



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Volume L

SECOND SESSION

Number 9

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

Thursday

October 20, 2022

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

In the public gallery today, I would like to welcome Alison Coffin, former Member and Leader of the NDP.

Welcome, Alison.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Also in the public gallery, I would like to recognize Gail Thorne from the STAND for Hannah Foundation.

Welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

SPEAKER: Today, we will hear statements from the hon. Members for the Districts of Lake Melville, Terra Nova, Mount Pearl North, Placentia - St. Mary's and Conception Bay South.

The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

P. TRIMPER: Speaker, today I would like to congratulate the students, teachers, artists and volunteers associated with the Labrador Creative Arts Festival that will occur in November in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

This annual event brings students from Labrador communities and artists from around the world for a week of original student-produced plays, workshops and fun.

The festival reflects community, culture and whatever is on the minds of our youth, using a thematic approach. Through the exploration of social media and emphasis on creativity, in both digital and print, there is a reflective and contemporary feel to this annual event.

With this year's theme of Breaking Boundaries, students have been busy brainstorming a related idea that has become a script, then a cast and finally a full production that will be performed before their peers.

Following two years of virtual and local artist visits, the longest running children's festival in Canada is excited to now combine in-person interaction and new media so that all schools in Labrador can participate. Schools that cannot physically attend, can now film their play for viewing at the festival.

Best wishes to the coordinator, Sandra Broomfield and her extensive team of volunteers as they prepare for the upcoming 47th Labrador Creative Arts Festival.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. TRIMPER: Thank you.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I stand today with a first for the District of Terra Nova. Leslee Lake and his wife Krista are not new to backyard hobby farming. Les grew up on a farm and over the last couple of years has been determined to grow the largest pumpkin in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Les and Krista first started growing pumpkins for their kids when they were small for Halloween to display at their home. Last year's display had over 100 pumpkins. This year they've really outdone themselves.

In May, Les started to grow from seed he got from California, a 1282 Fennikoh seed, a fast growing pumpkin. Much to their surprise, this pumpkin would grow three to four inches in circumference each night. As with all backyard farmers, this takes lots of

time and water for success, to be precise, 45 gallons by hand per day.

This year's display will be called Gourdzilla, a 1,034-pound pumpkin. The largest grown in Clarendville, as well as Newfoundland and Labrador. They're going to share Gourdzilla with the community. They're asking for people to bring along a non-perishable item so they can also make a donation to the local food bank.

Congratulations to Les and Krista on their massive venture.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

L. STOYLES: Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador is known around the world for its musical talent.

Korona Brophy, a community volunteer and a veteran musician, educator and founder of the Celtic Fiddlers, took full advantage of the COVID pandemic. The lockdown provided her the perfect opportunity to realize her lifelong goal with the release of her first solo album, *Heart to Heart*. Dedicated to her four grandchildren, the album is a celebration of her favorite songs including: "Let Me Fish off Cape St. Mary's," "Let it Be" and yes, even "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" featuring her grandchildren.

The album showcased her talents as she plays every instrument including the fiddle, the violin, the bass and the piano. You name it, Korona plays it.

Korona has taught music in our school for over 30 years and at Memorial University for over a decade. In addition, she founded and assembled the group called the Celtic Fiddlers in 1993 who continue to entertain citizens in our province today, enriching our culture.

I ask all Members to join with me in congratulating Korona Brophy on the release of her work and to thank her for all she has done to encourage and help others with her gift of music and on her continuing contribution to the province's music scene.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

S. GAMBIN-WALSH: Thank you, Speaker.

On August 17 of this year the longest serving doctor in Placentia retired. For 48 years, Dr. Harold Ross Penney has been a doctor, mentor and friend to hundreds of residents from the region.

Dr. Penney was born and grew up in Carbonear. He was a member of the first class of graduates at Memorial University Medical School in 1973. In 1974, he moved to Placentia to fulfill a one-year contract obligation to the Department of Health. He opened the first private practice in the area in 1975. His wife Vera, a nurse, worked with him in the clinic. Vera retired due to health reasons in 2008 but remained active in the practice on the administrative end.

Dr. Penney and Vera loved the Placentia area and raised their two children there. They feel privileged to have served the region and the people who welcomed them into their lives, making their rural practice so fulfilling.

As the MHA for the District of Placentia - St. Mary's, I ask all hon. Members to join me in thanking Dr. Harold Ross Penney and Vera Penney for 48 years of medical service to the Placentia region.

Thank you, Speaker

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

On Wednesday past, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, the MHA for Topsail - Paradise and the MHA for Harbour Main, along with myself, attended the 11th annual Bright Business Awards Ceremony held in Conception Bay South.

The Town of Conception Bay South hosts this event annually during Small Business Week. It is a great opportunity for local entrepreneurs to network and showcase their individual achievements in our town. These businesses play a very important role in growing our economy and creating employment in our community.

The 2022 Bright Business Achievement Award Winners are: Beautiful Business (Multi-Tenant Award): Around the Block Quilting and Fabric; Beautiful Business (Single Tenant): Aurora Estates; Community Pride and Partnership: Sisters in Fitness; David Murphy Chamber Leader: Bloom Facilitation Services; Established Business: Hickey's Greenhouses and Nursery; Downtown Member of the Year: Exploring Awaits Child Care; Glenda Noseworthy Award: Jeanine Scott, Sisters in Fitness; New Start Up of the Year: Seal Cove Grocery; Sustainable Business of the Year: Foxtrap Automotive.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the award winners, nominees and sponsors. Conception Bay South has shown tremendous growth throughout the years, and I would like to thank the business community for their contribution and wish them continued success.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality.

P. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this hon. House to talk about our government's use of the Gender-Based Analysis Plus, also known as the GBA+, on all newly implemented programs, policies, legislation and budgets.

Speaker, the use of GBA+ ensures that the perspectives of those who are marginalized are brought to the forefront, and considered at every earliest stage of policy development.

The Premier included references to the need for GBA+ in the mandate letters for every minister, which is a clear indication of the importance of this practice to our government.

The Office of Women and Gender Equality has provided targeted GBA+ training to over 500 public service employees who were involved in program, policy, budget and legislative development. This training and approach has resulted in an increased focus on gender-based policy decision-making.

Speaker, most notably, just this week our government introduced the *Pay Equity and Pay Transparency Act*, which supports fair and equitable compensation practices in the province. GBA+ analysis played an important role in drafting and finalizing this legislation, to create a strong foundation for equitable compensation practices here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our government is investigating virtual training options to cultivate further understanding of GBA+ throughout the public service, as well as making the training more accessible for agencies, boards and commissions.

Speaker, our government will continue to seek out and implement new and innovative tools, methods and practices to help us create a more equitable province for all people.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Speaker.

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

While the minister talks about the use of Gender-Based Analysis Plus, unfortunately there's very little evidence that the government has taken Gender-Based Analysis Plus into consideration when making decisions. Decisions that are made with Gender-Based Analysis Plus in mind are good decisions and help all of society, not just women and gender-diverse individuals.

I must reference the recent cost-of-living adjustment. If gender-based analysis was truly considered, then a single mother making \$30,000 a year would be receiving more help than a two-income family making \$90,000 each. This leads me to ask, are there any accountability mechanisms in each department to track, demonstrate and prove that gender-based analysis is utilized at every decision-making level?

Therefore, I take this opportunity to ask the Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality to advocate to her Cabinet colleagues to better include gender-based analysis in all future decisions.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

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

Sex discrimination is an issue that impacts all regions of our province and hurts all levels of society. It must be addressed. We support the use of GBA+, but we remind the minister and this government about the multiple times we requested to see the results of GBA+ analysis for legislation and have been denied.

SPEAKER: Are there any further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, the Opposition has a duty to ask questions in the public interest. The Premier insists he paid for a trip to Mr. Risley's hunting lodge himself.

Will the Premier put speculation to rest and table his receipts for this trip?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's unfortunate that personal issues are evolving into House issues, Mr. Speaker. What we do on our own time is on our own dime and should be respected, Mr. Speaker.

While I appreciate the need for the Opposition to ask a question, I answered the question. I went on a vacation with my dad fishing. We share a passion for fishing,

like many do across the country and across the province, Mr. Speaker. It was paid for, Mr. Speaker. I don't know what else to say.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

I'll remind the Premier, he does hold the highest office in the province and, unfortunately, with that comes a level of responsibility and this looks like poor judgment. What we're asking for is to clear the air once and for all –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

B. PETTEN: – and we're asking about conflict of interest. We're not getting personal, Mr. Speaker, we're asking legitimate questions which we're here to do and we have to do and we're going to continue to do. Unfortunately if they don't like it, that's it. I mean, if they were on this side, they would do the same thing, I'm sure, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker, the Premier must be accountable to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Premiers are held in the highest standard. Will the Premier provide a full list detailing everyone who joined him during his trip?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I've said before, personal time needs to be personal time. There has to be some boundaries with what you do with your personal time, Mr. Speaker. I've never denied that I went on this trip. I've never denied that I paid for this trip, Mr. Speaker. It's been public knowledge now who was on

the trip. There's nothing to hide here, Mr. Speaker. It's been fully disclosed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. PETTEN: If there's nothing to hide, Mr. Speaker, well, why don't the Premier just table all that information I just asked for and then we –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Any more comments, people are going to be named.

The hon. the Acting Leader of the Official Opposition.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

As I just stated, there's no reason we can't put this to rest and provide that information, then we can move on. Obviously, there's something they don't want to disclose. I mean, that's going to be the decision the Premier is going to have to decide on.

Yesterday, the Premier stated he went to the Commissioner for Legislative Standards for an opinion. Will the Premier table the Commissioner's decision or guidance?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Inaudible) context, Mr. Speaker, what I have said is I have discussed with the Clerk and the Commissioner for Legislative Standards surrounding issues about my ethical wall, with different people I know, friends that I know. I encourage others in

this House, if they have friends, to set up an ethical wall. It's not obligated by the House, but it is a good instrument to protect conflicts, Mr. Speaker. That's what I said yesterday.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. PETTEN: I guess it will be a cloud of secrecy over this issue, Mr. Speaker, and I guess we'll have to continue on.

Speaker, even though the fiscal position of the province has improved, thanks to the offshore oil industry, the minister continues to force seniors to struggle to afford rent, groceries, medication and transportation.

Why does the Premier refuse to axe the sugar tax and the carbon tax?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I said many times in this House, the sugar tax is an important tax to help people make the right choices. We lead the country with respect to cardiovascular health. We lead the country with respect to stroke. We lead the country with respect to diabetes. We lead the country with respect to obesity. We lead the country with respect to amputation, secondary to diabetes.

We have to try something, Mr. Speaker. All we're asking is for people to contemplate the decision they're making when choosing beverages, Mr. Speaker. I would suggest that the conversation that has evolved from this –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Both sides of the House have been warned. Next time, someone will be named.

The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: The fact that that instrument – by the way, which we hoped to make no money from, ever – has caused such a significant conversation within the public sphere, I hope that that in and of itself allows for an education and for people to make the right decision about their own health future, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. PETTEN: Speaker, we suggest the Premier and the government should have tried to educate people, not tax them into behavioural changes. That's not what –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: You're trying to change behaviour by taxing people; it just don't work.

Speaker, a single mom called my office to say she owes \$837 on her home heating bill and is worried her oil deliveries will be cut off. She is worried that her rebate will not arrive in time to keep her kids warm. The mother asked me: Why is the Premier planning to increase the cost of home heating oil again by adding the carbon tax?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I hope the Member opposite took the opportunity to explain that it's not us, Mr. Speaker. It's the federal government who is impacting on the constituent he's talking to with respect to increases in the carbon tax.

I've been very clear. I tabled a letter here. I hope you had the opportunity to read it. In fact, I noticed the federal Conservative leader himself quoted my letter either today

or yesterday in the House of Commons, Mr. Speaker.

We make the position that this is not the right time; that this instrument should be paused right now given the inflationary pressures that exist on households across the province, Mr. Speaker. It's a position I've taken. It's a position I maintain and we're not going to change.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. PETTEN: Mr. Speaker, I guess they got off the bus after they drove over Trudeau. Now they're on the Poilievre wagon. So I guess things are looking up across the country. They're seen the light. The Premier has finally seen the light. That's pretty good. It's comforting to hear today, Speaker.

