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*Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA*

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(Night Sitting)

The House resumed at 6 p.m.

**SPEAKER (Bennett):** Are the House Leaders ready?

Order, please!

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**S. CROCKER:** Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL, that this House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 52.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

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

### Committee of the Whole

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

We are now considering Bill 52, An Act To Amend The Petroleum Products Act, and we are dealing with clause 1.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Petroleum Products Act." (Bill 52)

**CHAIR:** I will be ruling now on the amendment submitted by the Member for Lake – no, for Labrador West. I'm the Member for Lake Melville.

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

**CHAIR:** The Member for Lake Melville will rule on the amendment.

So the amendment for the Member – it's interesting, the bill that we are dealing with is an amending bill and, as such, it has a very narrow focus. So the question that the team looks at here is whether or not the amendment changes or introduces a new idea. It was ruled that it does, in fact, introduce a new idea and, due to the narrow scope, it is not in order.

So we will carry on.

Any further speakers?

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

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

I'm going to speak on this just for a few minutes. I think what the Member for Labrador West put forth was a great amendment, seconded by the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands. It was turned down because it changes the scope. Well, I'm not sure how the rulings work, but you have to go with the rulings of the Chair. But I think it's a great idea for the government to come and introduce – if they need to introduce another part of the bill to do it now. I heard the minister earlier saying that we'll look at it later. I heard that before. I heard that before that we'll look at it later.

I can assure the government, and I want to let the people of the province know, what the Member for Labrador West, and the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, who seconded the motion, was that we would get the Citizens' – Dennis Browne –

**P. LANE:** Consumer Advocate.

**E. JOYCE:** Consumer Advocate to look at the gas prices to make sure the increases – and protect the consumer in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. That was the proposed amendment that was made. It's a great amendment. It would give the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, with the high gas prices now, it would give them a bit more assurances that their views are being heard, that they have someone there who's going

to protect them, which he's doing now through the electricity rates and through other avenues, through the PUB.

I urge the government, if you really want to be transparent. If you really want to protect the consumers of this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, don't wait and say we'll do it later. Do it now. Do it now, I say to the government. If you don't do it now, I bet my bottom dollar that most of us in this House won't be here when it's done.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Just like the helmets.

**E. JOYCE:** Well, like I said, we heard that before; hear that we'll give very serious consideration.

So I'm going to stand and speak and say I'm asking the government to look at this and bring it in now, if they can, or if we have to bring in the bill after to change it and do it this sitting so that we can give the confidence to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that there is somebody who is not doing any of this stuff secretly. That we can sit down and have someone there that we know is protecting our rights, protecting the high gas prices and justifying why these prices are necessary for the residents.

Because, as we said earlier today, and we heard Members on all sides of this House, people are suffering because of high fuel prices. People are suffering. Absolutely, no doubt. And when you get the high fuel prices, then you get the high transportation costs, people going back and forth to work; high food costs which is exorbitant; medical costs. We heard here today about people who cannot even go to their medical appointments because of the costs, they got to sell the car, can't keep it, can't pay for the gas.

I urge the government to look at the proposed amendment that the Member for Labrador West made. It's a great amendment. The Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands spoke about it today and said what a great idea and to get the Consumer Advocate involved.

I will just sit and take my chair. I look forward for the government to see if they can find some

way to bring the Consumer Advocate into the justification of oil for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**S. CROCKER:** Thank you very much. Mr. Chair.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Digital Government and Services NL, that the Committee rise and report progress.

**CHAIR:** It is moved and seconded that the Committee rise and report progress.

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

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.

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

The hon. the Member for Lake Melville and Deputy Chair of Committee.

**P. TRIMPER:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report progress on Bill 52 and have asked leave to sit again.

**SPEAKER:** The Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole has reported that the Committee has considered the matters to them referred and directed him to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

When shall the report be received?

**S. CROCKER:** Now.

**SPEAKER:** Now.

When shall the Committee have leave to sit again?

**S. CROCKER:** Presently.

**SPEAKER:** Presently.

On motion, report received and adopted. Committee ordered to sit again presently, by leave.

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

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

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 3.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that this House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 60.

**SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair so the House can resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

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

### Committee of the Whole

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

We are now debating the related resolution and Bill 60.

### Resolution

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

*“That it is expedient to bring in a measure respecting the imposition of taxes on carbon products.”*

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

**B. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the hon. Member for paying attention and having an opportunity, but I can't let the couple of statements pass by here today. So we've been listening to the budget debate for a long time now, probably some 70 hours or so, plus Estimates and some other things. I just can't let the opportunity pass. I have not heard one – not one – single decision or opportunity for the Opposition to provide any insight into how we can save money – not one.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

It's good you're paying attention, but let's let him speak.

**B. DAVIS:** We face many of the problems in this province because of decisions that were made by previous administrations. I'm not going to say which ones, but we had one of our colleagues on the other side making strokes about how many times we mention a particular decision that was made. I would say that the hon. Member for Conception Bay South can continue to make strokes until he hits 500 million strokes on his piece of paper.

So we're here talking about carbon tax and we're here talking about climate change, and I'd like to thank some of the speakers that spoke before me, the hon. Member for St. John's

Centre and the hon. Member for Lake Melville, who have spoken in favour of what we have to do as a jurisdiction, as members of the global community, to try to battle the most existential crisis that we face as a people in this world.

We have some people who, I think, are maybe misguided in some of their thinking, or maybe just not understanding when you sit in this hon. House and you perpetuate information that is not scientifically founded, it adds credibility to individuals that have none, no credibility.

We heard from the hon. Member for Bonavista, who I have an immense amount of respect for, but we have obviously a difference of opinion on the quality of individuals that we're going to bring up in this House, about their scientific work and their viewpoints. Lomborg, as was talked about earlier, one of the lines that I'd like to bring forward is the views and works attracted scrutiny in the scientific community. It was formally accused of scientific misconduct over *The Skeptical Environmentalist*. Concluded in – I'm paraphrasing – one couldn't prove that Lomborg had deliberately been scientifically dishonest, although he had broken the rules of scientific practice in the interpretation and the conclusions that he cited.

I just think it is very, very important that we all, in this House, utilize information that is factual; that is true; founded in science would be what I would recommend. Especially when we're talking about something as important as climate change.

When we talk about climate change, it is real. I think most of us in this House can attest to the fact that it is real, whether we listen to the hon. Member for Lake Melville talk about what impacts it is having in our northern communities, not just in Labrador, right across this globe and right across our country. We can talk about what the hon. Member for St. John's Centre talked about, which I fully agree with. We're seeing damage to roadwork, bridges and riverbanks in our province at an alarming rate that is going to cost this province a significant amount of money and, in turn, the people we all sit here to represent.

I would be remiss if I didn't highlight some of those things, and facts really do matter: climate

change is real. Warming temperatures is a reality. Roads and bridges are being affected. Weather systems are getting stronger, more challenging to deal with. This is reality; this is true. But many of my colleagues had already highlighted the fact that this is a carbon tax that the federal government has pushed on us. It doesn't matter which side of the House you sit on, whether you agree or disagree – and I personally agree that we have to do something about climate change. I personally agree. So you want it on the record? I personally agree we have to tackle climate change.

**B. PETTEN:** (Inaudible.)

**B. DAVIS:** We have to tackle climate change; not for you, Mr. Petten – or not for you, MHA for Conception Bay South –

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**B. DAVIS:** I am sorry. Not just for you, MHA for Conception Bay South, but because of the people we represent.

There are young students, my nieces and nephews, that have come out for Fridays for Future, standing up against what we can do together. And it's all of us together that's going to make a difference here for climate change. One of us is not going to make an impact ourselves, but if we don't do something, it's for sure not going to make any change.

One of the hon. Members mentioned earlier that – I think he used numbers, I'm going to use a different number, but it's going to mean the same thing he was getting at, I think. If we talk about 1 per cent of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions, that's about what we make here in this province, 1 per cent. You used different numbers and you said that's not very much. I'll agree. It's not. But if we don't do our part, and Canada doesn't do their part, which is 1 per cent of the global emissions, and the rest of the countries don't do anything, well then we're going to be in a significantly worse situation than we are currently.

I can go on about this all night, and I'm going to have multiple opportunities to speak to this, and I will speak to it, but I just wanted to highlight some of the things that I find are the most

challenging when you're dealing with this. We can make it political, we can make it challenging about saying we shouldn't do this because people can't afford it, and I agree. It's challenging for people. Nobody wants to have gas increase. But what it is doing, and what it has sparked, is a conversation on how to move people to do different things.

Some people talked about you can't get electric vehicles. True. The supply chain is challenging. Not just because of the demand for electric vehicles is high now across the world, but because of microchips, because of COVID – all of those things have been backlogged. That's where we're to. That is going to free up – the supply chain is going to get significantly stronger and we're going to see an opportunity. But, also, people can choose to do things like the hon. Member for CBS. They can ride their bike more often, they can walk; that's possible.

I understand –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**B. DAVIS:** St. John's Centre, sorry.

I understand what the hon. Member for Exploits –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

One at a time.

**B. DAVIS:** I understand what the hon. Member for Exploits has said. It is challenging for those in communities that have to drive for services. I understand that. I completely get that. And that's things that we're trying to work with. We're putting forward –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**B. DAVIS:** – options to provide solutions. The federal government and the provincial government are trying to make it easier for

people to make those choices – those are challenging choices.

I only got a couple of minutes left so when you have an opportunity to purchase an electric vehicle, or purchase a smaller vehicle, or purchase something that's a little bit more energy efficient, as in a hybrid or a plug-in hybrid vehicle, we're not saying do that today. Although, if you can, perfect. Do it. Excellent. If you can't, we're saying when you make your purchase of a next vehicle, let it be considered.

The hon. Member for Ferryland used to be in this industry. He understands the challenge. You don't make a decision to buy a vehicle every year. That's not possible. We all understand that. But we do understand that people make that choice in Newfoundland and Labrador and right across this country and across this globe every day.

So there is an opportunity for people to make those changes. That is why we put in place some environmental rebates for electric vehicles. That is why we're doing that, but we also want to encourage people to make that choice and think about it now for when they do. If their lease is up in two years, let's think about that as an option because the technology is getting significantly better, the battery life is getting longer.

We talk about investments in infrastructure. I think some of the hon. Members mentioned that you can't have an electric vehicle because there is no infrastructure. Well, we have some 200 Level 2 public charging stations across this Island. We have 14 fast-charging stations right across the TCH and another 19 coming this summer with an additional 12 that is going to be – haven't got a home yet but they will be.

The hon. Member for Bonavista – I sent him a message today about a question he had based out of Estimates there earlier last week. Questions about businesses having the ability to get infrastructure like Level 2 charging stations. I sent him that this morning because I had found it. I sent it off to him so his businesses can apply for partnerships with Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro to allow them to put that in

there as a selling feature for the business but also to allow their clients the ability to charge their electric vehicles.

He has an interesting –

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

Thank you very much.

I think the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands was next.

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

I'm just going to have a few words on this. I can assure the minister that – and I'm assuming and I will not be proven wrong – every Member over here believes in climate change.

So for anybody to say that no one over here believes in climate change –

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

**E. JOYCE:** I'm just saying we all agree with climate change. I mean, if you don't believe it – when you look around with some of the people here who have been on councils before and mayors and you look at the difference that the towns had with the major floods and the hurricanes that are coming through and the reoccurrence and the number of times – we all believe in climate change. We all definitely believe in climate change. There is absolutely no doubt.

I know, personally, a lot of things that myself and Heather do for the environment. We have a garden. We compost. I think we have six or seven different composts. We do it. We try to preserve the environment as best we can. Going around picking up garbage around the streets. We participate in the SPCA clean ups. So there is no doubt climate change is real. Absolutely no doubt that climate change is real.

But the question I would like to ask the minister, later on, this carbon tax – I understand because I was part of the discussion earlier, back in 2018, to bring this in. I agree with the Minister of

Finance that some of the exemptions that were made, we put those exemptions in. There's no doubt about that. But the question I'd like answered, and you can speak to it after: Last year, I think it was \$80 million through carbon tax, I think it was \$80 million, I could be wrong. I thought it was around \$80 million and this year it's going to be more. How much of that – whatever it is now, close to \$100 million – is put back into projects for climate? How much?

I'm not saying – but I know last year, all of it wasn't spent for projects. I know that for a fact. I have a list of the projects. It wasn't spent. What happened, Mr. Chair, is that however the government decided to do it, when the money came in for climate change, it went into general revenue. It's in general revenue; I know that for a fact, that's in general revenue.

So when it's in general revenue, then the Minister of Environment has to go to Treasury Board, has to go through the process of getting funds for climate change. That's the process of it working.

So when people hear this idea that, okay, we have this carbon tax, it's going to try to stop people from driving. That was the intent, if we put a levy on the gas people will rethink about driving as far, going as far, thinking about the climate a bit more. I was a part of it. It was also part that the money would be spent on projects to help climate change in the province.

I'm sure the minister has a list of the \$100-million projects that were spent. If the minister could table the list of last year's \$80 million worth of projects that was used for climate change from his department, then you can say, okay, we're making a real change. But if the money is in general revenue, and instead of spending the \$100 million that you're going to get from the carbon tax, if you're spending \$30 million or \$40 million or \$50 million, then it's a money grab and it's not used for the purpose that the federal government put in.

That's something the minister could table. I'm asking this on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, because a lot of people ask me about it. I say, well, here's the intent of the carbon tax. Here's why it was brought in, here's the reason why and here's

how it's supposed to be used. I said I will ask that question.

Is the money, the \$100 million or so projected, \$80 million last year – I'd assume it's close to \$100 million this year. Is that \$100 million or whatever the amount is – the Minister of Finance might have the exact amount – is that money put through climate change projects for Newfoundland and Labrador, and will the minister table the \$80 million worth of projects that the money collected last year?

But if it's gone into general revenue and there's not \$80 million spent on climate change in this province, I feel that the money is not used for the intent that it came down. And I heard the Minister of Finance state that it's a federal program. Now, I agree back when it was established, there were two ways to do it. Either you set up your own program for Newfoundland and Labrador, or the feds are going to impose it on you. That's a fact. That is true, so what Newfoundland and Labrador said, we're going to set up our own program. No problem.

I understand that you probably can't reduce the gas tax, because if you did, the feds are going to say, well, we've got a carbon tax in, you're reducing it, so we're going to give you a penalty if you do that. But there's nothing to stop this government from giving an oil rebate to the low-end people who need it in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The minister herself spoke in this House, and rightly so, said that the carbon tax is not on home heating oil. So anything with home heating oil is not connected to the carbon tax. It's just not connected. There's no carbon tax on home heating oil. So if you give a home heating oil rebate, which has been done in the past, to the people who need it at this time right now, it's not in violation of the carbon tax set out by the federal government.

Here's the option, and it's a solution – I understand the financial woes that the government is in. Absolutely, no doubt. But if we're getting \$100 million from the carbon tax, which is supposed to go towards projects for climate change in the province, and we're only using – last year I think it was \$22 million. I'm just going on memory. Maybe I'm wrong, but

I'm sure the minister will table every project. But just say there's a \$50-million difference. There's an opportunity for the minister to collect the carbon tax, give a home heat oil rebate, and not be in violation of the carbon tax.

It's a way to get around it, and we discussed that years ago. There's a way to get around it. Because when the minister stated herself – rightly so, and I'll say it again, rightly so – there's no carbon tax on home heating oil. Home heating oil is out of the equation for carbon tax. So now that the money is going into general revenue, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change has to go through the process through Treasury Board, through Cabinet, their the P&P, if necessary, to get the money.

So the money is there being collected. I'm asking the government, and I know for a fact that it will not violate the carbon tax rules that the federal government imposed. After the minister stated that there's no carbon tax on home heating oil, here's an opportunity for the government that what we collect off the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador through the carbon tax, to give it back to the people who really need it right now for home oil rebate in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the money is coming from people of Newfoundland and Labrador and given to the people that need it because it is not being used 100 per cent for environmental and climate change initiatives in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I heard the minister say we never heard any options. There's an option. There's an option that I'm giving out to the government right now that you can help the people in need the most right now. Because we in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Liberal government at the time, created their own program made in Newfoundland and Labrador, touted as made in Newfoundland and Labrador – which I agree with, by the way. Instead of having to be imposed on the federal government, we did it. But the only difference is the money is in general revenue.

I'm asking the Minister of Finance, I'm asking the Minister of Environment and Climate Change who just asked give us some ideas of what to do. This is one idea. The surplus that



we're not using from the carbon tax and not used for projects of climate change in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, whatever that difference is, put it through a home heating oil rebate to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that need it, until the gas prices and oil prices drop to a level – you can put a level on it, drop it to a level and once it hits that level, you can stop the oil rebate again, but until we meet that level.

So that's an opportunity now, I say to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, for you –

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

The Member's time is expired.

I now recognize the Member for Labrador West.

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

I'll speak briefly to this as well. One thing about it, and I look at it, is if we're going to oppose it, obviously, we have to make sure we see whatever comes in from this revenue needs to be dollar-for-dollar put back out in projects that actually make a difference into this province. And that's the general look at is. We need to also make sure that we are contributing back on this particular projects. When it comes to environmental projects, we have to look at multiple aspects of it. Especially, we are experiencing climate change. There are increased weather patterns. There are things like that that we do need to start mitigating against, especially in a coastal province.

You look at roads and stuff like that in this province are vulnerable to storm surges. In Labrador right now, May month, 20-plus degrees. This is unheard of in other times, so now we're experiencing different weather patterns and stuff. Like I said, there are studies right now that show that Labrador is actually warming two times faster than the entire rest of the country right now. Part of it is obviously with the reduction of the Labrador Current, which is actually currently slowing down, which is actually causing less cool air and stuff to come down through Labrador right now.

So we're now also looking at the fact that the weather patterns and climate patterns around Labrador have changed, and for us – and everyone says, oh it's warming up now, that's great – it's not great. Because Labrador Indigenous society is built on ice and snow. That's how we move; that's how we get around. It's actually having a massive negative effect on the Indigenous people of Labrador right now. We look at the program SmartICE, trying to help with climate change and help Indigenous people continue their traditional activities.

If you're looking at the pattern changes and heating up at two times faster than the rest of the country, that's significant. You look at flights now; so you move to this. Flights into these communities, they're experiencing more extreme weather, so their flights are actually less frequent into these communities right now. So they're trapped, basically right now, because of climate change. We're having increased weather patterns and changing like this, we're actually directly affecting Indigenous people in coastal communities.

We have to self-reflect on how do we do our part. And yes, we have to do different projects, and it's going to cost a lot of money to mitigate a lot of these risks. That's one thing. My colleague for St. John's Centre mentioned that Sweden imposed a carbon tax in 1991, and it steadily increased over years. And that actually had a direct impact on mining in this province. Because of these strict impacts.

One of the largest steelmakers in Sweden was forced to convert from coke and coal to hydrogen because of the cost of the tax that was imposed on them. They were one of the first large steel mills in the world to do this. Now, because Sweden is a part of the European Union, actually it's starting to impose stricter rules on importation of minerals into the European Union. One of them is their requirement for low-carbon content.

So last year, the Iron Ore Company of Canada, Rio Tinto, actually started the process, feasibility study, on converting some of their operations to hydrogen and looking at hydrogen. Currently, right now, they are doing a feasibility study on converting a portion of their operations from Bunker C to hydrogen to meet these new

requirements for importation of iron ore and pellets into the European Union. It's actually in conjunction with major steel mills in Germany, who also has the carbon tax.

So that's one aspect here. If that project goes ahead, that's a massive billion-dollar project to convert an entire industry over to low-carbon emissions. Starting this year, IOC also started a study on converting their locomotives to electric, to reduce the use of diesel fuels and to start carrying their iron ore to the port using electric locomotives. Also a result of the European Unions requirements and carbon taxes to meet the needs so they can actually continue to import to the European Union.

Tata Steel, who also imports into the European Union, is also looking at reducing greenhouse gases at the site just south of Schefferville, just north of Labrador City, and as a result of the carbon taxes for importation into the European Union. ArcelorMittal, which is a company whose headquarters is in Luxembourg, in the European Union, who is also looking at changing a lot of their operations to hydrogen to meet these requirements.

So you can see the pattern here is that, even though the carbon tax is not in our country, it still has a direct impact when it's applied in other areas, especially areas that we export to. This is just a taste of what is actually going on right now in the mining world. Obviously, do these companies want to spend on all this money? No, they don't obviously want to spend this money; they're required to spend all this money, these billions of dollars in retrofits, upgrades and moving on forward because they have to continue to do business. It's just a little taste to prove that these taxes and stuff, sometimes, most times, are actually having an impact, especially when you're shipping and importing.

So these big multinational corporations – and I'm not a fan of big, multinational corporations by any means, but it has an effect. It actually does have a necessary effect to instill change in the world.

Right now, this is a result of European Union carbon taxes that actually had a direct impact on our mining industry here in Newfoundland and

Labrador, especially in Labrador with the iron market. Iron ore is the base metal for most construction right now. It is in your car. It is in everything you use. Steel and iron is a part of it and it will continue to be a part of it because it is the basis of most construction in industry.

So, yes, we're seeing a change worldwide that we are a part of. Now we look at what we're going to do here as a province and what was imposed upon us by the federal government, but now we need to see to make sure that the commitment is actually there. Yes, you can put the carbon tax up, but we want to see the commitment is there. We want to see, for every dollar that comes in, in carbon tax, every dollar has to go out to do something that actually improves the lives of the people of this province and also gets us ready and improves our industry and our infrastructure in the province to deal with this change.

I know that there are some places in this province that are going to need seawalls. There are parts of this province that are going to have to move roads. There are going to be parts of this province where we are going to have to retrofit buildings to stop burning furnace oil. There are houses in this province that need to be retrofitted and are probably going to need a substantial bit more return on that for the program. So \$5,000, yes, I've seen some of the invoices so maybe move that needle up a little bit more as a rebate for some of the people who are going to require this.

Our entire electrical grid is going to have to be improved and retrofitted for this change. So there is going to be a lot of money that is going to have to be required to be spent to meet our goals, meet our requirements but also to facilitate this change. All this changes in the mining industry is not going to be cheap; it is also going to require a lot more production of electricity. It is going to require a lot more infrastructure changes and that is infrastructure spending; that is a good thing. We're going to see a lot of benefit for projects and stuff if we follow through, but that is the key, we have to follow through.

That is where we look at this; every dollar that comes in as tax better be spent on something that does involve the change of our economy and the

change to do projects to make ourselves be better. That is the thing; we have to be better. We have to be a leader and we are in the perfect position, as a province, to show that we can be better. We could be a template for the rest of this country. That's the thing, we've got to keep our eye on that goal and make sure that we do better. But in retrospect, every dollar in better be spent for a project that is relevant – not general revenue, on a project for the future.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

I now recognize the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

Again, happy to get up and speak anytime on behalf of the residents of Topsail - Paradise, and I hope everyone got out and supported McHappy Day today.

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

**P. DINN:** In support of Ronald McDonald charities, so thank you for anyone who did that.

I first want to start, and just clarify, nobody in this House, nobody on any side of this House disputes that climate change is real. We know climate change is real. But we also know there are many approaches that we can take to address it. During the discussion earlier today, a lot of discussion about is it a provincial tax, is it a federal tax, it's been imposed on us – I think the Member for Virginia Waters mentioned it's been pushed on us. These are all the words that have been utilized to talk about the carbon tax.

You can debate it all you want; it is a federal tax. But when I look at the Estimates book here, and I look at the Statement II, Provincial Tax Sources, it lists a number of taxes: Personal Income Tax, Sales Tax, Gasoline Tax, Carbon Tax, Payroll Tax, Vaping Tax, Cannabis Tax, the new one, Sugar Sweetened Beverage Tax, Corporate Income Tax, Offshore Royalties, Mining Tax and Royalties, Insurance Companies Tax, Corporate Tax and Forest Management Tax for a grand total of almost \$5.4 billion.

The point being, whether it's federal, provincial, it doesn't really matter. It's a tax. That tax is levied on, falls on the residents of this province to deal with. When you look at the bill, and in this bill we're talking about section 72.1 and it breaks out the tax levied on carbon products. Again, a tax. On butane – I'll round it out – there's a tax of about nine cents per litre. On ethane, a tax of about five cents per litre. On gas liquids, a tax of about eight cents per litre. On gasoline, a tax of 11 cents per litre. On heavy fuel oil, a tax of almost 16 cents per litre. On kerosene, a tax of almost 13 cents per litre. On light fuel oil, 13 cents per litre. On methanol, almost 5.5 cents per litre. On naphtha, a tax of 11 cents per litre. On petroleum coke, a tax of 19 cents per litre.

There is no debate. It's a tax. And the people who are paying many of these taxes are the people of the province. So when we talk about climate change and carbon tax, I mean, really the crux of the issue here is how do we ease the burden on residents of the province and still continue to make strides in climate change?

So, again, we agree this is real and we have heard the Premier say many times already, and it has been in the press, that there are geopolitical forces at play. That's all good and there are, but I just went down through a whole list of taxes and to tell us – not us, tell the people of this province, the Newfoundlanders and Labradorians – that we can't do anything to help them in the cost of living, other than to raise taxes in the carbon tax and then to look at sugar tax and all of the other petroleum products where taxes are raised, and we have heard the \$140 million figure tossed around, but we also know that is not addressing everyone in this province. It is addressing some: a bit here, a bit there.

We talked about Metrobus, the passes for Metrobus. I mean, you are trying to get people on the bus because they won't use their cars. It will reduce our carbon footprint, but it is only limited to the St. John's area. Corner Brook has buses. I don't think there are passes or any assistance out there, but there's nothing out there.

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

**P. DINN:** No, but I'm sticking to the facts here. I'm sticking to the facts. At this moment in time there is nothing out there.

Then look at the rest of the province, where does this help the rest of the province? It doesn't. There have been some opportunities offered here in terms of rebates on fuel that can help individuals. And we're not saying eliminate the carbon tax. We're just saying, at this particular point in time, do we need to throw a full – I think it's \$117 million, I think it was – carbon tax on top of everything else?

It's interesting, we always toss this out: Muskrat Falls, a misguided project. When that first came to the House of Assembly, I had no denying on that, misguided is the appropriate word. Yet, whenever we talk about things in this House, it always goes back to COVID, Snowmageddon and Muskrat Falls. I mean, I don't mind saying it, we all realize the burden it's put on us, but a good portion of this House didn't support it. But we support moving on and coming up with solutions.

What we don't hear in this House – and we're talking about climate change – we don't hear enough of Muskrat Falls is producing over 800 megawatts of clean, renewable energy.

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

**P. DINN:** Now and into the future. That will help our grandkids and children. It's going to help them.

Then you hear talk about Gull Island as well, if we're pushing green projects and we're talking about electric vehicles, they're not running on beach rocks. The move is, they won't run on gas, it is electricity. You have to have that.

So, yes, there's Muskrat mitigation and, yes, there was a great plan put in place, which I might say very closely mirrored what our plan was on it, so someone would have had it in place, but right now we have to move ahead. If you're talking about green energy and climate change, we need to start supporting and promoting what we have. But we also need to

address what our public, our constituents, what Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are going through right now.

I'll said it again, it's so cliché but it is no truer words: They are not looking for a handout. They are looking for a hand up. We are not saying there is no climate change; throw everything to the wind; change is in the air. We're not into that. But there must be a way with all of those taxes, carbon tax included, sugar tax included, there must be a way that we can address a plan for a greener economy, but, at the same time, ease the tax burden that is on Newfoundlanders and Labradorians throughout this province.

Because, right now, we've already said this tax is imposed on us, it's pushed on us and all that. But what we are doing right now, we are pushing it on our residents who now have to leave their car parked; can't get to medical appointments; who can't get to work; who can't get to child care. That is what we are doing now. We are pushing on that and that is a provincial decision. We can make decisions there to help our constituents and hopefully sooner.

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

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

I now recognize the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi and the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

**J. ABBOTT:** Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to participate in this debate on the carbon tax.

I guess just for the record, this bill, once approved, will result – effective May 1 – we will have an additional carbon tax of 2.2 cents a litre. So that is what the focus needs to be on in terms of the impact on taxation and cost of living.

A couple of things I wanted to talk about here, one is around leadership – leadership in climate change. As we know, for 20, 30, 40 years – take your time frame – society, governments have been talking about the need to recognize climate change.

