the future.

One of the things I always hear is: It's too late when the horses have been left out of the barn. Well, Mr. Chair, the horses are left out of the barn and the people are gone looking for them and we have nothing left.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. PARDY:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.



You are doing a good job this morning. Don't follow the precedent of the person or the Chair last night that led us to a five-hour session. I hope that you have much more success in keeping it a little more condensed.

Several things I would like to speak of and two that I won't have time to, but I would like to discuss from last night's discussion with the P3s, I would like to speak to that. The second thing I would like to speak to would be on education and the exchange between my colleague from St. John's Centre and the minister in Question Period yesterday, to weigh in on that. I concur with my colleague from St. John's Centre.

I would like to start with the Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and that maybe a little unique for the Member for Bonavista to be putting out there, but, hopefully, I can give you context of which I bring it to the floor this morning.

Many people are surviving breast cancer more than ever. The future looks promising, but it is still the most common type of cancer. It is the second-leading cause of cancer death among Canadian women. One of my first engagements when I got elected last year was to preside and to speak at the Relay For Life at Cabot Stadium in Bonavista. Many people in the stadium, but there were about 150 in a yellow T-shirt and they were the survivors. Two things that stood out in my mind in that event was the sheer number of people who were survivors. When they did their victory lap around the stadium and everyone applauding, it was a thing to behold and to embrace. It was fantastic. I also mention the volunteers who made it all happen. I really applaud those individuals who stepped up to make it happen.

In February of this year, I received a written note from a lady who was diagnosed with breast cancer, and this is what I'd like to present to the House. For us in the Legislature here, the decision-makers, we have conversations that hopefully something resonates with us so that we can embark upon change.

Her name – and I have permission to use it – is Karen Johnson, she was Lodge. She was a classmate of mine back at T. A Lench in Catalina. We went through the school together; a

group of us hung out together. She was diagnosed in November with breast cancer and she drafted a note, an email to me explaining what her life was like in February. I can almost read verbatim from the note that she had sent as how her life was turned upside down. We all know and realize that anybody diagnosed with cancer, you know the mental anguish involved with it. I think that goes without saying.

The biggest part from the email that I took was how her whole life, financially, was turned upside down as a result of this diagnosis. We had patients who would have to endure cancer, but on top of that is the strain, financially, and with their resources that we put them through. When I say we put them through, it's mostly through the federal government. The provincial government would have some ability to assist.

If I may share her words, what she had written. She was undergoing chemotherapy at Bonavista. She had to begin 16 rounds of radiation in St. John's and she only had two weeks left on her EI claim. She left work on November 19, had surgery and had a healing period. She did chemo; she had another healing period and 16 rounds of radiation. She had to move to St. John's for another healing period to make sure that everything went well.

The time to get back to work was when she had the ability to do so, from her health perspective. I would say, Mr. Chair, that when we look at those situations, there must be something in legislation or even a lobby and a voice that we can provide to make the plight of those people who have to endure cancer, who are the breadwinners of their family, who don't have insurance, that we can assist them in the time. That will conceivably help and enhance the healing of the individual.

So if my voice today gives a thought to the Minister of Health and Community Services who's listening intently, if it's something within his realm that future goes forward in assisting and giving voice to assisting these people, then that would be wonderful, and it occurring in Breast Cancer Awareness Month is just. I throw that out there from the district.

I would also like to acknowledge that I am super pleased that we have a trustee now representing

Zone 11 on the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District Board of Trustees. Again, with permission, it's Jean Butt. I do thank the minister for the selection and having our district represented. It's been some time that our district has gone without representation on that trustee board. I'm sure pleased. We have a great candidate for the 14 schools that serve Zone 11. That's wonderful.

One thing before I move on to the education piece; one thing Karen Johnson did state was that she thanked all those physicians, the oncologist, those working at the Bonavista hospital, and thanked them all for the care she received because she had thought on the care provision, there wasn't a whole lot of room for improvement. I think that's worthy of stating with our system to know that she did get the medical treatment that she desired and needed. The only thing being was the hardship that she had to endure while she was getting that treatment.

Mr. Chair, there was a question raised in the House yesterday by the Member for St. John's Centre and he talked about the public exams. He had mentioned the public exams and whether they should be cancelled. I would agree that they ought to be postponed.

One thing the minister stated in reply to the hon. Member for St. John's Centre, he referenced that the Member wanted to have half a school year this year for some students having to go on a rotational basis. I was part of that discussion back on August 11 with the minister, and it was something that we had presented. We had presented it to the minister because if we did a jurisdictional scan, the largest school district in the country, the Toronto District School Board, were doing the same thing. They were doing it because they perceived that to be the safest method at that point in time for school start-up.

It came across to be something at this point in time that seemed really out of sync with what people would think, but back on August 11 it was a great suggestion. Remember, at that point in time, Mr. Chair, we didn't know if we were going to bus children to school.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

I want to hear the Member speak, please.

**MR. PARDY:** We didn't know, Mr. Chair, if we were going to be able to bus children to school and we went all September month scrawelling in order to get children to school.

In the future we may look at what we did, the \$26 million that we get from the federal government, but keep in mind \$15 million of that now is in busing. While we need busing, there's going to be – when we look back, having that privilege of hindsight to look back and say in the inclusion of the \$15 million, was that the best place in order to place \$15 million within the education system that has so many great needs?

I look forward to speaking again sometime in the future, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

It's a pleasure to speak again on this piece of legislation and, more importantly, to speak about stuff that's important to each and every one of us in our districts and the people we represent.

I probably should start off as a follow-up to the Leader of the Third Party, her commentary opening out today's debate about the Dominion strikers and what happened last night being reported in the news. I have a Dominion in my district. The workers are on the picket line. Everyday I drive by, and I feel so bad for them. They're out there in the rain and they're cold; not everyday has been sunny. We've had a nice fall, but there's a long slog. You blow the horn and you wave to them. I've stopped a few times and had a chat with them, but my heart goes out to them.

In my previous life, I was involved in the labour movement for many years. I get what it's all about; I get what they're fighting for. I admire

what they're fighting for. We all should be supportive of everyone fighting for their rights, no matter what it is, whether union or human rights, whatever the case may be. I tip my hat, but they're also essential workers.

There in March and April, when we were all home working and hiding for cover, they were on the front lines. People are realizing, they started out first. They never had any protection. We were learning this as we were going along. They were down there with little to no protection. Everyone was wrapped up in hand sanitizers and what have you and wearing latex gloves. We've progressed a lot in the last six, seven months.

When all of us were being looked after and protected and working from home and getting paid to not to have to go out through the door, they were going on the front lines and providing an essential service. Let's be honest, food is one of the necessities. It's a necessity of life. They did it with a smile on their faces. To see now that they're on the picket line for much too long, in my mind, it's very disheartening. I can't put it in words; I think it's outrageous. These multi-billion corporations to be treating people such as those workers – the way they're being treated, I think it's absolutely outrageous.

It saddens me, too, last night to hear that our riot police, the riot squad, goes to a picket line. They're fighting for their rights. We may have a shortage of muffins and bread today, so we had to bring in the riot squad? It's outrageous. It's insulting. It's disgusting. I can be on record, no matter who's there – and I have a lot of friends in the police force; I have a lot of friends on the picket lines. I have a lot of friends who probably work at Weston's, I don't know, in my district. This is outrageous. It's uncalled for.

Leadership should be taken to show this shouldn't happen. Whoever made that decision should be called out publicly. This should not be let die. The society we live in now, you're afraid to say things, you're afraid to do things, but you'll never be criticized for standing up for people's rights. If you're in a leadership position, you should be standing up in your place and condemning this. I know I'm condemning it. I know we as a caucus condemn it. I know the Leader of the Third Party

condemns it. I'm not sure who else on the other side condemns it. It's outrageous. It's absolutely outrageous. This is not party stuff; this is individual stuff.

When you drive home this evening and you drive by that picket line, they're not out there because they want to be. They're not millionaires. There's not big pay in those jobs, but they deserve the same respect and they're not getting it. I think it's absolutely scandalous and I think we all should stand against it, because this stuff should not happen.

It's akin to four or five, six, seven years ago someone had a chicken coop in my district. At the same, I was having debates trying to get a police detachment for the area because we have a major crime, drug problem in Conception Bay South. Luckily, we have the detachment, but during that debate and that back and forth, two police officers showed up at this man's door because he had three chickens in the backyard. I was outraged and I made that known, and whoever wanted to hear me I made it known. The town called the RNC who showed up on the doorstep with two police officers and a municipal enforcement because he had three chickens. Give me a break. That's not where we need to be.

If I'm calling out our police force or I'm calling out the leadership in that place, so be it. They're not above that. They're not above the law. They're meant to enforce the law but they're not above the law, and this is outrageous. I'll leave it at that, Mr. Chair, but I think that goes – and I speak for every Dominion worker in my district and in this province.

Another issue in my time that – I moved off from, I'm no longer Transportation critic, but I think it's important to go back and revisit the idea of the five-year roads program. I remember in 2016 that was the cure-all to taking the politics out of paving. This administration came in; they were going to do it right and take the politics out of paving. I heard the former minister forever and a day, who is no longer in this House, telling me it was taking the politics out of paving. We had many debates in this House, many debates. That was their golden five-year roads program.

That never took the politics out of paving. It clouded it. It makes it a little bit more difficult to see. You have 25 per cent left off this year, and you have 50 per cent coming up on elections, usually. That's a real filler. We see the former minister, the current minister, blacktop everywhere; yet, I hear colleagues on this side of the House, they can't get tenders done. I have colleagues there; they are fighting forever to get tenders done. There's nothing moving.

In the minister's district there are spreaders going. If you stay in the same place long enough one might come over your boots, and we can't get a tender. Some of our fellows can't get tenders out. Is that right? No, but that's the five-year roads program. They took the politics out of paving.

The former minister was \$12 million one year, \$9 million the next year and I think – I had the numbers, it was atrocious. I think it was supposed to be \$12 million this past year. I don't know if that got continued on or not. Is that taking the politics out of paving when other Members have probably \$100,000 or half a million dollars, if they're lucky? Some can't get a pothole fixed.

The Member for Exploits got nothing. Is that right? I don't think so. The former administration was criticized because they were spreading roads throughout the province. That was a criticism because they had politics in paving. They were taking it out and they were going to do it right. It's probably never been so bad. This is ridiculous.

Then you get questions – my colleague from Terra Nova asked questions and the minister was laughing at it. Making no apologies. Now, you know he's not going to apologize to his own district if he got everything out there paved. The former minister is not going to apologize to his residents because he got every road, every byroad, every nook and cranny paved.

We're asking for you to apologize to your residents. We're asking you to apologize to everyone else's residents, the people that pay taxes in this province. There's no monopoly on the taxes. It's not three districts in the province that pays all the taxes. It's a \$70-million budget. What's so fair about that?

Yet, you hang your hat on the five-year roads program. We hang our hat on the signature bill of the IAC, Independent Appointments Commission. Now, I need about two hours to go on that one alone. That's the heights, the heights – I can't go there. That's your signature bill. Now, you tell me, the Independent Appointments Commission, the appointments that have been made by this administration and continues to be made, because they have to make recommendations but the Cabinet don't have to accept them.

Sure, they could go out and get it on a postage stamp: I'd like to have these three people. Okay, we'll take that under consideration, but we're going to put our own friends up there. That committee works great. It's all smoke and mirrors, Mr. Chair. Everything that's done is smoke and mirrors. That's been a problem with this administration from the get-go and they can never seem to shake themselves.

As recently as yesterday, you watch the news or you read on Twitter, we got all of these issues on the go, we got oil and gas, we got that (inaudible) – even the Dominion strikers, believe it or not, it should be an issue that deserves more attention in this House. The Premier, our new Premier, I'm waiting to see what he got to offer.

He decides he's not going to go down to the scrum. He's avoiding scrum. Donald Trump goes to a scrum every day. I know he loves the media, but sure the President of the United States can go to a scrum, and he's not in a particularly good situation with the media, but he will go down and face the media. So what is it about the new Premier goes up in his office and he avoids and (inaudible) the media?

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

**MR. PETTEN:** The people are – he's the Premier for the province. He's everybody's Premier. It's ridiculous to not come down and face the media and answer the questions, because you can run for cover but you can't hide. You can run but you can't hide. He has to face the people. That's what the job entails. That's what all of us, as elected officials, have to do. When the rubber hits the road, we have to be accountable to the people who elected us.

In my final seconds, the Premier needs to stand up and answer questions from the media, because he's not answering questions for the media, he's answering questions for the people of this province, the public.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

I just want to start my comments by reading a message I received from a teacher last night. Not one that I was asking for or anything else but unsolicited and one that based on – certainly I didn't go madly off in all directions to get it.

Hey Jim, I just wanted to reach out and say thanks for bringing many educational issues to light over these last number of weeks. In the high school setting you certainly get a sense that it's going to take considerable time to get these children back into a groove, and we have a lot of gaps in learning to make up for. Our best, top students, who did work their (inaudible) off during the time out of school last year, are even feeling the pinch a little bit and it is certainly taking more instructional time to fill in some gaps in their learning.

Where we notice it the most is probably last year's Grade 10s; this year in Grade 11. These kids appear to be the biggest cohort that shut it down on March 13 and it is a daily struggle to fill in gaps. We are working our guts out training and instructing these new Grade 10s to try and instill high school in them. It's going to be a long, drawn-out process. The biggest thing we're seeing is that we are losing some instructional time every day, and we need every bit of instructional time this year, plus extra if we can get it, to get things turned around by June 2021. It's going to take the full school year to offer some semblance of recovery.