Speaker, the families in Labrador, Baie Verte Peninsula, Northern Peninsula and every other rural community pay more for gas, oil, food and for many other necessities, yet through the carbon tax and the sugar tax, the Liberals want to push up these costs even more.

Why do the Liberals continue to force people in rural communities to pay more?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Might I take an opportunity to correct the preamble? I wasn't quoting Poilievre. He was quoting me, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. FUREY: Perhaps you should join us, Mr. Speaker.

Come over, it's a big House. We've got plenty of room.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Mr. Speaker, for the record, we believe that we need to curb our sugar consumption; everyone believes that and I think that's a noble effort. The only thing we don't think is that the sugar tax is the right vehicle for that.

The Premier keeps saying that the sugar tax was introduced to help all citizens live healthier, but in many cases the Liberal taxes are forcing people into financial hardship.

What does the minister responsible for poverty reduction tell seniors who are compromising their health because they're forced to choose between food and medication?

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

J. ABBOTT: Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to respond.

As I think we all know, the government has, over the past year, implemented quite a number of financial measures to support families throughout this province. We introduced the five-point plan in March. Within that we've increased the Seniors' Benefit, the low-income benefit; we've increased the rates for people on income support; and we've provided the \$500 subsidy for those heating with oil.

Speaker, we are acting and we are responsive and we will continue to do so.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: I think we all agree and we've stated it numerous times in the House, we are aware that people out there are suffering in the times that we find ourselves in. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians also continue to suffer financially as they cannot afford to heat their homes and put food on the table. Now the prime minister plans to triple – yes, triple – the carbon tax.

I ask the minister responsible for poverty reduction: Do you believe seniors and those facing poverty can afford a tripling of the carbon tax?

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

J. ABBOTT: Speaker, in terms of the Member's question, the Premier just responded with respect to the carbon tax. It is not a provincial tax; it will be and is a federal tax. The prime minister and the federal government will have to respond to that.

What we are doing here in the province is responding with the resources and instruments that we have at our disposal, such as putting out the \$500 rebate for those heating with oil and the \$500 payment to households under \$100,000 income. So we are acting where we can and acting responsibly.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Speaker, back in May in this Chamber, the Premier and every one of the ministers boasted about how good a carbon tax was for Newfoundland and Labrador. While every Liberal MHA voted in favour of the carbon tax grab, the minister responsible for poverty reduction even said: "... we need to stick with it, come high or low"

I ask the minister: How does he support the carbon tax when it is forcing people to pay more for heat in their homes, their drive to work and putting food on their table?

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

S. COADY: Thank you very much.

On the carbon tax, allow us to say that we did have a made in Newfoundland and Labrador that exempted home heat and we're supportive of that. As you're well aware in the Opposition and the people of the province are well aware, the Premier has made an appeal to the federal government to not change the program – to not change the program. The federal government is pressing on. It is a federal government tax and therefore the Premier has implored the federal government to not impose it as they are planning to do and we're going to stick by that, Speaker.

We are saying to the federal government, we believed in the program that was made in Newfoundland and Labrador and if they move beyond that, we can't be supportive of that particular program.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Speaker, the people of Happy Valley-Goose Bay are crying out for help. *The Telegram* put it as: "... an escalation in lawlessness that's consumed the town of about 8,000 people." One man told *The Telegram*: "People have been ... beaten, raped and froze to death."

I ask the Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs: What will you do to address violence, in particular, against women in Labrador?

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

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker, and I thank the Member for asking the question.

This is an important topic that she has raised. It is a very complex situation, Speaker, when you're dealing with a transient and a homeless population. You're dealing with people with mental health and addictions rooted in intergenerational trauma.

But make no mistake, this file is a top priority for this government. We have put a tremendous amount of resources, both in terms of ministers and money. We are working closely with our Indigenous partners. We are working very closely with the Town of Happy Valley.

Just two days ago, myself and the Justice Minister met with them again. We have an action team that is meeting weekly on the ground in Happy Valley-Goose Bay looking at a longer term, purpose-built facility. Since June, we have had an acute-response team set up of four minister that are working with our partners. This is important –

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The minister's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yes, Speaker, indeed the issue is a complex one, but *The Telegram* reported: "... they've received a lot of empathy from provincial and municipal politicians, but concrete action has been in short supply."

I ask the Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs: Will she outline concrete steps to address the violence and homeless issues plaguing Happy Valley-Goose Bay?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister for Labrador Affairs.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I did allude to some of the steps that we're taking, both immediate and the acute response team initiatives that we are working on and the action team with regard to longer term.

Some of the steps, Speaker, since we've been there, the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay has asked for extra enforcement to ensure the safety of not just the broader community, but safety for the transient, this vulnerable population. We did respond with resources for them to hire extra. There was a request for outreach workers. We responded with funding through multiple partners for a number of outreach workers.

I've been up in the community, sat down with the chamber and met with the business community, there's a whole gamut of things that we are doing. We will continue to do what we can to work with the Indigenous communities, to work with the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay to ensure the safety and –

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The minister's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

It seems the conditions are not improving up in Labrador – not improving for the homeless and those in need.

Speaker, the Connors family have spoken out about their heartbreaking experience during a mental health emergency. First, they tragically lost their son-in-law and now

they worry about their daughter's suicidal thoughts.

Speaker, why were they turned away from the Waterford Hospital in their darkest hour?

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

L. DEMPSTER: Speaker, I do want to respond to the preamble of the Member when he says nothing is being done. There is a lot of work that's being done. They're a little bit late to the game, Speaker. We've been working really hard at this.

The action team have been put together since the spring of '21. We're working with four ministers, Housing, Health and Justice. We've been working weekly, meeting with people in the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Indigenous partners since June, Speaker, meeting weekly as an acute response team.

Actually, if he wants to read the statement that we put out yesterday to see what's being done, I would ask all Members on the other side of the House – we have gone through an exhaustive list of things that we are doing in short-term measures and long-term measures. I encourage him to read it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you.

I suggest the minister look at *Hansard*. I said there were no improvements. So look at *Hansard*; get it right.

Speaker, let's go back to the serious question that I asked. The Connors family –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

P. DINN: I'd let the Members across know that suicide is serious. It is serious. So for you to say it isn't is disrespectful.

SPEAKER: Move on with your question, please.

P. DINN: Speaker, the Connors family have spoken out about their heartbreaking experience during a mental health emergency. First, they tragically lost their son-in-law; now they worry about their daughter's suicidal thoughts.

Speaker, why were they turned away from the Waterford Hospital in their darkest hour?

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

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Suicide is a serious issue. It's an issue that we all find very difficult, especially those who are involved with it, those with lived experience.

Mr. Speaker, the Member knows that we cannot speak of individual situations and circumstances in this Legislature. I will say, having said that, that we have asked for a review of what's happened so that we can ensure that they have received the most appropriate care. The department doesn't make clinical decisions, Mr. Speaker; we leave that to the health professionals. There are services available such as Bridge the gapp, such as Doorways, 811 have mental health and addictions services available as well.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The minister's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

I also spoke to this family who were already reeling from a tragedy and are now seriously worried about their daughter falling victim to suicidal thoughts. Of course, we've heard similar stories.

Speaker, this family is desperate for help, and they've reached out. Yet, they feel disrespected and dismissed by the mental care in this province.

I ask the minister: What does the minister suggest they do in this instance?

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

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, I have asked for a review to ensure that they have received the most appropriate care. If for some reason the review says that they haven't, Mr. Speaker, we will ensure they do. There are other services, as I had indicated on my previous answer: Bridge the gapp, Doorways, mental health and addiction services through 811.

When people are going through the most vulnerable time of their lives, dealing with a situation like this, Mr. Speaker, government wants to make sure that all of the available resources are there for individuals who need it. If the right clinical decision has been made, there are other resources available to the individuals. There are other health professionals that can provide resources to individuals. We have asked for a review and we will make sure that they have received the appropriate care.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

While government looks to implement a physician assistant program here in the province, many other health professionals stand by waiting for the opportunity to use the full scope of their practice.

Speaker, why is the minister looking to introduce a new health care provider when he is not fully utilizing those in the system now?

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

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We are hoping to use nurse practitioners to their full scope of practice. In fact, I just provided direction to the health authorities just recently that I want them to employ nurse practitioners in community-led and family practice within communities in the province, especially in light of the fact that we don't have enough physicians.

Nurse practitioners and physician assistants are different. Nurse practitioners can operate independently, Mr. Speaker. Physician assistants have to operate and can assist with surgeries, but have to operate under the guidance of a physician.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Pharmacists and nurse practitioners and many others have been speaking out for years about how they could help our health care crisis, yet they have not been empowered to do so.

Again, I ask the minister: Why is he adding another layer to the system without engaging these groups on solutions staring him straight in the face?

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

T. OSBORNE: I don't know if the Member heard my last answer. We are looking to expand the scope of practice for nurse practitioners. Last week or the week before, the Member asked me a question about pharmacists. I had answered with the fact that we are looking to expand the scope of practice for pharmacists as well.

Mr. Speaker, if we don't have enough physicians in this province, if we don't have enough surgeons in the province, physician assistants can help with surgeries. They can help with the paperwork associated with surgeries. They can allow surgeons to do more of what we need surgeons to do. They will free up the surgeons' time. I will not apologize for trying to find efficiencies in the system.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Speaker, new technologies such as drones and social media have changed the way people approach hunting in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Though legislation states that using aircraft is illegal, will the minister be modernizing his legislation and enforcement directives?

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

D. BRAGG: Thank you very much, Speaker.

A great question for this time of the year. I myself look forward to hopefully in the next couple of days getting in on the country and doing some moose hunting. And I appalled by the number of people that use different means when I go up there.

The use of a drone, number one, 100 per cent illegal for spotting big game animals – 100 per cent illegal. Let's be clear. You can take a picture; you cannot use it for the purpose of hunting, Mr. Speaker. It's there as aircraft and it's considered like any other aircraft. Drones are already covered.

We are looking to bring forward a new *Wild Life Act* soon, and in that we're going to be looking at some changes to our regulations, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Currently the program for hunters with disabilities requires – quote – the designated hunter keeps the hunter with a disability within sight or 800 metres at all times. For many people with disabilities, this is not practical.

Will the minister update his legislation so that people with all forms of disabilities can get their moose in a safe and dignified manner?

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

D. BRAGG: Mr. Speaker, first I guess a disability is a disability. I don't know what you would refer to as all form; we look at it as disability. When we talk to disabled hunters, we have a constant conversation. We are reviewing our legislation as we speak. I'm always looking to update and look for innovative ideas to help people with disabilities, and one I would like to remind everyone of is the ability to go and get an animal that's been dispatched at a farm.

So when farm animals are nuisance animals and the farmers have to put these animals down, most times, anyone with a disability or any impediment – they could have broke

their foot two weeks ago – they can go and be a part of that program.

That program works really, really well. It helps the farmers and helps people put meat in their fridge, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Speaker.

If it can work in the fishery, when you can get someone else to catch your fish, why can't it work in wildlife?

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear!

L. O'DRISCOLL: Because it's federal? Let's make it in provincial. Let's move it in provincially.

Speaker, it's been over four years since our province's fifth water bomber was damaged. Labradorians continue to request a dedicated plane. We all saw the issues in Central Newfoundland this summer when other provinces came to our assistance.

Speaker, if the minister has no intentions to fix the aircraft, why is he letting it rot away?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture.

D. BRAGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I got up to respond to the preamble when he talks about comparison of the fishery, which, again, is federally regulated; it's a recreational fishery with no quota. Our moose population, there's a quota. There's a management plan that we establish every five years for our moose population in this province.

It's carefully guided, it's carefully crafted and it's carefully guarded. We have enforcement officers in on the country, and sometimes in the air, for enforcement purposes of that. There are allocations for a moose; there are allocations for the number of moose that may have been crippled in going to the woods. It's a very, very comprehensive plan, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: The fishery has a quota too.