I was a bit concerned this morning when the Member for Bonavista talked about some of the research he has done or quoted. And it almost seemed to me like climate change denial. Albeit, I know that by the time he concluded and others in the Official Opposition have said, no, they are not deniers of climate change, which I am glad to hear.

So the easiest thing for the government of the day, the Minister of Finance of the day, is not to proceed with any taxation measures, including the one here today. But we have to recognize that climate change is a worldwide phenomenon and that governments have to lead by coming up with the best policy instruments to effect change. As the Member for Lake Melville mentioned this morning, and I agree totally with several of his comments, but one in particular around what are the best policy instruments that we can be using to influence behaviour and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it is a carbon tax.

The research has been clear on that, and governments, obviously, in some cases reluctantly but recognize yes, despite the impact that it's going to have on the consumer, the citizen, it's determined that it is the right way to go. So in terms of Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador, we are leaders, I think, in this country in adopting climate change and the fact that we have a Department of Environment and Climate Change, we're recognizing that we have a role to play.

So we've entered into the agreement with the federal government –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

It was nice and quiet.

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

**AN HON. MEMBER:** The minister responsible for heckling.

**J. ABBOTT:** Thank you Chair, for that observation, and we'll bring the Government House Leader to his corner in a minute.

We have this agreement with the federal government which, in my view, is a very positive policy instrument. It allows us to collect this tax and use it for the things that we need to in terms of addressing climate change. The alternate is that the federal government comes in and it taxes us and it takes the money and runs, and we're no further ahead. It was a good bit of negotiation on the former minister's part, and I'm certainly appreciative of the leadership of the federal government in this area.

As a citizen, as a consumer and as a Member of the House of Assembly, I'm supportive of the policy direction around climate change. I think we owe it to the world at large to make our contribution. For those of you who've heard of the snows of Kilimanjaro; well, I've been to Kilimanjaro, I've camped on the summit of Kilimanjaro. There will be no snow in two decades time if we do not arrest the greenhouse gas emissions. I've been to the Antarctic and I have seen the ice loss and the impact it's going to have on the wildlife there; penguins, for example.

So we've got to think about this in the broader context, and we cannot get ourselves hung up on 2.2 cent a litre carbon tax at this point in time. We have to look at this in the long term and where this is going to lead us. This government is committed to making sure that we move as fast as we can, to make sure we can minimize the impacts.

It's been said here earlier what the purpose of the carbon tax is, and it's simply to have those who cause environmental cost, that they should pay the full social cost for that activity. Obviously, the more you drive and disburse greenhouse gases, then the more you're going to have to pay in carbon tax. That's the simple math here, folks, and I think there's going to be a recognition.

Now, we're caught up, unfortunately in this period time, with the cost of living, other larger factors that are at play and we have to make sure, I think for the immediate period, that we look at how we address the cost of living on its

own track. The government has started down that road. The Minister of Finance and the Premier have indicated that there more work needs to be done, more initiatives need to be considered and implemented so that we can help those here in the province who are struggling with the cost of living, whether it's heating fuel, gasoline, cost of food, cost of anything. We've started down that road. We've reduced or suspended some taxes. We put money back in people's pockets, and we have more to consider.

I think if we look at in terms of the youth of this province, of this country and of the world, Greta Thunberg certainly is a noted individual in that regard. So we do owe it to the youth of the province and those who will follow to make sure we do what we can while we're in the positions we're in to make sure we have the right policy instruments. The carbon tax is the right policy instrument, and we need to stick with it, come high or low, when it comes to how popular it is or it is not. I have not seen or I have not heard other options from the Opposition and recognizing that we are on the right track, I'm not suspecting that I will hear more.

The Climate Atlas of Canada identifies the impacts of climate change. We are seeing increasing in the average annual temperatures. The Member for Labrador West talked about the current and immediate impact on the Labrador coast and inland. We are seeing a warming permafrost. We are seeing increased precipitation in the north. We are seeing declining sea ice. All of this is going to have substantial impact on our Indigenous communities and other communities on this Island.

I've hiked in many parts of this Island, for instance, and I'm seeing the impacts. We're seeing coastal erosion everywhere and we are having to invest significant funds through public infrastructure to arrest coastal erosion. So very, very observable impacts and we need to make sure we reduce the greenhouse gas emissions and the carbon tax is a means to doing that.

So, folks, we'd ask you to think long term. Separate the discussion around why we have a carbon tax and its importance and what we need to do around the cost of living issues that are, obviously, immediately in front of us. I think I

would like the discussion, really, to focus on how we mitigate some of the cost of living impacts while we're moving ahead with climate change policies, taxation and initiatives to improve the economy.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

The Member's time has expired.

I now recognize the Member for Conception Bay South.

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

It is a pleasure to get up and speak on this, I suppose, important resolution. It is whichever way you want to look at it, how important it is you want to find it. Because it is an imposition of the carbon tax. I go back in time and I remember, for several years, I was the critic for climate change in our caucus, as one of my critic roles, back when there was only seven of us. We had four roles each. It was a learning experience. I remember when I first got involved in it and I used to hear all the commentary and I was doing a bit of a study on it myself, because I don't think any of us were that up to scratch with the carbon pricing. It was evolving at the time; I'm going back six, seven years ago now.

The part that jumped out at me, nobody understood it. I was not alone when you had trouble getting your head around it, the public didn't understand. So you'd stand, you know, you'd get in your place here in this House, and we'd put out news releases and we'd argue the point and we'd be highlighting to people what this is really about and what people can look for and what's in store, and as the prices get up, the price on gas and what have you.

Nobody understood, nobody could get a grasp on what was actually happening and I used to really find it puzzling and I wanted – not that I wanted them to condemn it, but I think that your role – again, I always say our role over here is sometimes to get that word out, to kind of act as the intermediary. People didn't understand. I remember one of our staff suggested, why don't we write a letter to *The Telegram*? So I said fair enough. The headline in it was coined by the staff person: There's a new tax. That's all the headline was, that was the key point.

That caught a huge, huge amount of attention. They caught the word: tax. We were no longer explaining to them what carbon was, we weren't trying to explain what carbon pricing was, what emissions are, climate change, which all of that stuff goes over the majority of people's heads, mine included, but you recognize what a tax is.

I would hazard a guess the majority in this House are in the same boat as me.

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

**B. PETTEN:** I've got lots of time to speak tonight, Mr. Chair; we're going to have a long time at this, so my colleague opposite –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Oh, oh!

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**B. PETTEN:** – wants to keep coaching along, I have no problem. I've been at this too long now to get distracted. But that's where I think everyone are to.

My friend, the Environment Minister – and he's a good friend. I was asking earlier –

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

**B. PETTEN:** Nothing wrong with that. I've got Liberal friends, believe it or not. I've got Liberal friends, but I asked him: Do you support the carbon tax? Not, do you believe in climate change? We all believe in that. Do you believe in charging a tax on carbon? Simple question. I could ask all the Members opposite that question. I would hazard a guess that the majority would say no.

Now, I know some Members over there think it's the be-all and end-all. You know, the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development, he just doubled down on it. But I wish they'd double down the commitment to help the average Newfoundlander and Labradorian to deal with the cost of living.

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

**B. PETTEN:** I wish they had same passion on dealing with that issue. Because, ultimately, it's all tied together.

So as another staff member likes to always refer to me, he says: What do the people on the Foxtrap Access Road think? They don't want a tax, but most of them got no grasp on what we are talking about when we are talking about carbon. And some of the conversations here and the pricing, some of the issues that come up here – I'm telling you now the majority of them are like: Can you explain that to me?

Well, all you got to do is explain that it's 11 cents on a litre of gas and it's going to increase incrementally year over year over year. On the same week, ironically, when the gas went up to \$2.17 a litre, we get this introduced. It is almost like – and I say this often, too – we're in this alternate reality. It's like when you think it can't get no worse, it gets worse and really.

So when I saw this legislation coming up Wednesday, I said, unbelievable. The same week you get gas at \$2.17 a litre, we are introducing this. I know that the government is going to say it is not our fault. It is a federal issue. It is federal when it suits you. When it's good news, made in Newfoundland, pat yourself on the back. It's a made-in-Newfoundland approach and we are so proud of it. But when it goes the other way, it's a federal problem. It's a federal problem. We have got no issues with that.

So when you go and any bit of negativity comes up, you get the deflection. There is a lot of pressure on government this week on the cost of living and carbon pricing is a big part of that – a lot of pressure.

The Premier who keeps shaming one of the best green energy projects in North America, even though it cost more than everyone wanted it to cost, and none of us voted for it, he likes to shame that. But then when the parallel to the Upper Churchill is glaring because it's the same thing, but we don't rub it in.

But today, when all of the pressure is on about the cost of living: news conference. We are forming a Committee to deal with the Upper Churchill. The umpteenth committee when we take over in 2041. It's defection. It's to change

the conversation. When you feel the pressure, flip the page. Feel more pressure, change the conversation. Take a picture. That's what it's called. You are under all of this pressure.

You're under all of this pressure out in Grand falls and Gander in the long-term care. So, you know, you're going – and I'm trying to do this, to frame it up to the way I feel about all this other stuff, the alternate reality, and the pressure is on. I'm probably part of the reason they're getting a lot of pressure, but the pressure is on.

Everyone in the media is chasing them. They're not giving any comments and guess what? Ribbon cutting. Deflect. There's no longer an issue. Now, that was March 28. We are now getting up there, going towards the end of May; we're pushing June, still not open.

So they knew then it wasn't. It's just like all of this, it's deflect. So we have got a cost of living crisis. We supposedly have a climate crisis. We have a health care crisis. As the saying goes: She's gone, b'y, she's gone. But over there in the alternate reality, alternate universe, things are great. Carbon pricing is wonderful; we have \$142 million to help out all the people in the province with their cost of living issues.

I hear it day over day over day. Do the math on half a million people. Do the math for me. You can't get oil to come unless you have \$600 worth.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Two hundred and forty-two dollars.

**B. PETTEN:** Two hundred and forty-two dollars. There we go; we have the quick math on that. Now, after the last couple of crises, that might be less because our population is actually increasing, according to some accounts and decreasing according to others.

But the ultimate issue is we're dealing with a cost of living crisis. And on top of that, we're going to bring in a tax on carbon. That's a tax, no other way of putting it. And the problem you have with this, too, Mr. Chair, is as much as you want to say it's a Newfoundland approach and a made-in-Newfoundland approach, this is a

federal project, federal initiative. They all say it, when it suits them. But the problem you have, too, is you have a federal government up there who thinks green, it's all about green.

The Bay du Nord Project was a painful process to get approved because they're green. They don't care about anything; it's all about green. Green technology, green initiatives. You have to pay for those things; they don't come free. But no, no, it's all free.

When you look at Canada, 1 per cent of the emissions, think about that. So what's Newfoundland? I tell you, this person is no longer in government, but he was a high ranker in government, he was around for a long time. He told me one day, he said: Do you know what? Do you know what we are on the world stage to emissions and pollution and carbon pricing? And this guy was well versed in the environment portfolio. He said it was a particle of dust. He said do you see that particle of dust on the desk, that's what we are.

Did you ever here the saying, Mr. Chair, if you want to kill a mosquito you only just have to hit it with the back of your hand, you don't have to use a sledgehammer? Well, that's exactly what's going on here.

We have an issue. Yeah, we have a few emissions; we have four or five polluters. We're not Beijing. I've been in Beijing. We're not Beijing, you can't see across the street. It's one of the cleanest places you ever want to live. No, but we're going pricing. We're going and charging tax on carbon emissions. Oh, we're polluters; we're the biggest polluters in the world. I mean, it's not even in the same universe everyone else is in. People don't understand.

Pollution: a fellow going up the road with his muffler gone in his car, that's the most pollution I see in CBS. Yet, we're going to price everyone. We're going to punish them with a tax.

Mr. Chair, I'm going to wrap in a couple of seconds, but it's going to be a long night. I won't get into a new rant now before my time expires, but as long as government keeps trying to – do you know what people would rather them say? We disagree with this. The federal



government are making us do it. But they have such a cozy relationship; you can't condemn the federal government.

They were going to say we'll support this, as the minister just said earlier. We have to do this. I don't buy that, Mr. Chair – I don't buy that.

Thank you very much.

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

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

**P. LANE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's always a challenge, I have to say, following my colleague from Conception Bay South. It's fun because he likes to get them all riled up and he does a real good job of that, I have to say – very entertaining.

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

**P. LANE:** What? The Member says it's easy to do.

Mr. Chair, I want to say first off the bat – well, I'll say two things. Number one, I'm certainly not a denier of climate change, as other Members have said. It's real. You see it in front of you. You see it on the news. You see it here in our province. No doubt things are changing, so I'm not denying that.

Second point, I believe that the carbon tax – personally, this is my belief – is nothing but a tax grab. I said that when the bill came down, when we first came in with our made-in-Newfoundland-and-Labrador solution, I supported the bill, but I was quite clear in saying I supported the bill only because we were told that if you don't support this, the feds are going to impose a worst solution on us.

So I did it for that reason and that reason only. But I still was quite clear, and I'll be quite clear now, that this is nothing but a tax grab. That's what it is. I hear the Members talking about it's suppose to change our behaviour. What behaviour is it changing? The only behaviour that's changing is that people don't have a cent left in their pocket after they go to the pumps.

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

**P. LANE:** That's the only behaviour.

People still have to go to work. They have to get there somehow. Most people have to take their car. We hear the government, we hear people all the time talking about don't drink and drive. We hear don't drink and drive. So what do you do? If you're going out somewhere, you get a taxi. Well, guess what? When the taxi driver goes to the pumps, trying to earn a living for himself, now he's getting nailed with a tax. Is that stopping him from driving a taxi? Are the taxis gone out of business? If someone needs a taxi, can they still get a taxi? Are all the taxis driving around in electric cars? No, they're not.

We see construction going on out of our highways, once the construction season will start. Is that going to be driving the cost of construction now, because of the price of fuel that they have to pay? Are we doing to stop construction now? No, we're not.

You see delivery drivers. You see SkipTheDishes and everything. Life will go on anyway. Cars are not going to stop. The SkipTheDishes guy is not going to hop on a Metrobus – if you have a Metrobus – to bring you your order. I mean, that's like, when we talk about the alternate universe that my colleague is talking about, he's right.

The reality of it is that the only thing that this carbon tax is doing is making life less affordable for the average person. That's what it's doing. People have still got to have their cars. They still have to go to work. They still have to go to medical appointments. They still have to do all that stuff. Look at yourself, I ask Members opposite. Has carbon tax stopped you from using your car? How many people now park their car and bike everywhere they're going? Nobody.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** I walk.

**P. LANE:** Oh yeah, the Member walks, right. If I were to go out on the parking lot here now, where all the Members park and the ministers park, I'll see one electric car. And that's the Member. But I think he's got a truck, too. I see a few pickup trucks out there.

So the reality of it is that it's not changing a thing. Nothing is changing. That's the truth of the matter. Nothing is changing. And if the government was legitimately saying, listen, we collected – what's the number? How much –?

**E. JOYCE:** It was \$117 million.

**P. LANE:** Chair, \$117 million that we collected in carbon tax, and then you could show me, here's the \$117 million and here's the \$117 million that we spent on green projects, whether that be electrification of buildings, putting in more infrastructure for electric cars, changing out the provincial fleet – let's talk about the provincial fleet. How many electric cars have the government got? I'd be interested to know, Minister of Transportation and Works, how many electric vehicles do the government have?

Maybe you have a whole bunch, I don't know. Just out of curiosity, I'd be curious to know what percentage of provincial government workers – if I go to the depot of Transportation and Works, or I go around the province, how many people are going around driving electric cars, in the government? Leading by example, with all of this money, this \$117 million that's supposed to be earmarked for climate change and electrification of buildings and electric vehicles and all that infrastructure and all this good stuff to save the world and save the planet. How much of that money is going there?

We know it's not. Last year, I believe the Member said there was \$20 million spent by the Department of Environment and some of those programs are probably existing programs, I suspect, as opposed to new ones. So all this money is just going into the general coffers. I mean, that's the reality.

Now, I'm not saying – and again, I've stood in this House many a time and said, and I will repeat, I understand the fiscal situation the province is in. I understand the desperation to try to get every cent you can get, to try to pay for health care and education. We have a deficit and a debt; I understand all that. I really do, but let's be honest about it. Be upfront and honest with the people, and transparent, and just simply say, this is another source of taxation that we need to try to dig ourselves out of the hole.

Guess what? We're not spending that money on climate change. We might spend some of it, but the majority of the money we're putting into general coffers to try to stay afloat. So we can make the payroll. So we can pay our civil servants. So we can pay for health care. We can pay for education. Be honest.

But the part that really upsets people, and it upsets me quite frankly, is when I hear these flimsy excuses about oh, we're doing it for the planet and we're going to change behaviours. It's BS. It's absolute BS.

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

**P. LANE:** It is.

Mr. Chair, if BS is an unparliamentary – I didn't say the words, but if that is I withdraw those two letters if that is.

But –

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

**P. LANE:** Go down where?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** The UN.

**P. LANE:** Go down to the UN? Yeah, I'm more concerned about Newfoundland and Labrador than the UN.

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

**P. LANE:** My God, the UN. Go down to the UN. That's how out of touch we are here in this province. We have people in this province, Mr. Chair, who are calling me, crying, some of them, saying I got to choose between my groceries, my medications. I have to go to the doctor; I can't afford to get there. I can't afford to heat in my home, and we're going to talk about the UN. I couldn't give two hoots about the UN.

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

**P. LANE:** I couldn't care less about the UN.

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

**P. LANE:** Yes, it is leadership. Listen, we need leadership in this province. That's what we need.

We need leadership in this province to stand up for the people of this province. If you want to be on the world's stage or something go down to the States, run for the president of the United States and get on the UN, or run for the prime minister of Canada and get on the UN. For goodness sakes, absolutely ridiculous.

The Minister of Environment can yap at me all he wants, he can chirp. I know he doesn't like what I have to say. But the facts are the facts. The minister is always saying: Don't confuse the facts. The facts are, Mr. Chair, this carbon tax is accomplishing nothing; only putting people in the poorhouse. That's what it's accomplishing; that's the reality. The money is not being spent on green initiatives: that is a reality. All we're asking for here is some honesty. Be honest with the people. Tell the people what you're doing with the money.

**J. HOGAN:** It's called a budget.

**P. LANE:** Exactly, there we go. Perfect, the Minister of Justice said it is called a budget. Perfect, that's all you have to say. Tell the people that this is just another revenue stream that we're using to balance the budget.

Now, a lot of people will say: Guess what? A lot of people will say: Do you know what? You had to do what you have to do; I can accept it, but at least you're being honest about it. But don't go giving us the whole song and dance about we're saving the planet here and we're going to change all the behaviours of Newfoundland and Labrador and we're reducing the carbon footprint and we're investing in all these projects, because it's simply not true. It's factually incorrect.

I will end off this speaking time but I intend on speaking again. But I will say, be honest with the people.

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

**CHAIR (Reid):** The hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

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

That was a very passionate speech from my colleague, the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

I just want to bring it back again to the realities. It's easy to be heckled and (inaudible) I agree with him. We're concerned about Newfoundland and Labrador. We are concerned about Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Chair, we just had a COVID crisis. There is no one denying that we had a COVID crisis. There is absolutely no one denying that. But when we had a COVID crisis, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador stepped in to help sectors of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador because of the COVID crisis. Education was a prime example with the buses, when the Minister of Education went out and found so many busses so that we could separate people on the busses. That cost extra money; that is what needed to be done, there is no doubt about it.

There are businesses that needed funds along the way because of the COVID crisis and as the government stepped in, I don't know if anybody over here ever criticized the government for helping businesses out because of the COVID crisis. No one criticized anybody for getting tests out. No one criticized the government for setting up test sites because we're in a crisis: absolutely no one.

So, Mr. Chair, I'll just ask the government Members one question: Do you think when people have to choose between their medication or food or travel for medical costs, for medical treatment, is that a crisis? And the answer would be: Yes. The answer would be: Yes, it is a crisis.

I'm not going to criticize one person; I'm just not going to do it, because I just feel there are so many people suffering. But when you hear well it's only 2.5, I'm just saying it's only 2.5 cents. Mr. Chair, it's easy for us because we have a mileage allowance. It's easy for us. But when you look at the people who have to travel back and forth to work. When you have to look at people – we heard a story today, the person has to sell the car because they can't afford the gas, can't get to their medical appointments. That's a crisis. It is a crisis.

This is not the crisis caused by the government. I know it's not, I'm not accusing the government of causing this crisis, I'm not. You look at the world as it is now, look at the demand; you look at the US; you look at what's happening in Ukraine. This government didn't cause the crisis. I don't think anybody is saying that government caused the crisis. But before we step in and take the \$117 million, that we're going to use for climate change because of a carbon tax, we need to admit to ourselves, and government needs to look in the mirror and say: We are in a crisis for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

If we are in a crisis for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador because of COVID; medical attention during COVID; setting up testing stations; getting so many people in the ICU; having extra staff in. If you can't get to your medical treatment and you can't afford now to get your medication, we're in the same crisis. It may not be called COVID. Inflation, whatever you want to call it, but I can tell you people are suffering. People are suffering.

If the gas prices were down to \$40, \$50 a barrel, we wouldn't be having this discussion here today. We wouldn't be having this discussion, but with the gas prices going steadily up, when the gas prices go up, food goes up, medication goes up, heat goes up, oil goes up, everything goes up with it.

So what I'm asking the government to do is sit around as a government and look and say we're in a crisis. I read a note the other night from people who have to start paying \$45 for some fees. We are in a crisis. And I can tell you, when you hear the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands and people of the Opposition talking, and I know some government Members realize this, there are people suffering.

One thing that government was elected to do – any government whatsoever – was to protect the people and make their lives better. What better way can we do right now, what better things can we do right now in a time of crisis – and we are in a crisis, absolutely no doubt we are in a crisis – and if you don't think we are in a crisis, I'd say to some people come with me. Come down and I'll show you some prime examples. I don't

think you need to do it because you hear it from your own areas. I don't think you need to travel because I think you know there's a crisis.

Now that we know there is a crisis, we need leadership. We need leadership. We need the Cabinet to sit down and say: What can we do? What is it we can do? Once you establish that and you start trying to help people out, people will understand. If you want to give a home heat rebate, an electricity rebate somehow for the people that really need it, people that are really struggling and put it on a certain level until oil stops per barrel, to bring down gas, bring down oil, home heating oil, I would go for it. All out.

But I urge the government, I urge them – we could stand here tonight and banter back and forth, at times I do it myself, banter back and forth, and we say this, but we've got to understand that there's a crisis. All of us here in this House of Assembly are doing all right. There's absolutely no doubt. We're doing all right. But there are a lot of people who are struggling – a lot of people. A lot of people can't even send their kids to school now with a meal. I know it.

Then I heard the Minister for Children, Seniors and Social Development say: What's an option? Here's an option, I'd say to the minister, here's an option. Until this crisis is alleviated, take the money you're going to get for carbon tax that's sitting in general revenue and spread it out among the low income, the people who are need it, until the crisis is gone, until the price of oil goes down so that people get back to a sensible living because food has gone up.

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

**E. JOYCE:** That's an option. I can assure you that if we would walk in today and say, okay, we're going to increase the deficit by \$117 million. People are going to say: Well, the deficit's gone up. I hear it. I understand it. How about our children and grandchildren? I ask anybody in this House, would any of your grandkids want to see parents not with their medication? Would any of the grandparents say, Mom, Pop, don't eat today? They won't. They'll understand because we're in a crisis.

We just went through COVID for 2½ years. There's no criticism about the measures that were taken – none. Education is a good example. Health: All the stations set up was a good example of things that we did. Then, once we got back on our feet, all the subsidies to different businesses to help out. The federal government themselves started giving money to businesses to ensure the tourism industry and businesses survive. They gave it to people who couldn't work. They gave out the CERB money to people who couldn't work. That was all part of the crisis.

Before we say that we're just over here and don't believe in climate change and don't know how to stop our habits or anything else that we do, the government needs to realize that there's a crisis. This is a crisis that's coming after COVID. This is a crisis caused by world issues that's out of our control. This is not government's fault that Putin invaded – it's just not the government's fault.

But it is the government's fault if they don't take action to help people out. It's not the problem that caused it; it's how you react to the problem. That's where we need leadership. We need leadership now to say we have a problem, the same as we did with COVID. Same as we did when we had hurricanes here, everybody came together and found a way. We found the way. Go find the money, and we did it.

But before we do that, I urge the government, take leadership and realize that there's a problem. I say it to the minister – I made a suggestion the other day – get the Minister of Finance to sit down with the Opposition critic for Finance, sit down with the Leader of the Third Party, come up with a solution and bring it back to the House as an all-party solution to help the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I spoke on behalf of my colleague, the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, we would support what three of the leaders came up with. That's what we're here to do: help people during crisis. What better can we do than have the whole Legislature, all Members come together and do something positive to help the people that really are struggling right now?

I urge the government to do that, and I urge the Premier to show leadership for that.

Thank you.

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

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

**J. HAGGIE:** Thank you, Chair.

It's great to be able to stand and, I hope, contribute to this discussion. A couple of things stand out. One is the passion that the topic seems to have generated, on all sides of the House. The other thing is a surprising amount of relevance. I have to say, this is my seventh budget and, for the most part, the debate today has actually stuck pretty close to the topic. The topic is carbon tax.

It is a challenging times for families. We, on this side of the House, like everybody else here, have constituents who call and express their concerns. For those of us with portfolios, we get province-wide calls through our staff and we are not trying to diminish or minimize those problems, and we acknowledge it is difficult for some to navigate this situation.

From my background, I spent over 30 years dealing with the situation as it is presented to you. As a surgeon, as a clinician, you could wish things were different. I have seen families wish and pray and all of the usual things that people in distress and turmoil will do to try and change the environment in which they are in. And it doesn't work, Chair. It simply doesn't work.

What happens is we find ourselves, as a provincial government, operating within a framework of the constitution of this country. This is a federal decision. We have heard very eloquently from some of my colleagues behind me about the rationale for it. We have climate change and I have to say, at one point, I shared my colleague in Environment's concern – the Member for Bonavista was going down a slightly unusual path. What it turned out to be was not climate change denial but, rather, an unfortunate quote from a discredited author elsewhere about the efficacy of carbon tax and I think that has been addressed by others.

I think the real box in which we work is set by the federal government. This tax is coming. This tax is an escalator based on greenhouse gas emissions per ton, hence the sliding scale in the schedule of the proposed amendment. That is directly related to what the carbon footprint is of burning a certain amount of ethane or pentane or gasoline, and that is what it is designed to do.

The feds have also made it quite plain that any manoeuvres by a province in deviating from an arrangement would trigger the backstop. The discussions, originally, that the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands supported when we brought to the House initially, those discussions were essentially how are you going to bring in a carbon tax with an escalator that will fit our requirements. The requirements were you start at, I think it was, \$20 a ton and then work your way up, incrementally, to something of the order of six or eight times that price. How are you going to do it?

So we, the previous minister of Finance, and the leadership of the day – because in reference to the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands, we do have a table that sits and figures out what we can do and how we can help the people of this province. The delivery of that was the five-point plan and the budget.

It is a bit disingenuous to suggest that we have done nothing because those are tangible things that we are discussing at the moment. So, within that box, the federal government set criteria: that is the quantum. How are you going to do it and if you tinker with anything else related to greenhouse gas emissions that offsets that, you trigger the backstop. So the feds look at this holistically, to use a phrase of our leaders, and if we go and tinker with the provincial gas tax or anything within our remit that directly affects the effect the federal government wish to produce, the backstop comes in. We lose control, we lose the money but, more importantly, we lose the ability we have negotiated to protect the most vulnerable. There is no tax, from a carbon perspective, that will be levied by the federal government on home heating fuel, on stove oil.

Aviation in the north for our Indigenous and remote communities is protected. If you are using gasoline to generate electricity or diesel, you are protected. If you are using it for the fishery – very important role, a very important industry in this province and, still, no matter what has happened to the fishery over the years, a major contributor to our economy. If you are in the fishery, you are protected from the effects of carbon tax on the fuel you burn. If you run farm equipment, if you are a farmer and have agricultural machinery that you run using greenhouse gas emitting fuels, you are protected under what we negotiated as an exemption from the federal backstop.