We are even looking at the possibility of eliminating mid-year exams in January so we can get ourselves an extra week of instructional time. In math and science over here, we unanimously don't know where we're going to do a good job of instruction of the entire

curriculum unless we and the kids get some form of relief in the tune of no exams. We're hoping that we can recover enough instructional hours to make up the gaps in time for June. I still can't fathom how my chemistry students are going to write a potential public in June.

You can see it starting to weigh on the kids' and parents' minds. They're noticing that it's taking longer for them to understand and apply concepts than in previous years. We're trying our best to deliver the curriculum and plug last year's holes at the same time. It's rough. A lot of teachers are June tired already.

I want to use that as the lead into a survey that was carried out by the CBC, Mr. Chair. Two thousand teachers surveyed, more than 200 responded. Before we can say, well, that indicates there's not much of a problem, I can tell you right now that those 200 are the ones that had the temerity, I guess, or had enough is enough, I'm going to say it. I can tell you that in the past, trying to get a teacher or any professional, I would argue, to make a complaint, to advocate for themselves is a difficult challenge. That I can tell you.

"The idea" of this survey "was to get experiences teachers were having so far, now that everyone is back in schools.

"Many of the respondents indicated they're feeling burned out, exhausted, and afraid, as they cope with being in classrooms during the pandemic.

"Nearly half of them said they feel very or somewhat unsafe while teaching in the classroom during these COVID times.

"The most concerning issue for roughly half of the respondents was mental or physical health concerns for themselves or family, or the mental health of students.

"More than four in five of the teachers who responded said the province could have done a better job – or did a poor job – of ensuring a safe and organized return to school."

"It's so stressful..."

“It’s a very scary time. Students are looking to us to see if they are safe and we do the best we can, but fatigue is setting in. It’s somewhat like compassion fatigue. You are trying to manage the mental health of students at the same time you are trying to keep your head above water and support your own family.

“We’re limited in how we can share resources.... The day starts and there is just no time or space, or moments to catch our breath. Five weeks in and I’m burnt out like never before.... I love teaching, but this is bad all around.... I fear for the profession, for the students and my colleagues.

“The decision-makers responsible for the health and safety of our children have failed.”

“Specific concerns raised by respondents focused on perceived safety issues: class sizes, classroom sizes and the lack of space separating everyone.

“Teachers were asked how often they are able to stay physically distanced from their students when they’re in the classroom. Nearly four in five replied ‘not very often’ or ‘not at all.’

“Only three of the more than 200 people who responded to the questionnaire said students were two metres or more apart when seated in the classroom.” That’s three out of those 200 that responded.

“Students are in overcrowded classrooms with no ventilation and are sitting shoulder to shoulder. Their elbows literally touch. Some teachers can’t even fit enough desks in the classroom for the students enrolled. We are fine right now. But if a case gets into a school it will be a tragedy.”

The president of the NLTA was quoted as saying he’s “not shocked to hear those concerns.” Neither am I; yet, the province announced more measures in September.

In another part of this report: “In response to a question at a Sept. 2 COVID-19 briefing about what it would take to ensure schools have smaller class sizes or additional space for students, Education Minister Tom Osborne said that would require a great deal of analysis.” A

great deal of analysis? This is two months in. What are we waiting for? It’s a simple thing. I’m always amazed how the term complex problem or it requires a deal of analysis is used when it comes to investing money into a system.

“‘However, in a controlled school environment, where two metres was not possible between desks, the greatest possible spacing is recommended,’ the plan advises.” This is the Return to School Plan. “‘However, the daily school routine should not be disrupted to accommodate smaller class sizes for physical distancing.’” Again, the notion that the school is a controlled physical environment.

Here’s a primary teacher who called me and said: So, students come on a bus. They wear masks on the bus. They get off the bus. They come into the school and they’re not wearing masks. They don’t have to wear masks at all. Actually, at the end of the day, teachers are spending their time chasing kids to make sure they put the masks on while getting back on the bus.

Here’s the disconnect: In the bathrooms in this school, you might have four or six stalls in a boy’s bathroom; you’re only allowed to use half. There are two or three sinks, you’re only allowed to use one or two. There has to be that separation; yet, lining up outside, which is where a lot of primary children are, they’re lined up cheek by jowl. They’re not wearing masks; yet, at the same time, to go into that bathroom – teachers are having a hard time. How do you even manage this? The rules lost track of the regulations.

Reading specialists have to wear masks, students do not; yet, they’re required to work one-on-one with students, which is why I’ve often asked for the use of plexiglass barriers so that teachers can help one-on-one. I bring this up because it comes at a very good time. This is a survey of teachers. We’ve heard it from the president of the Teachers’ Association, you heard it from me and I hear it from teachers.

I always believed in an open door policy. Anyone can come and talk to me. Of course, as my executive director said, an open door policy is only as good as the willingness of people to

walk across the door of that threshold to speak to you.

Here we have it, a survey from teachers out there in the field who are living it. I can tell you what I'm looking for and what I will continue to look for here is that you have a group of the best professionals – and I have a few more stories for later on, just about how teachers are doing a remarkable job.

I will still say this year, Mr. Chair, let's get through this year, let's put the resources into it and let's give the teachers the tools they need so that they can help students in the best way possible.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and it's great to see you in the Chair.

I'm just going to spend a few minutes talking about this again and explain to people who are just tuning in that this is part of the process we have here. There's part of the budget that needs approval. Everybody has a right to speak on it and everybody has a right to bring up their concerns. The good part for me, who's been around here – except for, I think, one Member – the longest time in the Legislature, is that it's a nice healthy debate. Everybody has their own views. Some are different views on different issues but it's a healthy debate. That's what it's all about.

As I said to one Member last night when we were talking about debating back and forth, it's a lot better than we see in most of the world, that we settle disputes by guns. This is great to bring up issues and this is why we call this democracy.

I just give a little shout-out to people in Lark Harbour and York Harbour and the fire department. I know there was a fire out there today on Little Port Road. From my understanding this morning in checking on it, there was no one hurt but there was damage to the house. I just want to thank all the volunteer

firefighters out there who helped with that today and all the residents. I hope the people are safe. I'll be checking on them later this afternoon.

I heard about the Dominion strike and the issue that happened last night; I was filled in on it earlier by my colleague, the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, from his understanding. This is a difficult situation. I know a lot of the workers out in Corner Brook. I know they're going through a difficult time now. It's just the way things happened; when for the first five or six months you're heroes because you're essential workers, now all of a sudden you're out on the picket lines when things are getting a bit better.

I understand the issues that are facing them. I know a lot of them, when I was speaking to them before, mentioned they have the split shifts and some of their benefits – they're not permanent employees. They're standing up for their rights and we all have to respect that also.

I remember back in the '90s when we had a civil service strike. I remember I used to go up and talk to people in Corner Brook, and I used to chat to them. My words to them at the time were, let's not make bad friends because this is going to work out.

I know the union workers are going through a rough time, but let's all hope they find a resolution to this so they can get back to work and do what they do well. Then make sure that people like us are supporting the workers in their plight right now, because this will work out and they are great people. So hang in there with it all. Let's try to get back to the bargaining table somehow and let's try to get this worked out.

Last night we had a great discussion on the hospital in Corner Brook. There are some things we disagree on, but there are some things – and that's all good. It's all good. I spoke to a few people today in Corner Brook, one in particular, and they were saying how great it would be when the radiation unit is built in Corner Brook. They were listening to some of the debate here last night and they were thinking, it's a great idea to have the radiation in Corner Brook.

I heard the Member for Bonavista talking about people with the yellow jerseys on. We had that

for many years, the walk in Corner Brook also. My heart and soul – I don't know if there's a person in this Legislature who hasn't been touched by cancer somewhere along the line. I don't think there has been.

We all support the people who went through this very deadly disease, and a lot of them are such heroes in their struggles. I know a lot of them personally. Three or four of them live next door to me. We lost family members through cancer. This is why the fight for the radiation unit in Corner Brook is so special to me. It's because of the people I know personally, some family members also, very immediate family members. This is why the issue on the radiation unit.

I understand people are talking about three Ps. I accept all that. I understand all that. I will debate that. I understand and I respect everybody's view on three Ps, but I have to stand up and say the reason why I support the three Ps projects.

I just have one guy who's in here doing the treatment also. Being in here alone without the family is tough, trust me. I don't think anybody here would want to, say, stop the radiation because of three Ps. I think the understanding is that we need the radiation; can we find a better way? I don't think there's any concern or anybody here disputing the need for radiation. The three Ps is a different story, but the radiation is another thing.

When all this started, and I bring it up again, back in 2007, when it was first announced and there were many announcements, I don't think there was any better day for us in Corner Brook, not as legislators but as just private citizens, to watch. Then we had the advocate group, who are a bunch of union workers, that were working with us. There was no better day when the premier announced the hospital in Corner Brook, including a radiation unit.

I know the long-term care facility also, that there now is a state-of-the-art facility in Corner Brook. I don't want to hash over how it was done and the steps that had to be taken for 12 years, actually. I don't want to go into that right now. I know many of the seniors that are actually in the long-term care right now. I just have to recognize that. I will stand up to this day about how we approached the hospital and the

radiation unit in Corner Brook. I respect everybody else's view on that, but I just thought it was a great day for all of Western Newfoundland. I'm sure Labrador is going to be using that also.

It's like I always said, one of the proudest days for me as a person who's a parliamentarian is going to be the day that I learn that the first person used the radiation unit in Corner Brook, who has that dreaded disease. I hope it just vanishes; it won't. The first person that uses that radiation unit in Corner Brook, I would say that would be something that I'll be so proud of. It's a great accomplishment for all of us – for all of us – even the debates that we had here in the House of Assembly and the government approving it at the time, it was a great achievement for Western Newfoundland.

Everybody agreed that the old Western Memorial needed to be replaced. Everybody agreed to that, that it had to be replaced and why not replace it with a state-of-the-art facility that's going to help people with the dreaded disease of cancer. Even the staff at the Western Memorial hospital had a lot of input into it and each department had input into it for the design to make it more compatible for patients. I know many doctors had input into it to ensure we got a top-of-the-line facility in Corner Brook.

I got to thank the people of Corner Brook for sticking with us to ensure that it was done because there were a lot of people on that Action Committee that even up to the day they want to see shovels in the ground. We seen before that there were roads built and no hospital. We seen before water service, no hospital. We seen tractors going up.

I remember in 2011, we were at the old RecPlex and we had a debate and then they said no construction was started on the hospital. How can I deny that at the time? The tractors were up there. But what we found out later, back in 2011 when Tom Hedderson admitted here that they didn't even have the draft design done, the initial design, and that they were up their moving gravel back and forth just to give the impression that the hospital was starting. The hospital was never ever in the process of starting.



That's the kind of fiction that we had to fight with at the time when we took over in 2015. We had to prove to the people of Corner Brook and Western Newfoundland that no, no, this is going to be a reality. This is going to be a reality. We're not going to go up and move gravel back and forth during an election. That actually happened. When I was standing in the debate at the RecPlex in 2011 and one of the Members at the time stood up and said: No, they're up there now doing construction. I couldn't say anything. Well, let's hope for the best – moving gravel back and forth.

I'm just so proud of all of the accomplishments that we did for the hospital and the radiation. I'm proud to be a part of it.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** Seeing no further speakers, shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

**CLERK (Barnes):** Clause 1.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 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 Loan Act, 2020.

**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 this bill to the House?

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 consequence thereto, carried.

**CHAIR:** The hon. Government House Leader.

**MR. CROCKER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that the Committee rise and report Bill 47.

**CHAIR:** 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.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Ways and Means have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have adopt a certain resolution and recommend that the bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee of Ways and Means reports the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have adopted a certain resolution and recommends that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

When shall the report be received?

**MR. CROCKER:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

**MR. CROCKER:** Pardon me, sorry. See, Jordan, you fooled me up this morning.

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

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

I'm working with the Clerk here, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that the resolution be now read a first time.

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

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 bring in a measure to authorize the raising from time to time by way of loan on the credit of the province, in addition to the sum of money already voted, a sum of money not exceeding \$1,000,000,000."

On motion, resolution read a first time.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that the resolution now be read a second time.

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

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 bring in a measure to authorize the raising from time to time by way of loan on the credit of the province, in addition to the sum of money already voted, a sum of money not exceeding \$1,000,000,000."

On motion, resolution read a second time.

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Finance Minister, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Loan Act, 2020, Bill 47, 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 a bill entitled An Act To Amend The Loan Act, 2020, Bill 47, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Loan Act, 2020," carried. (Bill 47)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Loan Act, 2020. (Bill 47)

On motion, Bill 47 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 Bill 47 be now read a second time.

**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 To Amend The Loan Act, 2020. (Bill 47)

On motion, Bill 47 read a second time.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that Bill 47 be now read a third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 47 now be read a third 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 To Amend The Loan Act, 2020. (Bill 47)

**MR. SPEAKER:** The bill has now been 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 To Amend The Loan Act, 2020," read a third, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 47)

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

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

Before we adjourn for lunch, there wasn't enough time for me to speak last night, but I want to mention the hon. Member for Bonavista and the Member for Lab West for their contributions. They've both done a great job over the last, I don't know, eight or nine hours in the Chair.

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

**MR. CROCKER:** So thank them for that.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that we do now recess until 2 p.m.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the House now recess until 2 o'clock this afternoon.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

The House is now in recess until 2 o'clock today.

### Recess

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

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

### Statements by Members

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today, we will hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Bonavista, Exploits, Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, Burin - Grand Bank and Humber - Bay of Islands.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

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

Through the efforts of a dedicated group of volunteers, last year's Relay For Life at Cabot Stadium in Bonavista raised over \$54,000 for the Canadian Cancer Society. It may be the largest amount of money ever raised for a cause in the district.

Again this year, during a pandemic, the dedicated group of 20-plus volunteers are doing a virtual fundraising event this Sunday, November 1, from 2 to 6 p.m. on Eastlink Community channel six. The returning co-chairs, Bonnie Keel from Bonavista and Joan Sweetland from Port Union, are optimistic that the event will again make another significant contribution.