Speaker, if the minister has no intentions to fix the aircraft, why is he letting it rot away?

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

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know where the Member got his decisive statement there in saying that I'm not going to fix the aircraft. This past weekend I visited Gander, visited Marine Services, had a tour and envisioned those valued assets that we have for the province. We saw this past summer, in terms of the forest fire, how valuable they are and the service they provide.

Around the fifth unit, I even witnessed the damage that was done there. It requires millions of dollars to repair it, but it's a part of our conversation now what we will do with that fifth unit where it's an extensive evaluation that's going on in the department.

I look forward to a decision that will be made on that fifth unit. But to say that, it's an asset that is very valuable for this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, the Premier says everything is okay; his ethical walls have not been breached. The wind hydrogen project on our Island's West Coast includes tax credits, Crown lands, water rights and tree rights for a start.

Why aren't these details being released? How can we be sure that government is ethical and transparent with the green hydrogen project?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm absolutely pleased to stand up and answer a question in this House about the nascent wind hydrogen file. The reality is, right now – I've laid out the process very clearly in public for the last year.

In December, we laid out our renewable energy plan. In April, the wind moratorium was lifted. In July, we announced the land bid competition. October 1 everybody put their bid in and now we have until December 15 to announce which packages we're going to go with.

The reality is we had not announced the fiscal framework exactly for how this is going to work. We're going to work with the industry; we're going to look around the jurisdiction. So there has been no decision made on that.

When the Member says that there's been tax credits or that's there been this done or that done; the reality is we haven't even made those decisions yet. But I can guarantee you whatever we do will be open and transparent and talked about in this House.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

While Mr. Riskey is the Premier's friend and his fishing trip was at his friend's lodge, Mr. Riskey himself could indeed be considered a lobbyist. However, the *Lobbyist Registration Act* has no teeth and needs to be reviewed.

Will the Premier commit to doing a fulsome review of the act with a view to increasing accountability and transparency?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I guess I can speak on a couple of angles here as it relates to the *Lobbyist Registration Act*. Again, I guess from a Justice perspective, having handled that file in the past, I have not seen any indication that anybody has done any improper lobbying of any sort as it relates to this file.

I can tell you I have met with dozens of proponents of this file, dozens of companies; in fact, most of them were here in St. John's this morning at the econext conference in a room full of people that was sold out, talking about the possibilities here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. PARSONS: Again, we have made this process open and accountable. You ask any proponent and they will tell you that. Everybody's going to get a chance to talk about it. It will be looked at in this House; it will gather a lot of attention. Again, we're looking forward to a sustainable industry in the future.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

High school students in Nain are now forced to do their core courses required to graduate online, instead of in the classroom. Parents and students want to know why teachers who were hired and present in Nain at the beginning of the school year were moved to other classrooms to fill vacancies, forcing students to take courses online instead.

So I ask the minister: How can his department justify taking teachers from students when they are aware of the poor Internet service and other barriers these students already face?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Speaker.

Recruitment of teachers for rural and remote locations in this province, like recruitment of a lot of professionals, is a real challenge currently; Labrador is no different in that respect. We did hire a teacher recently for Nain.

The issue that the Member refers to is one that she hasn't brought to my attention prior to today; it is an operational issue with the school district. If she supplies me with the details, I'll be happy to look at it.

On the issue of Internet access, I have asked my officials to liaise with Health because the clinic in Nain has Internet access. I am not aware of any difficulties there so we may be able to find some synergies. I await the Member's details with interest.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Parents and students have brought these issues forward and I'll gladly provide them to him.

Last week, I raised a serious concern that all Nain high school students were forced to do their courses online, huddled around one computer, waiting through 15 to 20 minutes of frequent buffering interruptions to their courses. Now I am being told by parents that many of the students are switching from academic to general – that's the basic program – only because the online burden is too much for them. Last year, they were honours students; now facing a very limited career path.

I ask the minister: Is this acceptable? To download the problem with teacher recruitment onto students who had a teacher at the start of the school year? That's your responsibility, Minister.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, again, for the question.

I do not have broadband access for rural communities as part of my portfolio. There are others who are better positioned to answer that than I. What I can say is that I am aware of a discrepancy between the standard of broadband available to health care clients and the school.

I have asked the school district and I have asked my department to talk to the Department of Health and Labrador-Grenfell regional to see what they're doing differently. These are operational issues with the school district and with the details

that the Member says she is going to provide, I'd be happy to look into it further.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

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

J. DINN: If I may, Speaker, I'd like to table the press release that was put out by the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour on pay equity legislation and how it's woefully inadequate.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

My apologies, leave is required for you to be able to table that document.

Does the Member have leave?

AN HON. MEMBER: By leave.

SPEAKER: Leave is granted.

Thank you.

Any further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you very much Speaker.

Speaker, I give notice that on tomorrow I will move in accordance with Standing Order 11(1) that this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, October 31, 2022.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

Speaker, I give notice that on tomorrow, I will move in accordance with Standing Order 11(1) that this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, October 31, 2022.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I give notice that on tomorrow, I will move in accordance with Standing Order 11(1) that this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 1, 2022.

SPEAKER: Are there any further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The background of this petition is as follows:

WHEREAS there are no current operations at the Bull Arm Fabrication Site; and

WHEREAS this site is a world-class facility with potential to rejuvenate the local economy; and

WHEREAS residents in the area are troubled with the lack of local employment in today's economy; and

WHEREAS the operation of this facility would encourage employment for the area and create economic spin offs for all local businesses; and

WHEREAS this site is an asset to the entire province, built to benefit the province and a long-term tenant for this site would attract gainful business opportunities.

THEREFORE we the residents around the area of the Bull Arm Fabrication Site petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to expedite a process to get the Bull Arm Fabrication Site back in operation. We request that this process include vision for a long-term viable plan that is beneficial to all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to stand here and talk today, specifically when I talk about Bull Arm. I want to talk about the possibility of the Bay du Nord Project and Equinor, which excites most residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, but, specifically, and I know through talking to industry leaders, certainly through the building trades and stuff, that the current minister has lobbied hard and is doing the diligence to do it. But what concerns me is the language that other Members of his government have been using; specifically, some who've said leave the oil in the ground.

I want to urge – urge – this minister to consider all things in negotiating this new contract. We know back in 2018 it was based on a minimum of 5,000 metric tons, and for those who are familiar with industry, they'll understand that 5,000 metric tons doesn't mean a whole lot, maybe a helideck, a flare boom and some lifeboat stations, but that's not the conversation

that's being had, we want the topside modules built here in this province. What's being discussed is subsea work.

While I don't dismiss the subsea work, because of the longevity of what it would provide for this province, it gives us an ability to carry on with fabric maintenance and things we haven't done in the past. It's very important we do subsea work. But I do believe that these modules can be built in this province. We have 15,000 strong members of the Building Trades. We've done the White Rose. We've done the Terra Nova, and if people go back historically and look, we did 70 per cent of the Terra Nova, 90 per cent of the Sea Rose and we should be doing 100 per cent of this here.

We all understand that the hull can't be built in this province, but all other aspects can. When it comes to mechanical outfitting, fabrication of any modules, it needs to be done in this province. We have the capability to do not only the topside work but we can do the subsea work, too.

I urge the minister, and I know that the minister is doing good work on this file, but I urge him that he gets the people in his caucus and Cabinet behind him. I urge that he goes to his federal counterparts and ask them to support them in the same manner. I urge that they push Equinor to do this work in this province and anything less than that would be unacceptable.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology for a response.

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the petition from the Member opposite and certainly I think we are of like mind when it comes to the resources we have here in the province and the

development of them and the benefit of them.

One thing we will disagree on is that I can tell you that our caucus is united in the best deal possible for this province as it relates to Bay du Nord.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. PARSONS: I can say to this House that we have unity here. In fact, I can't say unity in the House, I think most sides here are on the same page; we've got a few stragglers that don't really have much concern as it relates to the women and men of the oil and gas industry, but we'll leave that there for now, we'll park that.

What I will say to you is that we want the best deal possible; we do think there is a capability here. In fact, I just had a meeting with Trades NL just about 1½ hours ago in my office to talk about this.

Now, one thing I will say is that while we have a resource, when we talk about leave the oil in the ground, I will say this, the only thing worse than no deal is a bad deal. That is the thing that is guiding us as we move forward; we want the best deal possible.

So, look, I can tell you that the Premier, as well as this caucus, as well as Members opposite pushed extremely hard to get federal approval of this deal. There was a lot of work done behind the scenes and we got there. There is still a lot of work left to do as it relates to the negotiation and the framework benefit, but again I appreciate the comments from the Member opposite. We will all need to work together to ensure that we get the best deal possible for this province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, residents on Route 350, 351A and 352 in the Exploits District are concerned of road conditions on these routes causing safety issues and damage to vehicles.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to immediately have the roadwork contracted to upgrade and improve conditions on these routes.

Speaker, I presented this petition earlier; every chance I get I'll present this petition because this year has been really poor on those routes. We had the Come Home Year and I listed off amazing amounts of dollars worth of damages that were done to those vehicles during this year. I have names. I have emails.

If the minister is not going to listen to me with those petitions and what needs to be done with the routes, he can certainly have those emails, names and numbers and he can call them himself and explain to them why they're not getting their roads done and why the road is in such poor condition.

It's unacceptable. Even this year right up to September, even getting the potholes fixed up until September. This should be done in early June, some probably contracted out in areas where road conditions are really bad, contract it out, have it done, regular maintenance to roads, to the holes and potholes and keep our road conditions up to standards. That should be done by June, early July. We shouldn't have those complaints going into the summer.

Thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure for a response.

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's always a pleasure to talk about roads. We'll take that under advisement as we do our planning. But I'll just put it on the record here that this past season there was millions of dollars spent in his district.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Speaker.

The background to this petition is as follows:

WHEREAS in the District of Harbour Main there are many residents who are concerned with the deteriorating cellphone service that they have been experiencing in recent months. There has been a significant decline in the cell service throughout the district where calls are being dropped and residents are unable to get their calls to go through for no apparent reason.

THEREFORE we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to work and partner with the various cellular providers and telecommunications officials to stabilize and improve the cellphone service within the region so that citizens have a reliable service that they can depend on.

Speaker, something has to be done. We are hearing in our office from so many constituents throughout the entire district of the poor cellphone service. It seems to be escalating. One constituent, for example, from Conception Harbour, she said at first the cell service was fine, but it steadily declined over a short period. She thought it was her phone. She purchased a new phone, not the case. The issues still existed. She explained to her service provider with no success. She's working from home, she's on the phone with clients and the call just fails. This is a typical situation, Speaker.

I'm hearing it from everyone in the district. One constituent actually started a petition, an online petition. She received over 100 signatures of people who were exacerbated with this problem with the same issues of dropped calls and terrible cell service. The town council in Holyrood, I've been working with them because there have been so many problems, specifically in the Holyrood area. They have been reaching out.

We're trying to get communication and get meetings with the cell service providers so as to see what can be done. It's to the point where people are declining calls until they get out of the area because they can't speak on the phone. They're paying an exorbitant amount of money for this service, a service which they're not getting.

Speaker, these companies are very profitable companies and if they're going to be providing a service for their customers, then they have to invest in it. They have to provide proper infrastructure with upgrades and enhancements to provide adequate and acceptable service for the people that are paying a lot of money.

I've heard from so many people that are saying this affects their daily life. They need to have better service for the big bucks that they pay. So I'm calling upon government to partner with the various cellular providers and telecommunication officials to get something done here.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology for a response.

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The first thing that I'll say to the Member opposite is that I concur that there are many areas within the Harbour Main District where cell service is an issue. I have seen

that. I have family there. So I'm not disagreeing with what she's saying, not one bit.

And the reality is, sadly, that that is common in a number of areas in this province. Again, I made a number of those petitions when I sat on that side. It has been an evergreen issue for some time; it continues to be. But I think more and more, and I think the pandemic proved it, we need more reliability when it comes to broadband. We need more reliability when it comes to cell service for business, for safety, for you name it. It's just something that we all are used to and require now for every facet of life.