So we get the revenue stream, we protect our most vulnerable. You have seen us walk the line by effectively remitting the entire provincial gas tax in other ways that we can present to the federal government, who are the arbiters of this, not us, not this House, the federal government and that's the Constitution. That's a box within which we operate and the Members opposite know this but choose not to acknowledge it in the discussion here. The fact is those constraints have allowed us to move money around within other areas, to offset what really is the crunch at the moment, which is the cost of living. And they've done it in a way which has allowed us to remit and pass the federal government sniff test, an amount equal to, if not slightly greater than, the provincial tax on fuel.

That is protecting the vulnerable. This is a federal box we're operating in. We can huff and puff and we can wish that it was different, but it isn't. And the consequences of not doing this expose our most vulnerable people. They expose our rural, remote and fly-in communities. They expose valuable industries like mining, literally. We have gold mines in my constituency, on my doorstep. Something I never thought would happen. We have New Found Gold with \$281 million of capital at their fingertips to invest in a community in Central Newfoundland. And the spin-off is huge. They are building, they are buying up land and other prospectors are also moving in to smaller communities. It will boost the mining industry, which has a small core from the Beaver Brook project which can now expand.

So without this protection, it is another blow, another barrier to our ability to diversify from traditional industries in this province. If we step outside the box the federal government have drawn, what will happen is we lose our protection for our vulnerable, we lost that protection for nascent expanding industries and we lose the ability to look after our access to rural and remote communities.

If we do that, we do not serve anyone's interest, no matter what their income, no matter what their resilience is. And I would argue that from COVID's point of view, particularly, the challenges that those communities have faced has highlighted the issues that we're bringing up with the social determinants of health through Dr. Parfrey and Sister Elizabeth, trying to give everybody that equal kick-start and that equal opportunity for real health.

But at the end of the day, if we do not have a healthy planet, then all of this will fall on my grandchildren, as they find difficulty breathing in the cities, as they find difficulty with the coastal erosion, access to communities, access to crops that we traditionally grow here, which we now no longer can because our climate has become different and changed.

This is a legacy that we have to look at to safeguard the future of our children and grandchildren, and we're doing it by doing measures now that allow us to protect the vulnerable and yet accept the realities of the will the federal government has painted for us. There is no way out of this box without a significant challenge to our most vulnerable people.

You vote against this, the facts of the case are, you're voting against keeping prices of home heat oil down. You're voting against rural access in Labrador. You are voting to inhibit the development of agriculture and the mining industry, because that's the knock-on effect.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** It's not true.

**J. HAGGIE:** It is true, and you've been denying that stuff since you got in this House. We have a situation; we deal with the realities of the world as painted by the federal government.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

**P. TRIMPER:** Thank you very much, Chair.

First of all, I want to start off by some apologies for where I'm supposed to be right now. There's a more pressing issue right here in this House right now. I want to follow up – first of all, I'm going to carry on from where I spoke earlier. I want to acknowledge several excellent points here, and then I have to challenge some of the stuff that's going on, on the floor.

First of all, the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi, there were only two words in his entire speech that I'd like to challenge. He used the term worldwide phenomenon when described climate change. Well, if you understand the definition of phenomenon, it's really a fact or a situation that you don't understand.

Well, when it comes to climate change, we understand what it is. We understand what it's doing to us. And guess what? We understand how to fix it. We know how to fix this problem, and many other jurisdictions, sub-nationals and national governments around the world are doing it and folks we are not holding up our end of it.

As I said earlier, the United Nations has identified some 111 countries pursuing the number one strategy for dealing with a reduction of greenhouse emissions in any jurisdictions, 111 with another 12 on the way. We're sitting here, and folks I have to say to you, if you don't have the scientific background and you're not taking the time to read it, I think you might want to pay attention to some of the authorities that are out there saying to you what you need to do.

I don't need to go in any particular order, but I'm just going to go to – you know what, last night, after we left here, I went over to my mother-in-law's place. She likes to watch the business news, and I'm sitting there watching the screen, BNN. I'm watching it; it comes across and guess what the headline was? Suncor declares 12 per cent increase on their dividend to their shareholders – 12 per cent. They just posted a \$2.95 billion first-quarter profit. We're

here arguing over 2.2 cents on this bill. That's what we are talking about – 2.2 cents. Suncor just made \$2.95 billion.

I have got to tell you, unless we pull together and go to Ottawa and go after this windfall profit tax legislation, we are so missing the boat. Those guys are getting away with it.

Canadian Natural Resources posted \$7.7 billion last year and I can go on and on and on. I have learned in the last few days, since I spoke about this a couple of days ago, to do this we are going to need Ottawa's help but by goodness we should be going at it.

There are some crazy things going on in the United States, but one thing that makes a lot of sense is this legislation. It is in Congress right now. Go have a look at it. I can tell you, it can generate – right now, if we were at it we would have some 200 – I'm going to lose my numbers here, but it's many millions. I think it's \$2.3 million per day that we could take – you keep talking about the low and the middle income and the folks that are most exposed to this cost of living we are all feeling. Do you know what? If we had that strategy in place, we could be supporting them right now, taking a marginal tax on the profits and putting it right to those folks. But no, we are going to argue over 2.2 cents on the strategy that the entire UN is saying we need to do.

And by the way, earlier somebody was talking about we are just a little speck of dust in the whole spectrum of what is going into the atmosphere. Well, guess what? We generate about 1 per cent of the total greenhouse gas emissions in the country. But guess what? Newfoundland and Labrador ranks third in the country. We are the third dirtiest jurisdiction on a per capita basis – per capita – 520,000 people sitting here with all of this big space and, by the way, the Big Land which people keep forgetting about

**AN HON. MEMBER:** What is the biggest greenhouse gas producer?

**P. TRIMPER:** Sitting out there in Holyrood.

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

**P. TRIMPER:** Listen gentlemen – ladies and gentlemen – we'll try to deal with the Chair.

Somebody said earlier about Muskrat Falls in terms of its strategy. Yeah, if that thing had come in on budget, we could be really sitting on a resource. We are struggling with the schedule and the cost overrun, but I can tell you in the long run, yeah, it will be helpful. I'm with you. You won't hear me charging and I say to the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

Back to where we sit in the world, folks. Newfoundland and Labrador is the third dirtiest of the sub-national governments in Canada. Guess where Canada sits? Anybody got a guess?

We like to talk about our great situation and so on – and part of the reason I'm always on my feet saying we need to get to Ottawa and the frustration around – again, I'll say it, folks – Bay du Nord and buying a pipeline, some of these other strategies – we are the seventh dirtiest nation in the world, on a per capita basis. There are only a few above us. Seventh. And we tout ourselves as this big green machine, right? It's incredibly frustrating to see what's going on.

I want to talk a little bit about where carbon taxes have been applied. British Columbia has adopted, in 2008, carbon tax. They were the first one in the country to do it. The carbon tax is used to cut income taxes, cut health premiums and invest in green technology. BC has some of the lowest tax rates in Canada. Guess what their rate is on a per capita basis? Guess where they sit in Canada? The absolute lowest. The absolute lowest. You want to see about results, and you want to incent your public to get off and away from sources of energy that are producing greenhouse gas emissions, implement a carbon tax. That's 14 years ago in BC; they are now the best in the country, in terms of per capita. They've got it figured out.

Let's go to Sweden. Look at it in a whole nation. Somebody mentioned Sweden earlier. They've had a carbon tax now for – I've got to do a little calculation here – 31 years, since 1991. It started out at 25 euros per ton; it's now up to 120 euros.



This is the kind of strategy that, you know, I'm sure there's going to be more debate with each year, when this comes along. But if you want to look at it: Sweden has reduced its total greenhouse gas emissions by 25 per cent. They are on track, by 2045, to be at carbon neutral. They're doing it. And they're doing it with a financial strategy.

I've got to go back to these profits, because I feel that this is where we're really missing out. When I look at some of what's being posted here, I really want us to think about it. And by the way – again, not a political slap, but we need everybody in this country to realize – tonight, there is a Conservative leadership debate. I would love it if we could get the message on that floor, who in that room is willing to really take a stand and say: Do you know what? We should do this. We should go after these profits that are coming. I would propose to put it on there.

As I said, Canadian National Resources posted \$7.7 billion – that's last year, by the way. That's last year when the price of oil has now about doubled from where it was last year. And, certainly, their profits are going through the roof. I'm sure I'm going to see another news flash; I'll go sit with my mother-in-law and the next time looking at it.

People are asking, they're saying, so where's the evidence? You know, I can tell you when you're starting to sit with people who are sitting in a Northern jurisdiction – I'm very fortunate myself, and other colleagues from Labrador, as I said earlier, we feel like the canaries in this coal mine that is climate change. We can see it; we can feel it; and we're struggling with it.

Here is a quote – I spoke earlier about a story when I was meeting with Minister McKenna, Catherine McKenna, and there was a little tweet. If you're following me on Twitter, I posted this little story the other day because she talked about being at COP 22, the Conference of the Parties, she said there was a conversation between an Inuit government representative and someone who represented – and I don't know what South Pacific Island it was, but it is in big trouble because of the rising sea levels. Here was the line: "My homeland is melting and it's causing yours to go under water." That is what is happening.

So we can sit here and say: Oh, to hell with the UN; we don't believe in the UN; don't do all these things. But I can tell you, nations, regions around the world, are screaming for our attention, hundreds of millions, if not maybe billions, of the next generations. We keep talking about our concern for the kids and the legacy; I can tell you, we are punting out a heck of a problem and unless we are going to get serious here, and we have to drop the partisan politics on this one. This has to be a sole focus and we can do it in this province. We have a lot of resources. We can go at it; we can work together. But I can tell you, if we're going to tie it to political lines we'll never going to get anywhere.

We'll be just like the Americans as we watch whoever gets in, we're going to throw out the arrangements with the Paris Accord; we're going to get back on. It's just this confusion. We keep punting it down the road.

In the meantime, as I said earlier, the deadlines that are being targeted by our leaders, including in this province, by the way, we haven't met a single one – Canada is not making them. As we come to these deadlines, it is not like we go to create a new one; it is now that the effects are irreversible.

Thank you, Chair.

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

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

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you very much, Chair.

So what we're debating here – we're not debating environmental concerns; we're debating whether a carbon tax should be put on the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I'm going to start out with saying this, the biggest threat to our job and what should take us out of your seats, whether you're a minister or MHA, immediately is comfort and complacency. To the people of Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans, when you see me getting comfortable and complacent, vote me out immediately because I'm not doing my job anymore.

We know now that the government say that they went to Ottawa and they negotiated. And I take that in good faith and there's no doubt that you did. But you didn't fight. And let me tell you the difference. If you were backed into a corner, like so many people in this province, you would've fought. But there's not one person in this House that's backed into a corner.

Let me tell you what backed into a corner looks like. Backed into a corner is having an appointment in another place in this province, a medical appointment, and it costs \$250 to get there and back and you have \$175 in your bank account. That's all you got. That's backed into a corner.

I guarantee you, if either one of you over on the other side or on this side had that and went through that and was backed into a corner like that and like so many people out there, by God, you'd fight. You'd be in Ottawa right now and you'd be fighting. Backed into a corner.

If any minister, if any MHA had a kid that wanted to go to hockey this year and it cost 500 bucks and you have \$324 in your bank account, you're backed into a corner. If you have to take your kid across the Island to play hockey or go to dance and you know it costs \$250 and you have \$98 in your bank account and you have to buy groceries, you're backed into a corner. There'd be no negotiation at that point. No negotiating whatsoever. It'd be a fight. You'd be like a dog backed into a corner fighting for your life and your family's life.

And this is not rhetoric, whatever the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands said earlier, this is not rhetoric, this is the truth. Nobody's backed into a corner.

So if you don't have your back against the wall like that, you become comfortable, you become complacent. And I know everybody in here is a strong voice and an advocate, there's no doubt in my mind. But there's a difference between seeing and understanding what the people of the province are going through. And we all see it and we all feel bad for the people out there, we truly do. But there's nobody backed into a corner. There's nobody that's going to put on those gloves and say, by God, that's not going to happen here because people just can't afford it.

We're going to debate this tonight and possibly tomorrow. People cannot afford this, they truly can't. There are people out there that can't take anymore. And we just throw our hands up and say, yeah, well, you know what, it's just the way it is because Ottawa sent it down and it's just the way it has to be. We banter back and forth and we fight for our districts. This one should be a no-brainer. All 40 Members should be stood on our feet and saying no way in hell Ottawa is doing this, no way they're going to do it to us, because we can't take it. That's what I'm hoping we can do.

Now, you're asking yourselves, well what can we do? The backstop is on, like you called it, and it's Ottawa's rules and we have to go by the rules. Well, I'll say this, without everybody getting up in arms, not every province is the same. I'll give you for instance. I believe Quebec this year is going to get another \$13 billion in equalization. Change the name of equalization, for God's sake, because it's not equal. Because if you look at our province, and we are literally drowning, it's not equal. So not every province is the same.

I'm just going to ask this question once, and no need for everybody to get in a big uproar about it: What's our payment on Muskrat Falls each year? What did we say, \$500,000?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Million.

**C. TIBBS:** Sorry, \$500 million? It's a lot of money, isn't it? Carbon tax paid by Newfoundland and Labrador 10 times over. That's our carbon tax; that should be our carbon tax with our partners up in Ottawa. If that's not our carbon tax paid on one of the greatest, greenest projects on the planet that we took the initiative of doing, getting it done. And it's going to hurt us, yes. But at the end of the day, that's our carbon tax. That should be considered our carbon tax.

So when we negotiated that, did we say that? Not all provinces are the same. You look at the project that we have here now. It's a world-renowned project and it will come online and will be good for future generations. But \$500 million, are you kidding me? That's our carbon tax, guys, and that's exactly the point that we should be going to Ottawa.

So my suggestion is this: I say we put this debate on hold. I say the Premier and the leader of the two Official Opposition parties, go to Ottawa and state their case again. I'm not crazy. I seriously know what I'm talking about. I really think that this should be done. I think the Premier, the two Opposition leaders should go to Ottawa, should meet with the prime minister and his people and let them know we are drowning; we can't take any more. We cannot let this carbon tax happen. No more taxes can happen upon us, it can't.

So that would be my play moving forward. That right there, that's our carbon tax. And, by God, it's a pretty hefty tax we have to pay each year, as you guys point out every single day. But I think that's our play. Not all provinces are equal. We paid our share; we took on that as a province. Like it, hate it, it doesn't matter. The fact of the matter is we have it. We have to pay for it now. That should be considered our carbon tax, and I'll say it over and over again. And again, it's not rhetoric. All 40 Members should be standing and saying this right now. The reason why we're not is because we're comfortable. We're comfortable.

Now, this evening, I got gas to get home at the end of the day. I can stop in and grab another supper if I want to. My kid got dance out here next week, I'm not rich by no means, but I know I'm going to make it. That's comfortable. And that is a disease when it comes to politicians. Comfort – it's a disease. Because it takes you out of your element where you should be with the people of the province. And when you go out and you talk to the people of the province, and you see it, you go home at the end of the day because you can afford to, we can probably all go out to a decent meal with our family.

But when you talk to somebody that's got their back against the wall, b'ys, that's who we should be in here fighting for. That's our job. So, no, I'm not going to roll over and take this. And we're going to debate, what, tonight, maybe tomorrow and that's it, we lose the vote, another carbon tax is implored. Think about those people that got their backs against the wall that can't take this right now; and I guarantee you, if your back was against the wall, if you were in survival mode, you would not let this happen. You wouldn't.

But, unfortunately, we're all just a bunch of politicians that sit here and make decisions as best as we can, but they're not everything we can do. I fought for everything my whole life; the little bit I got in life, I fought for everything. I know people in here fought for it too. I know you guys are great fighters on that side, you are. And we're great fighters over here, too. And do you know what? We can banter back and forth about getting stuff for our districts. This one's a no-brainer.

This one's all 40 politicians, all 40 MHAs and ministers in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador standing up and saying to Ottawa: No, we've done our part. We truly have.

I really hope that we pay attention to what I'm saying here, because it's a sin, b'ys. It's a sin what's happening out there to the people of the province. It is. It's terrible. When we leave here, yeah, it plays on our minds sometimes. I stayed up all night last night thinking about it. I lost sleep. I never lose sleep. I could sleep on a clothesline. But last night I lost sleep thinking about this today.

It's sad, you know, I get it, we all banter, joke around, stuff like that, but you've got to remember that when this comes in, people really got to pay more for tax, more on gasoline, more to try to bring their kids across the Island to a competition, like I just said, or more to go to a doctor's appointment, more to get to work 60 kilometres away. I mean, we live in a geographical area that's nowhere like anywhere else in Canada. And that's what I'm saying to you. We have to explain to Ottawa, that no two provinces are the same. Newfoundland and Labrador is very unique, extremely unique.

That's what I have to say. I truly hope that we take a moment, before we keep going with these speeches for a day or two, get voted down and say, well, that's it, that's all we can do. What else can we do? There's no way we're going to give up on this. So that's what I say to you. Let's all together, 40 of us, take our fight to Ottawa, tell Ottawa we're paying our \$500 million a year, we took a chance, we got Muskrat Falls, we're paying the price for it right now, but that should be our carbon tax.

I'll leave you with that.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Thanks for recognizing me so I can have a chance to speak here this evening on the carbon tax and the issues we've heard a lot about on both sides. A bit surprising that Members opposite continue to bring up Muskrat Falls, but there it is. I mean, we were told not to talk about it and the other Members keep –

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

**J. HOGAN:** No, hear me out.

The reason I think it's fair to keep bringing it up is because it is still a big issue, right. It's not a 2010 issue. It's not a 2012 issue. It's a 2022 issue. It's a 2052 issue. It's a 2082 issue. We can argue about the merits of the project all we want, even though that was done thoroughly over the course of two years, and we had a very respected hon. Justice of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador clearly decided, after he heard all the facts, that it was a bad idea.

We can also argue if we want back and forth about whether or not the cost overruns are due to the current government, or the fact that it was a misguided project from the start. Again, we can argue back and forth all we want, but we already have the answer, because Justice LeBlanc said it was a misguided project from the start.

That's why we're paying \$500 million a year, for as long as we're all going to be here and our kids are going to be here because it was a bad idea from the start. You can twist it and argue it as much as you want; it's not going to change the facts. As we keep saying facts do matter. So I think it's important to talk about it and we need to address it.

The Premier has done an amazing job of getting rate mitigation to help the cost of living in this province, by making sure people's electricity rates don't go through the roof. I'm not here to

talk about blame, I'm just here to talk about the facts, and those are the facts.

There are also conversations this morning about Muskrat Falls, again, not from this side of the House but the other side of the House, that it wouldn't have went ahead unless the federal government gave a federal loan guarantee. That's not true either. That's not what the facts say. I was asked to bring in some evidence on that and I was happy to bring in evidence on that. I'll read the evidence out, actually, just so we have it here and for the record.

This is what the former premier said, one of our former premiers said about the project and the federal loan guarantee. This is her words not mine. The merits of the Muskrat Falls Project stand on their own and have been verified and supported by several independent experts. We have always said we designed this project without the notion of a federal loan guarantee, and can move forward without it. The decision to proceed with Muskrat Falls was made without the benefit of the federal loan guarantee and was based entirely on the best option to meet the long-term electricity needs for the people of the province. We were sequentially successful in securing the federal loan guarantee, which will result in additional benefit of over \$1 billion to ratepayers.

So that's facts, and none of us can change the facts. We can say we don't believe the facts, the same way some people might say they don't believe in science, they don't believe in climate changes and things like that. But facts are facts and that's what the facts are. So I think it's important that I was asked to put that on the record and get the evidence. I've done that. That's where it is now.

The federal loan guarantee, does it save us money? Absolutely. Would it have gone ahead without it? Absolutely, it would have. Facts matter. Again, Members don't always agree that facts matter, but I think they do matter.

Now, I do want to follow up on what the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans was talking about again with Muskrat Falls. We should all go to Ottawa, or at least the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Third Party and the Premier go to Ottawa and argue about

Muskrat Falls being our carbon tax. I understand the argument, I understand the logic, but here's why it doesn't work. I just want to take a few minutes to talk about why it doesn't work, and it's called the Constitution.

We have a Constitution in this country, and there was talk this morning about taxes in this province. We need to understand how the federal government and the provincial government work. We do have to pay in this province taxes that are imposed by the federal government because we live in Canada. We don't just live in Newfoundland and Labrador. We don't get to decide everything by ourselves because we have a Constitution.

I'm very happy that we have that Constitution. It's one of the best documents in the world. It created a system where we have provincial jurisdiction and federal jurisdiction. They don't overlap. Neither one is subordinate to the other. We're not subordinate to the Government of Canada. We just have a different role to play than they do. We have different responsibilities.

That's what the Constitution does; it divides powers up between the federal government and the provincial government. We can't legislate in areas of their jurisdiction and they can't touch areas of our jurisdiction. That's what section 91 and section 92 of the Constitution does.

So to be clear, we can't legislate in their areas. Some of their areas include the postal service, might sound silly but it's pretty important because the postal service stretches from Victoria to St. John's. The military, imagine if we had responsibility for our own military and all the money we'd have to pour into that; shipping; banking; bankruptcy; criminal law, how important is that?

We passed legislation here very recently where we changed some regulations to allow for the appointment of additional federal court judges here in this province. Federal court judges, paid by the federal government, to interpret laws in this province that are paid for – the courts are paid for; these judges are paid for by the federal government.

Imagine where we would be if we didn't have all that from Canada. You can laugh about it, I

don't really care, but I think it's very important. I think it's very important that we have a federal government that looks after those things in this province and in all the other provinces in this country. I'm very proud to be a part of a federation that works that way. I'm very proud to work with our jurisdiction and to work with Canada on what's in their jurisdiction of the Constitution.

To think that we had a Member here today talking about: we shouldn't pay federal taxes. We should only pay what Newfoundland imposes in their Legislature. It's not the way it works. It's important to remember, I can't believe I have to explain it, but that's very important to remember. We can't amend and enact legislation that has nothing to do with the jurisdiction of the federal government.

I'll tell you what; we tried that. We tried it in the '80s, the *Upper Churchill Water Rights Reversion Act*, it was legislation drafted by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and it was sent to court for a reference decision: Can we do this? Can we pass this legislation constitutionally or is it ultra vires the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador?

Guess what the Supreme Court of Canada said. They said no, the provincial Government of Newfoundland and Labrador cannot pass this legislation. It was an attempt to legislate and interfere with the contractual right of Hydro-Québec; provincial governments cannot do that. The pith and substance of that legislation was not within the jurisdiction of Newfoundland and Labrador. So it was a good lesson for us. It was a hard lesson for us and it was a very unfortunate result for the province, of course. But it was a good lesson for how the Canadian Constitution works.

So why is that relevant to this debate about carbon tax? Well, it is very relevant because, as I've said, this is a federal jurisdictional area; this is what the carbon tax is. It was created and imposed by the federal government, not by the provincial government. It is the *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act* that we're talking about. That's what the carbon tax is; the *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act* is a federal piece of legislation.

Now, some provinces have said: We don't think the federal government can legislate that. It is not within their jurisdiction, it is not within their authority. The same way we tried to legislate something that wasn't in our authority with the Churchill Falls reversion act.

So what happened? They went to the Supreme Court of Canada and asked the question, just like we did in Newfoundland and Labrador in the '80s. The Supreme Court of Canada, the ultimate arbiter of what is in provincial and federal jurisdiction, ruled on it. You might not like the result but it is the Supreme Court of Canada. The Supreme Court of Canada held that the federal government had jurisdiction to enact the GGPPA as a matter of national concern under the Peace, Order, and good Government power found in section 91 of the Constitution Act; that's the federal government's power. They ruled that it was within the legislative authority of the federal government. This is what the Supreme Court of Canada said.

So there was a time, there was an opportunity to go to Ottawa and make the arguments as the Member suggested. There was a chance to say we don't think that the federal government should – not should – is able, under the Constitution, the supreme document of our country and our province, that they can do what they're doing. And the Supreme Court of Canada was abundantly clear and it said it can.

In my view, a national GHG pricing scheme is not merely the means of achieving the end of reducing GHG emissions. It is the entire matter to which the act is directed, and as evident from the analysis of the purpose and effects of the statute, it is the most precise characterization of the subject matter of the act. It accurately reflects what the statute does: imposing a minimum standard of GHG price stringency, and why the statute does what it does, reducing GHG emissions in order to mitigate climate change. That's what the Supreme Court of Canada said.

So I take the point: go to Ottawa, make the arguments. It's been done. It has been done. We could do it again and do you know what? I haven't been here very long in the Legislature and I've heard those arguments before. Go to court and argue. I don't care if you're going to lose or not. To me, that's a waste of money. If a

client came to me and said, I know I'm going to lose this case, here's a retainer. I would never, in good conscience, take that money from that individual. I would never take that money from that client and go fight for the sake of fighting.

You know what I would do? I would say take that money and use it for something that you need. The same way the government should keep that money and use it for something people need. Like, I don't know, \$140 million back into the people's pockets to help deal with the situation we're in right now. I think that's money that's better spent that way, rather than chasing other court cases that we know we're going to lose.

Thank you.

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

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

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

It's again an honour to be able to stand up and speak to this. I listened to the Member that time talk about honour. When I first started to run for politics, I remember on the third day on the campaign trail, I listened to the radio before I left and Randy Simms was on the radio on *Open Line* and the three most – I won't say disrespected positions but the three most dishonourable positions they called them then: number one was a lawyer, number two was a car salesman and number three was a politician. I said me and him are two out of them three categories right now, so I don't know if we're honourable or not, but we've been in those professions.

When I was sat there that morning, I said, b'y, really, am I going to leave being a car salesman to be a politician? What a move that is. That's really bringing me up in the pecking order. The same as a lawyer, same as car salesman, so you know I said to him, what am I doing here doing this?

But anyway I'm here; I will touch on some other things. I remember he did a meeting up at the hotel one time, we were up doing – I can't even remember what it was, but I asked him about Muskrat Falls and, in time, will it be a good

project? And he did say to me back then, I'm going to say two years ago, maybe 2½ up at the hotel: Yeah, it will be a good project in time. The problem is right now –

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Yeah, it's going to cost us.

Then we got into the argument – we never got into the argument but we got into Churchill Falls as well. So in the '60s I think we gave that away. Where would we be today if we didn't give that away?

Now, I'm not blaming Liberals, that's not going to mean nothing now. But it would be great if we had it. How much more revenue in 2041 when we get it back? How good are we going to be, hopefully?

But do you know what the problem is? Some of us are not even going to be here to look at it and see it. That's the problem. We're talking about carbon tax, and it's realistic. It is happening for sure.

I worked in the car industry. Those car industries always tried to improve their product. They try to get their – well, first of all, you'd be all sitting here and you're talking about emissions. So the engine light comes on, the first thing they says: B'y, I'm going to check the oil. Well, guess what? The engine light don't check your oil. That has nothing to do with it. Oil light has nothing to do with the engine light. That's emissions and that's why it's on the car. That's what they did to make these vehicles better and improved.

So every time an engine light comes on, don't check your oil, that's not the problem. You might need oil, but it's not your problem, it's to deal with emissions. That's where they started in regard to engine lights.

So you're talking about companies that are trying to make the world better and their mandated from – I'm going to say, the federal government are mandated to make these cars more fuel efficient. That's what it's all about. So they started on that.

Then they started doing aluminum engines. Okay. Why aluminum engines? Because it made the car lighter and it made it more fuel efficient. Then they started doing the bonnets and the hoods, they became aluminium. The problem is if you take a Pepsi can and squeeze a Pepsi can, when you let it go, try to put it back to where it was when you're dealing with aluminum, it's not that easy. So you don't have body men that can go out and do that anymore like they did with metal. You can PolyBond it or do whatever.

When you squeeze aluminum, it's not going back to original way it was. They're making these vehicles lighter, so the doors are aluminium on some of these. Now, the frames inside are definitely safety inspected. They go through a rigorous, rigorous safety panel to be able to do – rigorous, they go through. Like I said, they do aluminum doors, then they did aluminum tailgates and they went from steel wheels to aluminum wheels. So everything is about fuel efficiency.

Those companies are mandated from the federal government by 2050 to make these cars more fuel efficient and better. Now, I drove to Trepassy last week, and I have a 2010 Malibu, so I'll say it's not as fuel efficient as a 2019 I got home, which is on lease. The 2010 car did 7.7 litres per 100 to go to Trepassy and back. I didn't clock the mileage but that's what it came up on the odometer or wherever it's on your information panel.