In November of last year, a classmate and very good friend of mine from then T.A. Lench school in Catalina, Karen Johnson, developed breast cancer. In an email to me last February,

she talked of the mental anguish due to her diagnosis, as well as the financial burden due to her loss of work during treatments. In her words: Her world was rocked. Fortunately, she is doing well now and is one of the hundreds of survivors who are championing this event to assist others.

I ask the Members of the 49th House of Assembly to join me in congratulating those volunteers and survivors.

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

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

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

Each year, MacGillivray Law awards a \$5,000 scholarship to one post-secondary student whose story of perseverance inspires them. This year's scholarship was awarded to Ryan Carey of Bishop's Falls.

Ryan was diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome when he was a young child and it has affected every facet of his life ever since his diagnosis. While it was less noticeable when he was younger, by the time he reached Grade 8, Tourette's began to take a large toll on his well-being.

Ryan had to concede and couldn't complete his Grade 8 requirements and was forced to stop participating in extracurricular activities. Through Grade 9, Ryan insisted on having one-on-one teaching to stay on par with his classmates. He was able to continue through Grade 12 and graduate from high school, something he never anticipated he would achieve.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Ryan on his accomplishments, scholarship and pursuing engineering in post-secondary education.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Today, I would like to recognize a very strong woman from my district, Ms. Catherine Williams Kleinwort of Spaniard's Bay. Born in St. John's, moved to Ontario in 1959 and returned to Spaniard's Bay in 2001 when she became a well-known volunteer in the community, serving on a number of committees and implementing new ones, such as the Spaniard's Bay Environment Committee. She also was elected chairperson of the Joint Management Committee Incorporated, which has custodial responsibility of the shared wetlands of Shearstown Estuary between Spaniard's Bay and Bay Roberts.

Ms. Kleinwort is one of five Canadians to receive the 2018 Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers and one of five recipients of the Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors of Distinction Awards.

Cathy was instrumental in establishing the Baccalieu Trail Seniors Outreach satellite office. Volunteering from 1965 to 2000 in Ontario, she has continued enriching the lives of citizens in Spaniard's Bay until just last week. Our community was disappointed when Ms. Kleinwort announced her and her husband were moving back to Ontario to be close to her grandchildren – where she is watching from today, Mr. Speaker.

My district will be forever grateful for your positive impact and legacy.

Thank you, Cathy. You will be missed.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. Member for Burin - Grand Bank.

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

Anyone following soccer in Newfoundland and Labrador is well aware of the Town of St. Lawrence's history in this sport. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, it has been dubbed the Soccer Capital of Canada.

One of the luminaries to come out of the soccer scene in St. Lawrence is Gord Dunphy, Mr.

Speaker, who last week became only the 12th person named as an Honorary Life Member by the Newfoundland and Labrador Soccer Association in recognition of his more than 50 years of commitment and dedicated support to all things soccer in the province.

Gord began his career as a player with the St. Lawrence Laurentians followed by several roles including president of the Laurentians and coach of the team that won three provincial Challenge Cup Championships, culminating with Gord being named Newfoundland and Labrador Coach of the Year in 1999 and Executive of the Year in 2014.

Following his time covering the games with the *Southern Gazette* and CHCM Radio, Gord has continued to promote the sport through Gord Cast livestream which is viewed worldwide, Mr. Speaker.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Gord Dunphy on his latest recognition. Yet another header to the back of the net.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to recognize an individual from my district that is an inspiration to everybody he meets.

Philip Beales of Curling is best known for his athletic abilities as a winner of a gold and silver medal in the snowshoe races at the Special Olympics at the Canada Games.

This week, he showed us all of his abilities on a new focus by starting a job at Fox's General Store in Curling. Philip brings enthusiasm, spirit and a sense of pride to all he will serve and engage with. He's an inspiration of what we can accomplish and how a smile and serving people can inspire us all.

Thanks to a person with a heart of gold, business owner Michelle Payne and the Humber Valley

Community Employment Corporation, their work and efforts is making this a reality.

If you want great customer service, always a smile and the best ice cream in town, I invite you to drop by Fox's General Store and meet Philip. His smile is contagious and we're all so proud of his accomplishments.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating Philip and wish him all the best as he starts his new venture and his new job.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Statements by Ministers**

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs.

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

I would like to speak in this hon. House today about the work that is taking place to create an environment for economic growth in the Big Land.

The Labrador North Chamber of Commerce is a leader in showcasing the tremendous economic potential of Labrador.

Over the years, the staff and volunteer board members have developed Expo Labrador, a first-rate, annual event that promotes business opportunities through the exchange of information and partnerships.

As a participant, I welcomed the chance to network with business leaders and entrepreneurs to learn about emerging developments aimed at tapping Labrador's potential.

These linkages bring people and their ideas together. This has resulted in significant advancements in Labrador's social and economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, this year the pandemic forced organizers to adapt. The three-day program, which ends today, was a virtual event which

generated registration from more than 130 businesses and individuals. I commend the Labrador North Chamber of Commerce for meeting the challenge of developing a program that provided valuable information and insights into what is happening in Labrador.

The Premier delivered the keynote address and I was pleased to join him for an informative question-and-answer session afterwards.

Mr. Speaker, Labrador is a vast land with tremendous, untapped potential.

As the Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs, I applaud the Labrador North Chamber of Commerce for its effort to bring discussions on Labrador's economic development to the forefront.

Please join me in passing on congratulations from the House of Assembly.

Thank you.

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

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

**MS. EVANS:** I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement.

Mr. Speaker, although the Labrador North Chamber of Commerce has been challenged this year due to COVID-19, I'm very proud of the resilience and persistence of the organizers and volunteers who stepped up to ensure Expo Labrador continues. The platform may be virtual this year, but the value of continuing to build relationships and encourage investment in Labrador is paramount.

Continuing Expo Labrador is a sign of our true Labrador spirit and resilience. The Labrador North Chamber of Commerce and the Expo Labrador are critical to promoting business investment in the Big Land. I commend the organizers for their hard work and dedication.

Mr. Speaker, Labrador is a tremendous place to do business. Even though I may be a bit bias, not only do we have the most beautiful landscapes,

we also have some of the hardest working and dedicated people the world over.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I would like to thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. It was a privilege to give opening remarks at this great event. Expo Labrador brings excellent exposure to Labrador-based businesses and helps share our innovations with the rest of the regions of this province and with Canada.

I hope that the government will endeavour to continue to support Labrador to enable its businesses and industry to remain competitive, especially in these times of economic and social uncertainty.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

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

I'm pleased to provide this hon. House with an update on how we are improving the way suppliers do business with the provincial government.

In November, the Public Procurement Agency will launch a new e-procurement system that will allow users to submit, view and manage bid submissions online.

Vendors who do business with government will no longer be required to drop off paper copies to the procurement offices of Tendering and Contracts and the Public Procurement Agency.

Instead, they will be able to manage their own accounts, identify types of open calls relevant to their business and receive electronic notification when open calls are published.

Vendors will still be able to bid on open calls through the current paper-based process if they choose. However, training webinars are being offered so that all vendors can become familiar and comfortable with the new system and we anticipate all vendors will be using the new online system in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, the Public Procurement Agency and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure award hundreds of millions of dollars in contracts each year. By launching the new e-procurement system, we are hoping to help all suppliers do business with the provincial government in a user-friendly environment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. PARROTT:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

I'm pleased to hear that the Public Procurement Agency will launch a new e-procurement system that will allow businesses to manage their business submissions online.

The transition to online services for business and the public alike is a positive step to bring Newfoundland and Labrador in line with jurisdictions throughout the country. The people of our province have an expectation in today's world that processes should be able to be completed online and that government should not be an exception.

I'm also pleased to hear that this may make our procurement process more efficient and I look forward to hearing the feedback from businesses in our province about the new program as it rolls out.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I would also like to thank the hon. minister for receiving an advance copy of his statement. The Third Party caucus welcomes measures such as these that reduce paper waste and make government function more quickly while maintaining a competitive bidding process.

We hope that this new system achieves the desired effects and that it improves the ability of our suppliers to provide us with services. It is also our hope that the new system increases the amount of openness and transparency in the bidding process.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The hon. the Minister of Education.

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

Today, our government announced \$25,000 for the Quidi Vidi/Rennie's River Development Foundation for the delivery of educational programs at The Fluvarium which has been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The funding will allow The Fluvarium to continue those programs this year in a virtual format.

Each year, students learn about the importance of freshwater ecology and habitats. Approximately 10,000 students visit The Fluvarium annually to participate in these educational programs.

With the funding announced today, The Fluvarium will provide schools with videos that include footage from both their indoor and outdoor environments, and will then host a virtual question and answer session with students and teachers.

The virtual format will also allow The Fluvarium to reach a greater number of students outside the St. John's area.

Mr. Speaker, this is an excellent example of how we are all finding ways to adapt and change due to COVID-19. It is important that we welcome and continue to offer fun and interactive learning experiences for students and our government is pleased to assist with the necessary funding.

I ask my hon. colleagues to join me in recognizing the work of the Quidi Vidi/Rennie's River Development Foundation in finding a way to continue this programming for our students.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. I join the minister, Mr. Speaker, in recognizing the tremendous work of the Quidi Vidi/Rennie's River Development Foundation.

Mr. Speaker, through The Fluvarium, the foundation delivers outstanding programming to thousands of children every year. This helps foster intuitive, hands-on learning outside the classroom environment which I contend is very significant. The positive results are supported by academic research and feedback from participants.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to see The Fluvarium adapt to offer programming in a COVID pandemic. I also note the organization has had significant financial struggles this past few years as corporate sponsorship has dried up. Given the return on investment, \$25,000 is a great investment to help this organization continue to play an integral role in educating our children.

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.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the hon. minister for receiving an advance copy of the statement and certainly congratulate him where government steps in to make up the shortfall to the Quidi Vidi/Rennie's River Development Foundation.

The Fluvarium is a wonderful educational resource. Students have always enjoyed their visits to the facility. We are very pleased to hear that The Fluvarium is now able to continue to reach each student, not only on the Northeast Avalon but across the entire province. We, too, would like to recognize their important work. Certainly, it's important also to ensure that kind of activity is sufficient to allow all students to participate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

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

The Premier says that people can expect open, transparent and just government from him. Yesterday, he refused to meet the press and explain to the people his personal standards on race, reconciliation and the Innu Nation objection to the Member for Lake Melville being in the Liberal caucus.

Does the Premier intend to meet the press today to explain his standards to the people?

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

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

As the hon. Member knows, I answered questions about this on Thursday and again on Monday. It's good now that it's finally come to his attention that the media alerted him to bring it into the House, but I'm happy to address his question.

I've talked to Mr. Trimper, and he's offered a sincere, real apology. He's offered that publicly. He's removed himself from his executive position and he's declared that he's no longer going to be a candidate in the Liberal Party in the next election.

More importantly, I talked to the grand chief of the Innu Nation yesterday morning and we moved towards recognizing that this isn't just an individual issue, this is a system's issue.

In the Legislature right now we are afforded an opportunity to be able to change not only language, but behaviours and understanding of the issues that face all Indigenous people throughout this province, and that's what I'm committed to doing.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** The Premier avoids my questions about jobs for workers and now he's avoiding questions from the press about this. I have questions about his own job.

How much time does the regulator require him to take off from being Premier?

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

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

The regulator, we're still discussing with the College of Physicians and Surgeons surrounding my future with respect to work-hour requirements. I'm a full-time Premier, will always be a full-time Premier and the interests of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are my top priority, especially in these troubling times.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** Will the Premier practise surgery at Eastern Health or at any other health authority in the province?

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

**PREMIER FUREY:** Mr. Speaker, as I suggested during the leadership, I do intend to continue my licence because, after all, I'm 45 years old. I plan to have life after politics.

That Member opposite, as I understand it, continues his credentials. This is a credentialing issue. The beauty of this Legislature is that people with diverse backgrounds can come in and contribute to public service and then return to a life where they're also able to contribute. I'm not prepared to let that go and nor should anyone have to.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** I think that we all understand his sentiments around that, but he hasn't answered the question.

Will he be doing his surgical credentials upkeep at one of the provincial health authorities?

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

**PREMIER FUREY:** Mr. Speaker, again, I'm currently discussing with the College of Physicians and Surgeons how to best maintain that credentialing. It may involve operating and assisting in a surgical suite in Eastern Health from time to time on my vacation.

I'm sure the Member opposite takes vacation, as I'm sure we're all entitled to. A part of what I'm going to do is use my vacation time to maintain my credentials; again, to offer myself to public service like everyone should be able to and then return to the profession that they are so trained in.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** Well, that's wonderful, Mr. Speaker, but the Premier may not be aware that premiers don't get vacation.

His government spends over \$1 billion a year on Eastern Health and countless more dollars on the other health authorities.

If he's going to maintain his surgical privileges at a health authority of the province, does he think doing that might put him in conflict of interest?

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

**PREMIER FUREY:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm working through this with the regulator, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, right now. There are other ways to maintain your surgical hours without being the surgeon in charge. There are often assists; there's continuing medical education. There are other ways that you can contribute to maintain your credentials.

I'm not going to make any apologies for continuing my credentials. I've said my piece on this. The Member opposite continues, that's fine, but there's been no public mistake. I will continue with my credentials – I will not continue with surgical practice, so to speak – that I can leave this Legislature with my head held high and return to the practice of medicine when this is done.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** I thank the Premier for that, but this is the place where accountability and information as to the extent to which the Premier intends to be a full-time Premier. This is where accountability occurs, in this House.

Does he have an ethics opinion in writing that clears him of conflict of interest should he work in the health authorities?