What I can say, first of all, though, that this does fall under federal jurisdiction. So I think we need to jointly continue to ensure that the federal government and their partners meet the CRTC standards and continue to invest in broadband. I know that, in fact, it was just in the last number of months they invested \$136 million. In fact, we have also partnered in that and we have made significant investments in the last number of months and years as it relates to broadband and cell service in this province.

We're going to continue to do that. In fact, we're working on round three of small cell projects that would be applicable to numerous smaller communities, especially in a rural area. So we're hoping to bring out round three soon, but I would say to the Member I agree with you; I concur with you that are citizens are facing it. We're all paying too much, and we will continue to lobby Bell and every one of those providers to ensure that our customers and constituents are getting bang for their buck.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll read the prayer of the petition:

WHEREAS our environment must be protected and the *Environmental Protection Act* must be followed to ensure the safety of our environment for future generations; and

WHEREAS the World Energy GH2 has submitted a plan to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to build wind turbines in Western Newfoundland; and

WHEREAS the company director has stated publicly that government told the company to register only Phase I of the project; and

WHEREAS the company director has stated they need the three phases to make the project viable;

THEREFORE we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the hon. House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to reject Phase I of the World Energy GH2 project and complete an environmental impact study on the World Energy GH2 project as one to ensure the complete project is evaluated and the environmental study is not circumvented.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to stand here today and I'm going to state what's in the public domain. The public domain is John Risley, himself, said government told him to only put it in Phase I. Who in government? I know it wasn't the Minister of Industry, Trade. I know it wasn't him. The Minister of Environment said it wasn't him. The Premier said it wasn't him. So who did it? Who told this man that he should put in Phase I.

This is very serious, Mr. Speaker. Government should do an investigation into that. They should do an investigation. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change is saying that yes, you should, I agree. This is very serious. You're putting a lot of people at risk with the environment out in Western Newfoundland, with one guy saying government told us only put in Phase

I, because once we get that done – but we need the three phases. We need to know who is telling them to do this, to circumvent the system.

This is a serious allegation that John Risley made that someone in government is giving him information. I'm not making any allegations; I'm just saying what he said in the public domain. It's on the CBC. He said it to CBC. It is serious, so I call upon the government to look into that. I'm going to continue to raise that because it is a circumvention of the environmental impact study, I say to the minister.

The minister is shaking his head saying yes, we should do an investigation. Therefore, Minister, you should put a halt to this until we get it straightened out.

Another thing, the person I have the confidence in is the Minister of Industry, Trade and Rural Development. I have the confidence that you did set the record straight and the process straight. I can honestly say that that you did. But can you do me one favour, just one little favour? Just walk down that steps to the Minister of Environment, it's only about five seconds, because you just said –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

E. JOYCE: Well, I'll ask for leave. We gave leave yesterday because this is very important. Can I have leave to finish? Just for a minute.

SPEAKER: Is leave granted by all?

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

SPEAKER: By leave.

E. JOYCE: Thank you.

I say to the minister I have full confidence in the Minister of Industry; I have full confidence that you set the system. What you said – and tell me if I'm wrong – is that

the decision won't be made until December 15 on who won the parcels of land or the bidding. That's not what you said?

A. PARSONS: No.

I'll get up now.

E. JOYCE: Okay.

Because my point, if the process is not followed and you're saying that there's a process that there was a tender put out for whoever wants to bid, whoever wants to be the best proposal for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador – and you said that decision will be made December 15 on that. I think that's what you said.

My question is: If that's true, why are we doing the environmental impact study on the proposal that hasn't even been accepted yet? Mr. Speaker, that's my question. If there's a process set out, which I have full confidence in the minister – it's a great process, especially for the Crown lands. Why are we doing the environmental impact study and we don't even know until December 15 what the best proposal is going to be and be accepted?

I'm not against this project yet. I just want to make sure that it's done properly. Yet, because we haven't got the full information. Mr. Speaker, it's like I said before, if you are going to build a foundation for a house, if your foundation is not proper, you're going to have a bad house and if we don't have the environmental impact study done properly, we will not have the final results properly.

So it's all I'm asking is let's rewind all this. Let's go back and let's do it properly and let's put the whole project as one so we can do the study properly, when the bids are accepted by the minister who I have full confidence in.

Thank you.

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

A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand up again. Any time I can stand up and speak to wind energy, to speak to the process, I think it's important because I will note that along the way, there has been lots of questions asked which I think is pretty normal, pretty common whenever we have a new process.

So the first thing I would say to the Member is my understanding is that anybody can launch an environmental assessment application at any point. The legislation does not forbid somebody from doing that but the Crown land part of it – that's doesn't mean that you're going to actually get access to that land. If somebody wants to go out and spend the money and spend the time and do it, they have no guarantee whatsoever that they are going to get access to that. I can guarantee you that.

The second part of this – and again, I've got small notes written here. I apologize. You talk about what an individual said. Again, does that mean that's the truth? We're saying here that somebody in government said that. We don't know that. The Member opposite – the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands said what about the \$10 million. If a proponent wants to go out and spend money or a community, that's on them but I can guarantee you, similar to whether it's fly-fishing or \$10 million or an environmental assessment or as it was brought up yesterday, the Member said I'm very confident this is going to happen, the reality is that we have a process and the process itself will determine. I apologize, I have seen this happen before, Mr. Speaker, but if I can get leave –

SPEAKER: The minister's time has expired.

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

SPEAKER: Leave granted.

A. PARSONS: I appreciate this, Mr. Speaker. I can say something as somebody who's been here a few years, I've seen good debates happen on issues extending from these petitions and hopefully that's the point. What I would say, again, is that we have a process that is laid out.

Now, coming back to your December 15 point, on July 26 we announced the process. October 1 was the deadline for industry proponents to identify the land that they wished to work on. The closing for that was October 1; we had 73 projects proposed by 31 proponents. What we have now is until December 15 for the province to decide which pieces of land we are going to put out. That will be based on community consultation and Indigenous consultation. It will be done on land-use surveys; it will be done on a whole range of factors.

They also had to put in a high-level understanding of where their project was. December 15 we put out what land that we are going to put out for bid. Hopefully, sometime in the first quarter of 2023 we will be able to announce who wins those bids.

I can tell you some companies have already said that they're going to wait until they find out if they get land to start with an EA or to start spending money, because in some cases they don't have the capital in order to do that. Some companies, some proponents, have said in order to expedite to meet the 2025 demand that has been put out by Germany and others – in order to meet that they're saying we're going to go ahead, we're confident enough in our proposal that we're going to start the EA to cut the time after if we win. But there is a risk factor involved in that, the same way there is a risk factor if you go out and order an electrolyzer now. There is a huge demand for those; the supply chain is going to be difficult.

Some people are going to go out and order, some people won't, but again, there's a risk involved because at the end of the day they

have no certainty right now. The only certainty they will get is on December 15 this province will say what is available. Then, at some point in the future – as I said I hope Q1 2023 – we will say who is successful. So that's where we are.

So coming back to the original point, yes, they've launched an environmental assessment. I have nothing to do with it, but I can guarantee you it doesn't mean – just because you launch it has no play whatsoever in our process. My process and our process will be what is in the best interests of the province, the people, the land, the best return, jobs, et cetera.

That's where we are. I appreciate your giving me the liberty to sort of speak a little bit on that.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Orders of the Day

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I thank the two hon. Members for the wonderful debate this afternoon.

Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Motion 1.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Speaker, I move, second by the hon. Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting the Delivery of Health and Community Services and the Establishment of a Provincial Health Authority, Bill 20, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce Bill 20 and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

Motion, the hon. Minister of Health and Community Services to introduce a bill, "An Act Respecting the Delivery of Health and Community Services and the Establishment of a Provincial Health Authority," carried. (Bill 20)

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting the Delivery of Health and Community Services and the Establishment of a Provincial Health Authority. (Bill 20)

SPEAKER: This bill has now been read a first time.

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

S. CROCKER: Tomorrow.

SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 20 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call from the Order Paper, Order 7, second reading of Bill 9.

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the MHA for Placentia - St. Mary's, that Bill 9, An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act, now be read a second time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 9, An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act." (Bill 9)

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, public safety is a top priority of this government. As the department responsible for the *Highway Traffic Act*, Digital Government and Service NL takes this role very seriously: the protection of the public. We work with our law enforcement and safety partners to help make our highways and roads safer.

I've seen the profound devastation of those who have been personally impacted by incidents along our roadways. Speaker, I get infuriated when I see news and social media posts boasting about dangerous behaviour. It's unacceptable.

The *Highway Traffic Act* is a significant piece of legislation that regulates drivers and motor vehicle use on our province's highways. It's important that we, as a government, regularly review the act to keep it current with changes and safety codes, vehicle design and other highway improvements, as well as responding to driving behaviours.

Words cannot express the devastation that families live with every day. I commend these individuals in their efforts to spread

their road safety message despite their suffering. I'd like to thank Gail Thorne, with the STAND for Hannah Foundation, who's joining us today up in the gallery.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

S. STOODLEY: Sarah Pittman, Patricia Coates, MADD Canada and many others for your ongoing advocacy.

We have to keep these stories top of mind every time we make changes to the act to help increase road safety. That's why it's so important for individual advocates and groups to keep speaking out and spreading the message that driving is a privilege that must be taken very seriously, and full recognition of the potential harm that can be caused if the rules of the road are not obeyed. They can never give up their fight to educate the public and lobby for change. We have to listen, react and respond, Speaker.

Over the past several years, we have amended the *Highway Traffic Act* to strengthen penalties for violations, with the hope that this will help deter dangerous and life-threatening behaviours. I'd like to thank my colleague, the MHA for Placentia - St. Mary's, who led most, if not all, of the recent changes to the *Highway Traffic Act*. We introduced tougher penalties for handheld devices while operating a vehicle, as well as increased penalties for impaired driving, including new rules that we hope will steer young drivers in the direction of safe and sober driving habits.

We increased penalties to deter behaviour that continues to pose a risk on our roadways, such as excessive speeding, street racing and stunting. We created a new offence for driving without due care and attention or without reasonable consideration for others causing bodily harm or death.

The one-metre rule for cyclists and pedestrians was also introduced, and

penalties were increased for such things as driving with an obstructed windshield or an illegally modified vehicle. More recently, we also amended the *Highway Traffic Act* to provide the authority to strengthen enforcement efforts through the use of traffic cameras to support our efforts to help make roads, highways and communities safer for the travelling public, schoolchildren and workers on our roadways in construction zones. Regulations have been published in the Gazette and we have a committee working on an implementation plan that can't be out soon enough, Mr. Speaker.

Unfortunately, there continues to be many reported incidents of unsafe driving on our roadways. People are still dying, Mr. Speaker. One death is too many. The message is not getting through clearly enough. My department recently reviewed the top five offences resulting in convictions from 2017 to 2021, the majority of which were issued for speeding.

We have consulted with our safety partners who highlighted public safety concerns arising from excessive speeding, street racing and stunting. Speaker, these behaviours are being highlighted because they are considered serious public safety issues which can lead to crashes and fatalities on our roadways, and therefore the focus of the *Highway Traffic Act* amendments that we're proposing today.

Altering driving behaviour is not as simple as increasing fines. It's difficult to isolate the specific effects on individual penalties, particularly since different penalties are likely to affect people in different ways. Clearly, the current level of penalties is insufficient to discourage speeding, racing and stunting. It is hoped that our proposed changes will help reduce this dangerous driving behaviour, Speaker.

So I'm very pleased to today propose that we increase fines by \$100 for exceeding the speed limit by 11 to 20 kilometres an hour,

21 to 30 kilometres an hour, 31 to 50 kilometres an hour and by more than 51 kilometres an hour. This \$100 increase would also apply to fines for speeding in a construction zone or school zone.