My vehicle, the 2019, is running at 9.1. So it's an older car. I would never have thought it, and I only done it just to check and see, but it's at 7.7 compared to 9.1. But I will say that these companies are definitely trying to make these better.

Now, the trucks, if you go back to – and I'm talking about carbon tax here and talking about environmentally friendly and trying to make this a better place. That's what they're trying to do for the environment.

You go with trucks, I'm going to say 2013 and 2014, some of these trucks with a 4.8-litre engine would be at 16 to 17 litres per 100. Then they had a 5.3, so the bigger engine was easier on fuel and wasn't working as hard as the

smaller engine. Lots of people didn't realize that at the time. People learned and got educated that a 5.3 was better than a 4.8, even though the 4.8, they were going to say is less on fuel, it wasn't, the 5.3 is more fuel efficient. And then they made that better. They made that better to a point that, you go buy a truck now, it's at 12 litres per 100 on the new vehicles. So your vehicle, and the 1988, that's not fuel efficient, I can tell you that. Definitely not, you can hear it guzzling when you go down the road.

But that's what these companies are doing, that's what they're trying to do. They're doing that for the environment. I'm not going to say they're regulated, but they're mandated by the government, so I suppose it's regulated. They're mandated by the government to make these vehicles more fuel efficient. And that's what they're doing.

So they are doing they're part and they're doing the best they can. Every single part is looked at and it all goes into the body of the vehicle and it's all about weight and all about fuel efficiency.

Then they came out with the dexos oil compared to the regular oil, which means a lot to the engine and the lubrication of it all. Do you know what? I'm not a mechanic, but you have to learn that as a salesman. You go down and do training. It's not just go in and deliver the car and do it. And there's information that you do at training that meant nothing to me selling a car, nothing, absolutely nothing. But you had to get into it, you had to understand it, because there was somebody who was going to come along who's looking at electric and off the beaten path and you had to know the answers for them, because they're going to ask you. How the transmission shifts, whatever it may be you had to understand it all, and you weren't an engineer. But that's where it's to.

I called a dealership today and I asked them to try to get me the stats on electric cars in the last five years. So in 2016, 2; 2017, 1; 2018, 1; 2019 – that was just before COVID hit and I'm going to say in the middle of COVID – 6; 2020, 3, so you can blame that on COVID. We blame everything on COVID, so we're going to blame that on COVID. In 2021, 5. So that's where they're to with electric cars right now. We have

a big discount out there that you're trying to help the environment, there's no question, but we don't have the products.

Now, we're going to get there and you have to set up the infrastructure to be able to charge them, I get that. I get all that. I totally get where that's going. But we don't have any cars hauled in to them, or very few. That's the problem right now.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** How many hybrids though?

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** What?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** How many hybrids?

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Didn't say there, I didn't ask that. There are not many. I remember before I left, we ordered two hybrids in trucks and they were the last two trucks that were sold. When one of the guys bought them for his construction company, six months later he said, b'y, that's no good to me, shutting down, I need to get going – it didn't work for him. It was surprising, really.

We had people come in that owned businesses and said I want to buy a hybrid vehicle because I want to be part of changing – they owned a big company here in town. The next time he didn't order a hybrid.

They're working on that, so that's improvements that they're making. So because of that last year, they had a recall on batteries, during COVID in 2021. This year so far, they've delivered – this year we have two delivered that the recall is completed and they have another 27 units that are ordered and presold.

I'm going to run out of time. I'm sure people are sitting here – and it's interesting how it all works with cars.

So you've got 27 that are presold. You order cars now, it's May. The deadline could be June by the time you order them. Come September or October, they build them. There are 27 presold. You may not get those 27.

**S. CROCKER:** Can you get some for the rental car companies?



**L. O'DRISCOLL:** We'd like to have them for the rental car companies; I could get into that later. But there are 27 that are presold, but that don't mean you're getting those, just because you ordered it and that's where it's to.

I'll get in before I finish, online reservation lists for 2024 – might as well say it – Silverado EV and a Cadillac EV. It's tagged in the dealership. It requires you to pay a deposit of \$100, which, what's that, that's nothing right now. At the moment, they have 43 reservations in 2024 for those vehicles. That's what they've got. But the problem is they're not going to be able to produce them quick enough.

You know, we're going to get there, eventually we're going to get there, but don't ram it down our throat right now. We've got to set up the infrastructure, we've got vehicles that are being built, but they just can't build them. They can't switch over from gas – I mean, they are doing it, obviously GM got an electric plant and Toyota got an electric plant and they're going to get there, but right now they're not there.

I ran out of time, sorry.

Thank you.

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

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

**A. PARSONS:** I apologize to my colleague across the way, I know he's been getting up and down and trying to get in the queue there, but my apologies.

I'm happy to get a chance to speak to this resolution, this piece of legislation, something that's been in the House now since, I guess overall as a topic, 2018. I think that's when the first piece of legislation went through here. I can certainly point out that this debate is much calmer one than that one when it first went through. That was a different time. It was brand new. I do think that things have changed dramatically since then in terms of the world, in terms of our understanding, in terms of just so many things, just people's knowledge of the topic.

I don't have any real prepared notes. I've been listening to everyone. It is what I would consider to be a solid debate. People going back and forth; people being respectful; people listening. I'm just sort of giving my take on this. I give it as someone who – I counted up the other day, I think there are nine of us in this House that have sat on both sides. So know what it's like to sit in government, know what it's like to sit in Opposition, to know the mindset of both sides.

I know what it's like to sit in the Opposition. I know what it's like to be over there for hours and hours and hours questioning, asking, debating, doing our job to oppose in times, to question, to scrutinize. In this particular case, I look at this legislation and I see it as something that – and again, I look at my colleague from Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans, and I get the passion, certainly, totally. He never leaves us in doubt as to what his position is. I see the logic in that.

I think in Newfoundland and Labrador, we're sort of raised up, being we have to fight and fight and fight. I get that. There's a time and place for that. In my respectful opinion, the problem I think here is I absolutely believe that if all 40 of us got on a plane and went to Ottawa and got in the prime minister's office, I don't think we'd walk out with any different than what is there right now. I do think this is an established – this is where we are in the world. In fact, I bet you as opposed to 2018, I do think there's widespread acceptance of carbon tax.

Now, acceptance and liking something are two separate things. The crux of what makes this so interesting is that it comes at the same time that people are getting hammered by the price of fuel. That's the problem here. I don't think for a second that we're sitting here on a Wednesday night if that wasn't the case. I really don't, but it's an opportunity for Opposition to question the government and what we're doing to help people go through this tough time. That's what I think it is, and I'm not saying that's a wrong thing. I'm saying that's what I think it is.

Again, I echo the comments from the Minister of Justice. I don't think going back to court gets us where we want to get, because it has gone there. Alberta did that. All the kudos and power to them for going that way. They did it and they

tried, but the same as he mentioned with our cases with Upper Churchill. I mean, my God, the brightest legal minds of over decades now tried to figure out a different nuance and ability to redress that wrong. At the end of the day, we just don't get there. So that's why you see today, we're moving forward – you know what? 2041 is coming. It's going to be here a lot quicker than we think, so we need to prepare ourselves for that.

That's sort of where I see we are. The other thing is I think this is a federal conversation. I bet you every Legislature right now is having the same debate. Regardless of stripe and government saying some version of we like or we don't like, but it is what it is. I bet you in Alberta they're saying no, we don't like this but we're forced to do it. There it is.

In this case, I do like the fact that rather than fight it – and I give credit to a lot of people other than me, and former minister of Municipal Affairs across the way was a part of that. You know what? There were good things done, rather than get that backstop, which would be very generic and straightforward across the board, and wouldn't reflect the different demographics that we have in this province.

I have to tell you, anybody who has dealt with the federal government – look, this is not a political stripe thing. Whether your PC, Liberal, NDP, whether you're federal Conservative, whether you're federal Liberal, the fact is at the end of the day we all like to complain about the federal government. It's sometimes difficult, but I tell you what, I know the work that the department went through at that time to get this. I guess, in some ways, it was making the best out of what was a difficult situation.

Again, I look at this; I think it's a federal conversation. Now, who knows? Depending on what happens with the federal Conservatives – the Member for Lake Melville mentioned the debate. Well, depending on where that goes, that's going to be interesting. Who knows if this becomes a federal issue? Again, I'm going to get a little political here. I would say, depending on who wins that, if it's a certain person, I don't think the federal Conservatives touch it.

If it's a certain other someone, with initials P. P., I do think they'll have a go at it. But I even think that Conservative governments across the country are recognizing sort of the inevitability or the ultimate, look, this is where we are. But sometimes it is how do you deal with the politics? How do you fight it?

Look, we're paying attention to that too, because when it comes to our national federal political landscape, it affects us all. We need to know who's going to run this country, and what are we going to do to get the best out of it for us. We're all united in that.

So coming back to it, again, the Member for – I used to just say Bay of Islands. Is it Humber - Bay of Islands now?

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

**A. PARSONS:** Humber - Bay of Islands.

He made a good point. The carbon tax is happening. It's about the investment into carbon reduction, the investment into that. So what I can say is I don't think, dollar for dollar, we can say that every dollar comes in, goes into that, but I will say, and this is where I take some pride, we have in our department a lot on that. I look at Newfoundland and Labrador companies like Mysa, eDNAtech and SmartICE; we are trying to up that investment into these companies. SmartICE, what they're doing up in Northern Labrador to try to protect that environment there to protect sea ice to build new measuring and monitoring is great. And we're trying our best to do that.

Now, is it enough? No. The reality is, like every government ever before, you're always constrained on the amount of resources you can put in. None of us can ever put what we want into it. So again, I sort of circle back; I love the idea of fighting Ottawa. Believe me, there are many days where I get frustrated, but at the end of the day I do think that sometimes pragmatism is necessary.

And it's one thing to go into a fight for the sake of it – there's a time and place; we all know that. But in this particular case, I don't think that we come out of that much better. Again, they would make the argument, believe me, I can guarantee

they make the argument, look, what we're doing on rate mitigation. Because again that's a big deal. Believe me, that's going to affect every one of us here.

Now, the problem again is that it's never enough. Right now, we as a province are like every other province and state. We're getting hammered by all these pressures, but we feel it more here. We feel it more here, I have no doubt, than other places. But when we talk about the fuel prices alone, you look at our proximity to supply versus Alberta, you look at our supply chains, you look at all these things – again, I look at the taxation side and a lot of people it comes down to, look, it's easy for – and I think a lot of our constituents feel this way. We look past the reality because at the end of the day when you're out filling up that pump and the top number is going up so much faster than the bottom number and you don't think about how does this work and what are all of the factors behind it or the fact that our retail markup here is huge. That the wholesale markup is huge. That the storage costs are huge. That we have people spread out across all these jurisdictions.

I have constituents down in Ramea, I mean probably one of the highest prices – and again, I know other Members have districts that we have these far-flung places that the price is ridiculous, but that's the reality of having a population of 500,000 spread across a huge landmass or islands off of islands. The reality is we are always going to face that. I know the Opposition knows that, because I knew that when I was there. But that doesn't mean I'm not going to give the government a good poke while I'm at it. That's the reality here.

So look, I guess what I would say is this: I think the Opposition is going to continue to do what they have to do. Don't blame them one bit, because I sat there. We're going to continue to defend the choices that we've made. At the end of the day people will say do we think you did enough or not. But as it relates to this specific issue, I do think that this is decided Canadian law.

There are days I don't like it. It is certainly adding on to what is already a huge, huge cost. But, if anything, I think it is about trying to figure out what do we do about that revenue?

How do we continue to work with the federal government to make sure that we get as many exemptions as we did during the last round, as opposed to having that backstop imposed on us that might hurt us more than actually figuring out a negotiated deal?

But on that note, I'll continue to listen to the debate, and onward we go.

Thank you.

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

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

**J. DWYER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is always an honour to stand in this House and represent the good people of my vast District of Placentia West - Bellevue. For all those watching, just know that we're fighting on your behalf.

A couple of things while I'm listening here that kind of caught my attention, especially from the Minister of Justice and Public Safety. He talks about facts. I appreciate what he brings to the floor and the knowledge that he has about our Constitution, but I think there is one thing that everyone on that side is missing the point on.

When we entered into Confederation – are you listening – when we entered into Confederation, we went in there in a bilateral agreement between two countries. We didn't go in there asking to be added on as a province. We went in there as a bilateral agreement of two countries. That's never been recognized because we are in such a destitute situation at the time that we had no other choice. We needed it. It was basically the baby bonus that was promised that got people over the hump; we were in a desperate situation. But we all know that when a contract is signed being under duress makes that contract null and void.

When you sit here in a province that has seven seats in Ottawa and a province like Quebec that is getting \$13 billion in equalization, has 77 seats. Which, I will add, is more than double the amount of seats for four Atlantic provinces that are all supposed to be equal under this

Dominion. These are the facts. Use those facts. Start talking about how we're being treated in Canada. And it is not about going with cap in hand; it is about going up there and saying, well, listen, you took whatever resources we had in the beginning to do whatever you could, you negotiated the Grand Banks with other countries to have favour in the world. Yet, we're not acknowledged as being coming into this as an equal partner. We're not getting everything that's due to us. As the Minister of Health said, he was talking about the escalators and stuff like that. There's no escalation clause built in Churchill Falls. Is that producing carbon? Because that's what we're discussing here today is the tax on carbon.

But when we were in a destitute situation about building Churchill Falls to make our country better, we went to Ottawa and we asked for their help, to be a partner in that one. I guess they learned their lesson because they became a partner in Muskrat Falls. But for Churchill Falls, they said no. What they did was they loaned the money to Quebec to come in and be our partner with no escalation clauses with an agreement that was signed under duress. That should be our argument in Ottawa.

It's not about going with cap in hand and begging and asking and pleading. It's about going getting back what we already loaned them. For 500,000 people, to be after giving what we've given since 1949, including what happened in 1969, is ridiculous. It's our turn. We deserve to be the beneficiaries of our natural resources. We deserve to be able to take care of our children and our seniors. The people that blazed a trail for us. We can't even get them in to get their prescriptions or getting them to doctor's appointments, all because they're taxed to death.

Now we're going to introduce a new carbon tax. When we talk about carbon, everybody I'm sure is aware of carbon credits. So that's the little bit of manipulation that goes on with federal governments in order to, I don't know, either help their buddies or to rob Peter to pay Paul. We've got a situation with Vale where they can trade carbon credits. I've got no problem with that, because they're the same company. But between Labrador and Long Harbour, they can do that. But who was holding the carbon credits

while the refinery was being sold and we were putting five cents extra on a litre of gas? Who was getting those carbon credits? I sure hope it wasn't the people that were pretending to buy it.

The hypocrisy that's going about the House talking about the green economy and all that kind of stuff. I don't know of any magic switch. There's nothing that I'm aware of that we're just going to flick a switch and we're going to be in a green economy. We have to transition to that.

So it's not about taking the money out of people's pockets and saying now we have a green economy. Industry is exempt, but they're all paying out of pocket in their disposable income. So you wouldn't want to charge them twice, I can understand that. But on the face of it, if they're the polluters – and it's very miniscule as to what is being polluted by the rest of the citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador – then why spread it amongst everybody else? Why not look at the people that are creating this and hold them accountable, instead of the people in the province who you are holding accountable now, that can't afford it. They just simply can't afford it.

The hypocrisy is beyond measure. How many people on the other side have taken advantage of the electric vehicle uptake?

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

**J. DWYER:** So other than the Member for Lake Melville that owns a big truck and an electric car, nobody in here has taken advantage of it.

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

**J. DWYER:** Well, no, but that's fair. No, good on you.

Do you plug that into the charging stations, because right now we have 200 charging stations and 28 vehicles?

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

**J. DWYER:** And that's only for one brand, but I can't see any other brands being too much more.

Here in Canada, the facts say that we're the seventh dirtiest country in the world. I tell you –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Per capita.

**J. DWYER:** Oh per capita, sorry, yes. But we're not factoring in the fact that we have a boreal rain forest that produces more oxygen for the world than anywhere else in the world. That's not being brought up.

So I'll tell you how serious our people are about it in Placentia West - Bellevue, they brought it to my attention that they'd like to have blockades. They'd like to have protests. That's what's being proposed to me. Do you know what? I'll stand with those people. If they want to protest it, I'll stand with them.

I know we're going into a green economy and that we have to reduce our carbon footprint, no two ways about it, but we can't afford out of the pockets of the average citizen today. That's what we're here debating. That's why we have no problem staying here night after night, or however long it takes. We want you to realize that it's the people that are hurting.

This five-point plan, it helps some of the most vulnerable, but it put them also in a position where it was almost like they got false hope that something else was coming, because it wasn't enough.

The thing that we need to do in here is obviously to address the cost of living, and the taxation imposed on Newfoundlanders and Labradorians - period. That's it. That's our job. That's what we have to do; we have to make sure that people can peacefully enjoy the life that they've mapped out for themselves. Yes, we all make choices of what career we want to be in, where we live, and all that kind of stuff. But I will say, I think it's a good initiative for people in the metro area to be able to get these bus passes and stuff, but it does very little for somebody in Swift Current, Arnold's Cove or Terrenceville. Where are they getting the bus to?

They've got 45 minutes or an hour just to get to a clinic. So we have to take that into consideration, when we're reaching into people's pockets. They just don't have it right now. We're not saying this is not going to happen. We're not saying that this carbon tax won't work; we're saying it's just not going to work right now because we're already out of

pocket on everything else. People need a break. You need to listen. The first step in a five-point plan, or the first step I should say in any 12-point plan, is recognizing there's an issue.

We need to recognize that right now, we're in a fiscal crisis, and adding more taxes to the bottom dollar of the disposable income of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador is just not acceptable - period.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

**B. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don't know where to begin, actually, there's that much stuff to talk about, so I'll highlight a couple of the key pieces that I've heard so far. We've had the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands talk about, I guess, the easiest thing is populism. It's easy to want to support what's popular, but it's not always the best decision. Just because some people think that it's not the best decision to impose a carbon tax -

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

**B. DAVIS:** Okay, talk to some of the young people in Mount Pearl because I've talked to them. I have.

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

**B. DAVIS:** Yes, fair enough. You talk about the taxicab operators, and I feel you; I hear your concern. I really do. But what we've seen in other jurisdictions, right across the globe, not just here, and you may or may not want to listen to it, but in BC we've seen the bulk of taxicabs are moved to hybrid. That's over a 10- or 12-year period, as the Member for Lake Melville highlighted.

I know you don't care about the UN, but maybe I'll talk about the UK too. Some of the cab companies in the United Kingdom are fully electric. I know you don't care about that because that's not here in Newfoundland and Labrador, but what it does say about is, when you institute programs and supports, to inject rebates to people to make those decisions, it

actually helps move intentions. That's what we're trying to do with, whether it be the electrical vehicle rebate program, or the oil to electric program. That's part of what we're trying to do to incent things.

What the federal government has said and the Minister of Justice and Public Safety eloquently talked about the federation and the Constitution – and I hear the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue; I understand. I hear his passion. We did bring a lot into the federation and we have received a lot from the federation too from a lot of different things. But it is a constitutional fact that we've tried to fight these things on many different occasions and we have not been successful. That's not to say that we will not continue to try to find legislation that works and can fit, but this has been tested recently by Alberta, highlighted that it has been successfully tested, that the federal government has the ability to impose this on to the people of the federation.

We can agree or disagree with it. My personal opinion is I agree that we have to do more for climate change; we really do. Not for just the people in this House, but for generations and, as the Member for Lake Melville said, for the seven generations after, which is really, really important.

So I think the facts matter with respect to the Constitution. We can't win that argument. It's been proven. It's not going to change, so what we have to do is figure out ways we can support individuals in this province to help navigate a system that is challenging – albeit, I agree with every Member on the other side, saying that this is a very difficult time for people with respect to the fuel prices. You've heard the Minister of Finance say on numerous occasions, in numerous Question Periods, that it's a situation that we have very little control over. The things we can control, we've tried to do. Is there going to be more? Absolutely we're going to continue to look at more. We're going to continue to try to find ways from an environmental standpoint, in my department, to find ways that we can support individuals.

I'd just like to highlight a couple of the things. The Member for Humber - Bay of Islands had some good points that he brought up on this. I'd

like to highlight a couple of the interesting things that we've been part of in this department. The oil to electric program, this budget alone, \$2 million. The electric EV charging and rebates that the hon. Member for Ferryland, I think, talked about earlier this morning, about the fact that there's not enough there. I agree that there's not enough, but that's why you need to have infrastructure put in place so that range and anxiety that people face when they're making those decisions to buy a vehicle that you've sold many, many hundreds, maybe thousands of vehicles that's one of the concerns that people have. So we try to take down those barriers by putting in place infrastructure to go across. So that's another \$1.9 million.

The Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund, \$17 million in this budget alone. Also, \$4.6 million for public building retrofits; hurricane alert system, \$42,000; flood risk mapping, \$1.2 million; Conservation Corps youth education initiatives grant, \$147,000; NEIA, \$100,000, or econext, I should say, the new name; Climate Change Division, another \$600,000; Green Technology Tax Credit, 20 per cent to help businesses with specific capital costs to help green initiatives; environmental policy and natural areas, another \$1.8 million; renewable energy and implementation of the renewable energy plan that the Minister of IET talked about.

Those are the things that I can highlight right now that I have readily available. I know the Member has asked for a list. I'm going to work on that for him. But there are other things. I haven't even started to talk about the transportation and infrastructure asks that we have out in the province. I can see the people are asking, why does that matter? Well, I can tell you, we have to put bigger culverts back, so the costs associated with those bigger culverts are things that we have to factor in as the cost of environment and climate change.

The fact that we have to build bigger bridges, the fact that we have to do additional roadwork, the fact that we have to do Gabion baskets. I've seen and toured the hon. Member's district a few years ago and talked about some of the damages that have happened from climate change and weather events that are coming more often. Extra armour stone that's being put around to

help shore up shorelines, coastal erosions. The R-values with respect to roofing and windows and LED lighting that's being put in all government buildings and hospitals right across this Island to try to mitigate some of those costs. All of those things are not factored in there, and in this very House of Assembly.

Municipal infrastructure and funding is another thing that is not reflected in the numbers I've already mentioned. Anything that we give from whether it be TI or municipal infrastructure, SAG, CEEP, all those funds that we give to municipal governments or municipal agencies to go out and reduce their carbon footprint by changing out and saving their residents money each and every day when they change out a heating system in their building to make it more green, to put in mini-split systems in or those initiatives there.

The Minister of IET talked a little bit earlier about green tech. We've just scratched the surface. We have several companies. He highlighted Mysa, SmartICE, and others, that we've invested in right now. There is more money available for industries that we want to get to where we need to be for carbon capture, carbon sequestration, storage of carbon and hydrogen development. All of those things are important things that we're going to continue to work on to find those solutions that exist.

One of the other things that I think is really important, and I have heard it a number of times, I think we all have a role to play in the education of the public and people about what's actually happening the world. We all have that role to play. I think the Member for Conception Bay South mentioned that – I think I got that right this time, did I – sometimes the electorate don't understand this stuff. I would say that I agree with that statement when we are all not united on that front; they don't understand exactly who to listen to and who to believe.

This is straightforward science; we know it's impacting the people that live in this province and are going to live in this province. I have texted the hon. Member for Stephenville - Port au Port and told him – and he knows this – that Stephenville is one of the parts of the province that is going to be heavily affected by coastal erosion as sea levels rise. Those are issues that

he is facing every day and his residents are facing every day; just like many other people in this province.

Maybe not the people in Mount Pearl - Southlands because they're at the 190 contour. I know because that is very high, it's the same level as Signal Hill. But, at the end of the day, if they're affected by climate change with respect to water rising levels, well there is a big problem in the rest of the province for sure. Each and every one of us is affected by that, whether it be from all of those weather events that are happening each and every day.

So there are so many things to talk about, I hope I get an opportunity to chat again about it, but I have heard a great conversation. I think there is a lot of good information being shared in the House of Assembly here tonight and I encourage people to listen to what others have to say and try to find the solutions on how we can reach out to our residents that we all represent.

At the end of the day, we run against each other only once every four years, that is an important piece to recognize. We're all in here as colleagues to try to make the province better and one of the things that we're all facing is climate change. I think we all have to get on board to try to support that. That's why I'm supporting this; because I believe this is a step in the right direction. I may not like the timing; I may not like the fact that it is going to cost people more but it has worked in every jurisdiction that it has been implemented in.

I understand how important it's going to be for the future of our kids and their kids. That is the important piece and that is why we should all stand together on it.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

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

I'm just going to have a few quick words on this again. I thank the people for indulging me for a few extra speeches. I heard the Minister for

Health and Community Services almost cast blame that if we vote against this, we're voting against farmers, we're voting against home heating oil. That's just not true. If this was ordinary times, people would probably say, okay, we understand this. But look at the price of oil, look at the price of heating oil, look at the price of gas.

If you look at Alberta, I just read up in Alberta, who refused to go along with the carbon tax, a family of four is getting \$1,100 rebate this year. They didn't go so they put a backstop so it would fill in their income tax, family of four will get \$1,100 rebate – to the people.

There's only one more point I wish to make. We heard it here tonight, on many occasions, that if we tinker with anything to do with gas prices, they're going to impose it. Now I can go back in *Hansard*, and I heard it at least 15 times, I'd say, and I can check it in *Hansard*. The Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board said in this House, on numerous occasions, that the \$120 million we got from the gas tax, we put it back into rebates for the people. That was said in this House.

Yet, we've got the another minister standing up and saying that if we tinker with the gas tax the federal government is going to come in and then all of a sudden put the backstop in and cancel the program and impose their own program.

Minister, you said that in *Hansard*, that the money that we collected from gas tax – \$120 million – you gave back.

**S. COADY:** It's \$142 million.

**E. JOYCE:** Hundred and what?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** A hundred and forty-two.

**E. JOYCE:** A hundred and forty-two –

**S. COADY:** That's provincial gas tax.

**E. JOYCE:** Okay.

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

**E. JOYCE:** No, no, I know. But what we've been told tonight is that if we fool with the gas tax –

**S. COADY:** The carbon tax.

**E. JOYCE:** – the federal government is going to – the program that we got, they're going to stop it. That's what was said, Minister.

**S. COADY:** The carbon tax.

**E. JOYCE:** Anyway, I'm not arguing, I'm just saying what's in *Hansard* and what was said tonight. So you can't stand up and say we gave back \$142 million in gas tax –

**S. COADY:** Provincial gas tax.

**E. JOYCE:** – provincial gas tax – so the minister is stating that we can give back more gas tax, provincial gas tax?

**S. COADY:** Provincial gas tax, we can give them that.

**E. JOYCE:** Okay. And we can give more? If the government –

**S. COADY:** (Inaudible) the carbon tax (inaudible).

**E. JOYCE:** I'm not talking about it. You can get into semantics. The only thing is that you gave back money from provincial gas tax. We can give more and it won't affect the carbon agreement we have got with the federal government. That's the point I'm making. You cannot stand in this House and say we can take gas tax and we can give it back, but if the carbon tax gets it, we're not allowed to give out no more gas tax. You can't have it both ways.

So that is my only two points on that. If this was normal circumstances, I don't think we would be arguing over this because everybody agrees with climate change, but it is not normal circumstances. I won't stay much longer to speak because I know I spoke and I thank the Opposition for giving me a chance to indulge, but when I hear one minister say we can't tinker with the gas tax and another minister saying we gave \$142 million back from the gas tax, it just



don't jive. And while we are arguing over semantics, people in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador are suffering; can't get to their health care.

So I ask the minister again if you can reduce the gas tax, please do it? Please do it to help out the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. If you don't want to reduce the gas tax, give back some home heating rebate and a rebate on electricity for the low end, the people that need it. That's what I'm asking, Minister.

The carbon tax, we all know it's federal. I know it's federal. I was there when it first came in. We know it's federal. There is no one here arguing that, but what we are arguing on this side – and if anybody on this side wants to correct me they can. We are arguing to try to find some relief for people who need it, however it is done, that's all I'm saying.