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

**PREMIER FUREY:** Again, Mr. Speaker, we are working through with the College of Physicians and Surgeons. The truth is that they're reviewing what they think as credentials for the future of the practice of medicine in Newfoundland and Labrador and doing jurisdictional scans.

Again, I'm working with them so that I'll make sure that I'm not in a conflict of interest with respect to maintaining my credentials.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** I'm not sure that it's the medical regulator that can resolve the question of conflict of interest.

The Premier's government is talking to the doctors about pay.

Does he think this puts him in a conflict of interest?

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

**PREMIER FUREY:** Again, Mr. Speaker, we will work with Mr. Chaulk and an ethics advisor to ensure that there is no conflict of interest. I haven't operated to date since becoming Premier. If there is a conflict of interest, then I'll figure out different ways to maintain my credentials.

Surely, the Member opposite is not suggesting that I let my credentials lapse in my time here. Maybe he thinks I'm going to be here long enough so that I don't have to go back to practise medicine, which is also (inaudible).

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** I want to reassure the Premier that we, on the PC side of the House, have no intention of allowing that to happen.

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** Will the Premier table all documents from any regulators that he may yet have governing his practice of surgery and conflict of interest?

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

**PREMIER FUREY:** Again, we're still working through all the details, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to disclose things to the House. There's nothing to hide here. I maintained the whole time: I just intend to maintain my credentials. If there is a conflict, we will work through it and I'll make sure that there isn't a conflict moving forward.

We're going to maintain the credentials as I've suggested. There's nothing further to add to this.

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

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

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

The images from Weston's Bakery last night have concerned many people in the province. According to reports, legally striking Dominion workers were confronted by heavily armed police, including the tactical unit, riot squad and senior RNC leadership.

Why is the Minister of Justice allowing this excessive use of police power to break up a lawful and peaceful picket line?

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

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

When you talk about the Dominion strike, I have a Dominion store in Carbonear with 93 employees. I see that as 93 families, Mr. Speaker, and, literally, I think 1,200 employees in the province – that would be 1,200 families. So first and foremost, we need these two parties to get back to the table and get a resolve in this as quickly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite knows full well, or should know full well – and I guess I

could go back through Justice ministers since Confederation. There's no operational direction from myself as Justice Minister when it comes to police operations, and that is proper.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank the Leader of the Third Party. The Leader of the Third Party rose today and gave a very good speech about her concerns. Early this morning, the Leader of the Third Party took the opportunity to reach out to Chief Boland, I believe they had a conversation, and I think there was some understanding in that conversation. I totally respect that.

I can say to the Member opposite, if she hasn't already done so, Chief Boland is certainly willing to have a conversation with you as well this afternoon. As well, Chief Boland has also offered to come in and meet with us and the Leader of the Third Party and discuss these operational issues and how he gets to these decisions. It's a very important question.

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

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

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

**MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Mr. Speaker, surely the Minister of Justice is concerned about this display, this excessive use of police power and has an opinion to give us on this.

Mr. Speaker, just months ago this government was celebrating Dominion workers as essential employees and heroes – heroes, Mr. Speaker. How the times have changed.

Again, I ask the minister to explain and justify, if he can, why dozens of heavily armed riot police were deployed to attempt to suppress a peaceful and lawful picket line by our essential workers.

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Again, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I still do support those front-line workers in my community.

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

**MR. CROCKER:** It was just this past Friday I spoke to a friend of mine who is a Dominion worker. I actually spoke to him again this morning. I actually had the opportunity to spend a short period of time on the picket line in Carbonear and talk to those workers and hear their concerns. Not only do that, Mr. Speaker, but express my gratitude for the work that they did through the pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to support the people in my district that do this work. They do great work and we're very proud of the work they did. They were there for us. Mr. Speaker, this is why I think the minister this morning has spoken to both parties, encouraging them to get back to the table.

I offer to the Member opposite the opportunity to have a conversation with Chief Boland about these operational decisions. I look forward to another question because I have some quotes here I want to infer on the Member.

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

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

**MR. PETTEN:** Thank you.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

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

Minister, maybe you should stand up for the workers at Dominion today after what happened last night. It's no good talking about what happened the other day – what happened last night.

Yesterday, the minister said there are multiple projects looking for a piece of the \$320 million for the offshore and the projects will be

evaluated. Minister, there are a number of projects in our offshore which deserve support.

I ask the Premier: Why did you sign an agreement that didn't provide adequate support for our offshore industry?

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

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

We have been hearing from operators in our offshore about trying to work together to find solutions to the issues that they face. We're very happy to have \$320 million in which to do so. I can tell you that the operators are quite happy to be able to try to avail of that and the task force that we have assembled is also happy to have that.

The reality is before this we didn't have as much as that and, again, as I've said, the province doesn't have as many financial levers to pull to help. What I can say, the good news is that these companies are coming to us now; we're trying to work out a scope of work with the goal of getting these workers back to work here as soon as possible.

Thank you.

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

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

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

When I asked about the future of the West White Rose, the minister said that Cenovus's proposal is the best hope. Yet when funding was announced, Husky said that the funding would not assist in moving West White Rose forward for the 2021 construction season.

I ask: Why has this government given up on getting more funding specifically for the West White Rose Project?

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

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

I can't speak to the comments the Member attributes to me, I'll have to look to *Hansard*. I can't remember if I said that or not.

What we have said is that this is certainly a huge, huge merger forming the third largest energy company in this country right now. In fact, I have an email here from Husky saying that they're going to continue to work with us to discuss how the federal dollars allocated to the offshore can support the long-term success of White Rose and the offshore.

That's the assumption that we're proceeding on. We all want to ensure that this project can move forward. We all realize the difficult financial conditions that every oil company in the world finds themselves in. We're trying to look at the positive in what's a very tough situation. One of the positives is that we have \$320 million to help get these workers back to work.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I remind the minister: actions speak louder than words. Husky's words sometimes are running hollow on a lot of workers that are waiting for answers on the West White Rose Project and the people of this province.

When the \$320 million was first announced, the Premier said this is just the beginning. Minister O'Regan suggested more help could be coming for the West White Rose Project. A month later, we now know there are no additional funds and the \$320 million is simply not enough.

Given the circumstances, Premier, have you reached out to Minister O'Regan regarding additional support for the West White Rose Project?

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

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

Certainly, actions do speak louder than words. That's why the Opposition spent the first half of Question Period asking if our surgeon Premier is going to give up his credentials and leave these questions to the middle of Question Period, if we want to talk about what is important to the Opposition.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** What I will say is that our priorities are getting them back to work.

Again, if we want to talk about actions, we're dealing with an Opposition that has spent this money three times now: we should put the \$320 million into Husky; we should put the \$320 million into Come By Chance. The Member opposite reminds me of my six-year-old at ToysRUs; they got the money spent before they got past the first aisle.

Thank you very much.

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

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

**MR. FORSEY:** The middle or the end or the beginning wouldn't matter, we're still not getting any answers, Mr. Speaker.

In Question Period last week, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure stated that all districts in the province have gotten roadwork. The minister should know that Exploits received none.

Minister, why was our district left out?

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

**MR. BRAGG:** The hon. Member asked a great question, but I guess he hasn't travelled his district very much, because I would like to remind the hon. Member of a beautiful bridge that's built across the mighty Humber River. That's in his district; that services his district. That is well maintained, well done, up to the standard it should be today.

I would say, after driving the old bridge across there, it's way safer because you eat your heart every time you went across the other bridge. That's money well spent in the Member's district that keeps his commuters, his residents and his people in his district very safe on a well-travelled and well-maintained highway.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. FORSEY:** I certainly thank the Minister of Transportation and I really know why he wants to take credit for that bridge.

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

**MR. FORSEY:** Because that bridge was done seven years ago in the budget under the PC administration, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. FORSEY:** I met with the previous minister last fall to lobby for much needed roadwork in Exploits. I met with him again this spring. He assured me that there might be some roadwork in our district in the second round this fall but, again, there was nothing.

Minister: When will we finally see some much needed roadwork in Exploits? Does the bridge cancel us out of any more projects?

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

**MR. BRAGG:** I guess, Mr. Speaker, it's never a bad chance to mention the hon. Member for Mount Pearl North – Mount Pearl North. I wouldn't want to get that incorrect – who said that we over paved our province. So maybe when you're back in the caucus room, talk to your Member, talk about our over paving.

I remind the Member of \$20 million being spent on the Hugh Twomey Centre – \$20 million in his district, Mr. Speaker. That's not too bad. Is that not enough? That's \$50 million, \$60 million spent in the Member's district, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. FORSEY:** Mr. Speaker, the Bond Bridge is only a quarter of a kilometre. You've got \$9 million or more down in the Premier's district and you got just as much probably as that in the minister's now.

When will the minister finally stop giving the Liberal districts pavement?

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

**MR. BRAGG:** Thank you very much.

I appreciate the Member's enthusiasm and interest in getting work done in his district. Mr. Speaker, we're all there.

I asked in this House the other day, the statement was made, do you have to be a minister to get work done? I questioned in this House who has not had work done in their district. In my district, if you're going to talk about my district, there are 700 kilometres of roads – 700 kilometres. That's one of the biggest districts in the province.

When you look at districts and the way the road is allocated, you look at engageNL, we have a Roads Plan. Everyone had an opportunity to do work on the Roads Plan, and there's been no good pavement covered up anywhere in this province, Mr. Speaker. Every inch of road that we've done, every dollar we've spent on pavement has been well invested throughout this great province of ours.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Your time has expired.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

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

The co-owner of Fishers' Loft in Port Rexton has stated that bookings are down significantly for next year.

I ask the minister: What action is being taken to support businesses in the tourism industry for next season?

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

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

It's increasingly difficult to have bookings when you're not open. One of the issues that we have is we want to make sure we have our tourism operators open and accessible, as we started with the Stay Home Year campaign 2020. That was well received, although it's not going to be perfect for all of the individuals in the province because, obviously, we have a significant amount of travel to our province from other jurisdictions.

We have an Atlantic bubble that's been created. We market into that bubble to try to attract tourists that way. We have our marketing budget ready to go when and as soon as the Canadian bubble opens up. We expect that hopefully when we start to see some trends in the right direction nationally. We'll have our marketing campaign ready to go to welcome people from all over the country to our beautiful province again, and to the successful operators that have given so much to the people of our province and work so hard for the industry.

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

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

**MR. PARDY:** I'm sure the minister can understand why some businesses did not open in this current year. I'm sure he'd have full understanding of that.

This co-owner also suggests that now may be the time to blitz the Maritime provinces with tourism ads and campaigns.

Is this an action that the minister is considering?

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

**MR. DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for the question.

Not only considering; already doing. As soon as the Atlantic bubble opened, we started marketing into the Atlantic region. We did that from day one. We're going to continue to have those marketing campaigns ready to go when and if the marketplace opens for the Canadian bubble. I hope that is soon, when it's safe to do so.

The other thing that we're going to do is we created the Tourism and Hospitality Support Program, which are programs that can avail of and support those industries. We're working with our federal colleagues each and every day trying to extend those programs to support the operators that are affected by this pandemic that's not just in this province, not just in this country, but around the world. We're going to continue to do that.

We're looking forward to the recovery plan coming from Ottawa that was mentioned in the Throne Speech. I look forward to seeing that reach out to our people in our province and the operators that have done so much to develop this product for the betterment of the people of this province.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains, time for a quick question and a quick answer.

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

Nain, Labrador, has been waiting for night lights on its airstrip for over 20 years now.

Will the Premier commit to making the feasibility study happen for this life-saving equipment and the airstrip?

Thank you.

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

**MR. BRAGG:** While I thank the hon. Member for her question, I would like to remind her that is a federal matter. The airstrip in Nain is a federal property, so you should reach out to your MP on that.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the essential workers who put their health on the line to ensure we were fed during Snowmageddon and the pandemic cannot afford to feed themselves.

Will the minister legislate a living wage?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, we are very concerned about the labour stoppage, the labour disruption at Loblaws between Dominion, its employer and the 1,400 people who are currently out of work because of a labour stoppage.

It is a sacrosanct right, it is a constitutional right, which has been reinforced by labour leadership as early as today, the right to withdraw services during the course of a labour disruption, as well as the right of an employer to lock workers out. It's part of a bargaining cycle or process.

My role as labour minister is to get working families back to work, to get the employer back to the table, to get the union back to the table. I reached out just recently with both the employer and the bargaining unit, Unifor, to get the parties back to the table. I'm hopeful that that will occur soon.

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

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

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

I asked if the minister would legislate a living wage.

Mr. Speaker, the Dominion strike is about people being paid low wages, facing reduced benefits and reduced hours. This has forced these employees to depend on income support in order to survive. Dominion is essentially using



our income support program to subsidize their low wages.

Why do the taxpayers of this province have to pay so large corporations can offer poverty wages?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, it has been outlined by Unifor, it's union local, what their bargaining position is, what their position is at the table. As we are aware, there was a tentative deal that was struck between the employer and the bargaining unit, which was subject to ratification by the employees.

One of the issues surrounding the bargaining at Dominion, Loblaws, and its employees is of course issues around wages, and as well full-time positions. It is incumbent upon each and every one of us to allow that bargaining to occur in good faith and without interference.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to re-emphasize my concern and empathy for all parties involved in this, but it's really, really important to get the parties back to the table to allow the negotiations to continue and for a deal to be established by both parties, especially the 1,400 workers which are dependent on those jobs.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Leader of the Third Party, time for a quick question and a quick answer.

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

Mr. Speaker, we have multiple large multinational corporations doing business in this province who acted quickly to adjust their way of doing business so that they could continue to make billions of dollars. We cannot trust these organizations to ensure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can prosper. These corporations do not seem to care about workers of this province; they care about their profits.