We're also recommending that fines be increased by \$100 for racing vehicles or bicycles on highways and performing or engaging in stunting while driving. I'd like to give some examples. So the fine line for a first offence of speeding between 11 and 21 kilometres an hour over the speed limit right now is between \$100 to \$150. With this proposed bill, the fine would double to \$200 to \$250. I'd like to give another example, Speaker. The fine for a first offence of speeding 51 kilometres an hour over the speed limit is \$400 to \$600. With Bill 9, this fine would be increased to \$500 to \$700 with additional penalties, which I'll describe shortly.

The changes proposed not only increase fines, but we're also changing demerit points and vehicle impoundment fees for excessive speeding, racing and stunting, Speaker. So besides the changes in Bill 9, we are also modifying the highway traffic demerit point system regulations and the vehicle seizure and impoundment regulations from 2012. The proposed changes would increase the demerit point allocations from two or four to six points for exceeding the speed limit by 51 kilometres an hour or over for racing vehicles on highways and for performing or engaging in stunting while driving, Speaker.

Our province currently uses a demerit point system based on 12 points. Drivers are notified in writing when they've accumulated six to nine points. Drivers who earn 12 points within a two-year period have their driver's licence suspended. The length of suspension increases each time a driver accumulates the maximum point limit from two months to four months. Novice drivers can only accumulate six points within a one-year period, Speaker, before their licence is suspended.

So I'd just like to be clear to this House and to anyone listening, with our proposed changes to demerit points, if a novice driver is caught speeding by 51 kilometres an hour, caught racing or stunting, their licence will be suspended immediately.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

S. STOODLEY: Digital Government and Service NL is amending the regulations to send a strong message. We're increasing the administrative vehicle impoundment from three days to seven days for exceeding the speed limit by 51 kilometres an hour or over for racing on highways and performing or engaging in stunting while driving. This also increases the cost for getting your vehicle out of impoundment.

So, Speaker, just to be clear, there will be no extra cost to government or to the RNC for increasing the impoundment time. That cost is completely borne by the individual whose vehicle is impounded. Under certain situations people can apply to the registrar for early release, but we're intending to significantly increase the punishment and the time that your vehicle is impounded after one of these penalties, Speaker.

These proposed changes generally align with those in other provinces for similar offences. These specific behaviours constitute serious public safety issues and they've been the focus of targeted initiatives by our enforcement partners. Excessive speeding, racing and performing stunts are driving behaviours that lead to crashes and fatalities on our roadways. We're increasing the penalties associated with these behaviours to improve deterrence.

Driving is a privilege, not a right, Speaker, and the amendments that we are debating speak to the government's commitment to support safe and sustainable communities in our province.

I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the advocacy groups and

individuals, enforcement agencies and stakeholders for working with us in our efforts to improve road safety in the province.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

C. TIBBS: Thank you very much, Speaker, and I thank the minister for the preamble there. It's very important.

I agree with a lot of this bill. Again, I don't know if it goes far enough to tackle some of the issues that we have on our roadways here in Newfoundland and Labrador. This has been a particularly bad summer, especially in Central, where we've had quite a few accidents and they seem to be piling up.

So we look at the bill here today, Speaker, and this amendment which will increase fines, speeding, highway racing and stunt driving by \$100, which is great. But when we talk about here – during the briefing the officials said the minister is proposing this change because of representation from families of road crash victims, such as the STAND for Hannah Foundation, which is absolutely fantastic for these advocacy groups to be out.

But instead of being reactive, or along with being reactive, I would suggest that we do some proactive work as well. We want to thank the advocacy groups as well, because we know what they've gone through, a lot of them. We know their stories and we can only imagine how many families an accident can touch.

I would suggest that we go another step further and, hopefully, one day see some of this in schools before those drivers get out. I know we got some great driving programs out there, but instead of just teaching new

kids how to drive today, I believe that they should meet with advocacy groups and have them come into the school and talk to these children before they get out on our roadways so they can see the actual impacts that it has on families throughout the province as they've dealt with some horrible, horrible accidents in the past that, again, has affected so many.

So the reactive stuff is great, but we would also ask that a proactive approach be taken before these kids get out on the highway. I have a 17-year-old son. He's been driving now for just about a year, and I got to tell you, my heart goes in my throat every time that he gets out on the roadway. Just like I'm sure most parents do, or anybody else that has somebody travelling on our highways.

Again, upping the fines here, it's a great idea in principle and do you know what? I think that it's going to have a difference, but we also need to address the almost \$45 million that we have in outstanding fines, try to get those back, too, because if we have habitual offenders continuously doing this and aren't paying their fines, well, it's not much of a lesson learned at the end of a day. So it's great to up the fines, but we need a way to get them back. I know about 80 per cent of the province do pay their fines but we need to find some way of getting those \$45 million back in our coffers, hitting the habitual offenders in the wallet where, hopefully, it hurts most to them and to keep their mind about them.

When you take a vehicle on the road, it can be up to a two-ton vehicle you're driving around. It's a weapon. It is a weapon and when you look at our highways, whether it be weather conditions, whatnot, that weapon can be weaponized very, very quickly.

One other thing I'll talk about before we get into the bill, and I don't know if I've seen it in the bill, maybe the minister can elaborate on it, is distracted driving. I know distracted

driving, right now, I would say contributes to a lot of accidents, whether they be fender-benders or on the highway.

I was coming out this summer, myself and my wife, from Grand Falls-Windsor, we were just passing Norris Arm and I had a vehicle coming at me, crossed right over into my lane. Do you know what? They were pretty close to me. I was ready to go off the road but they managed to correct it again and here the lady was on her phone.

So I would encourage everybody out there, when you get in your vehicle use the systems that your phone has. Put it in the passenger seat and leave it – leave it. There is not one phone call important enough to risk the lives of yourself and anybody else on the highway. I know that everybody – you take a quick peek at stuff like that. It cannot be done. Make sure that you leave that phone where it needs to be. No phone call is worth a life.

Construction zones: In the summertime we have a lot of construction zones throughout this province. I've seen it, you know, the construction zone, you go down to a 50-kilometre zone sort of thing. You've got people working there. That's people's moms and dads and brothers and sisters and you race through a construction zone or if you're looking at your phone, sort of thing, we want everybody to go home at the end of the day.

They're just doing a job trying to keep the highways up, maintenance here in Newfoundland and Labrador. We want to ensure that those people go home safely. So if you're in a construction zone please slow down, whether they're posted or not make sure that you slow down and ensure that those people go home safely at the end of the day, because you've got to remember, they're on the highway doing work that they're insured to do.

School zones is another one here, absolutely. Let's raise that right on the school zones for fines. It's absolutely insane

to watch people drive through a school zone. I'm not sure if it's 15 or 20 kilometres an hour now and that's the way it should be. You've got to remember, too, it's not just a 9 to 3, Monday to Friday sort of thing. There are extracurricular activities that take place in these schools at the end of the day, on a weekend, on holidays and that's our children going back and forth to school. I've never seen a school zone any more than a half kilometre or so long. If you can't slow down to 20 kilometres an hour there's something wrong, you probably shouldn't be driving anyway.

So let's protect our children, let's protect our construction workers and ensure that we have safe roadways here in Newfoundland and Labrador. You know, there are so many things that are out there that can happen in life to get you, but every accident is preventable. Every single accident that has ever taken place is preventable and that comes with education and, of course, punitive-style legislation like this, which we totally support and agree with.

Again, I don't know if you could put a high enough number for me, personally, on habitual offenders who do this. One person that does it the first time, absolutely, we can all creep over it a little bit. I am sure everybody in this House has done it, but the fact of the matter is there are people out there who have little to no regard for the law and we need to ensure that we do everything we can to educate these people to respect the law. If not, get their licence, get their car, take it away from them and that would be exactly what I would do.

Highway racing and stunt driving, I have saved that one for last for myself here. I know there's an array of other ones as well, but highway racing and stunt driving, that's where I believe we need to start educating the children. I believe if there's anybody that's convicted of this, it would be most young people. I am not trying to blanket young people but from what we've seen in the past, it is young people.

Before we get out of school, those people should have to meet with such advocacy groups to hear their stories, to see how many lives that it impacts. You know, for those who don't know, I grew up on that Southern Shore in Bay Bulls and I believe that I've had up to four friends die on the Southern Shore Highway. I mean back in high school when we were in high school. They were great people, sort of thing. I am not saying that anybody was doing anything wrong. But, at the end of the day, every accident can be prevented and when a young person goes out on the roadways, as a parent, my God, your heart just sinks.

When it comes to highway racing, I would suggest that we get some more education into those young people. Let them know – let them see exactly what can happen, what ramifications can happen if they make this decision. It can be a decision that affects so many people around you, so many other lives, not just the victims but their families, their friends, their schools, their peers and we need to ensure that this never happens again because it doesn't have to happen. Not to mention the life of the young woman or man who commits this crime. It can be prevented and those young people out there, one split-second decision can be life changing for yourself and a trickle effect, a spider web around you of so many other families and friends.

So if any young people are listening – and I hope they are – the message I take forward is before you do it, take a split second, just ask yourself, is this really worth it. And I think that you're going to find out at the end of the day that the answer is definitely no.

Speaker, we talked about distracted driving and I'll just leave you with this. In my former life, I worked as a paramedic for quite some time, throughout Labrador and here on the Island as well, and in my current life as a firefighter now with Grand Falls-Windsor Fire Department. I have seen a lot in my day as well. I have seen quite a lot in my day. I have seen car accidents. I have seen

victims. It was horrifying to see some of these accidents. I'm not going to rehash everything now, but I truly believe that it has made me a better driver, to see the outcome, to see exactly what could happen to a young person. I have dealt with children. I have dealt adults. At the end of the day, it is very tough to see those things.

Which bring me to my next point, of course, which is the emergency responders; they're people, too. I know that they carry it home with them. So when I say it affects everybody, it affects our emergency responders too. We're so lucky to have them. But to have senseless accidents on our highways, it is just absolutely not worth it, or in town or on our roadways in general.

Again, the stuff that we see, it can't be unseen at the end of the day. But if those people that are making the decisions now – those split-second decisions – whether it be stunt racing or speeding or reckless driving, by God, if you could see the impact that one accident can do in a split second, you would never commit that again. So before you commit the crime, before you impact so many lives, I ask you to take that split second and ask yourself: Is this worth it? What are we doing? Slow down. Put that phone away. And of course, we support any punitive arrangement with government when it comes to habitual offenders or anybody else and the demerit points are the same way.

I definitely support this piece of legislation. Again, I think that we can even go further. I'm not sure what happened with the cameras. I know that we brought in some legislation, our first or second year here, and I would like to see – or I would like the minister to probably, maybe we can do it in Committee, talk about where we are with that: cameras in school zones, cameras in construction zones. They have them right throughout Alberta; I lived in Alberta for some time and, oh by God, it was nothing to get a ticket in the mail for 20 kilometres over, demerit points, and fines. You have to

remember driving in that place; absolutely you certainly did, so that is something that can help the provincial coffers as well and hopefully put a stop to any offences like this.

We'll definitely support this piece of legislation. I ask everybody out there to keep an eye on your speed, stop the distraction, put your phone down, respect the law and respect the drivers around you because they are just out to have a safe drive as well.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

I would like to speak on this bill as well. First, I would like to applaud the minister for bringing these changes forward. They're very much needed. But I also want to applaud the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's. She's done much in the past in dealing with this act, as well, in making amendments that are aimed to make our highways safer.

For those in the House, you know I lost a brother to an accident on the highway that could be very preventable and should never have happened. An accident on a highway is very sudden. Not to take away from individuals who may be ailing in hospital and that, but when you have individuals – a child, a parent, a father, a brother – who goes off to work or goes off to whatever activity and you get that call and they're not coming home ever, that's horrific for those who have to deal with it. For me, it's still very vivid, and I'm sure it is for many others.

So anything we can do to make our highway safer has to be applauded. There will always be questions: Is it enough? And I think when you look at legislation, in these instances, I guess it never will be enough

because the cars on the highway are becoming more advanced, the roadways are becoming bigger and wider and people just take advantage and go.

Up in my District of Topsail - Paradise, I can tell you there are so, so many kids – I'll call them kids – on dirt bikes, quads, who are on the roads. Well, there was a video only the other day, whipping across in front of traffic, doing stunts, going up the roads on one wheel in the middle of rush hour. It's a joke to the kids, and I wonder where are their parents in this – where are their parents?