I'll sit down now and take my seat and listen to the informative debate. But please do not try – and I speak for myself on this – please do not try to cast the blame on me because I'm trying to help out seniors; trying to help out people with health care needs; people who can't drive; people who can't eat; people who can't – if I'm standing up and making an argument to help those people, then I'm going to hurt fishermen; I'm going to hurt people who are on oil; I'm going to hurt people that are in the forestry; I'm going to hurt people who are in the farming industry because it is just not true.

We are putting some substantial suggestions forward and I trust the minister that she hears it and something will be done.

Thank you.

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

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

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Chair.

It is indeed good to stand at this hour, at 9 p.m. We have been here since this morning, when we

came into the House at 10, and we've heard some good discussion back and forth. I'm happy to stand and to speak to Bill 60.

Mr. Chair, I have to go back to a comment that was made by the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL this morning when she said that we didn't understand on this side of the House. Well, I took offence to that, because I know we do understand. And I understand full well that this is going to be another tax come on my constituents who are already struggling and already hurting. I do understand that. And with respect to the comment that she made about in her district and easily walking to the bank and the grocery store. Well, my colleague from Exploits put it well when he said you've got to go from Leading Tickles to Bishop Falls.

Well, for myself, it's to go from Bauline to the neighbouring district to see a doctor, or go to a bank for some people, or go to a supermarket. So it's not as easy as walking around the streets of St. John's, of course when you also have the form of public transit as well.

Chair, I'll go back to a comment that was said by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. He said he liked to speak to the facts. Well, I know the Minister of Environment and Climate Change likes to deal with facts and I want to go back to a news release by government in 2018. In that there was a quote that said, "... we tackle climate change in a manner that takes into account the economic, social and fiscal realities that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians face." And the hon. minister is shaking his head. He says he agrees.

I want to read that again: the social, economic and fiscal realities. Mr. Chair, that's what we're discussing here tonight. That's what's affecting my constituents in my district. That's what's affecting the constituents of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. And that's what has to be kept in mind. But there's not a lot of that being said this evening with respect to the fiscal realities we're under. I've said it before, and Madam Minister knows that I've said it to her before; she's operating under a heavy workload when it comes to the fiscal responsibilities of this province. And she knows that, and I respect her for that. But when we're looking at the economic, social, and fiscal

realities of the province, that's what we have to keep in mind.

With respect to Municipal and Provincial Affairs, I listen to the municipal elected officials and I'm hearing that they're struggling. They are struggling, Mr. Chair. Municipal officials are saying to me that this is not the time for tax increases.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

The noise level is a little too loud in the House.

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Municipal officials are telling me that they're struggling. They have to put a budget in place that's good for the entire year of 2022. Municipal officials don't have the option, as my colleagues from across the House know, they can't change their budget midstream. They can't put in different set of fee structures, but municipalities are definitely dealing with the increased costs of conducting business with respect to what municipalities do need on a regular basis.

I'll go to my friend and colleague from Burin - Grand Bank, when he spoke this afternoon, and he said municipalities are trying to survive. It wouldn't be prudent at this time to impose more taxes and they can't afford any more. I can't agree with you more, hon. Member. They can't. However, when you're looking at the municipalities who have many contractors coming into their towns, doing work that their staff or their officials cannot do, well, then that excludes them from this particular carbon tax. That will lead to increased costs from contractor providers coming in to do work, if it's roads, if it's green spaces, if it's parks, if it's upgrading buildings.

These are things that municipalities will unfortunately have to pay more for when just conducting the regular business. Of course, that comes back on the municipalities; it comes back on the tax base. Of course, we all know the tax base is the same municipal, provincial and federal. They can't come to the House here, or they can't go to Ottawa looking for a break on their taxes. But I've been in the chair when a 93-year-old woman has come into my office and

said: Please, Mr. Mayor, do not turn off my water because I cannot afford to pay my bill. That is the reality that we are dealing with in our municipalities.

And the municipal officials are dealing with this on a regular basis and this is going to cause more. I understand the plight that they're in, I do. I understand the plight that they're in, Mr. Chair. They have to rely on the same tax base, Mr. Chair, but do you know what? The burden that the citizens are having is becoming overwhelming. I know that many mayors and municipal leaders across this province are losing residents in their towns.

I spoke to a town manager earlier today and he questioned me with respect to the provincial gas tax that we discussed in Estimates in the minister's budget. If I'm reading it correctly, it's \$7,100,000 for the gas tax revenue going back to municipalities. Well, one thing was suggested, if we're taking in more gas tax revenue, can any more go back to the municipalities underneath that particular budget line item. I said I would pass that along to see if it could be done. I'm sure, Madam Minister, you and I can chat about that later to see if it can go anywhere.

However, when we're looking at the increased cost, the tax base will be passed on to the constituents – the low-income, the middle-income residents of my district are feeling it. They are feeling it. They are being forced into more and more – one resident said to me – a different level of poverty. These are words from people in my district reaching out to me: a different level of poverty. That's hard to swallow. That's hard to swallow when we are looking at the health, welfare, safety and security of our constituents that's on our shoulders. So, Mr. Chair, I do know that people are slowly sinking. It is difficult to listen to, it is difficult to realize what is going on when it comes to municipalities and the responsibility that the elected officials have.

With respect to the electric vehicles purchased, I know my hon. colleague for Ferryland spoke about it earlier and we had a response back from the minister. I had two people reach out to me with respect to electric vehicles. One in my district who owns a small business who needed a pickup for his business and wanted to be more

responsible and to go with an electric vehicle. He said he needed one for his business; of course, you're trying to operate a business and you're trying to stay afloat, you need it immediately. It was an eight-to-nine-month wait for the electric. As a small business, he couldn't afford to wait that long. He wanted to do the responsible thing, but, unfortunately, couldn't wait that length of time.

With respect to the personal aspect of electric vehicles, I go back to the same comment that was made many times here: unattainable, not affordable. It is great that there is a \$5,000 incentive, no doubt about it; it is great that there is a \$5,000 incentive for that, but when you're looking at the levels of income that are required to purchase an electric vehicle. I have students, 18, 19, 20 years old, looking for a vehicle to get to a part-time job to put some money in their pocket to pay for the next semester of university or College of the North Atlantic; they can't afford an electric vehicle. They can't afford to put gas in a vehicle. It is difficult.

I tell you, Mr. Chair, it is difficult to listen to, but I can tell you it was said earlier this day that there were people rising in this House to speak for political points. Well, Mr. Chair, I can tell you, without a shadow of a doubt, I am not rising in this House for political points. My constituents know me, they know what I'm made of and they know I'm here to support them. I would hope that my hon. colleagues in this House know that I'm not rising for political points. I'm rising to bring forward the needs and wants of my constituents in my District of Cape St. Francis, and I'll continue to do that, Mr. Chair.

I see my time is running out. I will have an opportunity to speak to this again. I thank you for your time, and, of course, for the attention of all my colleagues.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I'm a party of one tonight.

Will people of the province want another tax increase? My younger self would have been screaming at me: No. My older self is looking at this in terms of what is for the greater good.

Hurricane Igor: \$200 million; that's what it cost the province in 2010. Snowmageddon, in the tens of millions of dollars, and I won't even use the word "inconvenience," but the disruption to people's lives, the bringing in of the military, you name it. In St. John's alone, you had people who were – the personal cost of just being able to get out of their own driveways, of hiring their own snow clearing, and these weren't rich people.

But Snowmageddon cost the province tens of millions. It wasn't just a St. John's issue. If you want to see who that affected, you just got to go back to the news stories, two years ago, and you will see the lineups at the stores of people who are not in a financial position to stock up. They were the marginal. Hurricane Igor was supposed to be a one in 100-year storm but we're expecting these to increase in frequency.

Let's shift ahead. In Manitoba, farmers there looking to plant their wheat can't do it because of the record flooding. In the summer, they had record drought. India – it's the first time; it may be in a position where it will not be able to grow wheat.

What does that have to do with us? Unless we have wheat fields here, it has everything to do with it because it will drive food prices up again for those who can't afford it.

I've already given examples of how the increased winds here in Newfoundland and Labrador have contributed to insurance claims and increases to insurance premiums. But I can tell you that if anything else, let's call a spade a spade; climate change is going to exacerbate the crisis for Newfoundland and Labrador, and especially for those who are on the margins. It will exacerbate it more than any carbon tax. What does that mean? Fewer people that will be able to absorb the cost, put food on the table, have work, you name it.

Rising sea levels – we've already got a clear indication that they're rising. I'm not saying that there are going to be towns in Newfoundland

that are going to be underwater, but I can tell you that when storm surges come, it will disrupt people's lives. It will make life difficult; it will make life a lot more expensive. In the end, we're paying. It's coming out of our pockets, and I fear it's going to be a lot worse.

Now I heard earlier, the story of the cancer patient – and it was in the newspaper – about the inability to get to a doctor's appointment. I'm sympathetic to that. So maybe here's a thought – that somehow the carbon tax means she cannot access treatment. To me, there are short-term solutions. We've heard it with the MTAP program as well, but maybe it comes down to, if someone's got to drive, then maybe there is a way of subsidizing that trip, whether it's a mileage rate for those who are required to drive to medical appointments, for those who do not have those necessities in their communities.

So there are ways that you can make that. I am not looking for a break for myself. But for those who have to travel, or required, then there are ways we can fix that. I've taught at enough small communities to know that just about every place has its taxi. Its local taxi that brings people to St. John's and so on and so forth. And I'm going to come to that, another point on this in a minute. But right now, because in the same report it talked about how the taxis are going to increase their fare. Well, if that's the only form of transportation, maybe it comes down to how do we subsidize this in the short term so that they can keep costs down so that those who depend on them are able to avail of affordable transportation.

I can tell you that long before this climate crisis, COVID crisis, the people that I helped in St. Vincent de Paul were already struggling. They were already hungry. They were already facing homelessness. But I do want to go back. To me, tax is about where we invest it. What do we do with it? How are we going to help people with it? One of the reasons I didn't support the sugar tax is because I need to see how it is going to affect those who are already food insecure.

But let's take a look at something. How did we get here? Successive governments have made decisions that have gotten us here. It is not the carbon tax. It is not the climate crisis, but we

have already made these decisions. Let's think about it. Roads to rails – despite the deficiencies of the Newfoundland and Labrador railroad, once we got rid of it, we eliminated one form of public transit in this province with this geography. Then we got rid of Roadcruiser. We no longer have DRL.

At some point on the Northeast Avalon – maybe we can start here because, to the point, Metrobus shouldn't be just a city issue. It should be a regional transportation system. But we haven't invested in that. Instead what we have invested in, provincially and municipally, is an extensive road network. We have twinned, double laned the highways so that we can make it more efficient for the use of cars. We have allowed – we have actually created the environment for urban sprawl.

We encouraged the development of these big box store power centres that you see in the United States on Stavanger Drive and now out in Galway. We have done everything, in many ways, to make it more difficult for people who do not own a vehicle to travel.

But I am going to go back to this. If in the end – because there has to be long-term solutions to this. There are short-term solutions and let us help the people right now who need it and I do support that. But, for God's sake, long-term solutions will cost us more in the long run and I don't know what we are going to do. The longer we push it off, the more expensive and troubling it is going to get.

But I'll come back to something that I've harped on here – we've harped on in this House. Let's take it and start looking at, if we're interested in priorities and making choices, how do we make sure that people are on the margins are able to have a decent living? We've talked about a basic living income, a minimum wage, about benefits that will help people. In the long run, we've taken away an awful lot of supports from people.

I've already had one gentleman in my district talk about how he's planning to go out and siphon off diesel in trucks to put heat in his home. That's what it comes down to. But I'll tell

you that, in some cases, you've got to be able to help people who are in this – he's a senior and his income is fixed. In some way we've got to help in the short term, but to me, unless someone got a plan here, other than let's pause, show me how we're going to get out of it. What is the long-term plan? Because if we remembered Fridays for Future, if we remember the climate change protests, there are an awful lot of people in this province who want to see something concrete done to address climate change.

It's going to cost us. It's going to hurt us if we do not. Whether this is the answer, but it's a start.

Thank you, Chair.

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

**S. CROCKER:** Thank you very much, Chair.

I'll just take a few minutes to talk about the bill we're debating today and how it relates to our province and how we invest as we move forward. It's interesting sitting here today and listening to this debate. A lot of good points on both sides of the House.

If you think, Mr. Chair, I know Members opposite talked about lobbying Ottawa. Well, the premiers of Canada actually did that. All the premiers wrote the prime minister. When you think about it, these premiers aren't all Liberal. They aren't all Progressive Conservatives.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** There's only one Liberal.

**S. CROCKER:** There's only one Liberal, that's right. There's only one Liberal and he gladly signed on to –

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

**S. CROCKER:** We'll disagree, the Member for St. George's - Humber. It's been a long day. All I say to the gentleman is it's been a long day, so I understand your little bit of delusion at the moment, but it's all good.

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

**S. CROCKER:** No, that day will come. That day will come. I don't foresee it in the very near future and I don't foresee it in my time, but that day will come. This is national issue. The premiers of Canada wrote the prime minister and asked that there be a delay in the carbon tax, and there was not, unfortunately.

Nobody enjoys increasing taxes. I've spoken to a number of Members of Parliament about this, and I hope everybody here in the House has or will take that opportunity to remember when they have the opportunity to see a Member of Parliament – the next time you see a Member of Parliament – challenge them as well on this tax, on this program.

I do support a price on carbon; I think it's important. I have – I was going to say young children. I can't really say that anymore, but I think about their future and I think about adding debt. *Budget 2022* has \$142 million in it, as an offset, I think that works out to be \$250 a person in this province, and I think the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port listed off some things yesterday, some provinces in Canada, that have actually done different programs – and they have.

Oh sorry, it was the Leader of the Official Opposition that listed off some jurisdictions that have done different things. And yeah, there are. One jurisdiction, I think it was Alberta, actually removed their provincial sales tax on gasoline. As the Minister of Finance has repeated and repeated and repeated, the measures that we've taken to date are the equivalent of our gas tax. The Member opposite says the people can't afford it; and I'm not going to argue that this time that we're facing people can afford a lot. Because I can tell you, I think it was the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans earlier tonight talked about the effect in standing up, on people.

I don't think there's one of us in this House that is not affected by the current cost-of-living crisis. And trust me; we're very fortunate as people who sit in this House. But we all have family members. I have older parents and I have elderly in-laws. Let me assure you, my biggest concern in a lot of cases – and I think it was the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, actually, in Question Period today, asked a question of the

Minister of Finance. I have concerns with all the rising prices in our province. One of my greatest concerns – our summers are short – we’re going to go back into the home heating fuel season.

I think that, to me, is one of the greatest concerns that I have as we go back into next winter if the strife in this world is not resolved, and unfortunately there is no indication that it is going to be resolved. It is important to remember what the Minister of Finance said today, and I think she has been very clear that we will and are considering every option that is available to us. There is nobody in this House that would not do that and we’re doing that. But, again, remember keeping in mind that the dollar that we use in any form of rebate or any form of taxation discount is a borrowed dollar. Any time any of us borrow money – let’s think about that for a second – any time you borrow money, you think about it, and you always got to think about the consequences of borrowing money.

We’re in a period, right now, of increasing interest rates and that is a challenge that we have to grapple with. I think we pay \$1.2 billion or \$1.1 billion. April 1, every year, we pay \$1.2 billion or \$1.1 billion of interest.

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

**S. CROCKER:** Okay, sorry, good. We pay \$1 billion of interest on our debt every single year. That is not because of this government or the government before us; that is the situation that we’ve created as a jurisdiction since 1949.

So I don’t think for one minute that this is lost on anybody when we talk about the cost of living. I don’t think for one minute, when we talk about – and it is unfortunate that the two have been conflated. I shouldn’t say we’re conflating the two. It is just terrible timing when you think about gasoline prices.

But, again quite frankly, the carbon plan that we put forward to Ottawa back in 2018 was to keep our made-in-Newfoundland plan; was to keep the carbon tax off of some essential items, such as home heating fuel. We recognize that. I think we have some of the highest numbers of people in Canada still using oil as a form of heat. That was something that was very important to us; we

kept it off. We negotiated fuel for fishing. We negotiated agriculture out and that is important.

The Member for Labrador West, this afternoon, and the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands have both referenced that money going back. I fully comprehend and respect that but when we think about the money going back, it’s not just the Department of Environment and Climate Change that invest in climate change. If you think about it, Transportation and Infrastructure continually, when we’re doing roadwork now, or every time the Member for St. John’s Centre just talked about Hurricane Igor and Snowmageddon, every time we have one of those events, it’s general revenue that pays for that. These are events that are related to climate change.

In Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation, a relatively small department, but this year we will invest in Butter Pot Provincial Park – and Butter Pot Provincial Park will be the last provincial park in this province to be on diesel. That will end this year. We will invest, I think, close to \$1 million –

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

**S. CROCKER:** – this year to take Butter Pot Provincial Park off diesel. It’s our last park on diesel; we’ll go to solar. Those are investments. That’s where the money that we collect on carbon tax goes, even in a department as small as TCAR. We’re investing in green, greening that department. So that’s throughout government. I don’t think you’ll find any department in government – all departments in government. Education just invested along with Memorial University in electrifying Memorial University. It’s a constant.

There are many ways that we’re investing, every opportunity. Kudos to the Department of Environment and Climate Change; they’re actually leveraging a lot of federal money when it comes to investments in climate change. That’s extremely important.

So, Chair, I believe that I’ll get some more opportunity to speak on this, and I look forward to it. I will conclude on – we always get in this banter, and I actually had the opportunity to sit in the Opposition for almost a year, Mr. Chair.

Great learning exercise, so I understand the role and the Members opposite do a great job in their role. But when we talk about equalization, and we kind of yell at the federal government when it comes to equalization, unfortunately the federal government has very little control over equalization. I'll need another opportunity but I've often went to FPTs, federal-provincial-territorial meetings and have colleagues look at me and say: Gees, you guys are having a rough time. I said: Listen, give us a share of your pie. The conversation stops then, though.

There's an \$18-billion pie in Canada that we would need the people sitting around that table – and I don't mean the federal government, I mean the provincial governments of all political stripes to agree, to let us have a bite of that pie. Guess what? They stopped talking about sharing the pie when you challenge them on it.

**L. PARROTT:** They won't even give you a crumb.

**S. CROCKER:** The Member for Terra Nova said they won't even give you a crumb, and unfortunately that is it. You're not going to see Quebec getting \$13 billion a year in equalization, put up their hand and say, it's time we helped Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

**C. PARDY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Great to have another few words on behalf of the District of Bonavista, but before I get into any significant comments I want to take a moment and speak directly to the camera of my four children with their friends are probably watching the House of Assembly tonight that your dad is not a climate denier.

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

**C. PARDY:** I am just as environmentally friendly as what I was before this debate started. Maybe even my wife is watching too, and she'd be very surprised that we have some of the

allegations that I'm not being sympathetic to climate change.

So however my address went, the first one, I do want to cycle back to it just slightly. Contrary to what my colleague right along said, don't do it, but I'm going to do it. I cited an author and an academic, a visionary, but he wasn't an environmental scientist. He makes it clear in his writings, the ones that I've read, and I'm not well-read on the man, there is no doubt about that. But he makes it clear that he believes in climate change.

He clearly states that he believes in climate change. The only thing that he's been critiqued for was that he doesn't believe that it's apocalyptic. And that was the thing I think that he's probably mostly challenged with. He thinks there probably needs to be a balance out there that when you tackle things that there are other things that are equally important and you do things in balance.

I think everyone in the House would agree with that. I think we do things in balance. Everyone has spoken passionately about the people that are hurting their districts. So I would say to you their first and foremost concern would be for their welfare, their livelihood, their existence. Are they sympathetic to climate change? They sure are. So somewhere where that balance is – and I think climate change has to be a high priority. I think the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology had stated we're in very atypical times. The Member for Humber - Bay of Islands would say extraordinary times require extraordinary measures.

But just let me move on from this gentleman, and I just want to cite a few things. The Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development had referenced that he thought that I may be a denier. Wasn't very complimentary but the Minister of Health and Community Services said almost like shame on the Member for bringing up a discredited scientist. But he's not a scientist; he's an intellectual and he's a visionary.

Just let me read a little bit about – before I move on. He was former director of the Danish government's Environmental Assessment Institute in Copenhagen. He's a visiting fellow

at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, and I would say, hey, that's pretty credible. He was rated in *TIME* magazine in the top 100 most influential people in the world.

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

**C. PARDY:** That's a discredit. Yes, I know.

*Esquire* magazine rated him to be one of the 75 most influential people of the 21st century.

One of 50 people deemed to be able to save the plant, according to *The Guardian* in the UK. Lomborg has reportedly been named one of foreign policy's top 100 global thinkers. Now, is he the full package? Probably not. But I would say you have to admit that's pretty interesting and commending. When you slander the Member and say I'm talking about a discredited scientist, that is absolutely off track. So the gist of what we talked about is making sure we do what is right for future generations, what we need to do now.

We went through Estimates with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and we had a talk. So we rolled out some programs. One of the things that we challenged and one of the things that I brought up was the fact that – and I mentioned it before – well, 140 people availed of the oil to electric, and that is a noble cause to put out. The only thing I challenged was the fact: What was the household income of the ones that we helped? I would say we've got them on the District of Bonavista. We have many in rural Newfoundland that we know can't afford it. But now if we look, and we refer back to the Canada Energy Efficiency policy scorecard, when they assess the province in what we do, when they look at the enabling section, we didn't do well.

Because the enabling looks at the policies which can put out either zero-interest or low-interest loans to those people who can't afford it, to pay it off in small increments going forward. That would help many in the District of Bonavista, much the same as Newfoundland and Labrador Housing with the low-cost loan, if you had that for the oil to electric, I would say, Minister, we would have a lot of takers on that. Because it saves money going forward, it reduces their

energy bill and it makes it more affordable for them.

So when you do your data collection, that's a nice piece to do and that's probably a nice (inaudible) to take. That's not breaking new ground because Newfoundland and Labrador Housing is doing it with their low-cost loans that they would have.

I spoke to an owner of a trucking company last night. He called, asked me could I give him a call and I gave him a call. A couple of things he passed out on statistics. On a route in the trucking company now to go between Boston and Montreal, last year, it cost him \$3,000. This year, it cost him \$7,000. So if we know that's not going to affect us now and going forward, we certainly are.

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

**C. PARDY:** Yeah. But the price of goods that are going to come to our Island, we're going to see that increase. I think that's where we are. We fully do.

The Member for Humber - Bay of Islands said we're in extraordinary times. It takes extraordinary measures. We stated here that in the extraordinary time that the Minister of IET had stated as well, we can't tax people any more in many of these low household income communities and rural parts of Newfoundland that we have and even in urban areas. I don't think these are the times that we would add more taxation to our population. That's all.

No matter how noble you would think the pursuit would be or what the rationale would be for the cause, when I think of that, I look at increased taxation, whether it be the sugar tax, and I know the carbon tax is a different creature, what we've got is probably what we've got, but the only thing I would say is we are really over taxing the populations that we have.

I was surprised – and I always looked at the transition – we were making good transition with the hybrid models. I had a gentleman who had a hybrid and he boasted how cheaply he could go from Little Catalina to St. John's on his hybrid. But we seemed to have jumped past the hybrid and gone fully to electric.



One of the things you would question and say, well, maybe we should have took more incremental steps. That's something that I'm sure we could debate and see what the rationale would be. But if he only spent less than \$30 to go to St. John's on his hybrid and come back, basically steep hills he kicked in with his gas combustion, he did great. He did wonderful and that is probably something that we ought to be looking at.

So while we got a big demand and we can't get electric in, maybe that hybrid model that he is professing that he is saving huge amounts of money, well, that's probably a good start in order to transition.

Mr. Chair, thank you very much.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

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

Mr. Chair, I will say that when I first got elected, that compared to now, we have come a long way in our awareness of environmental issues and so on.

I remember my very first question in the Legislature, and people can go back and check in *Hansard*, I remember my caucus colleague saying you need to ask a question. I said I want to ask a question on the cleanup on the St. John's Harbour. No, that's not going to get any media. Come up with another question. I was determined; the next day, what do you want to ask? The harbour. No, you're not going on today. So, finally, after about 1½ week I asked the question and it was the top news story on the news. So much to the surprise of my caucus colleagues at the time, it was an important issue and it was an issue that people latched on to. In fact, the harbour cleanup project actually got done in the City of St. John's. It needed to be done.

I remember speaking about paper recycling, curbside recycling. And just the lesson for any Member of this Legislature. A month after you do something, nobody remembers you did it because curbside recycling in Corner Brook and in Mount Pearl and even here in St. John's, I

was largely involved in making that happen when I was Minister of Environment. Nobody remembers that today. The mayor of St. John's kicked up at the time: nobody is going to want it; nobody is going to want it. Corner Brook was the first; Mount Pearl was the second; we finally got it in St. John's, but people did it.

We had 27 teepee incinerators in this province. I'm sure most Members remember those teepee incinerators. You could smell them a mile away; you could see the smoke from them a mile away. And I had mayors get upset at me because as Minister of Environment I said we need to shut them down. I had mayors argue with me and fight with me. But we got them shut down and there are only a handful now on the South Coast of the Island in areas that are so remote that it's the only viable option. But there are only a handful left of the 27 we had at the time.

So we have come a long way from that to this. We need to continue. We see our waters warming. We know that there are fish in our waters; we hear it from fishermen all the time, that they're seeing different fish in our water they've never seen before. They're not just coming here on vacation. They're here because our water temperatures are changing. It's having an impact.

I don't know if our cod fishery is actually impacted by the warmer temperatures or not. I do know that Iceland had issues with their cod fishery and their cod fishery came back. I don't know if some of ours migrated there because their waters were colder than ours or not. I don't know, I'm not a scientist, I can't say for sure. But I'm not convinced that part of the issue with our cod fishery is not related to warmer temperatures in our water. There's no doubt about it.

Seals are a big part. We have about eight million seals out there and half a million people in the province. So seals are a big part of that as well.

But the reality is, I remember my very first trip to Europe, 21 years old and I went over with a bunch of friends. One of the things that struck me was all the cars were small. Nobody had these big floating sedans.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Standard shift.

**T. OSBORNE:** Yes, and all standard shift, but they were all small cars. And I couldn't understand why and remember asking somebody at the time. So we're going back 35 years ago now. But I asked somebody at the time and they started at that point just getting into high gas prices. And I said to the person: Why are all the cars so small here? Because gas is so expensive.

So they probably would be driving, if they had the same gas prices we did back then, they'd probably be still driving the big floaters like we were. So sometimes you have to be pushed into changing your habits. And I would suspect that we'll sell more electric vehicles here. I will suspect that we'll sell more hybrids here, but I also suspect that we'll get into smaller vehicles instead of the big, eight-cylinder trucks, the mid-size trucks with a smaller engine for those who need a pickup. Except for contractors and businesses, but as a personal choice.

You drive around most of this province and the big, full-size trucks are still a major component of what's in people's driveways. That is the preferred vehicle to a lot of people. Not because they're hauling construction gear, not because they're involved in an industry that requires that. It's because that's been the mindset of people in this province for generations and generations.

So I don't like the carbon tax either. I've sat in Cabinet and sat as Minister of Finance, and I know that it was the best that we were able to get from the federal government without their backstop and having things like home heating subject to the carbon tax if they had to implement their plan because we didn't implement one. Nobody likes the carbon tax, including me, but the federal government are putting in place that to try and force people to change their habits. The same as we've seen the size of vehicles in Europe 30, 35 years ago.

I am not at all happy with the carbon tax, but I did go to a smaller vehicle. About two years ago I chose to go to a smaller vehicle. My wife went to a smaller vehicle from what she had. She's now got one of those little EcoSports, which is about half the size of the six-cylinder she used to have and is now a compact four-cylinder SUV.

So people change their habits and sometimes it's because they need to change their habits and

sometimes it's because they want to. The reality is we are seeing in this province the province and municipalities spending a great deal of additional money on infrastructure to deal with climate change. We are seeing the destruction of municipal infrastructure because it is simply not able to handle the extra water volumes that we're seeing with more frequent storms.

So we can say that this is a pristine place, we don't need to worry about climate change, but we have municipalities that see a great deal of destruction to municipal infrastructure because their sewer pipes and so on simply can't handle when we have the heavy rain incidents that used to be one in 100 years, and now they're one in 10 years.