I ask again, and separate from the bargaining process: Will this government legislate a living

wage so people working in this province can afford to live?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, before we make assertions of the behaviour of others, what I will say is that we all must live by the rule of law. Part of the rule of law is the constitutional rights of employees to bargain collectively and to do so unfettered.

When I spoke to Jerry Dias, the national president of Unifor, his first priority and his single priority when I spoke with him was to encourage me to encourage the parties to get back to the table. That was what the national president of Unifor said would be the best solution here.

When I spoke to Sarah Davis, the CEO of Loblaws for all of Canada, her priority was to get back to the table. I simply want that to be what they do. Mr. Speaker, I will encourage that in any instance.

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

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

**MR. LANE:** Mr. Speaker, over the past couple of years, I've presented dozens of petitions representing thousands of signatures from citizens who have serious concerns regarding inconsistent staffing levels and associated gaps in care in a number of our long-term care homes. Unfortunately, we have seen no movement from government to enact legislation to guarantee required staffing ratios and ensure our most vulnerable citizens are receiving the care they require and deserve.

If a daycare operator wasn't maintaining appropriate staffing levels, the government would shut them down, yet best efforts seems to be okay when it comes to our seniors. Not good enough, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the minister: Will you finally agree to meet with the group, Advocates for Senior Citizens' Rights, and work with them to enact the legislation that's required to guarantee the

appropriate care for our most vulnerable seniors in long-term care?

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

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

I'm pleased to be able to inform the Member that since he last asked this question things have moved on significantly. I have met with various union representatives. Indeed, I point out that the leader of NAPE is pleased with the direction we're going in terms of ensuring further training opportunities in conjunction with the College of the North Atlantic and other bodies for licensed practical nurses and personal care assistants. I'd like to thank my colleagues in Education and formerly AESL.

He acknowledges that this will not be a rapid process. We have various mechanisms, both provincially and specific to Eastern Health, to address these very pressing staffing issues, Mr. Speaker. We staff in these facilities to acuity, to the need of the individual. The average is a useful, but not typical, reference point. Our averages exceed the national.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. LANE:** What I'm hearing, Mr. Speaker is there is no commitment to meet with Advocates for Senior Citizens' Rights, but I do thank the minister for his answer and the progress made so far.

Mr. Speaker, a few months ago, the government announced an essential worker top-up program to provide a one-time benefit to low income, essential workers who placed their own health at risk and provided us with the essential goods and services we required during the onset of this pandemic.

Unfortunately, a number of these front-line workers have fallen through the cracks, have not received the benefit because they may have worked some overtime or received a one-time payout of accumulated leave to get their families

through the pandemic, thus putting them over the established qualification threshold.

I ask the minister: Are you willing to go back and revisit the criteria for this program to ensure that these workers receive the benefit that they so rightfully deserve?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the question.

The Member is very right in saying that these are essential workers. We have partnered with the federal government on a low-income, essential-worker, top-up program.

The rules of that program were indeed established by the federal government under a national criteria. We worked with the federal government in the past to be able to adjust their criteria. Originally, the criteria were at a \$2,500 threshold. We were able to work with the federal government to adjust that to a \$3,000 threshold.

All programs are subject to review and to adjustment. What I will say to the hon. Member is that I cannot say on the floor of the House of Assembly right now that I'm willing to break the law or break the pattern without authority. We will investigate all programs to make sure that they fit to the needs within the opportunities and the envelope, the financial capacity that we have available to us, but, most importantly, we will support our essential workers in Newfoundland and Labrador.

**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, Mr. Speaker.

Pursuant to section 26(5)(a) of the *Financial Administration Act*, I'm tabling two orders-in-council relating to funding pre-commitment for fiscal years '21-'22 to '25-'26.

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

Notices of Motion.

**Notices of Motion**

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I give notice, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader of the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Commissioner for Legislative Standards found in the *Lester Report* of September 24, 2020, that the MHA for Mount Pearl North violated Principle 5 and 6 of the Code of Conduct in the manner described in the report; and

WHEREAS the Commissioner made certain recommendations to this House in his report as he is authorized to do under section 39 of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*; and

WHEREAS the administration of the House's affairs and the discipline of Members is a part of the collective parliamentary privilege of this House; and

WHEREAS in practice and precedent this House has amended the penalty recommended by the Commissioner where the House has determined it appropriate to do so; and

WHEREAS the Commissioner has found that the MHA for Mount Pearl North has violated two principles of the Code of Conduct warranting a more severe penalty than the penalty recommended by the Commissioner;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House concurs in the *Lester Report* and further

requires that the Member for Mount Pearl North: (a) stand in his place and unequivocally apologize to this Assembly; (b) submit an unequivocal apology to this Assembly, in writing; (c) submit an unequivocal apology to Assistant Deputy Minister Keith Deering, Director of Agriculture Production and Research Division Dave Jennings and Conservation Officer Scott Martin, in writing; (d) meet with the Commissioner for Legislative Standards and, before January 1, 2021, establish a blind trust; and (e) provide to the Speaker written confirmation from the Commissioner for Legislative Standards that the Member has established the required blind trust within the time frame required in paragraph (d).

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

**Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given**

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

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

During Question Period the hon. Member for Exploits asked a question about infrastructure spends in his district the last number of years. Over the last three or four years it's in excess of \$33 million, Mr. Speaker. So just for the record, in Exploits District in excess of \$33 million.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further answers to questions for which notice has been given?

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

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

This is in answer to a question from the Member for Windsor Lake, alleging a perception of conflict of interest with the Premier and potential negotiations with the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association.

I am pleased to be able to inform this House that the Premier himself offered to recuse himself

from such negotiations. I have accepted. That fact is known to the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association, it is known to Cabinet, it is known to Human Resource Secretariat and now it is known to caucus. There is no conflict of interest, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further answers to questions for which notice has been given?

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

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

Yesterday in Question Period, the Member for Ferryland asked about highway enforcement officers. I just wanted to give some additional information.

Highway enforcement officers in the province, in terms of their qualifications, they have to complete a post-secondary program in law enforcement or an equivalent. They need experience in compliance activities, i.e., conducting inspections. They need experience in commercial vehicle repair and maintenance. They need both the enforcement background and the technical background.

I'd like to clarify something. I'd mentioned incorrectly yesterday that we were hiring in Stephenville. I was mistaken in that. In Stephenville we're hiring for a Motor Registration Division team member, so apologies about that. We are hiring highway enforcement officers in Grand Falls-Windsor, Mount Pearl and Port aux Basques. I just wanted to correct that for everyone.

Thank you very much.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further answers to questions for which notice has been given?

We have time on the clock left for one petition.

### Petitions

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

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

Mr. Speaker, residents of Central Newfoundland have been cutting wood for over a hundred years. It's a natural resource we have availed of, relied on and protected for generations. Over the years it has become more difficult for the people who have been cutting wood for decades to benefit from a resource they feel a right to while truckloads of wood are cut and shipped out of the region for use elsewhere across the province.

Therefore we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows, Mr. Speaker: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to commit to a comprehensive review of the timber rights in Central Newfoundland and a plan developed so the people of Central Newfoundland can have more accessibility to their forests for their own use.

I'll only take a moment, Mr. Speaker. Again, the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture has agreed to meet with myself and the Member for Exploits, and I truly thank him for that. Myself and the Member for Exploits have been talking the past couple of days and we have hope that this minister can meet with us and hopefully put up a comprehensive review to see what permits are being given out, what permits are being retracted, what permits are being taken back and try to get some of these people who've been cutting wood their whole life.

I always compare it to you wouldn't take a fish plant, for instance, from outside on the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador and bring it to Central Newfoundland for processing fish. We feel as though there can be some secondary processing done in Central Newfoundland. It's something that we can look at for the future of Newfoundland and for the future of the people of Central Newfoundland and Labrador.

We're hoping to meet with the minister when we set up an appointment with him. We haven't set up an appointment yet, but he has been very

willing to meet with us and we really look forward to it, because we hope that this minister can help the people of Central Newfoundland get back their resources that they have relied on for generations and generations. Central Newfoundland has been built by the lumber industry, and we're hoping to continue it in the future so my kids can possibly have something to look forward to out there when it comes to the lumber industry.

I look forward to meeting with the minister in the near future, and I thank you very much for your time, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture.

**MR. LOVELESS:** I know there's a short period of time, but in response to the hon. Member, yes, I have no problem sitting down and meeting with them.

Central Newfoundland is no different than any part of the province. When it comes to wood, it is a resource, and it's our responsibility to have a balanced forest management plan and that's what I intend to do. Yes, I will certainly entertain him for a meeting around that resource in Central Newfoundland.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Orders of the Day

#### Private Members' Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Given the time on the clock, pursuant to our Standing Orders, this being Wednesday, I'm now calling on the Member for Labrador West to introduce the resolution which stands in his name, Motion 10 on the Order Paper.

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

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

I gave notice of a private Member's resolution that was seconded by my colleague from St. John's Centre:

WHEREAS income inequality in Canada – and in this province in particular – has been on the rise in recent decades; and

WHEREAS Canadians from all parties and all walks of life, including CEOs, senators, doctors, community support workers and economists are now championing some form of basic income program; and

WHEREAS the federal government is already pioneering in the provision of income support to those who need it through the Canada Emergency Response Benefit; and

WHEREAS the current income support system amounts to a poverty trap and still leaves many to fall through the cracks; and

WHEREAS Canadian data from basic income pilot projects has shown that such programs increase public health, foster improvements in nutrition, improve mental health and well-being, lower the immense public costs associated with poverty, encourage entrepreneurship and allow people to pursue education and further training;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House consider truly ending poverty in this province by establishing an All-Party Select Committee on basic income, with a mandate to review and make recommendations on: eligibility and minimum income amounts, interaction with existing income supports, cost-benefit analysis, potential models for such a program, and a timeline for implementation; and

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

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important resolution, in my opinion, and that we take a look at what is the best thing we can do in this province to reduce poverty. We've seen it immensely. I know that, especially, the pandemic has shown the immense gaps in our society when it comes to income, when it comes to people having the means and abilities to live their day-to-day lives.

We've seen that some of our essential workers in this province live by a strand of a hair when it comes to their daily lives. Just one cheque, even if the cheque wasn't a full paycheque, their

whole life, their whole little system they have built to keep themselves going is completely unravelled. We know that this is very important. We're not asking for a program right here and now. We're asking to set up a Committee to explore this, do the research and do the homework so that we have a solution built in this province.

A lot of the research we did leading up to this PMM, a lot of the experts do call for a solution built jurisdiction by jurisdiction, which is interesting because there are a lot of cultural differences. There are a lot of geographical differences in regions throughout this country, too.

It's important that we, as this House of Assembly and as elected officials here, do a jurisdiction for us that will work for us and best benefit the people of this province because we do have very unique geographical challenges, we have a unique population. We have a lot of unique needs that make this province what it is.

We look at different models, different types and that's where I really hope that we can do this work, to see what actually works for the people of this province. It's really interesting. There's all kinds of research been done and a lot of it has been done in Canada, which is actually fascinating, too. A lot of this work has been done from the '70s right to today's date, exploring different options and different things.

A lot of the research that we've come across was actually Canadian research, Canadian led. As Canadians, we should be proud that we are actually looking at these things within our own country. We have a lot of the research and legwork already done here.

We also have a different emerging economy, the gig economy. The gig economy is very stemmed from the work of the tech sector, where you're on small contracts and you do job-by-job work. This seems to become more prevalent in our society. Another thing, though, is what if your job contract is cancelled early? What if this is done? So there is no fallback for a lot of these people, too. What comes with this gig economy also comes more precariousness in the current system, too.

That's something that seemed to come up in a lot of the research that we looked at is that the different changing dynamics of the economy is also creating different strains on our systems as well. That's one thing that seemed to come out of a lot of stuff that we did read about and we did look at.

There's also a lot of research about the income inequality. In 2018, NL had the most inequality income distribution in Atlantic Canada. The gap between the have and have-not was significantly larger in our province than it was in many other jurisdictions in Atlantic Canada. These are things we really need to take a serious look at: Why? We need to make sure we look at that. That statistic came from Stats Canada.

Between 2000 and 2001, the gap of the income between the rich and the poor increased rapidly, despite decrease in percentages of low-income earners. That was from the Harris Centre. It's quite the trend that has been – if you look at the Harris Centre's work and Stats Canada, that's 2000 to 2018, so that's 18 years of this gap being formed in our society. Income earners saw wages increased at a much higher rate than low income earners in the same period. Some people's wages went up while other's stayed stagnant.

This puts a lot of pressure on our society. It puts a lot of pressure on government. It puts a lot of pressure on individual people's lives that we really need to sit down and have a serious look at how we bring a balance to this; a balance that we're not seeing poverty increase in this province.

We've always see in the media, we see in the news, food bank usage increasing. We see that when a business closes down in a particular jurisdiction, a lot more people need to go on to certain assistances and stuff like that very quickly because the gaps and lives that people live right now rely so much on day-to-day, paycheque to paycheque, especially in the low-income earners.

These are things that we need to really have a look at: Where is the safety net? Where is the social safety net? A lot of the studies show people who were on these pilot projects in Canada, a majority of them went and got

retrained, finished college or university courses that they were missing to improve their lives. Some of them actually used the basic income program as a jumping off point to find more meaningful and gainful employment. Many of them managed to help succeed themselves and move up.

Most of the people that were on these pilots, when reviewed afterwards, increased their education levels, their job readiness and all this, significantly, because they had this ability that they knew there was a net under them, so to speak. Just imagine, if we can put more people into training, into school; imagine if we could give them the ability to move forward in life and improve themselves. This is a good first step in eradicating poverty in our province.

Just my observation of this province, we're a very societal province. We're very adapt. We're very caring. We seem to be a province that cares so deeply about everybody in it. This is why I think a study on this would be so meaningful for this province because we are a very caring province. We always check on our neighbours. We always see how everyone around us is doing.