Because when I grew up and you go out the door, you get asked the questions: Where are you going; who are you going there with; how are you getting there; and how are you getting back? You'd get all those questions. I don't know if they're asked anymore. When you're that young and you're flying along, you think nothing can happen to you. You're superman or superwoman. You're just indestructible.

But if we saw the video the other day, it led to an accident and the biker went off, rode off and gone off into the sunset without a care. Meanwhile, there's a family there dealing with being hit from behind because they had to stop because of a bike.

The first thing we look at is we say these fines are great, but they're probably not enough to deter people. I guess it comes down to enforcement. It comes down to enforcement and our RCMP and our Royal Newfoundland Constabulary. We know they have a big workload on them. They're dealing with a lot of issues day to day that require their attention. We just don't have the resources to be monitoring every road for speeders or stunt drivers or the like.

There are opportunities, and I think I mentioned this before, for example, your municipal enforcement officers in some of your communities, maybe giving them a little bit more leeway or ability or authority to

ticket moving violations. Maybe there's opportunity for community involvement.

How many videos do we see and pictures we see on social media of little Johnny flying up the road or little Mary going the other way on one wheel or jumping over this or that, and because of privacy, oh no, you cannot post pictures of underage bikers on the road. But they're going to kill someone, if not themselves, and nobody wants that. There's opportunity for community involvement here.

We talked about traffic cams and, hopefully, during Committee we'll get some questions on the status of that, where that is. But think about it, everyone in this House and most people out there, most kids have a phone. There has to be opportunities to take a video or record something happening that shouldn't be happening and forward it to the authorities and get the proper identification done and take the proper action.

Social media is an outstanding device. It's not so much for us as politicians, because sometimes you get raked through the coals in there, but it is a good resource for when you're seeing what's actually happening almost live of what's out there in the communities. We should be able to post that and prevent some issues from happening.

You know, we talk about the – I think it's \$44.9 million, I stand to be corrected, in terms of outstanding fines. Think about the work our advocacy groups do, and some are represented here today, think about the work they do. They do that out of a necessary need, they do it because something happened to them in their lives that pushes them along and gives them the courage to go and do and make a difference on behalf of someone they've lost. Think about a portion or a partial piece of that \$44.9 million can go to these groups and help them do even more, to do even more advocacy.

We talk about kids in school. We had discussions there last year on the ATV usage and that. We talked about the size of the bike that younger kids are allowed to be on and vice versa, but I can guarantee you there are a lot of kids out there riding on machines that are way too big for them, and we need to enforce that. We need to get out and – we have legislation, we have regulations, I'm not arguing that, but we have to find a way to enforce that and call people out on it. In fact, the parents, we have to call the parents out.

Up in Topsail - Paradise, I have four or five bikers and I can tell you by the time of day, they're going to fly up this road on one wheel and wave to you and keep on going in between traffic. I can almost, by the time of day, tell you when they're coming.

AN HON. MEMBER: Send us the licence plate.

P. DINN: No, it's a good point. Send us the licence plate.

But the unfortunate thing, most of these bikes don't even have a plate on them. Doesn't even have a plate on them.

AN HON. MEMBER: Get a picture.

P. DINN: Get a picture. But again I go back to my point about the picture. They tell you can't post a picture of someone who is underage, apparently.

But what I'm getting at, we have to look at other means and expand – this is a great step, no doubt about it – how we can enforce some of these regulations and rules.

Think about it, you go poach a moose or you poach a salmon, most of you – I've heard about it. But you can lose all your gear, you can lose your vehicle, you can lose it all. You have to go to court to get it back.

AN HON. MEMBER: You may not get it back.

P. DINN: And you may not get it back.

But you could be stunt driving, speeding and that and, yeah, your car being impounded, but you go down, pay your fee and away you go again after four or five days, whatever it is.

The penalty has to fit the crime. If you're out there and you're driving recklessly – I mean, if you shot a gun in public, up in the air, whatever, like the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans said you're out in a car or a vehicle that's a huge weapon when it's not used the way it should be used.

I think the minister said, and I stand to be corrected on her quote, but she spoke about altering driving habits and hoping to deter that by fines. Yes, that will have an effect on that. Many will say, well, the fines aren't steep enough. That's left to be determined. We'll see coming out of this how that's done.

It must be 20 years ago or something now, 20 years ago we were down in Florida and I was really amazed, as an example, the fines for parking in a blue zone were huge – huge. You don't see anyone parked in a blue zone down there. So there is some deterrent to the financial penalty applied here. I would like to see it higher, but you have to start somewhere.

Again, we look at this and we say it is a life and death situation for families. I can't imagine the parents of those families, but think about the child on that motorbike flying along, whips across the traffic like the other day, which was on video and that, and someone gets killed and he flies off and goes on his way. How will his parents feel about that when they say I could've prevented it or I should've known? They're right, they should've known.

If you have a child who got out of school, a Grade 7 or 8 and jumps on their motorbike and gone off. That's great. You'll get arguments that, well, in the towns they have access to get to these trails and they have to – let me tell you, if someone has a Sea-Doo or a boat they have to put it on a trailer to get there. So if you're in a similar community why not the same with a bike? Why not?

I think it comes down to a bit of a blending, a merging of your rural areas with your urban. There's no doubt about that. Maybe we should have trails for these bikes and maybe we should have drop-off zones. There's a lot we can be doing. I know you can't do it all at once.

But this here, again, I applaud the minister and I applaud the past minister, the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's. No one in this House is going to vote against this – I'd be very, very surprised – when you're talking about health and safety on our highways.

I've experienced the loss of a brother. I've experienced my family being T-boned by a driver who wasn't paying attention. I was working in the building here and getting a call. Going out to the Health Sciences, I had two of my daughters at the time being brought in on stretchers in neck braces. It's a terrible feeling. It's a terrible feeling to get. Then what you get is the person that caused the accident, in these cases, are the ones who claim: I didn't know, I didn't do this, I didn't do that. You had to do something. You had to do something because an accident occurred. You had to do something, right?

So for this here today, I got nothing but applause and thanks for improving on our *Highway Traffic Act*. We can go a lot further and I'm sure we will. If we continue to do this, eventually we'll start to see those accidents come down. Eventually, we'll start to see lives that should be continuing today will continue today.

I commend the Member for this. Hopefully during Committee we'll have some specific questions, but I applaud you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

S. GAMBIN-WALSH: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, I would like to be able to say that it is a pleasure to stand to amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act*, but the facts are that we are amending the act because the motoring public continues to break the law. Breaking the law, breaching the *Highway Traffic Act*, has life-altering consequences for people. Today's amendments are a result of the most frequently ticketed offences being analyzed to define which ones required additional deterrents, and consultations with individuals and family members impacted by reckless behaviours.

This bill proposes to increase fines for exceeding the speed limit, racing vehicles or bicycles on highways and performing or engaging in stunting while driving. Speaker, we as a government are grateful that families of road victims continue to consult with us as we develop and implement these changes. They are the ones who live with the impacts of what happens when you stunt on a highway, text, or speed. Their lives are forever altered by senseless decisions made by drivers.

Speaker, I was the MHA for the District of Placentia - St. Mary's just eight months that July day in 2016 when two motorists were illegally street racing over about 10 kilometres at speeds of up to 130 kilometres on the New Harbour Barrens. That race took the life of a young, vibrant girl and altered a family's life, a community and a province forever.

Hannah Thorne was in the passenger seat, with her 81-year-old grandmother, Gertie, at the wheel. They were travelling west to

Hannah's home in New Harbour, with Hannah having finished day three of a new summer job in Carbonear.

Reckless speeding, reckless racing on our highways must stop. We are here today to say that we will continue to raise the cost for reckless behaviour until it stops.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

S. GAMBIN-WALSH: Driving, Speaker, is a privilege, not a right. The STAND for Hannah Foundation has been a force in continuing to educate the public about the dangers and consequences of reckless driving. STAND is an acronym for Stand Together Against Negligent Driving.

Filmmaker Roger Maunder has documented the grief of Hannah's family and friends and their activism, as they fought and continue to fight for changes to the *Highway Traffic Act*. This film is an educational tool and I encourage everyone to watch it and learn from it.

Speaker, I strongly support the changes to the *Highway Traffic Act* to help decrease reckless driving on our highways.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Speaker.

First of all, I would like to, in response to the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's, say I did have the opportunity to watch the video. It's heartbreaking. It is educational. It strikes us all on the importance of safe driving. It recognizes that driving is a privilege, as has been stated, and it's not a right.

The rules of the road are very important. If they're not followed, we see the very tragic

consequences that happened for Hannah Thorne. It happens all the time. It's still happening.

What I would say in examining this legislation, it is a piece of legislation that I can support. I do believe that it is important to strengthen the rules, to strengthen the penalties with respect to our current offences and the consequences.

Unfortunately, I don't think that is enough, Speaker. We have to go further because we see right now that the amendments the government implemented just a few years ago, and yet we're not seeing – as the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's has stated, it is not curbing people's behaviour. It is not deterring the reckless driving and the reckless behaviour that we're seeing on our roadways.

So what is the answer? I mean, we certainly need to continue to strengthen the penalties. I'm not disputing that. But when we look at the fact that there is \$45 million in outstanding fines now owed to the province, that's astounding, Speaker, that we have so many people that are not paying their fines. The police have been enforcing these offences that take place on our roadway, yet the fines are not getting collected.

Now, I know that what has been proposed by government back in 2019, the Department of Justice and Public Safety had announced a fine options pilot program, but unfortunately, Speaker, it's still in the pilot phase. We need to see action on this important program.

What does this program do? It allows people to work off their outstanding fines. It allows them to do that through community service. Why is that important, Speaker? If we see that there is \$45 million in outstanding fines, then these penalties are not having the effect and the impact that they need to have, because it's sending a

message that the fines are not being collected.

That is not deterring people, Speaker. It is not deterring people from offending behaviour and from breaking the law. We need to have more attention not only to strengthening the penalties that we have – yes, I do agree and I also support that; we need to increase the penalties – but what is the message that we're sending out there to those people that are engaging in the offending behaviour who are speeding, who are engaging in racing and those dangerous behaviours on the roadways? People are still dying.

We heard from the minister, when she spoke, that from 2017 to 2021 of the top five offences, police have reported that the majority are for speeding. People are still dying and the majority are for speeding. So that's why this legislation is targeting that we increase the fines, for sure, but we need to find ways to impact drivers' behaviour.

Speaker, I think that when we look at this legislation, yes, it's important, but we need to do more. What else do we need to do in addition to perhaps having a fine options program so that people will know that there are consequences? There have to be consequences. If they know that they're not going to be penalized – oh, I don't have to worry. I'm going to be fined, but I don't have to pay the fine. I mean, what is the effect of that? What is the impact? It's not enough. We need to have more.

So, Speaker, I would suggest, in addition to implementing this pilot program that has been in place, we also look at more education. We need to have more public education and awareness in order for these fines that are going to be increased, in order for them to have more of an impact.

Again, on this legislation, I do think the amendments are good, that they are increasing the fines for speeding, highway racing and stunt driving. That is good, but

we need to do far more. We need to have more public education. We need to have more public awareness. We need to basically look at trying to find ways of making these laws have teeth, so that they are effective, so that people believe that there will be consequences. That way, we can deter people from engaging in this very dangerous behaviour that threatens the safety of all members in our society.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER (Warr): The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Speaker.

It's a pleasure to get up and speak on this bill, and I'm certainly in support of it. I'll touch on a couple of topics here. I won't take a whole lot of time. But I just wonder sometimes when I'm driving the roads, why there's so much rage on the roads. I just don't get it sometimes.

You know, you're driving through construction zones, you're slowing down – and I know you're in a hurry to get somewhere, but maybe we should be leaving earlier. It just doesn't make sense why there's so much rage on the road. I don't get it sometimes. Like, I'm pretty patient. Impatient in general, but when I'm on the roads and you got fellas holding up flag signs, or ladies holding up flag signs, I just don't understand where people are going in such a hurry. I just don't get it.