We are seeing the impacts of climate change. We are seeing the impacts, whether it's warming ocean waters or more storm surges or coastal erosion that we see in the province. We are seeing the changes as a result of climate change. I read an article three or four years ago about the water levels in this province are rising, the coastal water levels. If you go and you ask an old skipper in some of the communities, has the ocean level risen, and they'll tell you it has. We don't see it so much, the people in their 50s or 40s, but somebody who's in their late 80s or their 90s will tell you that the coastal water is higher now than it used to be.

It might only be a couple of inches, but they see it. We do need to be concerned here. Even though we're only half a million people, even though we've got a huge land mass, we are seeing the impacts of climate change. The reality is, as a government, we've put considerable investment into climate change adaptation, in municipal infrastructure. We've put considerable investment in terms of coastal mapping and flood mapping, which are reactions to climate change. People won't buy electric cars without the charging stations. So we had to put the charging stations in. Unfortunately there isn't the supply of electric vehicles; hopefully that will come.

We're putting money into the green credits for businesses; we're putting it into electrification of Memorial University as an example, getting them electric burners instead of oil. I see the Chair is saying that the clock has run out.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

**L. PARROTT:** Thank you, Chair.

The Minister of Justice spoke very eloquently earlier about the Constitution. As a former soldier, when I signed up to join the military, I joined to defend that very document and our country. When I left the military and I went into business, I worked with oil and gas and different things. Then I left that and I came here to this House of Assembly and I signed a different document. That document put me here to fight for the people who put me here and to fight for this province.

Malcolm Wallace looked at a young William Wallace and he said: "I know you can fight. But it's our wits that make us men." The reality of this is that sometimes we don't use our fight or our wits. I can guarantee you that out of the 40 people in this room, every single one of us have lots of fight in us, and every single one of us have lots of smarts in us, but sometimes we have to sit back and have a look and decide when we're going to use them.

This is not a debate on climate. Sadly, it's become a debate on climate, but this is a debate on a tax, on a carbon tax that was imposed by the federal Liberals. While there may have been a negotiation from the province with the feds, this is a federal Liberal tax that was imposed on the province. While it's there to curb climate change, whether or not it works, as per the Environment Minister, that's yet to be seen.

The statistics in 2019 said that 48,000 households or about 30 per cent of the province were still burning oil in their house. If that's the case, I would suspect, if it's working, then those statistics are far less right now because people would be switching pretty quickly. I would argue that the \$142 million could get a whole lot of people off of oil really quickly so we wouldn't have to worry about a federal backstop. We wouldn't have to worry about people getting charged carbon tax on home heating oil. We should be able to eliminate it quickly if we spent the money for that manner.

It's kind of funny that there was a little bit of an argument earlier about the United Nations and I would argue that if somebody were to pick up the phone, if they had the ability to get a hold of António Guterres and tell him about the situation we have here, he would tell you that climate is extremely important and that there has to be a balance between climate and poverty and the people we represent. There's no question about that. If we don't get control of our climate, we will never get control of poverty and we will never move the world forward, but the reality of it is that the people who have built this place for us, our mothers, our fathers, our grandparents, our forefathers, our foremothers, the people that are suffering the most right now, they need our help the most.

I don't disagree when the Finance Minister says we put \$142 million of the gas tax money back out to help people. Listen, I'm not disputing whether or not there was an effort made to help people. The effort was made. I'm not disputing whether or not there's a fiscal crisis here. There is. I'm not disputing that we spent \$500 million a year on Muskrat Falls. We do. But we can't say all of those things and talk about a climate crisis and talk about the climate and not acknowledge what Muskrat Falls is going to do for this province, regardless of the price. That's the path.

I would argue that if you look at major hydroelectric projects around the world and you were to understand the cost overruns and the mistakes that have been made, and unfortunately we've made them, twice – not once, twice – that's the cost of doing business. That's the cost of a green economy, unfortunately. It's the reality.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** You're digging.

**L. PARROTT:** I'm not digging anything; I'm telling the truth.

The reality of it is that we need to find a way to move those things forward. So instead of fighting or using our wits, we sit back and we let a federal government dictate to us what we're going to do. They tell us whether or not we can move forward on Bay du Nord. Very clearly, they made that decision, not us. We probably sacrificed our future in order to get it. I hope I'm

wrong when I say that, but they certainly held a gun to our heads, there's no question about that.

Since it's been approved, there have been lots of conversations that it will be the last one. That scares me. The reality of it is that if we don't find a way to move forward with our oil and gas which, as we all know, is a cleaner option – that doesn't mean it's clean. That doesn't mean it isn't carbon emitting. What it does mean is we don't have to depend on oil from Russia, Saudi Arabia, perhaps our oil sands here in Canada. It means that we changed the picture, and that picture can change pretty quickly. Supply and demand doesn't change. If it comes from here, it means we have cleaner options. It's still less carbon. That's the reality.

If we can be global leaders and be the ones that are producing cleaner products, we set an example for the world. People don't have to buy it from Saudi Arabia. They don't have to buy it from Guyana or they don't have to buy it from Russia. That should be what we're trying to do. Sadly, we missed the boat on that.

Our fishery, another example of our federal ministers saying how things are going to roll out. We had a federal minister tell us we should leave the fish in the water for the environment. Imagine, the audacity. I didn't hear anything from this government, and this isn't a slight on the current Liberal government. I'm talking about as a whole we're letting the federal government dictate to us. Maybe it's time that we stopped using our wits and started using our fight.

Sometimes you have to put your foot down and say exactly where you stand. Well, I can tell you where I stand. I know that the people in this province are hurting. I know that people are making decisions every single day that they shouldn't have to make. If we want to talk about leadership, as the Member for Signal Hill - Quidi Vidi said this evening, leadership – what I see isn't leadership, Sir; what I see is allowing the federal government to dictate what our environmental platform is going to be. I see them hiding behind a carbon tax that's given to us by the Liberals. Allowing a federal minister to dictate Bay du Nord, hold a gun to our head like I said earlier.

We've got Grassy Point. We should be looking at that. LNG, what a way to step into a greener economy. What a way to start producing hydrogen. Wind energy, we need to be looking at that in a big way. We know that there are players out there that are looking; when I sit here and I think about what we have, if we look at St. Lawrence, Fermeuse, Churchill Falls, Muskrat Falls, Bay d'Espoir, we should be getting carbon offsets for all that stuff.

When we talk about how dirty we are, it was based on population. Geography has to play into that equation. We need to understand there are 521,000 people here. We've got a vast, vast amount of geography, and we should be applauded, not condemned, for what we've done on an environmental basis.

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

**L. PARROTT:** This province is a leader right now, and every day we're taking steps forward to show that we're better. The reality is, for some reason, we don't know how good we are. We don't know what we've done.

We've got Holyrood; Holyrood will disappear in time, it has to. You look at North Atlantic; I can tell you right now, I'm one of the biggest adversaries of what happened at North Atlantic. It killed me to see those jobs lost. But it was probably the only option we had, and it's a green, clean option. It sets an example for the world. It shows us who we are and what we can do with resilience.

And we are a resilient people, make no mistake about it. You go to Labrador West, you look at two of the largest open-pit mines in the world, you go to Voisey's Bay and look at what we're doing underground, we're world leaders. Elon Musk wants to come work with us. There's no question. I hear the Member for Goose Bay talk about oil companies making so much money, and he talks about electric cars. He doesn't say a word about the world's leading electric carmaker, and how much money he makes – richest man in the world. Think about it, how hypocritical.

The reality of it is – and I keep saying the reality – is that we have everything right here in this province. We have it here right now. We just got

to find a way to do it. But in that journey to getting where we've got to go, we've got to look after the people that put us here. We've got to find a way to do. Now, I understand that the offsets come in play if we give more money or carbon tax back to people, but there's got to be a way to do it in a different way.

If that money goes back into general revenue, we can call it something else. There's got to be a way for us to do it. Unless that money isn't available. And I get that we allot it to other places; we invest in technology and all the things that we need to do in order to move the province forward. But moving forward sometimes makes us forget about the people that need it the most. Right now, I honestly don't believe for a second that there's been a time in this province, even going back to the great recession, that the vast amount of people have hurt as much as they are right now.

And sadly, we're a proud, proud bunch of people. And I don't say sadly because I think it's sad to be proud; I say sadly because I don't think we all understand exactly how bad it is. People don't want to talk about it. People hide behind their poverty, or their inability to buy stuff or take their kids to hockey, or go to see a doctor. I know; I've got cancer patients in my district who cannot come into St. John's to get treatment. They call my office. I set them up with H. Bliss Murphy Cancer Care family, friends for transportation and different things. Whatever avenue we can do. But we should not depend on charity to help sick people.

At that, I will have more time to speak later on.

Thank you Mr. Chair.

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

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

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

It seems like two days ago that we started this and myself and the Minister of Finance opposite opened the debate. But we are still here and it is an engaging conversation because there have been lots of things brought out about things

where we are going. I mean let's face it. I am not going to stand here and say that our province doesn't have a climate change problem because we absolutely do. The Minister of Environment over here talked about my district and he is absolutely right. And I am waiting for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to actually do something about the road in Fox Island River that was wiped out because of a coastal storm and the coastal erosion is real in my district and it continues to happen.

Again, the debate tonight, this is almost like a symptom of a bigger, bigger issue that we are all dealing with, which is the cost of living. We know the impact that the high prices and the high cost of fuel are having on people all over this province. We have heard comments tonight from the minister and others about the impact or the potential to consider a home heat rebate program and encouraging words, but I would hope that they are not just words, that there are some actions behind them.

Because, with all due respect, I think you had a real opportunity at the end of last year. You had a significant increase in revenue and a reduction in expenditure that allowed you to finish in a much better position than you originally had projected. So we missed an opportunity to take some of that additional savings and give it to back to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

This year, we are still projecting a deficit, somewhat lower, which is good, but it is still a deficit as has been pointed out. But we also have the potential that there may be some increased revenue come our way if oil prices continue to stay high, if oil production comes in as budgeted. We know that every time the prices go up we get more revenue from HST. So we have been talking about the idea of ensuring that we use some of that additional revenue to give back to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. They need that hope. They need hope that their government will be there for them. That their government will step up, but they need that commitment. They need a commitment that it's actually going to happen.

That is probably the reason why we talk about and spend so much time talking about the carbon tax. Now, I think what we're finding out after all day and most of the night is that the options for the government to do anything about the carbon tax increase does not exist. I heard tonight that the Premier had written his other premiers. I heard tonight that the Minister of Finance has spoken to her federal counterpart. The reality of it is, the federal government have said no, we're not prepared to not increase the carbon tax; we're moving ahead with it so you guys will have to live with it.

That's unfortunate that the federal government has chosen that route, because certainly they have an option to understand that the people, not only in our province but in the country are suffering through these high prices. But they refused, so now we have this carbon tax that we have to deal with.

I don't know if my calculations are right, the minister can correct me in a little while about it, but 2.5 cents seems to work out to around \$4 million in additional revenue that might come into the province this year as a result of that increase.

So, again, small amount in a \$9-billion budget, but a huge amount for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. So what we have to do is find ways, if we can't do anything about a carbon tax increase, then let's find ways to rebate back in other ways. We've heard some of those suggestions tonight from this side, so maybe it's time we looked at how we can rebate back through other things.

Let me tell you one of the things you can do, you have control of, you can certainly do it, and that is do not implement the sugar tax. That is something that you have total control over and right now you're estimating about \$5 million in revenue from that.

This is not the time. This is not the year to implement another tax. We said no taxes this year, but we're hiding behind the fact that we introduced it last year. You have control of that. So as much as you stand here and say you have control over the carbon tax increase, you have control over that sugar tax implementation; you can make the decision right now not to

implement that tax or to defer it. Defer that sugar tax; defer it. You have the ability to do that. The federal government aren't involved in that one.

My colleague mentioned a while ago when he talked about – my colleague talked about the fact – okay, Chair, get them to keep quiet.

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Will the minister of interruption please stop interrupting.

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

**CHAIR:** The noise level's a bit high in the House.

Could people cease to have conversations?

The hon. the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

**T. WAKEHAM:** I'd like to say, forget that, you have the control; you do not have to implement the sugar tax.

But I want to go back to something that the Minister of Justice said, and I appreciated his comments and how he delivered them. Because he's absolutely right, the last thing I would want –

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** – to do is spend more money on lawyers. I totally agree with him on that point. Can't disagree with him on that one.

Because he quoted facts and one of the facts is the Trudeau government applauded the Muskrat Falls Project in its new 2030 emissions reduction plan. As my colleague from Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans has said, as a population of 500,000 people, we have paid a significant price to help this country reduce its carbon footprint. We have helped this country switch from carbon fuels to green energy for the betterment of other provinces, not just our own, but it's on the backs of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Now I'm not going to talk about default, or whether it was good or bad or anything else. It's a reality that it's here, it's done; we pay too much for it, that's the reality. We've all read the report. But at the end of the day, it is now recognized as a project that is part of the solution. They recognized it when they talked about the Atlantic Loop and they recognized it in their 2030 reduction plan. But it's the people of Newfoundland and Labrador who are bearing that cost. And I don't know how the negotiations went when government went forward on rate mitigation. But I am disappointed in the fact that coming out of rate mitigation, instead of taking an equity stake in the Muskrat Falls project, the federal government took an equity stake in the transmission line.

The federal government, whether the Minister of Justice agrees or not, have a stake in this project. The sanctioning of that project, the low-interest rate that was granted to it was all partly given because it had an impact on other provinces, because it was going to help other provinces. So I would continue to put the pressure on the federal government to take an equity stake in that project because if we're going to move forward – the Premier just appointed a new committee to overlook at the Upper Churchill. Whatever we do, we have to make sure that we hold the federal government to account in that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, I would continue to argue, have paid the highest price per capita of anyone in this country to have carbon turned from carbon fuels to green economy. I don't think anybody can argue with that.

I'm out of time but I'll get another chance to speak, but before I close, I'll talk about the Minister of Education and waste management. I don't think anybody can tell me that it is carbon efficient to have a truck leave, what I call the dump, out in St. George's and travel to Grand Falls to unload garbage that was collected and brought from St. George's. Somehow or other that just doesn't work for me.

Anyway, I'll sit down.

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

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

**P. LANE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Glad to have an opportunity to speak again. Mr. Chair, I usually don't get to upset in this House of Assembly but I got to admit that last time got my goat a little bit.

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

**P. LANE:** No, I'm not going to get into it again because I have to say that the Minister of Education, when he speaks, he always has a calming effect on me.

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

**P. LANE:** He does, he does.

He's a good Member; he's a good minister. The proof is in the pudding; just look at how many times he has been elected.

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

**P. LANE:** I have to give credit where it is due.

Now, I do have to make a comment to my colleague, the Minister of Environment, because when he got up and he spoke, he had to take the opportunity to take a little shot across the bow and refer to me as a populist. So I said, well, I'll tell you what, I'm going to Google populist and a populist, it says, for the record: "a person, especially a politician, who strives to appeal to ordinary people who feel their concerns are disregarded by established elite groups." So I say to the minister: Am I a populist? You're darn right I am; I wear it as a badge of honour in this House of Assembly. I would argue, Mr. Chair, that every Member in this House should be a populist because every Member should be speaking up for the people in their district. That is what they were elected to do.

Mr. Chair, I'm going to digress. I just want to go back, first of all, to say once again I don't want it to come across that somehow I am ignoring climate change because I felt a little bit of inference by a couple of Members here. That is not the case. I totally recognize climate change. I understand climate change.

I think the issue for me, more about the approach of how do we deal with climate

change, to my way of thinking, right or wrong, and we all think differently on these things, on a lot of things, to my way of thinking, instead of going after the average citizen and taxing them to death, I think we should be going after big polluters. That's how I would see it.

If we want people to drive electric cars, if we're saying that we want people to drive electric cars, which we recognize is the right thing to do, it's where we need to head, then I would be more of the mindset to say, do you know what? Why doesn't the Government of Canada say put some sort of a time limit and say by the year 2030 – I'm going to say the year 2030, just as a random timeline. By the year 2030, you will not be allowed – say it to car dealerships – no more combustion engine cars can be sold in this country after the year 2030. They're going to adapt, they're going to start building more electric vehicles. That's all that'll be sold and the price will be competition and there will be more of them and we'll all have them.

Then, at that point in time, when I have a choice, as a consumer, when the average person has a choice. Not the person who has money, when the average person has a choice at a certain given time that they can go and readily obtain an electric vehicle, readily obtain it at a reasonable price and the charging stations are available across the province and everything is good to go. And then I still say, nah, shag it, I still want to drive a regular car, it'll be a second-hand one because I won't be able to get a new one, well then charge me at the pumps. Because I'm making that conscious choice where I have an option that I can afford but I'm simply making the conscious choice to say, shag it, I don't want to drive an electric car. But at least I have the option.

Right now, we don't have those options. The options are not there for the average person. So all we're doing is until that time comes, where the option is available for the average person, we're going to punish everybody at the pumps until then. And what is it changing? That's my question, what is it changing?

I can understand if all of a sudden we're all going around in electric vehicles. It's not, that's the reality, it's not happening. We don't have electric taxis going around. We don't have

electric cars going around all over the city. We will at some time, and when the time comes that we have them and they're affordable and everything else and the choice is there and the infrastructure is in place, then, at that point in time, people can choose to do it, or if they don't then they pay a price. That's what they can do, but until that point in time comes, I would say, Mr. Chair, all we're doing is taxing people at the pumps, unnecessarily, and it becomes a tax grab.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

I'd like to hear the speaker.

**P. LANE:** Thank you for the protection there, Mr. Chair.

So the other point I wanted to make is, the government keeps talking about – they're hiding behind the feds on this. They're saying it's a federal tax. It's a tax that's being imposed on us by the federal government. We have no choice, and I agree. I listened to the Minister of Justice, too. I thought he made a good presentation, made sense what he said. I agree with every word he said, absolutely 100 per cent, I agree with him.

I agree that it would make no sense to go to Ottawa; nothing is going to change in that regard. I get that; that makes sense to me. But the point that seems to be getting lost in all this is that, sure, you can't do anything with the carbon tax, but what you can do is you can say that the extra money that's coming in, or money coming in from carbon tax, we can give it to people a different way.

My colleague here from Humber - Bay of Islands talked about Alberta, a family of four, I think he said, was a cheque for \$1,100. So that's what they did.

We could say we're going to reduce people's income tax if we wanted to. If we really wanted people to buy electric vehicles, the minister instead of offering \$1,500, let's offer them \$5,000. You have lots of money that you're spending. If the money is for climate change money, and to get people on electric vehicles, instead of throwing it all into the general coffers, let's up it to \$5,000. Let's make it easier for more people.



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

**P. LANE:** I am calm. I am calm, but that's my point, the money that's being collected in the name of climate change: (a) I don't see where it's making any big difference and (b) the money is coming in it's just going into general coffers and some of it could be used, seeing as how you're not putting it all into environment; seeing how it's not all going into – some of it's going to environment, I agree. Some of it's going there. But seeing how it's not all going there, we're saying you're going to start spreading money around to other stuff, well then spread it around to the people who are suffering right now. That's all that's being said.

I do acknowledge in Question Period today, the Minister of Finance said – she committed that they would put in a home heat rebate. Now she didn't say when.

**S. COADY:** Consider it.

**P. LANE:** Now she's saying consider it. I don't think she said consider it. I think she just said yes. I'm pretty sure that the word consider never came out of her mouth in Question Period. I'm going to check *Hansard*, I'm pretty sure she said: Mr. Speaker, yes, and sat down. I'm pretty sure that's what she said. Now she is saying consider it. She must be taking lessons from the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL about consider, like we did on the helmet legislation.

But, anyway, the point is, Mr. Chair, I want to go back around to – and I just want to reiterate, Mr. Chair, the fact that there is money coming in. Yes, it has to be imposed. It has to be imposed because of the federal agreement. I totally get it; I totally understand it, 100 per cent. But to say that we have to collect this money and we have to keep the money; that is not true.

It is not as if the feds are charging the carbon tax and they're taking the money; they're not. The feds are just simply saying to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, you have to give the provincial government more money. We're ordering you, by way of this tax, to pay the provincial government more money for their general revenues. That's what is happening, I mean, that is reality.

In doing so, one would think it is supposed to be going into climate change. Just like the 75 cents on the telephone for the 911 was supposed to be for Enhanced 911 and now that's going into the general coffers of the government. It is the same thing. The money is not necessarily being spent for the purposes for which it is supposed to be spent.

So if you're not going to spend it all on environmental issues, if you're not going to do that, which clearly you're not. You're spending some of it, maybe a lot of it; you're certainly not spending all of it. All we're suggesting is use that money in some other form. Don't call it a carbon tax rebate; call it a home heat rebate. Send everybody a cheque, or low-income people a cheque, like they've done in Alberta. Give people at certain levels a break on their income tax. Do something, but get the money back to the people who need it.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Before I recognize the next speaker, I want to say that the noise level in the House is rather high. I ask for Members' co-operation as we proceed.

The hon. the Member for Exploits.

**P. FORSEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's great to stand here tonight and represent the District of Exploits, as I did this morning and many other times before, it is always good. I must say, the debate is good. It is back and forth on both sides. I think everybody got some points and the issues are good, and I think it is healthy. I really do.

But coming from the government, it looks like there is nothing they can do with regard to the carbon tax. It is a federal tax and they are going to push it on us, but the people of my district don't see it that way. It is another tax, and they can't absorb another tax right now. The people of the province can't afford another tax right now. It is something that we just can't push on them right now. We have to get this pushed down the road, taken off or find another way.

We have got three options here that we can do. To find the other way would be to reduce some of the taxes that we already have brought in, especially on the high cost of fuels that we have right now. We would probably be able to eliminate some of the other costs to fuels, or put in a rebate program that can help absorb some of these issues, Mr. Chair. We need to do that to help the people out to be able to absorb those costs. We can't just throw in this other tax right now with what they have already got.

So with that, Mr. Chair, I will go back to what I said this morning because I know it was referenced by the Minister of Finance and it was referenced by the Minister of Health and Community Services later this evening. They stressed that it is going to help the forestry, farming, agriculture and fishery. To a point it will, but right now I don't know if anybody has been listening to the news the past three or four days with regard to the agriculture, dairy farms and that sort of stuff. I don't know if you are already listening to the news already that those people can't afford it.

There are no options there to help them right now, of what they are doing, to help alleviate some of the stress and pain off those farmers right now. It is already there. You are going to relieve the carbon tax off the fuels that they burn, but that doesn't relieve the carbon tax off the fertilizers that they are bringing in. It doesn't relieve the carbon tax off the parts that they are bringing in. Those costs are still going to rise. With regard to the gasoline itself now and the diesels they are already an exorbitant cost now. They are up almost triple from last year. They are triple now from last year; 186 per cent on some of it. That's something that they can't absorb already. This is going to run down to the food that we put on the tables of every Newfoundlander and Labradorian in our province. That's where it's going to end up.

We've got to find a way to help everyone, especially the lower income people, to be able to afford that food that's going to come down on their table, because the farmers, if they're going to survive, they have to pass this off to the end users. That's what will happen.

That's plain to see. To say that we can't do anything; we have to do something. We just can't stay here and say that the carbon tax is going to be added on, just another tax, let's do it, let's get out of here and let's have it over with. To me, it just doesn't work that way, and we have to find ways to get at this. Even the farmer, new entrants – you talk about new entrants coming into a farm these days. Why would they even try it? Why would they even tackle such an exorbitant cost, to buy machinery, to clear land – which they can't afford to clear, and then put in crop in there and they can't even get fertilizer to grow their crop. Because without the ground, we have no crop. We just got no crop; we got no food. So where's our food self-sufficiency? It's sliding away from us, very, very quickly. Our food self-sufficiency is sliding away. More stuff we have to bring in.

We definitely got to do something about that carbon tax. We really do. It's just a tax that we can't put on the average individual in our province right now.

With regard to the carbon tax, you say that it's all across Canada. The carbon tax is done by all the provinces, all across Canada. It's a model of other countries. Well, we're not in the UN and we're not in Sweden, so we need to find something for our own self right here in this province. We always follow models from other provinces, on other things that we've done. We've followed models on medicine. We've followed models on education. We always hear from the government that they're following models from this province because this has worked in this province. We've followed models from another province because that has worked in that province.

Well, here are a couple of more models that probably we could follow or try. PEI is sending direct payments to its residents. Alberta eliminated its 13 per cent on the gas tax – doing this while struggling with oil in their own province. Ontario has pledged to reduce gas tax by 5.7 cents per litre by July 1. Nova Scotia implemented a heating assistance rebate program to help the low-income residents with the cost of living. New Brunswick is using the tools to offer relief. Newfoundland and Labrador, not one cent to help on rebates or gas

breaks. Not one break in Newfoundland and Labrador.

So if we could follow models from other provinces for education, we can follow models for health care, then why can't we follow models from other provinces to help with our own individuals right here in this province?

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

**P. FORSEY:** That's certainly something that we need to look at. If those other provinces, they're paying their carbon tax – you've already said that everybody is going to pay the carbon tax. Every province in this country is going to pay the carbon tax and it's working and everything was never so good before. But those provinces – that's only one, two, three, four, five provinces that are helping out their own individuals, their own constituents, their own people right now and we're not doing anything to help out. We're not going to put out a rebate. We're not going to take some price off gas tax, anything like that. We're not offering any options to those people so that they can afford to get to work, so that they can afford to buy stuff at the grocery stores.

Those people are hurting right now. I hear it. I hear it every day and I've heard every single Member in this House of Assembly so far who got up in this debate. Nobody is arguing that. Nobody is. The government can get up in regard to the carbon tax, once we're done, you'll get up and have your vote and the carbon tax will come through. But that's not good enough. If we're going to bring in the carbon tax, we need to offer some assistance in another program somehow on another relief. We just have to. We just can't let this go and let the individuals of our province keep paying and suffer. Because that's what they're doing; they're suffering. They're suffering health-wise. They're suffering mentally. They're suffering every day just to try to get to work. And that's not right. Our people deserve better; we have to do better and we can do better.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

**B. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just had to clarify a couple of little things. One of my favourite quotes – we were just chatting about it over on this side – is from Ben Parker: “With great power comes great responsibility.” When we sit in this House of Assembly, it is incumbent on us always to try to provide the best information we can.

So one of the things that the hon. Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands said – I just want to clarify for him because he probably didn't know. He was making a great suggestion, an absolutely great suggestion, that the federal government should put targets in place for gas-powered vehicles to be transitioned out of the marketplace. They did. They must have read your mind, because they did do that a while ago for 2040 but recently, as in I think this past fiscal year, they accelerated that to 2035 for all internal, or what they call ICE vehicles to be taken out of the market place and not be sold anymore.

So it was a great suggestion. They want 20 per cent of the vehicles by 2026 to be electric vehicles and 60 per cent by 2030, with 100 per cent by 2035. They have set achievable targets, which is an important piece. I think the reason why we have put in place the electric vehicle program and the oil to electric, which I hopefully we will get to speak about in a second, was to help move those people a little faster.

I get your point – the hon. Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands – about increasing the amount of money to help spur that change a little bit more. That is why when we did a pilot project last year, we had seen some success. Even considering the supply chain problems globally for microchips in every kind of vehicle, including electric vehicles. As that starts to rectify, you'll see that supply chain get stronger.

I know that some of the hon. Members have mentioned the fact that there hasn't been as many electric vehicles. By the end of 2021, I think 284 battery-electric vehicles were registered in the province; up from 195 in 2020 and up from 113 in 2018. So we are seeing a positive increase. While ICE vehicles are going in the other direction, albeit as a larger number

of vehicles being purchased that way, but they are in a declining, sliding scale there.

One of the things that we have look at for electric vehicles now, we have quarterly meetings with the dealers association, and the hon. Member will be happy to hear that over 300 vehicles from those dealer networks have said that they will be here this year, based on orders, based on what they've been confirmed from the suppliers, from the manufacturers. That does not include Tesla or vehicles that would be ordered to be delivered to the province, which in last year's terms is about 25 to 30 per cent of all vehicles, electric in nature, that were ordered and purchased under our program.

So it could be as many as 420, 450 at the worst-case scenario. I'm hopeful that those numbers will even be higher than that, but time will tell and hopefully the supply chain comes in. That's perfect, excellent.

One of the other things I'd like to highlight, one of the other investments that we've made from the money that's collected from the imposition of carbon tax would be the investment of \$2 million to help people transition from oil to electric, which I think the hon. Member for Terra Nova talked about some 30 per cent of the province being on oil, and it's higher in this province and in Atlantic Canada than in the rest of the country in nature.