This is a logical next step for us, in my opinion, that we take the time to show that we care for every single person in the society of this province, because I've visited the majority of provinces in this country and I've never seen, outside of here, that I see here in this province along our society, that we truly care about everybody.

So seeing poverty in this province is really hard because we all, in this room, really do truly care about the society and the people around us. This is why I feel it's needed that I bring this forward to this House as a PMM because we really need to tackle this. We really need to find a solution to poverty, to reduce poverty and use every tool and availability that we have as a people to move this forward. I ask all Members to take the time to read it because I think this is something very special and important to this.

Community groups across this province have signed letters calling for a pilot project. We had the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities, Stella's Circle, AnânauKatiget Tumingit

Regional Inuit Women's Association, The Gathering Place, the Canadian Mental Health Association; they've all signed letters to explore a basic income. There was also a letter signed, not that long ago, by CEOs of some of the largest companies in Canada also asking for something very similar.

A Tory senator wrote a book on why we should do this as a country. This crosses party lines, corporate lines, different lines of different not-for-profits in this province and this country. This is something that has been talked about since the '70s, it's been piloted and it's been looked at. All the information and all the gathering came back from all these studies and everything was all positive on ways we could move forward as a country to better ourselves.

In the Ontario project, I know, unfortunately, it was a three-year project that began in 2017, but, unfortunately, during a Conservative administration change, it did get axed. Most reported improvements of physical and mental health, many had less frequent visits to hospitals and health care providers, some started a new career and others became self-employed. The dropout rate from work was less than 10 per cent and a majority of those actually went on to do more education and training.

The motivation for finding better employment or a new career resulted from greater confidence, better mental health and physical health and having the time and income to leave a toxic workplace to find a more fitting and better workplace, and one of the things was with higher pay. Those who did not find better employment were people with disabilities or health issues that they were unable to be employed, but a majority of those found better housing and greater participation in their communities.

Greater participation in your community, that's a very high outcome for somebody because you have the means and ways that you can actually participate in your community better. That's always nice when you have the ability to actually go outside of work, go outside of school and go into your community and do some better that way too. That's a very positive mental health outcome too. These are some great things

that come from – even though, this was only just one year.

A majority of people found better living accommodations, were able to move to better housing, were able to afford more household goods and essential clothing. That's always another great positive outcome when you start to be able to purchase something for yourself and also better protect yourself and find clothing. That's essential.

Food security increased, food bank usage and meal skipping declined significantly. The ability to purchase fruits, vegetables and nutritious foods; most found it easier to repay debt, and reliance on payday loans dropped significantly. Most had better relations with their own families. That's another positive outcome from better mental health, Mr. Speaker. This is a fascinating thing with very fascinating outcomes.

I look forward to hearing what other Members in this House have to say. When I looked through all the research, it was very uplifting to see that such possibilities were out there and that some work was being done. We here in our province can do some of this research and work to find out what kind of program could possibility work for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and help eradicate poverty and come to a better place within this province so that we can help our fellow citizens get out of poverty, help them find food security, secure housing and better health outcomes.

At the end of the day, what we want is a society that is healthy, with a great sense of confidence in themselves and to participate in the community, participate in the economy and even participate in education so that we have, at the end of the day, a better society and a better social net.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I open up the floor to my fellow colleagues.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. BYRNE:** The Minister of Immigration, Skills and Labour.

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Oh, there we go.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I've just chewed up 10 seconds thinking that my microphone was not keyed.

Let me say upfront: This is a very easy motion to support, and I want to congratulate the hon. Member for his personal initiative, but I think it is incumbent upon us all to agree that this is not an easy issue. This is a complex issue that deserves a very reasoned, researched and explored pathway to examine.

Mr. Speaker, we are all captured by the imperative to support those who are most vulnerable. We are all captured by the realities, the fiscal realities, the economic realities, the social realities, the health-outcome realities that people who we represent and the challenges they face on a daily basis. We are all captured by the need to improve those health outcomes, those mental health outcomes, those economic outcomes and those social outcomes. So yes, Mr. Speaker, this is an easy motion to support, but let's all agree it is a complex issue.

Let's all agree that it's so complex that no known jurisdiction anywhere in the world has established a true universal, guaranteed income benefit. While there have been pilot projects, some of which here in Canada, none have resulted in a permanent, standing program of a universal income support benefit. In fact, it has been the opposite of the case. We have a hodgepodge of different programs and different services that are available by various levels of government. That complicates the issues, but it's important for us to break through that complication and see what can be done.

I think it's fair to say that the provincial Government of Newfoundland and Labrador – and it's been recognized throughout the country – when it comes to support of the most vulnerable from an income perspective, we do have a program which has been acknowledged – it's a fact that it offers the largest financial



benefit for a single person within the income support envelope of any province in the country.

Our support for single parents, I think it's number two in the entire country. Can we do better? Absolutely we can. We have to work together. We have to work with the federal government, which also has a variety of different financial programs to support the most vulnerable, whether it be the Canada Pension Plan, the Old Age Security program, the Guaranteed Income Supplement program, the Canadian Child Tax Benefit Program, and other programs that meet the needs of persons with special circumstances and additional vulnerabilities.

The federal government has a significant role to play. We cannot do this in isolation. We cannot do this in isolation, but we have to do something. We have to act on improving the lives of the most vulnerable. With that said, Mr. Speaker, let's take stock of the fact that the programs that are in place today, that have been in place for many, many years, but are always being upgraded and improved, do have a positive impact.

One of the things I note about the income support program of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador is we've responded to special needs and special circumstances with specific programs to meet those needs, whether it be our drug card program, our special program that provides additional assistance for home heating within the income support envelope. Our other programs, nutrition supplement programs.

So while we've been expanding and targeting additional assistance within income support, we recognize that there may be other opportunities, other ways to do this. It's why our government, our caucus, our party is fully prepared to engage in an examination of this with the expectation of a result.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have said that the federal government obviously does have a big role to play as well. I think in large measure this particular initiative is not being driven by any particular Member – although I do applaud the hon. Member for Lab West for taking this on. It's obviously an individual initiative which he holds dear.

This has been a conversation across the entire country. It became a conversation or a more vocal conversation when the federal government decided in the wake of COVID-19, in the wake of a global pandemic, to establish what is in essence elements of a guaranteed annual income called the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, and the other benefits which flowed, whether they be for those facing disabilities, those eligible for the Disability Tax Credit. There were additional resources that were available.

The real sign of this, that the country became captured by the possibility of a guaranteed annual income, really was evident when the federal government established post-CERB, post-Canada Emergency Response Benefit, the Canada Recovery Benefit, which basically continued on with a program to provide financial assistance, income support, and income replacement. That's the key word here is income replacement within the envelope of federal programs.

In transitioning from CERB, from the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, which offered \$2,000 a month for 16 weeks to eligible recipients, the federal government transitioned by broadening the eligibility of the program and scope of the program. It created not only the enhanced EI eligibility, EI program benefit eligibility, but it also established the Canada Recovery Benefit, which was made eligible to all those without criteria – the only criteria being that you were eligible for CERB. In addition to that, they gave additional benefit for caregivers. So the program broadened.

It's one of the reasons why I think it would be very, very helpful within the context of where we would go with this, to engage federal partners in a provincial response because, as we know, we cannot do this alone. We cannot have duplication of benefits. A guaranteed annual income is really meant – those who theorized what such a program would be – to be a one-stop, a single-source income of financial assistance for an individual.

As we know, Mr. Speaker, there may be many programs, there may be many levels of government but there is only one taxpayer. While that's not the driving force to this, there is one client. There is one person who is

vulnerable. There is one person who would draw down on a guaranteed annual income benefit. So it would be prudent to bring in all of the players, all of the levels of government and all of the agencies that might have a role to play in supporting this.

We need research done. We need to make deliberate decisions. We need to make informed decisions and we need to do this right.

No jurisdiction that I am aware of anywhere in the world has successfully implemented a universal guaranteed annual income. I'd be open to suggestions from others if there is a particular jurisdiction. I do recognize there are pilot programs that have been established in certain areas. Those pilot programs – some of which are still underway, many of which have been cancelled and some of the research has deemed it unsuccessful.

We don't take our cues from others when it comes to that, but we do take evidence from others. We do take best practices and learn knowledge from others. We'd like to examine that. I'm sure we all would like to examine that and find out what some of the pitfalls were, what some of the successes were, to generate a program that could potentially be enacted here in Newfoundland and Labrador that would be of benefit.

Again, like I say, Newfoundland and Labrador – it may not be recognized and it may be challenged, but the statistics and the facts speak for themselves. We do have a program, an income assistance program in Newfoundland and Labrador, that, on the essence of the numbers, offers one of the largest benefits anywhere in the country for so many.

One of the key points about our income assistance program that I'd like also to highlight is it's not a two-tiered entry system or a three-tiered entry system. Other provinces who have a lesser benefit for able-bodied individuals who would be income assistance recipients – provinces like British Columbia, for example – have a three-tiered system.

The Province of Alberta has one amount for a single and what they would call an able-bodied person, which is much less than the

Newfoundland benefit. They then have a second benefit for someone who is otherwise able-bodied but may face barriers to employment, which is lesser than Newfoundland and Labrador. Then they have a third tier which is for persons with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, one of the important elements of the British Columbia program, which is not remarkable, which is not unique in Canada – it's very different from Newfoundland and Labrador's and I think our system is much better – in order to get the increased benefit, you have to prove, through medical documentation, evidence and verification from health authorities, that you are otherwise unable to work and unable to work as a permanent condition or extended condition.

Well, we don't work that way. We don't have a three-tiered system; we do not have a two-tiered system. We have a single-entry system and the system is generous, but can we do better? Absolutely, we can. We always make improvements and improvements have been already made by this government to enhance benefits for those who are most vulnerable.

With that said, Madam Speaker, I can say, and say with an element of pride, we take no offence to engaging in this; quite the opposite is true. We would be more than happy to engage in an all-party discussion about a guaranteed annual income, but we'd add further: We think the federal government, and in particular our representatives for Newfoundland and Labrador within the federal Parliament of Canada, should also be engaged in such an exercise. It is why, Madam Speaker, I would like to propose an amendment to this private Member's motion.

It's within, I think, the scope of the amendment and I think that when you consider the debate or the information that I've provided, cannot be seen as anything other than helpful to the exercise.

Madam Speaker, I would like to propose an amendment. The amendment is to be inserted after the "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED" clause, and would read as follows: BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Select Committee engage federal Members of

Parliament from Newfoundland and Labrador to participate.

There is my amendment, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER (P. Parsons):** Thank you.

The House will now take a short recess to consider the amendment.

**Recess**

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order, please!

The amendment is in order.

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

**MADAM SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Corner Brook, with a minute and 22 seconds left on the clock.

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

I am so encouraged by your affirmation of the amendment. I think this will go a long way in getting a better informed decision but, as well, participation in any conclusion, any process to find a conclusion, this is important. This will provide us with a better pathway.

As I said earlier, the federal government currently offers very significant and, arguably, very generous programs that are paramount a part of anything that would be considered towards a guaranteed annual income. The purpose of a guaranteed annual income – this has normally been the template – is to provide one single payment from all sources, to blend it into one single payment, which would be the guaranteed annual income of the individual.

When you have a series or a hybrid of many, many programs, whether it be the Child Tax Benefit, whether it be the Employment Insurance program, whether it be the number of programs having the federal government engaged at the table through our Members of Parliament, is the right thing to do.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

It's a pleasure to speak to this PMR today. I don't know if it's ironic or what you'd call it, but I know we've gone through the COVID pandemic which has affected a lot of wage earners, especially low income. As we know, there are 1,400 Dominion workers, essential workers, who are on the streets today bargaining for a better wage.

When I came to this House – and I try to simplify things. When we look at the budgeting here for the province, I always say, how would you run your household? There are those things that you need to have and then there are those things that are nice to have, and you balance those out.

The Member for Lab West mentioned about what happens in our day-to-day lives, how people get through their day-to-day lives, and especially the financial challenges they have. He talked about exploring and doing research and our homework, and he acknowledged that there's a lot of work to be done.

The Member for Corner Brook was very much the same. This is a complex issue. He mentioned the hodgepodge – I think were his words – of services that are available. I think when we look at this, we really have to look at a collection of programs, services, supports that will assist here.

To put it in context here, if you look at – and don't pull out your calculators. I'm just rounding out the numbers here, so they may not add up to the cent but it will give you a good indication of what we're talking about when we talk about a basic income or a living income or low-wage earners. Someone who's making the minimum wage is going to take home, rounded out, \$20,000 a year – which equates to about, a little over \$1,600 a month.

Now, when looking at requirements, some studies and what's required for a household operation, they break it down into the basic needs and percentages. I'll just run quickly through these: housing, they figure 35 per cent of your income should go to housing; 15 to 20 per cent to transportation; 10 to 20 per cent to

food; 3 per cent to medical; 3 per cent to clothing; 5 per cent to utilities; 5 to 10 per cent to savings – if you have an opportunity to save any; 5 to 15 per cent to debt; and some personal or discretionary money that’s left over, 5 to 10 per cent.

Now, if I take the \$1,600 a month that a low income or a minimum wage income earner is making – breaking it down using those percentages – that leaves: \$560 for your housing – I’d like to know where you’re finding housing for that price; transportation, \$240; food, \$240 for the month; medical, \$50 – and we know many low wage income earners probably don’t have medical benefits; clothing, \$50; utilities, \$80; savings, if you have savings, \$80; debt, \$80 – and these are conservative; and personal discretionary, \$160.

So that’s really telling. That would be a single individual who would operate on that. Take it another step further, if that person has dependents, if that person has children. Looking at this issue is a very serious issue.