We're talking about all this legislation, and I certainly agree with it. I don't think the fines can go high enough sometimes. I really don't. Like \$100, \$200, there's a limit I'm sure, but parking in a blue wheelchair spot, a \$2,000 fine. As he said, he's down in Florida –

AN HON. MEMBER: Never be done again.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Never be there again. You would never have it again.

Now, will that happen – I am talking, like young kids that are out getting their licence. I have known a good many students now that got their licence this year and they're 16 and 17 years old and I'll start with education in the school. Maybe there's a video. They said there's a video there that the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's had said and maybe they get to see how it affects the families. You know, they're going out there and they're going to drive and do reckless stuff. There's a consequence to it.

They don't think on that when they are getting their licence. I am pretty sure they don't. They don't think about that but, eventually, somebody goes out and does something they shouldn't do, ends up being tragic. That's the last thing we need to see – the very last thing we need to see, but it does happen. I really think that education in schools is where it should start. Whether that's a one-hour course that every Grade 12 had before they leave school or something that makes them just realize what they're doing when they're getting their licence.

I have got two kids; they're 30 and 28. I certainly never sat down and spoke to them about it – certainly asked the same questions: Where you going? Who are you with? Be careful if you're driving. I've got a daughter and she's in England now and I guarantee you if she sees a drunk driver on the road or somebody going across the line, she is phoning the police on that person in front of her. Sometimes I think I don't know if I'd do that or not, but she doesn't hesitate. Not one second would she hesitate to do it, and sometimes I'm thinking I am not so sure, but she's right. She's absolutely right.

We had the same conversation the other night. I was in a hockey dressing room and there was a group had a video of a car driving down the road on the opposite side for a nice continued period of time. They are

thinking drinking and driving or it could be on your phone, but it would be a long time on your phone to stay on the opposite side of the road.

So the same kind of thing – and the person that's coming at them, they hauled in on the side. They had a video. They couldn't see. It was in the night, but they had a dash cam video in the car and it went for a good stretch of road that they were on the opposite side. Just the carelessness of people and getting in the vehicle and driving, it doesn't make any sense to me, I've got to say. I don't get it. Maybe I've made mistakes. I certainly got speeding tickets in my lifetime, but you learn your lesson and that's the thing.

So if the fines are big enough – and I look here that there are six demerit points, I think, is going to be the regulation for stunt driving, I think that's great. A new student, as far as I know, when they start – and this might have changed but I think a new student, when they drive, or a 17-year-old when they get their licence, I think they get six demerit points to start off. She's nodding her head saying yes. That's what I thought it was. So they're going to lose their licence. If they go stunt driving, they are going to lose their licence. That's not something that any family should have to deal with after – it just doesn't make sense. It is hard to speak on it, to be truthful. It's just something that a family shouldn't have to go through and I know stuff happens but it's just something they shouldn't have to deal with.

I came from a car dealership. Again, I always get into that, but I was speaking to one of my colleagues there and you get a GPS on your vehicle, you want to plot in where you're going and you just put in the street. If you're driving, you like to reach over – if you're not careful, if you're reaching down on your phone – and we all have done it. There is no one going to say they have never reached over and picked up their phone, because they have. It's just the way society is. GPS on your vehicle, it

won't let you do it first, when you put in the GPS coordinates if you're putting in whatever road it's going to be on. It will say you're not the driver; you can say no to that, even though there's only one person in the vehicle. So you can get around it. You shouldn't be able to get around it.

Now, I haven't done it, but my wife has put in the address sitting in the other seat. You might spell it wrong, it's not coming up right and you're reaching over distracted. Shouldn't be able to do it. If you can't do it before you start, then you should have to stop to put in an address.

The same thing goes for cellphones. They're making electric cars. They're doing everything in a cellphone. If you're in Toronto, you can start your car home in the yard. Why is it that you can drive your car and have your cellphone in your hand? Bluetooth is there, no question, but there should be technology coming out that maybe we shouldn't be being able to drive and if somebody is on a phone, not – paired Bluetooth, fine. You can hit the button and say call whoever, but if you're on the phone and it's not paired to Bluetooth, which can happen – you have two phones. A lot of people here have two phones, and the other phone will ring and you'll pick it up. Sometimes you'll answer it, you don't know who it is, and we all do it. But there should be something in a vehicle that stops you from doing that. There's no way that we should be able to drive and do that.

There are a lot of things that we can improve on. The minister, the last time we were in here, we did some legislation on cameras. We'd love to see that move forward, and I did hear you mention it. It has to go through regulations and there are certain, I'm sure, privacy issues that you're dealing with on the cameras, and I did go through it before in regard to licence plates on vehicles. Cars only have the licence plate on the back; they don't have them on the front. So there are all kinds of stuff you

have to deal with but let's see if we can get that done. That's very important.

We did touch on school zones as well. There are couple of traffic lights – I live on the Southern Shore, and the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans had mentioned he lived up there too, and we've had so many tragic accidents up our way. If we're not the highest per capita in Newfoundland in regard to people after being – not just from cars, just in deaths alone it's just been unbelievable the amount of people in our high school.

There are lots of traffic lights in the school zones now. There are a lot of those digital ones and they flash all the time, and not very often you're driving that that flashes on that you don't look and slow down, and it's very important. That's just a touch of it and it's good start.

Another Member there for Cape St. Francis had mentioned to me that municipal enforcement officers right now don't have the authority to be able to write traffic violations in a school zone, they don't. Now, where our school is to, in one area there are no municipal officers, but in certain places that have municipal officers, they don't have the authority to write traffic violations.

That's something else that we can work on. All this stuff is good discussion here in the House of Assembly. It's stuff that we should be discussing. These are the kind of discussions we need to have that everybody will be in favour of and consultations and having a group together to discuss some of this stuff.

I just wanted to get that out there and have some speaking on this. I just said I touched on some of the stuff that just comes to mind, but we certainly do support it and we want to have no more fatalities in this province.

I thank you so much, Speaker.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

I'll certainly support this, but with regard to fines, and I follow up on the comments by the Member from the Southern Shore there – talk about impatient, yeah, I know that feeling, I've been there.

I will say this, in terms of when it comes to speeding and I look at it, I've driven most of my life in terms of to my jobs, Speaker, whether it's on the Burin Peninsula, up the Southern Shore, you name it, and in many ways you can be the safest driver you can be, but you've got someone coming at you and it's a problem.

I look at my children, even though they're adults and they probably haven't had the same extensive highway driving or anything that I had in my career, but I will tell you my biggest fear is whenever they're going on a long trip across the Island is who's coming at them and who's speeding.

Look, do I drive the speed limit? No, but I can tell you there are people who can fly by me as if –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

J. DINN: Oh, no, no, I'll be honest, 10 kilometres or so over, no problem, but I tell you there are people who can drive by and make you look like you're standing still. You have to wonder, okay, how fast are they going? It comes down to, like anyone else, and the Member from the Southern Shore said the same thing, we all have the bad habits.

But I'm wondering, too, if there is room here in the legislation – and I understand fines and I certainly appreciate them, but for certain people I guess some of these fines are probably going to be just pocket change. But in terms of even making it more painful, like I think if you're driving over a certain speed limit, if you're driving over the

speed limit going through a construction zone, there's no excuse to go over that at all, that maybe if you're caught at that point, that the car is impounded right there for 24 hours and make it inconvenient.

You do it for someone who's drunk, but I think someone who's showing that kind of – who's driving at a speed that's approaching the limit of the vehicle itself, that needs to be squashed. Again, I can go through a construction zone and drive the speed limit, in this case, and I can tell you there is no passing and the people are still passing. Often the other part of it, though, is you wonder where the construction zone is. So maybe there needs to be something along those lines as to whether there are people on the highway or not. But my fear there is that someone will get knocked down by it. So maybe we need to have some clear guidelines along those lines, as well.

I've often thought of this as a proactive measure, but every year we have to renew our vehicle registration, every five years it's for our licence, but maybe it's worthwhile to do it, if we do it online, a little check-in every now and again. Before you can access this, do a little skill-testing question just to see how up-to-date your habits are, because we all develop bad habits, trust me I know that myself.

I remember one of the things I learned in driver education school, Young Drivers, was the whole concept of velocitization, which is that whole notion – and I remember the first time I learning how to drive, driving at 50 kilometres an hour or even 30 was actually –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

J. DINN: I'm the older brother.

P. DINN: Not wiser.

J. DINN: Not necessarily wiser.

But I do remember that first time, the panic, sheer panic of driving at that speed, because it's faster than what I had ever gone, but one of the things they taught us was be aware of the whole notion of velocitization where you can end up – after a while 50 kilometres or 100 kilometres doesn't seem very fast at all. When you slow down to 80 it seems like you're crawling, so you have to have – that's a conscious effort.

I think there's a little bit of education we can do there. And I often think in terms of, in addition to fines, maybe there's a proactive way that we can remind people that's not tied to whether they get the licence or not, like here's some skill-testing questions on your drive's ed that you're entered into a prize for a contest. I don't know but somewhere along the line I think we all need to be reminded of the rules of the road.

Double lane changes when you're making left-hand turns, the whole notion you're supposed to go into the lane nearest, yet people will cross over. So there are all sorts of habits that we get into that can cause accidents.

I guess from my point of view, it's one thing if it's a fender-bender, Speaker; it's another thing when someone's life is lost.

Now, I cycle into work and coming up Prince Philip Drive Parkway there, my biggest thing is – and I have the review mirror on the helmet – who's going to pull out and give me that three feet. Usually I stop and just wait because it's narrow and people don't always – despite how well you're lit up.

I think in many ways it comes down about safety, and my colleague and brother from Topsail - Paradise, we're all too aware of the loss that comes of losing a family member that way. It's about making sure that when you go to work that day that you come home. That's the key thing here. So fines are great, but I think we can do an

awful lot more. No life is worth – it's too valuable for this to happen.

I think in many ways, we can up the fines, but let's find other ways that we penalize those who are so outrageous in the breaking of the speed limits. Also, how do we collect the fines that they incur? Secondly, maybe the education piece as well.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. LANE: Thank you, Speaker.

Like everybody else, I guess I'll be supporting Bill 9. I guess for me, when it comes to, I suppose, if I can say levels of support or how passionate I am about it, when it comes to racing of vehicles, bicycles on the highways, performing or engaging in stunt driving, all those types of things, I support this 1,000 per cent. I personally don't think it goes far enough. I think it should be far more punitive to prevent that type of activity.

When we're talking about people, for example, exceeding the speed limit by 51 kilometres an hour, especially for multiple offences and so on, quite hefty fines here, and I support them. If they were higher, I would support them as well.

The only part that I guess I'm a little bit sympathetic about, I suppose, to some degree, and wonder if we're already fining people enough, to some degree, and that's the person that just goes like 10 or 15 kilometres over. That's the only one that bothers me a little bit. That's the only one.

Because I can see you can go down the Outer Ring Road, as an example, and my colleague from St. John's Centre is right, I've driven down there and even if you're

going above the posted speed limit, cars pass you like you're not even moving. Those people should be nailed to the wall, I agree. We should do more, in my opinion.

But then you're driving on the Outer Ring Road and when you pass that Torbay Road north turnoff there by Logy Bay Road, you're still on the Outer Ring Road, still big wide lanes. There are no businesses or houses or nobody around; it's still the highway, really, for a fair period of time up around the White Hills. All of a sudden that speed limit drops right off and it's easy enough.

Now, I'm not saying that it's right, I'm not saying that you shouldn't follow the signage or anything, but I'm just saying it is easy enough, if you're going like 100 and now all of a sudden you have to go right down to 50 or 60 or whatever it is, that there is that sort of period where you start to eventually slow down. Perhaps when you get halfway down there, now you're down to the speed limit. It's an area where it would be easy enough, I would suggest, to set up a speed trap. If someone was looking to just get tickets to get their quota, I would suggest that would be a great spot to set up and you could nail people left, right and centre for being over the speed limit in that area. I'll just use that as a random example.