So we have some 48,000 homes in this province that would be heated primarily by oil. So one of the things, we see that as an opportunity for us to try to work with them; \$2 million is by far not going to fix the problem for sure, but we did see the pilot project move from \$2,500 last year to \$5,000 this year, based on the concerns that people have. But that's only one program that people can avail of. There are three that they avail of, depending on their situation.

That's administered by Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, the oil-to-electric program that I'm talking about. There's another program administered through Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, which is again, a \$5,000 non-refundable grant program, that can be for changing out your oil furnace. It can be for reducing your oil consumption or your energy consumption. It's the HESP program that's

there, and we increased the threshold this year from \$32,500 to \$52,500.

Sorry, what was that?

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

**B. DAVIS:** They can be stacked. As well, the federal government has a Greener Homes program. Now that's a little bit more challenging because it doesn't focus on moving you off oil yet; we're working on that, but it does allow you to put in mini-splits, extra insulation, replace doors, windows and things like that, provided you get an energy auditing done first for an additional \$5,000.

So all of those three programs, they're all stackable and they can be utilized. So it is a help. Is it enough? It's not perfect, by no stretch, but we're working with our federal colleagues to open up the thresholds for the Greener Homes program, because we, in this province, want to make sure that the residents that are impacted by the rising costs of fuel, from a home heating perspective, are at least given the option to try to move in that direction. I've looked at it myself, and I know some of my colleagues on the other side have talked about it. I know some of my colleagues have their families looking at it because they see it as an option.

One of the things that we've got to look at is, obviously, there's a big cost in some cases for some homes to do that. Some homes it's only the replacement of the furnace itself, because they have an electrical panel that can handle that. In other cases, you have to increase the electrical panel capacity as well, which in turn makes the cost a little higher to do that for the homeowner.

So that's why we increased our program cost. The average cost to the people that have done the program, which I know is not a true representation of those that may have thought about doing the program, but the cost was prohibitive. So obviously that's a number that I don't have and I wish I could tell you, but it was about \$8,800 to change out your oil furnace to an electric furnace. I know that number will be higher for some people. I know for a lot of people I've talked to, that didn't avail of the program, that was one of the concerns. That's

why we're trying to work with those three programs to help those individuals stack those programs with each other to make it a little bit easier.

One of the other things that I think is really, really important is if we can look at what we've done with the partnership of the federal government. Over the last three to four years, we've had the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund. That fund was a cost-shared fund between the province and the federal government. That was \$89.4 million. We still have a little bit of money left to get out and announce over the next little bit. The applications closed a couple of months ago, and we hopefully have some more announcements that will come from there.

Over that four- or five-year period, when it's fully implemented, by 2030, we're going to see a reduction of about 830,000 tons of cumulative greenhouse gas emissions, and about 650 person-years of employment. So it pays to actually have people get involved in the programs and change over. The Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation highlighted one a second ago when he spoke about the Memorial University electrification project where we're taking oil-fired burners that are going to be our single biggest investment to savings in greenhouse gas emissions that we've done so far and replace them with an electric one. That not only is going to help Memorial University curb increasing costs, but also help the health authority over at the Health Sciences Centre, which is also heated by those oil-fired burners.

So those are a couple of the things we can do. Even on a smaller scale than that – because I know I only have a couple of minutes left here – we've worked with municipalities, whether it be down in Burgeo - La Poile District, down there where we have helped in the stadium change over for their electricity – change over the oil-fired furnaces to electricity. That's one.

We have done it in Mount Pearl at the city depot to reduce their costs. All of these initiatives that we have done are coupled to help reduce cost to individuals through either municipalities or municipal tax savings or whatnot, but also to put

money back into the municipalities where they can spend it on other things in the future to help their residents.

So those are just a couple of highlights. Maybe I will get an opportunity to jump in again if my colleagues feel the need to allow me to. But I just want to say thank you to all those that have spoken and everybody has something to add to the conversation here tonight. I have learned a little bit from everybody.

Thank you for the opportunity to listen during this fruitful debate.

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

**CHAIR (Trimper):** Thank you, Minister.

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

I certainly appreciate the opportunity to speak again. I spoke to the minister regarding the number of electric vehicles that are going to be coming to the province. The one that I had quoted that I had checked on today was just one dealership, but I think between them all – and he spoke to the Dealers Association – it's going to be 300 to 400 that they are anticipating for the year with all of the dealerships. So we are a long way off, but you have to start somewhere. Eventually they will –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** – make progress on that and eventually gas-powered vehicles will probably be a thing of the past at some point. I don't see it anytime soon. They're saying 2035 but that remains to be seen. And it all depends on people being able to adapt to that.

I will go back; I was trying to tie together between vehicles and another tax that we are talking about. In vehicles you have a DEF fluid. DEF fluid is a diesel exhaust fluid. So when they had the diesel trucks –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

Order, please!

Let's listen to the Member.

Thank you.

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** When they had the diesel trucks, they were trying to meet an emission standard, and they're again governed by the federal government to make these vehicles efficient enough that they have got to meet a standard. So in order to do that, they had to put in diesel exhaust fluid. That was something that brought the emissions down and this fluid right now is at a shortage. Okay.

So if you have these diesel trucks – there are people that have them – I think you get about 8,000 kilometres before you have to refill it and it's a four-litre tub that you get. It is very expensive. It's not only in the trucks; farmers are using it. Farmer are using it in their tractors and they are having trouble getting it. I had a call from somebody – I'm going to say it was probably two or three months ago, maybe longer – about the price of it and what they could get. There is a big shortage on it. Whether you blame it on COVID, again, I don't know what you blame it on but you know it's definitely an issue.

So when they get into another feature on some of these vehicles – and you probably all have these now because they're on all vehicles – is the start/stop feature. Stop at the light, the vehicle shuts off; leave, the vehicle starts. That's for fuel efficiency and that's how they're getting their targets, that's how they make this. So all that stuff is technology that has grown over the years and eventually you're going to get to electric. So that's the best they can do right now. That's not the best they can do, but that's what they're doing to improve all this efficiency in all these vehicles.

So I'll tie that to the sugar tax. These companies that sell the pop and soft drinks and whatever it may be, they come out with drinks, they come out with diet drinks, they come out with no-

sugar drinks. They are doing the same thing as these car dealerships are doing. They're trying to improve their product; they're trying to cut down on the sugars. They're doing this on their own. We're forcing them to do something now and forcing them to change their systems that they use in the stores. You're costing these companies money, big money. They have these POS systems, point of sale systems they have to change in their stores because we're going to add a sugar tax to the people of the province. It's a big issue.

They are doing their best. They've come in and met with us, they've come in and met with you guys. They are doing their best. There is absolutely no need to put another tax on the people of this province. There is no need to do it. They are doing their best to bring the product back here for the people of the province. They know that they're doing that. Same as I said the car dealerships, they're doing the same thing. Don't think they're not because they are. And they're going with different sugar-free drinks and drinks for kids and all kinds of stuff that they're doing.

But we didn't acknowledge them; we didn't give them a choice. You did not give them a choice. From the industry, there was no choice given to them. This is going to be implemented and this is the way it's going to be. No choice given. The government is going to implement it and that's the way it's going to be. Tax grab to come in. I know you're going to put it into schools or Kids Eat Smart or whatever the case may be, but they were just forced into it and it's costing these companies thousands of dollars to change over to sell these products – thousands.

Now you go in to try to put these on the shelves and try to put them in their systems, I'll never say it's going to be impossible, but it's going to cost them thousands. They're really hurting; they are really hurting. I wanted to touch on that.

I wanted to jump over to again we're talking about carbon tax and global warming. Sometimes I look back at it and I'll say, b'y, sometimes this is evolution. You started with an ice age, the world heated up, cooled down, it froze and it heated up again. It's like an evolution that's happening. Yes, it's global warming.

Do you know I was down in Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, the minister's district, I'm going to say last year, talking to some people who had worked on fish farms, they were retired from it, and I spoke to them about fish in the area. He said the temperature of the water was warmer down there.

They tag their fish. When they were down there they had some fish they tagged over the years, they had tracers on them, or trackers on them, whatever that may be, however they done it, but those fish ended up on the Northeast Coast over here. They tracked them, based on the temperature of the water, and they ended up over here. The water was cooler on this side than it was in the bay and that is a fact.

Now, whether that's why they left that bay to go over there, but it's a bit of science to it I'm sure, and I'm not a scientist. I listened to the Member for Bonavista and I listened to the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi, you're talking about scientists and all this, and I listened. You talked about Greta Thunberg. She's not a scientist. She's certainly a great spokesperson for it, no question, but she's not a scientist.

We have good scientists that you've introduced and spoke about, but she's one that's rallying and pushing this cause. It's a good cause, no doubt, but she's no scientist. She was a young girl when this started - I'm going to say 16 or 17 years old, and she grabbed on to it and had a rally cry. I certainly agree with it, no doubt about it. It's something that's going to change. We're not going to have any choice that it's going to change for sure.

I look at the home rebates. I have people in my district, I'll use Cappahayden as an example, Fermeuse or Renew, they leave to drive to town to go do their shopping, to go to Foodland, to go to where it's cheaper to buy groceries, if at all possible. Because we all know the further you go away from the City of St. John's, the more expensive it costs. It is hurting them in their pocket to drive to town. It really is hurting them. They have an hour or an hour-and-a-half drive, and it's not like their groceries they buy them for this week or they buy a two-week supply, they have to come out again in two weeks to go get more. It's incredible the amount of money that these people are spending to live and we want to

reach into their pocket and take money from them, with no consequences.

We have to look at this; we definitely have to look at this to see the brighter picture for these people. This is what we were elected to do, to get in here and represent the people. I know everybody has it in their district, everybody, but we sit here and debate. We had the budget debate and now we have this debate on carbon tax. There wasn't one Member on the other side that got up and supported your budget and spoke on it yet, not one, and you're up all night talking about carbon tax. You must be really excited about giving the people a carbon tax. Really excited to get up, everybody spoke, you're going to charge people a carbon tax and you never once spoke on your budget, how good it was, not once.

Like I don't get it, I don't get it. You want to charge people more tax, you're going to speak how excited - you're not excited, obviously, but you spoke about it. Everybody on that side - not everybody. People on that side that got up and spoke, and -

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** I'm going to lose my speaking rights again, I think.

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Everybody got up and spoke and supported the carbon budget. Everybody has got up and spoke, and spoke good on it I have no doubt about it. Why didn't you get up and support your budget if you're so excited about it? You're charging people tax, right now, today, on carbon tax, and you never spoke on your budget. So is there something wrong with that, that I don't see?

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Is there something that I'm missing, that you're not excited about your budget, that you never got up and spoke on how good it was? The minister did, when she introduced it. Other than that, you haven't spoken about it. But you're really excited to get

up and charge people more money. Like, really, not one speaker to get up. It's incredible. So you're really happy to charge the people of the province more taxes and never get up once to speak on your budget.

Maybe you should have a look in the mirror to see where it's all going, because it's unbelievable that we haven't done that once, just once. The minister did, because she had to introduce it, so she had to get up and speak how good it was. Other than that – maybe they don't support you. I don't know, they haven't got up and spoken on it. It's incredible.

You're voting on a tax to tax the people of the province and you haven't got up once on the budget. Anyway, I see my time is running out, Chair.

Thank you so much.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, and the MHA for St. John's West.

**S. COADY:** Thank you very much, Chair.

It's been a riveting debate over the last –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

You asked for her; you got her.

**S. COADY:** – I guess we're about 12 hours into this, and it's perplexing to me that we're actually discussing and debating climate change.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**S. COADY:** I thought we were past that debate and really focused on how we can help the people of the province. So allow me for a few moments to talk about what I've heard this evening, what I've heard this morning and pretty much all day on the carbon tax.

So first of all, as I said this morning, the carbon tax is something that has been implemented all across the country. The federal government made it a policy platform in 2015. In 2016 and 2017, they acted on their mandate and they delivered a carbon tax to the country. There have been a number of jurisdictions across the country that did take the federal government to court over the imposition of the carbon tax and of course, as my learned colleague from Virginia Waters well pointed out, that was not – sorry, my learned colleague from Virginia Lake – sorry Windsor Lake – it's really past my bedtime – pointed out, they were not successful in the courts, and of course the courts ruled that the federal government could indeed impose a carbon tax in this country.

It is their platform to ensure that we address climate change in this country. They are diligent in their efforts of addressing climate change. They have been very big proponents of the Paris accord, of course. In this province, we considered how the carbon tax – if the federal government was going to impose it – how we could do the best for Newfoundland and Labrador.

We made sure that we took into account the impacts on the people of the province and we made sure that we looked at competitive issues. So as we debated with the federal government, again, those that do understand how carbon tax can impact climate change are very supportive, obviously, of what the federal government is doing. There are those that do not support how this policy concept will roll out and impact climate change. We're not here to debate that; that has been debated. That is finalized.

What we are discussing is the federal government has said to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, indeed to the entire country, that we have to increase the carbon tax as we move forward, as we move through the years. In every other jurisdiction in the country, there has been the imposition of this carbon tax already this year; we are the last province, I understand, to do so.

But we have been able to negotiate with the federal government to minimize the impact on residents and to maintain our competitive position, so we have exemptions. The first



exemption and I think the one that is probably the most important to the people of the province is gasoline used for energy generation, for example, is exempt; that is important to the people of the province. Fuels used in home heating are exempt; important to the people of the province. Gasoline used for farming, forestry, fisheries; the transportation of fish, cultivation and harvesting of aquatic plants and animals; construction equipment used for such purposes as rock crushing and, of course, manufacturing equipment; and any gasoline used in the equipment for exploration of a mineral. Very important exemptions.

Now, if the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador said, look, we're not going to implement the federal government's policy on climate change, which one of the issues is a carbon tax, then the federal government will come in, they would impose the carbon tax and they would actually put it on what I've just listed out as exemptions that we were able to carve out under the carbon tax plan.

So I'm perplexed when I'm listening to debate here, with the Opposition understanding that the federal government will, as they have in other jurisdictions, come in and impose their tax, if we hadn't negotiated. I give a great deal of credit to the minister at the time, thank you for ensuring the competitiveness, and thank you for ensuring the people of the province had these exemptions, because they are particularly important.

It's very important for us to make sure we do not trip over ourselves, unintended consequences as they may be, and have the federal government come in and impose the carbon tax. We want to ensure that we retain these exemptions. We want to ensure that we actually retain the monies in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

My learned colleague from Virginia Waters - Pleasantville just gave a great speech about all the things that we're using the money that we're gaining from the carbon tax, how we're spending it. We're also in this budget; many people have congratulated the government. I could list off all the people who have congratulated the government on the budget, because we've been able to provide more additional funding.

I think it's \$400 million over the last two years to Health. We all know how important Health is. We've been able to provide I think it's \$67 million or something in that range to Education. We've been able to provide additional monies and supports to Justice and Public Safety so that we have additional public safety. Things around radios for first responders are in the budget. We also put in additional money for Transportation and Infrastructure. I've heard the Members opposite talk about how important it is that we have additional monies for roads. We put \$10 million more in the roads budget.

I heard people talk about how community groups are finding cost of living, and they needed additional money, we put \$5 million in that. It's about balance. So what we're saying to this hon. House at this late hour is it is better for us to continue with a made-in-Newfoundland-and-Labrador solution that we've negotiated with the federal government to ensure these exemptions continue.

We don't want the unintended consequences, and I know the Members opposite do not wish to have a carbon tax imposed upon home heat. We've all been talking about how difficult things are at the moment and how challenged the people of the province are in the cost of living. That's why we were able to provide \$142 million in assistance to the people of the province. Is it enough? Of course, it's not enough; it would never be enough. People are hurting, we know that. But it is \$142 million and we gave it to the people of the province to ensure that they could at least offset some of these rising costs.

We borrowed that money, \$142 million; we borrowed it from our grandchildren and our children. So we have to remember that we have a deficit of \$350 million. We have \$17 billion in debt. Every single one of us, the taxpayers of the province, the people of the province, owe \$17 billion. So it's really incumbent upon us to make sure that we have our fiscal house in order because we spend a billion dollars a year on the cost of borrowing.

So I say, again, a couple of key points. Climate change: I think I've heard many people in this House, most people in this House, say that they all understand there's an impact of climate

change. We all understand that the federal government's policy to address climate change, one of them, is carbon tax that we know from the courts that the federal government has the jurisdiction to be able to implement. We were able to successfully negotiate exemptions to that that will provide assistance to the people of the province. And this government, the provincial government, is ensuring that any provincial gas tax is returned to the people of the province. All very logical, all very important. I know the Members of this House would support those things. I hear them when they say we're concerned about the continuing cost of living impacts.

My colleague across the way today asked if I would consider further measures. We had said that already. We definitely are considering further measures. We'll see how the next number of months, as we lead into the fall, continues.

I will say to the Members opposite when they talk about the gas tax rebate. Let me just say this: the gas tax rebate in 2014-2015 was \$60 million. We now give that back in the form of Income Supplement and in the form of Seniors' Benefit and it's to \$137 million. So we are giving it back in those things and that's why we increased it by 10 per cent.

Thank you very much.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Minister.

Next, the Member representing the District of Conception Bay South.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Here it comes.

**B. PETTEN:** Here it comes, yeah.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

You know, I've listened to a lot of this debate tonight and I figured – actually, I'm pleased with the debate because we figured coming into this we were going to have to carry the night. We didn't think government were going to engage in the debate. So to their credit, they've actually engaged in a really good debate. I commend them for it, because, listen now, they're defending the indefensible, but they're

defending it. And I've got to commend them on that issue, that alone.

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

**B. PETTEN:** No, it's indefensible, but they're defending it. I get that because they're in government, they have to defend it.

I sit back and I do a lot of – if people are talking, I may not look like it sometimes but I'm paying attention to more than I let on and I process. But I want to offer a token of advice across the way, and they don't have to take it, obviously, they won't probably, they have never yet.

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

**B. PETTEN:** No, you won't. There you go. Thank you.

But it's not about the issue, Mr. Chair; it's about how you deal with the issue. We all know that the carbon tax is supposedly federal. We all know that the carbon tax – they can't do nothing about it. Today, they can't do anything about it, but tomorrow when someone says something good about it, yes, the made-in-Newfoundland approach, but today it's a federal issue and they can't do nothing today.

We get that, too. That's fair enough, but it's how you're dealing with the issue. Do we think we're going to change the world by debating what we're doing here tonight, this hour of the night? And we're going to continue on, we have no issues to stop.

Do you know what our goal is? I believe that you have to stand for something. We struggle out there to get our message out, whatever mediums we can choose. We have to stand the ground somewhere along the way.

My colleague from Ferryland made a good point: Very few Members stood across the way have spoke about the budget. Yet, they're speaking tonight about carbon tax in defence of it. It's a great point. When he said it, it was kind of lost on me until he said it. It was a very good point.

So you're defending, again, the indefensible, but when you released the budget, it was people

going door to door promoting it. It was the Liberal outreach program. Red jackets and all. The Premier, they're all in their districts and they were supporting this budget. It was a document to live by; we were all over it. I looked on Twitter and on a Facebook post, I said, good on you, you know. No problem. The rest of the province are on their knees waiting for more help, but you're out with the Liberal outreach program and I'm okay with that, if that's what you want to do, good on you.

But then you sit in the House of Assembly, day in, day out, day in, day out and, as an Opposition, we are kind of giving the gears to government. Okay, fair enough. I wouldn't want to be sitting on that side a lot of days either. But they're not standing; they're not getting up and defending what they're out promoting to the public.

Isn't that what they should have been doing? You're at the door of your constituents saying what a great document we've got – why not stand up in the House of Assembly and defend this document? Yet, you'll sit here tonight – and for some reason I get a rise every time I speak but that's fine – and defend this carbon tax. There is no one in this country, in my mind, reasonably thinking person who will agree with carbon tax.

It's Trudeau's dream, it's his dream, we have one provincial Liberal government left and it's their dream because it's Trudeau's dream. It's no one else's dream. The rest of the country woke up and gone other directions. We're still Liberal for now, but that's soon changing – someone made that – change is in the air.

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

**B. PETTEN:** That's right, my colleague for Stephenville - Port au Port, said change is in the air. Stay tuned.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** No, no, that's not on.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**B. PETTEN:** I want to go to a point the Minister of Justice made earlier. I listened intently to him, actually, because I was listening having a tea in the caucus room. I listened to him and I'll be honest, sometimes I don't listen to everything they say, I don't. He made a point about Justice LeBlanc. He made the decision on the Muskrat Falls Project which we said is a good, green project, it's carbon friendly. He made a decision that it was a misguided project, but Justice LeBlanc condemned this project.

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

**B. PETTEN:** That was his decision. Justice Wakeham could say next week it's not a bad project. That's a judicial decision. Do judges get it right all the time? No. Do you agree with every decision the judge makes? No. So just because Justice LeBlanc makes that decision, does that mean it's right? No. Do we all have to stop and get on our knees and bow, oh, sorry? No. Do everyone think there were problems with this project? Yes. But that's not the be all and end all.

You beat a project to death – and I got the tally sheet there. I haven't got my glasses to read it closely; we're probably at 40 to 50 references of Muskrat Falls. But actually it's kind of a hypocritical argument here tonight because actually Muskrat Falls benefits the province in this conversation. It actually benefits us. You won't hear that, though. You won't hear that.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** It benefits the country.

**B. PETTEN:** It benefits the country, right. It was once told by the federal government it was the best green-energy project in North America. No, we don't hear that; you hear \$500 million. It's that cause for every problem we got. If you got arthritis, it's caused by Muskrat Falls. It doesn't matter. COVID was brought on by Muskrat Falls. The potholes in the roads down in Baie Verte are Muskrat Falls. That's the answer for everything. Yet, they'll stand in this House and they'll defend the indefensible. This is indefensible.

My colleague from Ferryland, he said earlier: Look in the mirror. And you know that was a really good quote. There are some over there trying to see it in their phones and look in the

mirrors in their phone or whatever they're at. But if they listened to some of the commentary, and I've said it myself, there is too much smoke in the mirrors over there. They can't see themselves. So my colleague was right when he said look in the mirror. They're trying, but they can't see through the smoke, Mr. Chair. There's that much smoke. But if they were to go, if they were to move outside the mirrors and go into the walls on social media, there are pictures everywhere. Again, it's all about the photo op, Mr. Chair.

It's not about Muskrat Falls. It's not about carbon tax. It's a necessary evil. They look at us as being a necessary evil. It's all about this bigger, greater good, but I haven't figured it out yet. To someone else who made a reference that people understand this climate change, b'y – and I have a pretty decent community, education-wise; they're up with any district in the province. I can go up and down most streets and I tell you most people are going to be like, they know what it's about because they hear it all the time, but to have a real grasp on it, they don't. Sure I have people up there who are experts, smarter than anyone in this room on the issue, but as a general theme if you walk up a street you're going to find most people glazed right over.

But one thing they do know is that 11.5 cents a litre on gas as carbon will increase. That will increase up. As we know, the price per ton, we're going to be looking at 12 cents a litre in '22 and 27.6 cents a litre in 2030. That's only eight years away. That's just in carbon pricing. So what are we resolving? Because we are a particle of dust on the big world picture. That's all we are: one particle of dust.

Again, I said this earlier too, and it bears repeating. I'd like to get a private ballot, a secret ballot to go around this House on who supports the carbon tax. I'd say I'd have a resounding no. But they're going to stand up and defend it because it's the good project. It's good politics. It's supporting the –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**B. PETTEN:** It's supporting their friends in Ottawa. The Premier loves to go up and get his

picture with the prime minister, up watching videos of Zelenskyy and all that, and talking about all the good accomplishments he made. Why don't he go and talk about carbon tax? Why don't he ask the prime minister to give us a break on that? No, no, no. Jam up on a couch somewhere, get the picture. Get it up; get the picture, social media picture.

**CHAIR:** Stay relevant.

**B. PETTEN:** Go down to Scotland. The photo op happened in Scotland, Mr. Chair. If we're really worried about the carbon and emissions and our environment, he went to Scotland and got in photo ops at the climate conference.

All I seen, it was like a photo shoot. I never seen the likes; it was photos everywhere. But I repeat this, and I know it irritates government opposite: I've been years in this House now and I'm telling you it's never been so bad, what I'm witnessing now, because that's all I'm seeing. People might think I'm being tongue-in-cheek when I say smoke and mirrors and photo ops, but I kid you not, that's true and I really strongly believe it and I'll repeat it in this House over and over again, because that's what's happening.

I bet you a lot of the Members opposite agree with me. But they will not speak publicly on it, even though they promote the budget under the Liberal outreach program, but they won't speak on it, yet they'll jump up and speak on this, Mr. Chair, no different than on all the rest of this stuff. And if it's a camera around, you will find a Liberal.

Thank you very much.

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

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

**A. PARSONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** A little order, please.

**A. PARSONS:** Happy to speak to this bill. That's a tough act to follow. I mean, it's clear to tell that we're getting into the wee hours; there's a bit of delirium going around here. What I

would say, again, because the Member was talking about photo ops and going here, going there. Well, I can tell you, because I've been around, and I can remember sitting over actually in that seat, and I can remember when they actually used to rent The Rooms back then and have big announcements. Big announcements with CETA and they invited the feds – now the feds didn't show up.

It turned out that CETA wasn't actually a great deal for us. But they rented The Rooms for it; had a big event. Now I'm not sure if that was the same event that I saw the former premier up dancing with Harper or not; I can't remember.

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

**A. PARSONS:** A different event.

I can remember it was around that same time – and it was a lot of fun sitting over there then. They used to have the AGM and I can remember the former minister of Energy and the former premier out at their convention in Gander, the PC convention –

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

**A. PARSONS:** And they were dancing to “Muskrat Love.” That was the song that the band played. They danced to “Muskrat Love” was the song. Kathy Dunderdale and Jerome Kennedy – I can say their names; I'm allowed. I tell you, it was funny.

So again, what I would say is that sometimes – in fact the Member said it there. It was good advice. I took his advice, I looked in the mirror, and I'd say to the other side, b'ys, turn around and have a look – turn around and have a look.

The Member knows; he was inside. Like he said, he wasn't always on the outside of politics, but he was on the inside. He was on the inside here. And again, his friend the Leader of the Opposition – although I've got to say, I tell you what, there's a little “et tu, Brute” going on there, because that was a leadership run right there, what I saw there. That was a leadership run if I ever saw one. I tell you what, if anything, it's a little bit of Newfoundland and Labrador's got talent here, because we're

looking around and we're seeing who's making a run for the convention here, now.

I'm looking around, and it's good because it's distracting attention away from the fact that we're having a debate on climate change.

**CHAIR:** Relevance.

**A. PARSONS:** Mr. Chair, this is relevant. If we are talking relevance now, anyways – I will say, again, we are talking leadership and what I would say is that when we talk about climate change and when we talk about carbon tax we talk about leadership. I made my points earlier on that the reality is that this is going on in every single province.

In fact, I know what the Member is saying that this is a Prime Minister Trudeau thing. There is no doubt that it is a Prime Minister Trudeau thing. His government brought it in. It is the law. It has been challenged in court and the only way that it would change is if there is a change at that level, which I don't foresee until 2025 at the earliest. It is not going to happen and that depends on if the – we know the NDP federally will not make a change to that. In fact they would try to probably go even further. I don't think a re-elected federal Liberal government would go back on that and I have got to tell you, I am not sure about a federal Conservative government, hat they would do, because it depends.

I have got to tell you, here is the direction. I was just following Twitter while we were doing this and there is a Conservative debate. You mentioned it, Mr. Chair. It depends. If someone like Jean Charest wins, I think he has actually said that he is not against the carbon tax. I don't know who the Members on the other side are supporting in that, but he said he is not going to get rid of it.

Now, again, I don't know where Patrick Brown stands. I am pretty sure I know where Skippy stands. I will tell you what, I am making fun, but he is literally on Twitter tonight and he confirmed there tonight that he would allow Members to bring forward bills to criminalize abortions.

That is on Twitter tonight. Pierre Poilievre said that in the debate tonight. So if we are going to talk about rolling back our laws on that, I have no doubt that Pierre Poilievre would have no problem taking back the carbon tax if he is going to roll back these rights that have been decided for decades and decades when we are talking about the sanctity of a female body.