We’ve had much discussion on minimum wage and now we’re talking about basic income. When I look at this PMR, I go right to the last paragraph. The last paragraph, the one that begins with THEREFORE, it says:

**“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** this House consider truly ending poverty in this Province ....” That is the crux of this PMR, in my mind. In my mind this is the crux that we are going to truly consider ending poverty in this province, and part of that is to establish an All-Party Select Committee on basic income.

As I mentioned earlier, and as the Member for Lab West had mentioned and, as well, the Member for Corner Brook, there’s a lot involved here. We have to explore, research and do our homework. There’s a lot of literature out there. There’s a tremendous amount of literature out there on this; one saying this and something saying the opposite. There’s a lot of sifting through the information to come up with a process or a model that works.

With that said, I look at that last paragraph and again it says: **“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** this House consider truly ending poverty in this Province by establishing

an All-Party Select Committee on Basic Income, with a mandate to review and make recommendations on: eligibility and minimum income amounts, interaction with existing supports, cost-benefit analysis, potential models for such a program, and a timeline for implementation.”

With that said, and having experienced other Committees, I want to propose an amendment as well. I propose this amendment because I don’t want to see us left not looking at a particular area. I interpret this in looking at an interaction with existing income supports, which is fine. We also talk about potential models for such a program. I look at that as off-the-shelf models – what’s Quebec doing, what’s Manitoba doing, what’s some other province doing.

What I’m proposing is to ensure that we make sure we look at other potential initiatives that may not be existing that we can come up with. I propose the following, Madam Speaker:

I move, seconded by the Member for Mount Pearl North, the following: That the private Member’s resolution before the House be amended by adding immediately after the words and comma “interaction with existing income supports,” with the words and comma “additional poverty reduction initiatives.”

That amendment is there to make sure we cover off any potential initiatives that we haven’t been aware of.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The House will now take another short recess to consider the amendment put forth by the Member.

Recess, thank you.

### Recess

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order, please!

Are we ready to continue? Is everyone ready?

Order, please!

After consideration, the amendment is in order.

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

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

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

Good to hear, I think we should keep going and get amendment after amendment. But, no, I think both amendments are very appropriate.

I just want to talk to it a little bit longer here. I think we're all on the same page when it comes to poverty reduction and ensuring people have the necessities of life.

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

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**MR. P. DINN:** I look back, in terms of the Blue Book that we put out in 2019, and our commitment was very broad and open-ended. We said that we would begin to develop a strategy once elected. I suspect that will be sooner rather than later. The parameters would be worked out in ways that would deliver optimal results. Basic income could be a part of that formula if the evidence shows that it will work.

Here's exactly what we said in our plan: "Poverty stymies the development of children and youth, denies people opportunities to fulfill their potential and undermines people's health. The Poverty Reduction Strategy of previous PC administrations was lauded nationally for bringing poverty levels in Newfoundland and Labrador from the highest in the country to the lowest within a decade. We will begin the process of developing a new Poverty Reduction Strategy to build on what we started.

"We will bring forward a renewed housing and homelessness plan, building on initiatives that were undertaken under prior PC administrations. The strategy will cover affordable housing, social housing, accessible housing and home retrofits, landlord-tenant relations and slum landlords, safe housing and violence prevention, student housing, seniors' housing, fire protection, home insurance, and other issues.

"We will provide regular, reasonable increases to the minimum wage by linking it to the Consumer Price Index. The new Poverty Reduction Strategy will consider whether this approach strikes the optimal balance."

I put that out there because government had mentioned when they increased the minimum wage, they talked about balance. Balance was the word that was used. The Member for Corner Brook and the Member for Labrador West have both acknowledged that this is a complex issue, it requires a lot of research, a lot of study and analysis to come up with a plan, a program, supported by basic income, but also supported by other measures that will ensure that we are reducing poverty in the province.

I think we're all on the same wavelength when it comes to that. I don't think anyone – I can't speak for everyone – but I don't think, certainly on this side, we will be voting against this PMR, because, simply, it is the right thing to do.

When you look at wages, wages may be part of it. I'll just toss this out. This is part of the process of information we have put together. I spoke earlier about the minimum wage, what's available to pay for the necessities of life. I will argue that all minimum-wage earners are not created equal.

You think of our Dominion workers, they are either minimum wage or slightly above. They're not like someone working in a restaurant and serving liquor who also get gratuities. They leave work at the end of the day, they got their minimum wage cheque, but they might have up to double that, up to double that in gratuities. I ask the Members, when did any of us actually tip a cashier that checked in our groceries? Really? We might have tipped the individual who carried out our bags, if there's one there.

Income and minimum wage and basic income, certainly, we have to explore that because not everyone is created equal there. We've all agreed, it's a complex issue. I can't imagine, I can tell you right now, imagine being a family of one, two and three and trying to survive off of minimum wage or something slightly above that, and depending on medical and housing and transportation. How important those bus passes

are to individuals. I'd love to see it also piloted in Corner Brook.

Putting together an All-Party Select Committee – and I really do hate it when we do Committee after Committee after Committee, but this is important. I hope that putting together such a Committee will raise this on the scale of importance.

One thing here you talk about, a timeline for implementation. We need a timeline. We need a very ambitious timeline. Not too ambitious that we don't get the work done, but we need an ambitious timelines that we get the proper research done and come up with a plan, an all-encompassing plan; a model that's catered specifically to the needs of the province and the regions within the province, because it is different.

My colleague for Torngat Mountains will tell us many times about the cost of groceries and the like in her district. We're not comparing apples to apples here when we talk about Newfoundland in terms of a province system. We need to come up with something that addresses the regional disparities within Newfoundland and Labrador.

I'll end with saying that we support this resolution to establish the Select Committee and look forward to exploring the options out there and making a determination collectively based on the data we collect.

Thank you.

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

**MADAM SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows.

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

I want to thank the Member for Labrador West for putting forward the private Member's motion today. Listening to the debate and the dialogue, hearing the support around how collectively we all must work together to reduce and eradicate poverty, and explore the merits of basic income and finding better ways of how we look after our most vulnerable in society, and ensuring there

are appropriate safety nets socially and that there is financial support.

The Member for Corner Brook explained, I think quite eloquently, the number of supports that exist throughout the provincial government but also at the federal level. I really support the engagement of a Select Committee to ensure that federal Members of Parliament would participate from Newfoundland and Labrador in exploring anything that would be undertaken from a model to develop basic income and explore how that could be undertaken, because in Newfoundland and Labrador we have a number of benefits currently.

When the last Poverty Reduction Strategy was undertaken there were expanded benefits to the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program. There was a creation of supportive living, Community Partnerships program, a reduction in income tax paid by low income earners, and employment and education incentives.

Since then, we have seen, for example, under the income support program where there were more than 10,000 bus passes provided to income support recipients in the St. John's metro area. This type of program is meant to provide support to those who would be on income support to be able to participate more wholly in the community, whether it would be being able to travel to various places to pick up groceries, or to participate in various programs attached to the workforce, or be able to attend medical appointments. When that program was announced, the engagement also is taking place with the City of Corner Brook to look at if a similar program can be instituted there.

As a government, one of the things we did in 2016 was that we implemented an Income Supplement to help lower income earners in Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as an enhanced Seniors' Benefit. That was meant to provide support.

If you also look at those types of benefits – and there are many, many more benefits that are provided within and across departments at a social level to help people, whether they're on income support, whether they're a higher income earner that's been talked about in the

Estimates or whether it's for the Mother Baby Nutrition Supplement for support. There's a threshold as to what somebody would earn at a certain level before they wouldn't receive support, whether it would be to access housing or a housing supplement.

Going back to what the Minister of Immigration, Skills and Labour had highlighted, the federal government is key certainly to being part of a discussion around basic income, as we've seen in other countries; like Finland with their trial, and in the United States and other jurisdictions. The pandemic has really highlighted inequality that is in our Canadian society. They said from the start – the federal government did – that they would provide timely assistance directly to Canadians and help them get through the challenges they face.

We saw where there was a mix of programs, such as the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy. That helped businesses retain their employees and continue earning a paycheque for those who work there to support their families. Now, with the Canada Emergency Response Benefit that helped nearly nine million Canadians be able to have support, to pay their bills and be there for their families.

We saw in the recent Throne Speech of the federal government that there are going to be new flexibilities to the Employment Insurance program, an EI premium freeze and three new support programs that will provide \$500 a week to support Canadians impacted by COVID-19: the Canadian Recovery Benefit, the Canadian Recovery Caregiving Benefit and the Canadian Recovery Sickness Benefit.

The federal government has stated that they have a plan to build back better. The pandemic, as I said, exposed fundamental inequalities in our society and the federal government is planning to build a better society while making the economy better for all. There are pillars there that include ending chronic homelessness, accelerating universal pharmacare and building more affordable housing. These are certainly very important pillars as we look at all aspects of reducing and eradicating poverty and ensuring that people would have a level of basic income.

There are already programs that exist. For seniors in Canada, they would receive Old Age Security and some would receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement, which is a form of a basic income. As well, parents with children under the age of 18 can receive the Canada child care benefit. These two programs would be about \$80 billion in context. The parliamentary budget officer has cited that national basic income for low-income Canadians would cost about \$43 billion a year in one of the estimates that was provided.

If we were to look at universal basic income, an alternative method to social support, which basically every citizen is provided funding with no strings attached. The idea has certainly seen a significant resurgence with the COVID pandemic. Some who are proponents of a basic income argue it's the best way to end poverty. Others suggest that basic income tends to have a different impact. That it could be unaffordable for government and it would disincentivize work and that it could impact productivity and the sense of meaning that work can bring. While those who are proponents would say that it does boost happiness, health, school attendance, trust in social institutions and can reduce crime.

For those who support and those who are against, there are very valid reasons that they would present it in their case. This is why, I think in this Chamber, all people have said, that have spoken to it, that it's important to do the research, and whenever a decision is made that the best model, the best program and the best benefit can be put forward so that Newfoundland and Labrador can ensure that the program, or if universal basic income can be provided, that it is done in the best possible way.

We've seen some examples, and maybe it needs to be a new example, as the Member for Topsail - Paradise said, it may not be something that is replicated in another jurisdiction. The United States has tried some experiments. Some have been small in scale and some very short lived. Alaska is an exception. Since 1982, the state has given each citizen an annual dividend from the Alaska Permanent Fund. That's a state-owned investment fund financed by their oil revenues.

We've seen where in Ontario the former Liberal government launched a Basic Income Pilot in

Hamilton, Lindsay and Thunder Bay, to help 4,000 low-income people over the last three years. In 2018, the current Progressive Conservative government cancelled the project.

I mentioned about Finland. Finland is a relatively new example where they provided just about \$640 a month, as a basic income, to all their citizens. It highlights here in *The New York Times* that “Finland’s Basic Income Trial Boosts Happiness, but Not Employment.”

That was one of the outcomes of the study is that it certainly gave some individuals in the study the confidence to pursue entrepreneurship and other mechanisms, but it had not necessarily had the employment attachment incentive with it. That does not mean that that would be the case here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We’ve seen where there have been pilots that have taken place, whether it would be in income support, where those who are on income support can attach to the workforce and have earnings. You need to have the right incentives that are put in place and the supports, the wrap-around supports to help people that can attach to the workforce, especially if there are vacancies and there are jobs available. There may be skills training or there may need to be that level of incentive provided that there isn’t a clawback.

On some levels, if you look at the EI system as well, there could be a clawback that exists if somebody is working and they worked dollar for dollar. It could be a disincentive at times for people to be able to work, especially if work is precarious or if there is – as we see in the gig economy or shorter-term employment. You want to be able to create a program or a basic income that would allow people to have that ability where they may be able to take on work that may not provide consistent or regular hours, if that is where the economy is shifting, especially in a post-COVID world or as we continue to navigate through it.

These are all important mechanisms that we need to consider. This is why, I think, we need to look at evaluating all of these matters as to how we can reduce poverty, the inequality and the insecurity that exists; how automation is playing a role in terms of jobs and jobs of the future; how we can reduce the red tape; and how

we can continue to have the right incentives and the support for allowing people to be able to really have a positive impact on our labour market going forward.

With that, Madam Speaker, I want to say I fully support seeing a Committee struck, having this explored and looking at what options can happen. Maybe we can take all of the programs that exist at a provincial level and a federal level and really create something that can have a bigger impact than what the programs currently can have, individually, and make sure that what we do going forward at a provincial or a federal level, in terms of exploring universal basic income, certainly has the merits and the benefits to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and all the people that we represent here in the province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The Member for St. John’s Centre.

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

Madam Speaker, it’s been said that the true measure of any society can be measured in how it looks after or treats its most vulnerable members. I guess that’s the background I come from.

It’s interesting, the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands talked about his charity work with groups overseas and the orphanage that he supports. I will agree. Certainly, a lot of the students I’ve taught, students who escaped from war-torn countries, they were traumatized. They were doing without and they come to a country like Canada, to Newfoundland. We might, at times, think it has problems, and in many ways there are a lot of benefits and a lot of safety nets here. But I understand, totally, when he talks about the deprivation, the starvation, the threat of physical harm that they live with.

I tell you that even here in Newfoundland and Labrador we do have people who suffer. Yes, we have a health care system. When you think of it, no matter how poor you are you have



access to a hospital. Compare that to our neighbour to the south where that may not always be the case; where I don't have to worry about going in for a procedure if it's going to bankrupt me. We are very fortunate, very blessed to be living in a country like Canada, through an accident of birth, really, when you look at it.

We have a lot of social safety nets here. I don't have it in front of me; I know that in reading the Maytree report I think Newfoundland certainly has a fair share of mechanisms in place to keep people out of poverty. I would argue that there are gaps.

I will agree with the Member for St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows in that if we find some way to bring them together, of how to consolidate, because I think that's a part of the problem. There are so many different mechanisms in place, Madam Speaker, that people can fall through the cracks, but if we can find a way that this can be done better, then maybe this is the procedure here.

I fully understand we weren't proposing that we institute it. We believe, and I believe, that, yes, some form of a guaranteed basic income needs to be instituted. But before we rush into it, let's do something to come up with a made-in-Newfoundland solution to see what we have and how we go about it.

I can tell you that there are already people who fall through the cracks. I was speaking to the director of Food First NL, who interestingly told me that during the pandemic, especially with CERB, they had 20 people per week calling the food helpline. It's now up to 50 a day. What does that tell you?

Very clearly their needs were being met and they were being fed, food was on the table and they didn't need to access the food banks. Now, we're starting to see, as CERB is discontinued and if benefits here are being clawed back, they are going to feel a pinch. No doubt, a number of these 50 calls are probably families.

I've supported and volunteered with Oxfam because I was very much interested in justice overseas for those who lived in developing countries where they did not have even the basic

safety nets we had. I got involved in a food bank here because I realized that while we're waiting for that just world, we still have to put food on people's tables; we still have to put food in their stomachs here. That's how I ended up with the Saint Vincent de Paul Society.

I will tell you something: Do you know what's going to be the greatest mark of success of a food bank or of this project? It's when food banks are obsolete, when we no longer need them.

I can tell you from my own experience, I guess, of the people I've met, I can think of one gentleman who's a regular monthly calls into the food bank and he could call in more. One time we were up to every two weeks. He would get his cheque and he dutifully pay off whatever payments there were on his credit card and so on and so forth. I won't go into all the details, but put it this way: His first thing was to try to pay off all the debts to the point where he had nothing left to eat. He had no money for food, had no money for medication and so on and so forth.

We got him into credit counselling, everything else, just to see if we could find some way just to put him into credit protection and help him out. But that's the kind of thing that you're dealing with: people who are struggling, people who because they get behind, if some emergency comes up where they have to spend cash, guess what? All of a sudden, the light bill doesn't get paid for a month, and before you know it, that month is now two months and now you have three months. All of a sudden, you're into a position where you can't get out of it.

If I'm behind a month, I can tell you, they're going to send me a text: You're two months behind. No problem. I might mumble and grumble about it, but I can tell you, for someone that's living pretty close to the edge, that's enough to send them over the edge.

How about this: It's cheaper to put Pepsi on the table than it is to put a two-litre milk. Food banks are struggling with this. Trying to come up with a diet that is actually somewhat nutritious. I can tell you the food you're buying on a low income, you don't have the privilege or

the benefit of buying fresh vegetables all the time. You don't have that.

I think in many ways when we look at it, at a very basic level, not only when we're talking about a guaranteed basic income, when we look at this, I think we have to look at what is an appropriate amount of money for a person to live on. Sometimes there is no set amount, and sometimes I think it has to be reviewed, annually, as well.

We also know one of the benefits of a GBI, a guaranteed basic income, or a universal basic income, whatever you want to call it, is we look at the number of people who have fallen into part-time worker or in the gig economy. I'm going to give you an example of something, like a substitute teacher.

Now, a substitute teacher can sub throughout the year and they might get a few days here. They might get 185 days or more. They might get enough to qualify for EI. What they don't get often, though, is the holdback pay that a regular teacher would have.

Come June, the only money that a substitute teacher would have to live on is from the EI benefits that they would have to get them through the summer, until the next time they (inaudible). But if they're offered a job in June for September, even though the contract does not start until September, they don't get EI benefits. That means that basically for 2½ months they have no income. Even though they're not getting paid for the contract, it doesn't start until September. How do you support that? I think somewhere along the line a guaranteed basic income could be an answer to that, or change the regulations around EI.

You look at precarious work, I look at people who have families I know who are working sometimes three jobs just to put enough food on the table and pay the rent. Again, a guaranteed basic income would give breathing space. It's very clear here that what people do with their money and what happened with CERB, they paid bills; they bought, in some cases, new clothes, a new bed. They paid off bills.

I can tell you here that for the people in the arts community that we now – it's interesting, arts

community, we talk about it as arts, but it's become a business. We're actually looking at the United States, how they look at it. Hollywood is not just about arts and entertainment; it's a business, a billion-dollar business. I think here, if nothing else, what a guaranteed basic income gives is piece of mind; it gives people the opportunity to explore education improvements and so on and so forth.

All around, I think, it's an investment. It's no use looking at: Well, there are a few people who might abuse it. In every walk of life I can guarantee you there is a small percentage of people who abuse it, whatever that means. I do believe it's going to help those people who are in a gig economy or better yet, how about anxiety, stress, depression.

It's interesting, one of the main reasons why marriages don't last, one of the top reasons, is to do with finances in that it might very well exacerbate an existing condition. I can tell you when you have to worry about where your next meal is coming from, how you're going to feed the children.

Think about this for parents on low income. The start of every school year has to be frightening because it's about getting the clothes for them, getting the books, the materials and everything else. In many ways, what we're doing here – I can't help but think that this is going to have a positive effect on mental health. Also, we see that often good health outcomes are tied to the level of education and to income as well.

From my point of view, I think it's time to at least move ahead – and I know this can be portrayed as just one more task force, but I really think if we're going into this, the idea that this is an investment that we're going to move ahead, it's going to be something positive.

I was reading here, I think it was \$51 billion they figure in mental illness and addictions as a result of poverty. That's to the economy. I don't know if anyone has ever measured these effects.

We can talk about the cost of a GBI, but what's the cost to the economy, to families, to people of poverty. I can tell you in terms of one food bank, it costs \$100,000-plus a year just to put the food on the shelves to put that out. Now, multiply that

by every food bank that exists and you start to get an idea. There is a cost here and that's only scratching it.

What we propose then is let's look at this and bring in – I understand a number of amendments are made to engage federal MPs. I think that's an excellent idea because it goes back to the whole notion: it takes a village, I think, to raise a child. Well, I think it takes a country to look after the most vulnerable.

If I had one quote that I've always loved with any project that we understand, because I'm sure there are plenty of objections to it, I'll end with this: Let's get on with it. There's one quote by Samuel Johnson that always stood out. He said: If every objection must first be overcome, nothing will ever be accomplished.

So whatever plan we come up with will not be perfect. Often said: The perfect is the enemy of the good. I think whatever plan we come up with, let's start it; let's keep a Select Committee to review it each year, figure out how we tweak it until we get something where we can lift all of our vulnerable people as citizens out of poverty.

I think in the long run, just as a rising tide lifts all boats, I think this is something that's going to benefit all of us, because you've got people who are now not accessing the hospital system because they're probably in a better state of mind. We have people, all of a sudden, who can afford to get dental work, hopefully.

I'll tell this last story. It's interesting, when I was campaigning, the number of people who I met and they had poor dental health. Of course, what are they doing? They're hiding their teeth behind their hands because they're embarrassed. It affects their own psyche, their emotional well-being, but it also prevents them from going out to look for a job because they're going to be embarrassed by it. They're also worried that people are looking at them; it's hard not to miss someone's teeth. They're probably frightened very much by the fact that this person who's looking at hiring me is judging me by this.

I think in some ways what we're doing here is also for the good of our whole society. I think, overall, it's about mental health, it's about

earning a living, having a livable income; it's about looking after each other.

To me, I can't help but think this is probably one of the greatest initiatives that we can undertake, not because we proposed it, but I think because of the fact it's something that's going to help Newfoundlanders and Labradorians throughout the province.

Thank you.

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

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

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

This is a fantastic concept. I guess a lot of people are saying: Now, how much will this actually cost? But the question is: How much is poverty costing us today? That's the question we should be asking ourselves. Really, only a small fraction of our nation's wealth would be what it would cost to bring everybody to an acceptable standard of living, a minimum income.

Will we get value for our money? I most certainly think yes. Through the reduction and elimination of poverty, what could we do? Our health care costs would drop. Our remedial education, our crime, our social programs and lost productivity and lost opportunity will all disappear. When I think about a minimum income, I'm thinking how valuable would that be to budding entrepreneurs. That's what we need; we need to support every level of our society and most particularly our entrepreneurs.

In the agriculture industry that is one of the big challenges with a lot of new farmers and that being that they have no income while their farm is being developed. Sometimes all we need is a little bit of a hand up and an individual who may or may not be fully dependent on the system can stand on their own two feet and that's what we have to look at.

Abraham Lincoln had a couple of quotes there. I was reading a document there and he had about 10 quotes but I'll pick two out of them. One was: You cannot bring the wage earner up by bringing the wage payer down. It's not the

responsibility nor should it be burdened on the business owner or the employer to bring the wage earners up, at detriment to the business. That's where government can step in, and back to my original points: How much is poverty costing us right now?

It would be a far better investment to ensure that everybody has a living wage, a living income. It doesn't necessarily mean a cash wage. That means that we have to put the programs and supports in place to enable them to have an acceptable lifestyle.

Another quote from Abraham Lincoln and that was: You cannot perpetually give to someone and think you're helping them by overriding something that they can do themselves. We need to look at that. Again, no handouts, just hand ups, and a basic income would provide that. A basic income would enable somebody to invest in a business or invest in further educating themselves to provide better opportunities for them and their families.

I fully support this concept and I'm pretty sure the rest of my colleagues do, too. We will be supporting this private Member's motion today, and I thank you for the opportunity to speak.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Given the time of the day, I'm going to call on the Member for Labrador West, who presented this motion, to close the debate.

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

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

I am very moved and happy to see such overwhelming support for our PMM. It's so wonderful to see that everyone also feels that we must help everyone and help individuals and we all will, together, come to the table and do our homework, do our research and find out what we can do to improve the lives of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I want to start and thank the Minister for Immigration, Skills and Labour for his comments and his support and his friendly amendment. I have to say, that was a great amendment from the minister to bring the

federal government to the table and our federal MPs to the table. I will support that and I thank him for that. To make sure that we have them there at the table for helping find how they can help us as well and help avoid extra pitfalls as we look through different things from the perspective of the federal government.

I also want to thank the hon. Member for Topsail - Paradise for his comments and his friendly amendment to broaden the scope to look at what we have to do as a Committee. That was very encouraging and I thank him for that. I liked some of the wording about truly ending poverty. It's great that they're on the same page with us as we truly end poverty.

I also want to thank the Member for St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows for his comments. He reiterated that adding the federal government into this conversation is important and also talking about wraparound supports for individuals in this province. That's important. We need to make sure that if someone needs helps, they're helped. I really appreciate those comments. I thanked him for his support, too, for our motion.

I want to thank my colleague from St. John's Centre for his comments. Yes, it was good. We talked about all the people falling through the cracks, through the systems. There are always those gaps that are in there and talking about better ways to fill those in so that we capture more people with the supports we have as a province and as a society.

He talked about the noticeable difference from the time that CERB was introduced to when it ended and the food bank usage. I'd like to say that's a red flag there; we know there's something wrong in the system when something like that happens. Now that we are here, collectively, to talk about this, it's great that we all have the support of the House for this and that we can come up with a made-in-province solution to better support people.

I also want to thank my colleague from Mount Pearl North, talking about the importance of a hand up versus a handout. It's important to lift people up, give them the confidence they need in society because one's own personal self-confidence achieves a lot more when they feel

better about themselves versus when they're feeling down about themselves.

That's what we want to do. We want to instill confidence in people, that there are people here to help them and there are people here to help and not shame them. Self-confidence builds a person, and I can attest to myself that having self-confidence really does help someone feel great and also gives them the drive to get out and find that job or find that thing. So let's lift people up.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank everyone in this House for their support. I'm very glad; it's my first private Member's motion and I want to thank the support for that.

Thank you everybody.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Okay. We have two amendments. So we'll vote on the amendments first, then we'll have a vote on the main motion as it results from those votes.

The first amendment is by the Minister of Immigration, Skills and Labour, and everyone has the motion on their Order Paper for today.

The motion is to be inserted after the "BE IT RESOLVED" clause: BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Select Committee engage federal Members of Parliament from Newfoundland and Labrador to participate.

All those in favour of that amendment, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, amendment carried.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The second amendment is by the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

The amendment is: That the private Member's resolution before the House be amended by adding immediately after the words and comma "interaction with existing income supports," the

words and comma "additional poverty reduction initiatives."

That's the second amendment.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, amendment carried.

**MR. SPEAKER:** With the consolidation of those two amendments that were just passed, the resolution of the motion is:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House consider truly ending poverty in this province by establishing an All-Party Select Committee on basic income, with a mandate to review and make recommendations on: eligibility and minimum income amounts, interaction with existing income supports, additional poverty reduction initiatives, cost-benefit analysis, potential models for such a program, and timeline for implementation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Select Committee engage federal Members of Parliament from Newfoundland and Labrador to participate.

All those in favour of the amended resolution, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

Given the hour of the day and this being Wednesday, the House now –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Division.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Division has been called.

Division

**MR. SPEAKER:** Are the House Leaders ready?  
The Opposition Leader, Third Party and the  
independents?

All those in favour, please stand.

**CLERK (Hawley George):** Mr. Crocker, Mr.  
Haggie, Ms. Dempster, Mr. Byrne, Mr. Davis,  
Mr. Bennett, Ms. Coady, Mr. Loveless, Ms.  
Stoodley, Mr. Andrew Parsons, Mr. Bragg, Mr.  
Warr, Ms. Pam Parsons, Mr. Trimper, Mr.  
Mitchelmore, Ms. Gambin-Walsh, Mr. Crosbie,  
Mr. Brazil, Mr. Forsey, Mr. Wakeham, Mr.  
Lester, Ms. Evans, Mr. Petten, 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. Speaker, the ayes: 33; the nays: zero.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is carried.

Give the hour of the day, the House is now  
adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.