Anyway, I don't want to get into it, but I guess what I am saying is that I would see that government rolling back carbon tax because God knows what else that federal Conservative government would roll back and what I would say, that would not bode well for any of us in this House.

I digress and I come back to the main point of this is that we are talking about carbon tax. Do you know what? It has been a really good debate, but there is one thing I want to go back at. I do question the Member; we're talking about the budget. We're talking about the budget that was a part of this and we're not talking about the budget. I think there was some criticism of Members going out in their districts and knocking on doors and talking about the budget.

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

**A. PARSONS:** B'y, apparently it's a bad thing to go out and knock on doors in your neighbourhood.

Well, listen, I tell you what, I've been here everyday, I haven't had a single question on the budget. I haven't had a single one. Every day, 30 minutes, day after day in here, sat here, and I'm waiting for questions. They know that, I'm sat here waiting and I'm disappointed. I'm disappointed when I don't get them. I'm disappointed. When I see the Member responsible for Finance get up, I'm disappointed. I knows I'm not getting questioned from him.

When I sees the Member responsible for Service NL get up and ask his questions, when he's allowed, I get disappointed because I know I'm not getting a question. But everyday I'm here since that budget. I spent three hours – the

Member for Terra Nova was there and the Member for Lab West was here, sat here for three hours, and I would say, honest to God, we answered every single question that was in that Estimates on the budget. Proud to do it; had the team there. The Members will acknowledge that was a pretty good session.

Now, I will say, I do think that's the best part of the budget debate, because some of the budget debate can be a bit onerous at times. Not really getting to it. Whereas, the Estimates, I think is a truly great attempt to get the information out there and ask questions. But I guess what I'm saying, when we come back to the 30 minutes everyday that people are probably watching, I'm waiting for those questions.

So what I'm suggesting here now, and I'm not sure if we're going to get done tonight or not, because I have to tell you, it's like the Government House Leader said, he's up past his bedtime now so he wants to go all night. So we'll see if we can keep this going here, and I'm being serious about that, actually. I'm up this late; I may as well keep going.

But what I would say is when you get a chance, sometime tonight or tomorrow morning, what I want you to do, when you're getting your briefing out in the room and you have your researchers getting ready for Question Period, give me a question on the budget.

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

**A. PARSONS:** Sit down and write them. I will take your questions on the budget.

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** (Inaudible.)

**A. PARSONS:** So I would say to the Member for Ferryland, that is actually not true. I think I give pretty good answers in here. I can guarantee you, I have no problem with that, but I take what he's saying, because sometimes the answers and the questions there's a bit of spectacle to it. But what I'm saying to you is, look, I'm happy to talk about a budget. I'm happy to talk about initiatives, or what we're doing, or not doing. I have no problem to do that. But the reality is, here now we're talking about this carbon tax which has been in place, by the way, for four years –four years. In fact, I'm

willing to guess that besides the sort of ancillary side of questions on cost of living or price of gas, I don't think the carbon tax thing has been brought up a whole lot. It's become accepted. It really truly has become accepted. The problem now, as I've said earlier, is just that everything else in the volatility of that market has made the prices so high that, again, dealing with this now adds to it.

But, look, PEI has just voted it in. I don't know who's in power over there.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** PC.

**A. PARSONS:** Who is it?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** PC.

**A. PARSONS:** The PCs in Prince Edward Island just voted for that.

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

**A. PARSONS:** Now listen, you'll get a chance to stand up, I'd say something to you, but you might call my mom on me, I'm not sure about that.

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

**A. PARSONS:** Anyways, look, if you're going to come at me, I'm just saying.

On that note, what I'm going to say is just look. We're talking about climate change, we're talking about carbon tax, let's keep talking about that and let's talk about whether we should do it or not.

On that note, I look forward to the rest of the debate.

Thank you.

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

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

Let's try to be a little relevant. Anyway, just a suggestion.

**P. DINN:** Yeah, I'll be relevant, as much as we've been all night, which actually we've done a very good job at it.

**CHAIR:** We have, we have.

**P. DINN:** It's been a great debate. I'm going to pick up a half-dozen of Calm Tom on the way home, right. We need that.

Just to the point the Member just spoke, you know, talking about the budget debate, I mean we did. The fact of the matter is we did have a budget debate and most of the government side of the House did not get up and speak, so I think that's the point that was being made there. And for whatever reason, I actually spoke to it, either they don't want to get up, or they have nothing to talk about in their district, or they just can't defend the budget, so that was the point I made a while back and no one took the opportunity to stand up on the other side.

We've had a long night. I go back to – actually, I think it was a comment the Member for Mount Scio made, which might have been yesterday now, I don't know when. It was around: it comes down to what you believe in. And I don't want to put words – I don't want to say what she meant by that, but I'm thinking it came down to climate change and whether you believe there's climate change or not. She can correct me if I'm wrong.

But what we've done through the night, I think everyone here has agreed that climate change is a real thing. So that's not the discussion here. The discussion has not been around whether climate change is real or not. The discussion has been focused on an additional tax – a tax. And the Member who just spoke beforehand spoke that the carbon tax has been around for four years. That's fine. But what hasn't been in those four year, we have not been – and I say Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have not been in the situation they're in now in terms of financial strain.

We hear the stories on a daily basis of what taxation and what this cost of living is doing to residents throughout the province. And we have heard from Members tonight that have admitted the same. That they have people in their districts who are suffering; who have cost of living

issues; who can't afford gas; who can't afford food; who can't afford shelter; who can't afford medical supplies or prescriptions. So that is a given.

So the debate tonight is not around climate change; the debate tonight is around taxes. It's around carbon tax. We argued first off – I won't say argued – we debated is it a provincial tax? Is it a federal tax? At the end of the day, it's a tax, which many have talked to and said we were pushed into. We were forced into. It was imposed upon us. That's the word; that's the terminology that has been utilized tonight to describe how we got into this carbon tax. I understand if we didn't go that route, you know, there are exemptions that wouldn't have come into play. I understand that. But what you try to do for the people who elected you, the people you speak for and the districts you speak for is to listen to the situation they are in.

You know, I talked earlier in the budget about the threshold in terms of how many people can access some of the programs and services that are out there. Well, as the gas prices go up, that threshold stays there, but the people that are hurting goes higher. So when you mention the 140,000 or 160,000 – I stand to be corrected on the number – that this five-point program is helping. Well, I would suggest to you that number is a lot higher now in terms of those who are not being able to avail of the supports that are out there.

When you hear health-related stories and we look at the Health Accord. Now, the Health Accord came in with a fanfare; it is a great piece of work. I'm looking forward to the implementation plan. But that spoke about social determinants of health like it was something new.

But in back 2015, the previous government came out with a framework on health care. I would suggest governments before that, and that spoke to social determinants of health. So it's not something new. It's something that's always been there; it's something that we need to realize.

I'll just take a quote. This is a quote right from the Health Accord, and it deals with poverty and food security. It deals with the effect of taxation

on it. And it's a pretty lengthy one, but it covers a lot of detail here. "Food security and housing security are among the many social determinants of health. They are also two markers of poverty. Food insecure households have poorer self-rated health, poorer mental and physical health, poorer oral health, greater stress, and are more likely to suffer from chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and mood and anxiety disorders. Our province has the highest rates of diet-related chronic disease in Canada, and St. John's has been named as the city having the highest level of food insecurity in Canada. Children and youth who experience hunger are more likely to have poorer health, and children who face hunger repeatedly are more likely than others to develop several chronic health conditions, including asthma."

That's right out of the Health Accord. So you're talking about social determinants of health and we've heard talk about basic income and the like. The problem with this is you have to put more money in the pockets of our residents, of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. And a taxation of any type is taking it out. It's taking it out.

Now, you can say the gas tax we took \$142 million and we put it right back in there, but the concern we're hearing is where it went. Like, yes, it helped a cluster over here and, yes, it helped a cluster over here, but there's a huge portion of the population that are not at all helped by that \$142 million.

So when I go through and I listen to people who call, and some examples – one I spoke about in the House of Assembly the other day through Q & A and the Minister of Health and Community Services answered it. It was an individual who had reached out to both this side of the House and the minister at that time and talked about the MTAP – and this is a good example here – and it covers 20 cents on the kilometre to travel. This person was now paying \$2.17 a litre, he has two small children and he travels in to the Dr. H. Bliss Murphy Cancer Centre for treatment. He's to the point where he has to decide whether or not he can afford to come in and out. That's a real situation. That's a real issue.

There are a couple of more I have here, but let me stay on this one for an example. Like I said the other day, I was in listening to a good



presentation on mental health issues but also the minister responded to MTAP, spoke to it about how it is not means tested, you can get the money back and you put in a claim.

So this gentleman was watching the Q & A that day and he came back this evening to me. So you are talking about individuals that are struggling to make ends meet, who are making decisions on whether to feed their kids or come in for chemo. He has a claim in that has been in for over eight weeks for 11 trips; still waiting – still waiting. And now he has another claim in for another 11 trips – 22 trips and still waiting on a plan that gives him 20 cents a kilometre. So it is not a humongous amount, but it is money that he needs.

When we talk about two cents on the litre or two-point-something cents on a litre that a carbon tax is going to do, it is two cents that a lot of people don't have. So this is not about climate change. We know and we all agree there is climate change. This is all about this time where people are suffering and struggling to make ends meet and we are looking at another tax. That is what this discussion is about.

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

**S. CROCKER:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report progress and ask leave to sit again.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise and report some progress and ask leave to sit again.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against?  
Motion carried.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Lake Melville and Deputy Chair of Committees.

**P. TRIMPER:** Speaker, the Committee of Ways and Means have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have made some progress and ask leave to sit again.

**SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee of Ways and Means reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

When shall the report be received?

**S. CROCKER:** Now.

**SPEAKER:** When shall the Committee have leave to sit again?

**S. CROCKER:** Presently.

**SPEAKER:** Presently.

On motion, report received and adopted. Committee ordered to sit again presently, by leave.

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

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

Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, and with consent of the whole House, that notwithstanding Standing Order 11(1) that the Speaker not adjourn the House at midnight today, May 11, 2022, but the House shall continue to sit to conduct government business and debate the effects of climate change.

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

**SPEAKER:** Does the Government House Leader have leave?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** No leave.

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Government House Leader, no leave has been granted.

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

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that the House resolve itself in a Committee of Whole to debate Bill 54.

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

The House will resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the said bill, Bill 54.

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

### Committee of the Whole

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

We are considering the related resolution and Bill 60, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act.

### Resolution

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

*"That it is expedient to bring in a measure respecting the imposition of taxes on carbon products."*

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

**S. CROCKER:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'll just take a few minutes to talk about climate change and the effects that it has on our province Mr. Chair, and express a little bit of disappointment with the Members opposite that we offered the opportunity to sit tonight and get this matter done because we have a lot of House business left to do this sitting. So, Mr. Chair, it is a little disappointing that they don't want to debate this tonight. That's fine; we can certainly debate it tomorrow night. We just asked –

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

**S. CROCKER:** I say to the Member for Topsail - Paradise, he said keeping going. Well, we just offered you an opportunity, Sir, to keep going and you said no.

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

**S. CROCKER:** Well, Sir, if you'd bring out your Standing Orders, we could certainly do what we –

**CHAIR:** Member, address your remarks to the Chair.

**S. CROCKER:** I'm sorry, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** There you go.

**S. CROCKER:** Anyway, Mr. Chair –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

Important things are being said.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

I'm trying to give you some protection.

**S. CROCKER:** I know and I really need some. Mr. Chair, thank you very much.

We have had this debate now for any number of hours and it is always great. When you think

about climate change and the effect that it has on our families and on our communities, this is a very important debate that is framing up here. I look forward to continuing debate tomorrow on what climate change means to Newfoundland and Labrador and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I think the Member for St. John's Centre said quite well tonight when he talked about Snowmageddon – and I was minister of Transportation and Works during Snowmageddon and unfortunately the impacts that had on business and then it got exasperated –

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

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah, I know.

It got exasperated because those same businesses then came out and went into COVID and we know the effects that they have had, so they haven't had a chance to fully recover. I was also the minister of Transportation and Works in January 2018 when we had a major rainstorm on the West Coast and lost connectivity for the Island for a number of days.

The Member for Humber - Bay of Islands will remember that quite well. I can remember sharing a chopper with him as we went out to look at the damages that were caused from this. To deny the fact that climate change is real is concerning for me as a parent and a Newfoundlander and Labradorian.

Anything that we can do, if there are deterrents – and this debate is getting, I guess, conflicted into the fact – and I truly understand the cost of living, as I said here earlier tonight. You think about our families that are affected by cost of living, and it is real; there's no doubt about it. But one of the Members opposite said a little while ago – they talked about the truck driver. The fuel that the truck driver was using from Boston I think to Montreal was \$3,000 and right now it's \$7,000. That's real.

What I would draw everyone's attention to is that fuel was from Boston to Montreal. That fuel was not affected by a carbon tax in Newfoundland and Labrador. It was impacted likely by a carbon tax, maybe in Quebec; maybe,

there's a realization. Mr. Chair, it's important that we do those things, and we're proactive as we move forward.

I talked about earlier Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation, and our investments and a whole-of-government approach. The Member for Lab West referenced earlier it's great to see the climate change money going back into government departments. And I assure you it is.

I know he was out, so I'll just repeat myself, to make sure – diesel. Butter Pot Provincial Park will be the last provincial park in this province this year that we will invest in to actually remove diesel fuel and go solar. Every provincial park in the province will now be either solar or electric. And that's important. Investments at Memorial University in electrified boiler system – these are all changes that have been brought in in order to make our world a better place for years to come.

Every dollar that we spend as a government has to come from somewhere. This year alone, we will borrow \$350 million, and I have heard you need to reinvest. We are reinvesting \$142 million. The Minister of Finance has been clear. I think she's been crystal clear on her response today. When the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands asked to consider – and she was quite clear that she will consider. Any government, anybody in this House will consider and do what we can to help the people of the province.

We've all got families. We're all affected by this. We're fortunate, most of us in this House. We'll cope. But there are people in hard situations. I have parents, I have in-laws and I have a lot of family and friends that this will have an impact on. The cost of living has an impact. Earlier tonight, during debate, or in a bit of a break in the debate, I was looking at grocery flyers and you see that the cost of living has increased.

Well, Mr. Chair, I'm sure I'll get another opportunity tomorrow night to speak to this. I look forward to doing it. We all look forward to talking and to continue this conversation around climate change. I hope the Members opposite, if they're willing, if we can't finish this tomorrow,

let's do it on a Friday, because Fridays are a great day to talk about climate change.

You think about the best day of the week to talk about climate change is on a Friday. So let's talk about climate change –

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

**S. CROCKER:** Oh, they are one in the same, I would say to the Member opposite – totally. We have climate change deniers. They really don't want to talk about climate change over there. It's really evident that they don't want to talk about climate change. We have a ton of denial on climate change, but listen, Friday, let's continue this debate. Let's continue this debate on Friday. Friday is the great day to talk about climate change and the effects and what we can do to mitigate climate change.

So, Mr. Chair, we can certainly continue this debate on Friday.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters - Pleasantville.

**B. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd just like to clarify something that the hon. Minister of TCAR just talked about. We are not taxing for the sake of taxing. It is one in the exact same thing we're talking about. We're doing a carbon tax based on the federal government download of it because of climate change. It's because of that.

So it's one in the same; we're talking about it. We can't have Members speaking out of both sides of their mouths. This is the same topic. Tackling climate change is going to require effective action on two fronts. Simultaneously, we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate its impacts. That's what we're talking about here today.

We need to adapt to climate change and improve the province's resiliency. Not for just today, for future generations. We've committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from all sectors of the

economy. Stimulate clean innovation and growth, build resiliency in the changing of the climate, and continuing to pursue the Climate Change Action Plan, tailored to meet unique circumstances in this province.

As we've talked about before, we all have a role to play, regardless of how many Members on the opposite side say how small that role is. We, as a small jurisdiction in Canada, and Canada as a small jurisdiction in the country, have a huge role in leadership.

Every country, including Canada, has set ambitious targets as part of our Pan-Canadian agreement. Urgent effort – and I'd like everyone on both sides of the House to pause for one second on talking about the urgency of this. Provincial targets of 30 per cent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050; net-zero greenhouse emissions by 2050. We are making –

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

**B. DAVIS:** You'll have your turn. You can go tonight. You can go after 12, too.

We are making progress, but all of us have a role to play. During this plan – it's a five-year plan for the Climate Change Action Plan. We have 67 per cent of those actions completed. By far, that's nowhere near enough. We have 33 per cent left either in varying degrees of completion, but when we're finished that, we haven't solved the problem. The problem is huge. If we don't work together and stand as a united House about things that are going to make better for the people that we all represent each and every day – it is tough. There's no doubt about; timing is horrible.

My father used to always say if you take care of the pennies, the dollars will worry about themselves. If we don't take care of this now, it's not going to matter what we do 10 years from now because it's already too late. The horse has already left the barn.

We talked about a number of departments and a number of actions. The Member for Humber - Bay of Islands asked a good question earlier, and I was happy to give him as much of the information as I had readily available tonight, but I will work to get the rest of the information

from the other 11 departments that are working very closely on the Climate Change Action Plan. Because each and every one of those departments, and I would argue every department in government and every agency of government, is working to make those climate change improvements. Whether that's reducing the consumption of paper, all those things that we need to do, their waste management sides, everything, we're working hard to make sure we hit those targets. All 11 of those departments that are working closely with my department are doing everything they can to hit those targets.

But we know that more is needed. We know that. We're not standing here and saying the job is done. This is one aspect that we have to make sure we do – one aspect. It's not the final thing; it's only one aspect.

We talked about a couple of the programs, the oil to electric and the EV program, and I know some of my colleagues on the other side say it's not enough, or you will never get there. The road of a thousand miles starts with a single step. One of the things –

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

**B. DAVIS:** No, I stole that one from the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

One of our things that we've got to do is we've all got something to offer. I've learned an awful lot about each person's district, while we've had this debate tonight. We've had some good options come forward from Members, which I thank them for that. We'll look at those in our department and other departments. I can't speak for my colleagues, but I'm sure they will look at options that were brought forward. That can only work when all of us believe that we have an issue and a problem that every one of our districts are going to face.

Regardless if we're not going to be impacted by flooding or coastal erosion because our districts don't fit that model, everyone knows somebody that's going to be affected by climate change or is living through, as the hon. Member for St. John's Centre said Snowmageddon, or activities like the hon. Member for Humber - Bay of Islands had his district cut off from civilization

when climate changes were occurring. All of these things are important.

So we talked about a green economy; we talked about things we can invest in to support the green economy. My colleague from IET mentioned some of the investments that we're making. There's going to have to be a lot more investments to find solutions to problems that we have today. And those solutions aren't known. We know that there are advancements going to happen in carbon capture, and hydrogen, but we don't know exactly how that's going to work, no doubt. But there's smart people out there trying to find ways to lower emissions and trying to challenge all sectors of our economy to look at ways to decrease their greenhouse gas emissions.

Someone talked about the big emitters here tonight. I can't remember because it's all melding together. I think it may have been the hon. Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands. And that was a very good point that we've got to make sure we hold those big emitters to task. We have the *Management of Greenhouse Gas Act*, where each of those industries have to meet targets. I'm pleased to say that over the last two years since it's been implemented, every year they've exceeded the targets that we set for them. Those targets are getting harder every year for them to hit.

We're going to continue to double down on those emitters to ensure that those emitters are doing everything they humanly can to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions each and every day of their existence. I know they're committed to it, because that's what their shareholders want, that's what the people of the country and the world want and that's what we need to do.

On my last couple of minutes here, I'm just going to talk about one of the things we've done in the department recently that I was really proud of, and we were only the second jurisdiction to do so, was to establish a Net-Zero Advisory Council.

Some people will say: Why do we need that? I think it's really important to bring people who have varying views, whether they agree with mine or yours or somebody else's, they have a vast amount of knowledge that they can bring to

the table. Whether that be from their academic, their business interests, things they've worked on in the past or other jurisdictions that they have made contacts with.

I'm happy to say that committee has met on a number of occasions now. I'm looking forward to seeing some recommendations come forward on things we can improve on, things we can make better, investments we can make that's going to better our ability to hit those targets in both 2030 and 2050. Because let there be no doubt, let there be no doubt on this one, the quicker we can make a change to change your home or your car, it's better for the environment. The faster we can do it.

That doesn't mean everyone has to run out and do it today, that's not what I'm saying. When it's possible for you to do it, economically. I know the hon. Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands talked about the difference in price, and he's right. The electric vehicles do cost a little more, no doubt. That's why we're putting a rebate plan in place, same with the federal government's rebate plan.

In addition to that plan, there's also the cost of ownership that I want people to think about when they're looking at electric vehicles. There are no more oil changes. The cost of providing fuel to the vehicle is no more. You can charge your vehicle at home. All the research I've read says anywhere between 90 and 95 per cent of your vehicle charge happens while you're sitting at home at night.

So it's off-peak time, it's a perfect opportunity for you to charge your vehicle. The people that I've talked to, anecdotally, say it's anywhere, between \$25 and \$30 a month for them, depending on their amount of driving, of course, to charge their vehicle on a monthly basis. So that's a very big savings for some people, depending on how much you drive.

I think that's one thing we've really got to try to consider. I implore everyone in this House of Assembly, not because you're voting against farm equipment and farmers, that's not the reason why to vote for this. It's the right thing to do. It may not be the right time to do it, but it is the right thing to do for the people of this

province and the future generations: our children's children's children.

That's all I have to say on that issue, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much for listening.

**CHAIR:** Thank you to the Member.

I next recognize the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

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

I'm just going to stand and have a few words on this. We've been debating this now for the last seven hours. And I can tell you one thing, all of our debates here tonight haven't helped one person; hasn't put oil in one tank; hasn't put one bit of rebate on electricity in this House.

I've been through these filibusters. I've been part of two of the longest ones ever. I can understand what's happening. I go back to the Minister of Finance when the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands asked the question today, he said: Would you consider, or should I say reconsider, implementing a temporary income-based home rebate program to assist low- to moderate-income families who are really struggling to heat their home during extraordinary times? The minister said: Thank you very much, very good question, very timely one, and the answer is yes.

So this is why this is being held up. So when you start trying to cast a net here and say you don't believe in climate change, you're taking away from the people who are suffering. That's what this is about. This is not about the carbon tax. The 2.5-cent carbon tax is not going to change that much in the environment of Newfoundland and Labrador. It's supposed to be put in to stop the driving habits of Newfoundland and Labrador.

That's why the carbon tax was put in the driving habits. But the Opposition here and the Third Party, and the two independents here, what we're trying to drive home to the government is people are hurting. People are actually hurting.

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

**E. JOYCE:** I gave the minister – sit down with the Opposition Finance critic and the Leader of the Third Party and come up with a solution. It's already on record that you're going to reconsider, which, given the good impression, there is something going to be done.

But what we need, Minister, is we need to give the people of Newfoundland and Labrador some hope. We need to give them some hope that government is listening. That's what we need to do. I am confident there will be a program in place. After the minister's comments today, there will be a program in place. I'm confident of that. I can't guarantee but I am confident after her comments.

I know she understands the plight of the people in Newfoundland and Labrador. So while we stand here and banter and let's come back here Friday and let's do some more climate change and let's have a debate on climate change, we all agree there is a problem with climate change – we all agree.

But here it is now 10 to 12 at night, not one household has been helped because of our debate – not one. What the Opposition, and I know the two independents, myself and the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, are asking is to give the people some hope. Give the people some hope that, yes, we hear you. We know you're struggling. Even if it is the people who really need it. Pick a scale of people that really need it and see what we can do to help out. Us bantering back and forth, I've been through it a hundred times, by the end of the day, we need to do something for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, the residents who really need it.

If the Minister of Environment and Climate Change wants to have a discussion on climate, I'm sure everybody is open for it because everybody will agree that we do have to take care of our environment. But what we need to do right now – you did it during COVID, the federal government did it during COVID – is present something to the people to give them hope. To give them something to say that we don't have to go tomorrow and decide if we're going to be able to drive to get our medication or to a health care appointment; that's what they're looking for.

It is great for all of us to stand up, but, at the end of the day, I call upon government: don't wait until the fall, don't wait the three or four months to say, okay, let's have a big splash. Let's give them hope now.

The Opposition is holding this up right now, and I'm with them on this, to bring up a point that people are suffering and that is why we need to make that point. Because when it was asked on three or four occasions about this carbon tax, we can't change the gas tax because the federal government is going to punish us. The minister stood up again a few minutes ago and said – and it's in *Hansard* – that the money we got from the gas tax, we gave it back to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I applaud that.

But when the minister – when you have people on the government side saying that we can't give back the gas tax money and when you have the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board standing up again tonight and saying we gave back \$140 million of the gas tax money we received and gave it back to the people. She said it.

So why can't we, as a government, find some way to give a home heat rebate to the most vulnerable of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador? That's not going to affect this deal with Ottawa. We all know that, Mr. Chair. We know that's not going to affect the agreement with Ottawa. That's just not true. So when you start saying let's debate climate change on Friday; when you start saying, well, we don't, on this side, agree that climate change is a problem; when you say if we give a rebate it's going to affect the agreement, that's just a red herring. It's all a red herring.

So trust me on this. Trust me, I've been through this many times; what you need to do is come up with something concrete so that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador really feel that the government is listening.

I'm going to sit down now in a few minutes, Mr. Chair, but I can tell you, the more and more we keep going back and forth, the more and more – pardon me?

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

**E. JOYCE:** I'll keep going until 12, okay. I got no problem with that talking about the people. I got no problem talking about the people and some of the people that contacted me.

I read a few notes out, and I even got one tonight to stop the carbon tax. I got people on Facebook saying stop the carbon tax. This is not about stopping the carbon tax; this carbon tax is going to be approved. No doubt. But you've got to understand what the people are going through. If the gas was down to 70 cents, 80 cents, 90 cents, this carbon tax debate today would be gone.

Not only gas and food. Look at clothing. Just look at transportation back and forth, the people just in this building that live outside, travelling back and forth. Look at the cost of drugs are gone up. We heard today the Minister of Health and Community Services talking about how they're trying to increase the subsidy, working on it for people who need to travel for medical reasons. I agree with that because of the high price of gas.

So this is not about carbon. This is going to be approved, if the government wants it, it's going to be done. But the government has a right – they have an obligation, actually, they have an obligation – and when I sat over here in the Opposition, also, the Opposition has a right and the obligation to bring forth issues on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Don't ever forget that. That is your role. That is your role. Your role, our role, is to hold government accountable.

And if we could bring up this plight of the people and urge and keep on urging the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador – and I have to say, I know government Members get the same calls. They mightn't get as many, but I know they get the same calls, I know they do. How many women out there now are struggling? We know that, we get the calls. And I know the Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality, you get the calls, we know you do. And then how many people out there can't get medication? I know the Minister of Health

gets those calls. We get the calls; we all get the calls.

So what I'm going to ask in my last minute here is the minister said today, yes, timely and her exact words were very timely and the answer is yes. So I'm asking the government, don't wait until November, December, let's do something now to give people of Newfoundland and Labrador hope that collectively we're listening.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

Given the motion that we passed as a House of Assembly yesterday that this House conclude its business by midnight, we are therefore done.

I will now ask the Committee to rise and we will report progress on Bill 60. There is no vote.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Lake Melville and Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole.

**P. TRIMPER:** Speaker, the Chair of the Committee of Ways and Means reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have made a little more progress and have directed me to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

**SPEAKER:** The Deputy Chair of the Committee of Ways and Means reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have made some more progress and have directed him to ask leave to sit again.

When shall the report be received?

**S. CROCKER:** Now.

**SPEAKER:** Now.  
When shall the Committee sit again?

**S. CROCKER:** Tomorrow, which is today.



**SPEAKER:** Tomorrow, which is today.

On motion, report received and adopted.  
Committee ordered to sit again on tomorrow.

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

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

I was hoping to have a few more hours tonight, but –

**SPEAKER:** Sorry, I apologize.

**S. CROCKER:** Sorry, yeah, I don't get to say anything. Perfect.

**SPEAKER:** In accordance with the motion presented yesterday, this House do now adjourn at midnight.

I just want to remind Members of the Moose Hide Campaign, we are gathering at 8:15 this morning. I encourage all Members to please attend.

This House do now stand adjourned until 1:30 o'clock tomorrow.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, at 1:30 p.m.