I know you are not supposed to do it and we do have fines to address it, but the only part, like I say, where I'm a little bit hesitant about going too far with it is someone who is normally a law-abiding citizen who is not driving recklessly, who is not on their cellphone, who is not drinking and driving, who is not doing any of those reckless things, but getting caught up in those little situations, perhaps, and then getting nailed hard for doing so.

I'd be lying if I said I didn't have a little bit of sympathy for that type of situation, but beyond that we know the statistics. We know the reality of what can happen when people are not following the rules of the

road. We've seen far too many people who have lost their lives, whether it be because of distracted driving, whether it be impaired driving, whether it be reckless driving. And not just the individuals who were involved in that activity, but innocent people who fell victim to that activity. For sure, we need to send a strong message when it comes to those types of issues. I support these measures and any other measures we can take.

Like I say, perhaps, we're not even going far enough when it comes to that end of the spectrum. But, again, for people who are just over by a little bit in those circumstances – in particular, I think of someone, for example, who makes a very modest living. Maybe they're driving a vehicle for their work; they're a delivery driver or something like that, or a courier or something, not making a whole lot of money. They could lose two days' pay out the window, gone. They're driving all day long and two days' pay is gone because they happen to be going 12 or 13 or 15 kilometres over –

AN HON. MEMBER: Like we've all done.

P. LANE: Like we've all done.

That's the only part that kind of, again, I have a bit of sympathy, I really do. I feel kind of bad about going too far in raising fines for those people. Beyond that, the rest of it is all good in my books. Obviously, I'll support the entire bill, but I did want to put that out there that we always have to be cognizant when we're looking at fines and penalties. I think it's not totally black and white.

You can't treat the guy who's driving recklessly and who's engaged in drag racing and all that kind of stuff, and compare that to the average joe who's just trying to get to work. Maybe he's running a little bit late and he ends up going a few kilometres over and you nail him to the wall. So there has to be a little bit of a balance.

Obviously, that's why the fine for this situation is lower, obviously, than if you're going 20 over, 30 over, 40 over, 50 over. That's why that's there. Obviously, that's why there's also a scale for a first offence, second offence and third offence.

It is kind of built in there and I recognize that. But as I said, I'll support the bill 100 per cent, particularly for those who are acting in an absolute irresponsible, dangerous way and putting others at risk.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker. I was just getting ready to sit down again.

This bill, the amendment to the *Highway Traffic Act*, focuses a lot on deterrents. Anything that can deter people from speeding, I would gladly support, and I do support this bill. Unfortunately, a theme here that I've been hearing is that it needs to be more than just financial deterrents; we also got to have an education to the general public that would help them stop the speeding.

Looking at the financial costs. They're important. The Member for St. John's Centre, the Member for Harbour Main and the Member for Ferryland: just some of the few people that spoke about the need for education.

Why are these changes needed? That's important because I think there needs to be an awareness program rolled out letting people know that these increases are coming. If the increases are going to serve as a deterrent, people need to be aware up front, because if not and they do get fined, it's going to be a huge financial barrier. That actually sometimes is a slippery slope for people.

The main thing here – and the reason why I support this bill – is I'm quite aware that speed kills. We've seen a lot of increases in street racing recently. A lot of times we've seen movies come out in Hollywood that glamorize speeding. A lot of the youth who watch these movies think it's quite easy to handle a vehicle going at extreme high speeds. The reason why the saying is out there, "speed kills," is because a lot of people are not aware of how difficult it is to get a vehicle under control when you're speeding.

There needs to be education on the consequences. That's not shown in the movies. First off, the consequences of having an accident at high speed, the damage that's done and also how fast it happens. A lot of people don't realize when you're travelling at great speeds, a lot of times it just takes a blink of an eye or something that comes up that actually causes your vehicle to go out of control and you can't get it back under control. Also, with speeds, there's more of a chance of death and severe disfigurement – lives impacted.

My first experience with a high-speed vehicle accident was when I was in university. I couldn't afford to go home for the weekends or breaks or anything like that, so sometimes my friends would take me out around the bay. I remember driving out. We were slowed down and all of a sudden we were stopped and you could see the smoke from the flares. The RCMP were there, the cops were there and we were slowly being moved around. What it was: a bus had collided with a vehicle; it was a car.

I still remember as we got up to where the bus and the car was, the front of the bus was damaged, but the vehicle that had hit the bus had just sort of been squished together. The front had collapsed. The back had collapsed. It was a four-door car before the accident and just looking you could see – actually, it was really disturbing when you looked at it because you knew nobody

survived. There was no way anyone was alive inside that car.

It was really, really sad because there were things on the road. There was a bag, their overnight bag that they were taking. I thought that's probably students going home for the weekend, too, just like I was; I was going out around the bay for the weekend with some of my friends. There were a couple of sneakers on the pavement. If the vehicle hadn't been speeding I know the consequence would've been different. That was my first exposure to a high-speed accident.

Also one thing I would like to stress is it is very important to have education about the financial fines, because what happens a lot of times is people speed, they get ticketed and they get these huge fines that they can't pay. Then, all of a sudden, their licence gets suspended. I think my fellow MHA behind me was talking about some of the financial barriers. It is so important because people need to be aware that when you incur this debt, that it has to be paid, if not you'll lose your licence. Sometimes the fines are so great that you lose your licence upfront.

What is really troubling for me is people often need their vehicle to get back and forth to work, to get home, to travel and a lot of times when they have this huge financial barriers, they still will drive and then they're stopped and the fine is even greater because they're driving without a licence. This is what happens a lot of times and it is a slippery slope for people.

It is really important for us to make sure that is addressed. Because even though people will speed and they shouldn't be, at the end of the day it can't be a financial trap that traps low-income people to losing their licence, not being able to get their licence back and be forced onto great hardship just because they've lost their licence.

So I think education and being proactive in preventing people from speeding is really

where the success will come. I think that is very, very important for everybody.

I'll just end it there, Speaker.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

If the hon. Minister of Digital Government and Service NL speaks now, she will close the debate.

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to everyone for their words.

Just a few quick points. Just to give some extra information on fines. When we think about the large fines that are owing, that is for a wide range of offences, including parking tickets, for example. With this legislation – I'm not an expert; I have to defer to my colleague for Justice on exactly how fines are collected and how they work. But if you get a fine under that *Highway Traffic Act* and you don't pay it then you go to jail. That's what the column is – if you look at the amendments, there is a first offence, second offence, third offence and then each one if you don't pay, you go to jail for the amount of days listed in the bill, Mr. Speaker. So that's how that works. If people don't pay these fines, they go to jail.

I would like to mention that the STAND for Hannah foundation and Mothers Against Drunk Driving do go to schools. They have programs where they go to schools and they educate students. Obviously, we could always be doing a lot more of that, and we'll continue to work with education and support these organizations as we can. We're always happy to help.

I would like to add also, if someone has an infraction under this act and it leads to a catastrophic result then the *Criminal Code* would then come into play. So this is not the

be-all and end-all, it then folds into the *Criminal Code*.

I just want to clarify as well that there is no change for speeding for one to 10 kilometres an hour, Speake. Our fine changes proposed are for speeding greater than 10 kilometres an hour.

Thank you, Speaker, and I'm happy to answer lots of questions in Committee.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER (Bennett): Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 9 be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act. (Bill 9)

SPEAKER: This bill has now been read a second time.

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

S. CROCKER: Presently.

SPEAKER: Presently.

On motion, a bill, "An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 9)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call from the Order Paper, second reading of Order 6, Bill 8.

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Provincial and Municipal Affairs, that Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Credit Union Act, 2009 now be read a second time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Credit Union Act, 2009 be read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act to Amend the Credit Union Act, 2009." (Bill 8)

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Speaker.

The provincial government is responsible for the regulation of credit unions in Newfoundland and Labrador, pursuant to the *Credit Union Act, 2009*. Actually today, this is very fitting, Speaker. By complete coincidence, it's International Credit Union Day.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

S. STOODLEY: So it's very fitting that we make changes to the *Credit Union Act, 2009* today. Thank you to the House Leader.

AN HON. MEMBER: Did you say that wasn't planned?

S. STOODLEY: No, it wasn't.

A credit union, as I'm sure we all know, but it's a financial co-operative created for and by its members who are depositors, borrowers and shareholders. Members have equal shares which provide them with returns. Operated on a non-profit basis, credit unions offer many banking services such as consumer and commercial loans, time deposits and credit cards.

The credit union system in this province is comprised of eight credit unions with 36 locations, 61,000 members and have assets in excess of \$1.4 billion. Credit unions as an industry in the province is very important as well, and they employ around 300 people.

So overseeing the credit unions is the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation. It's a provincial Crown corporation established in 1991 and continued under the *Credit Union Act, 2009*. The mandate of this Guarantee Corporation is to protect the qualifying investments of all credit union members. The Guarantee Corporation facilitates the continued financial spilling of credit unions by requiring their compliance with legislation and to exercise sound business practices.

The Guarantee Corporation maintains a deposit guarantee fund, which represents the accumulated assessments paid by credit unions, as well as the accumulated operating surplus of the corporation. It provides deposit insurance on deposits of credit union members equal to a maximum of \$250,000 per insured deposit. The finances of the corporation and the fund going in to the public accounts and the government is the sole shareholder of the corporation, Mr. Speaker. So it's very important, as for government, that we ensure appropriate regulation of the credit unions because, ultimately, we're on the hook and the taxpayers are on the hook, Mr. Speaker.

Oversight of the Guarantee Corporation is through a board now comprised of eight directors. Five of which are appointed from nominations provided by the credit unions,

two directors are government officials and one is a public interest member. The CEO, who reports to the board's chair, manages the operations of the Guarantee Corporation. The Guarantee Corporation has five staff. The staff are paid by my department, which allows them to participate in the Public Service Pension Plan and unionized staff are subject to the NAPE general services collective agreement. The salary costs are 100 per cent recovered from the deposit guarantee fund.

The *Credit Union Act, 2009* was last amended in this House in fall 2020. We did a review of the corporation in consultation with the credit union system. Amendments to the regulations were then published in the Gazette, with the changes coming into force on December 1, 2021. So, in this, we had improvements to the board governance and composition, separated the roles of the CEO and the superintendent, and the superintended duties added to an existing role in my department.

After we made these changes, Speaker, it came to my attention through the corporation's budget 2022 submission that a number of employees were being paid more than what was reflected in the departmental salary details. We learned that the previous board had determined it had legal authority to set the remuneration for staff and increase the compensation for a number of employees, including the CEO. The relevant provisions of the act were long standing but had never been exercised by the board.

In the legislation, the board did have authority to set compensation. So, Speaker, I know we just had a recent fall fiscal update and things are looking good, but we are not overall in a great financial position, as everyone knows. We still have critical expenditure decisions, we have to help residents with the rising cost of living, we're transforming health care, we have investments to make in housing and

everyone knows all the expenses that we have to make.

We have made significant headway in the review of expenditures, and we have to continue to do this to ensure that funds are directed towards appropriate outcomes. So we've heard about inconsistencies with the agencies, boards and commissions, particularly with respect of the amount paid for salaries. There have been reports published by former Auditors General identifying various ABCs in which remuneration policies do not align with that of core government and that salaries in many ABCs are higher.

Government committed in *Budget 2021* to a review of all agencies, boards and commissions. The previous board, within their legislative authority, approved salary increases above what staff were getting paid from my department. As the minister responsible for oversight of the credit union system, it's my responsibility to ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to facilitate alignment of remuneration and expenditure policies within those under me in core government.

These policies are in place to ensure that employees, who do comparable work across government, receive comparable salary ranges, equal pay for equal value. That means if two different jobs contribute equal value to their employer's operations, in this case both for government, then employees in those positions should receive equal pay.

I do empathize with the previous board. They wanted to remunerate staff how they felt was appropriate. I often feel like from an IT perspective, we have trouble hiring staff, because the private sector pays a lot more, but ultimately we knock on doors. I know everyone here knocks on doors and people, especially as a minister, trust us to manage their very precious tax dollars. So, Speaker, we had to act. I can't justify paying staff

above and beyond what is paid on top of their government salary.

Government has policies for upscale hiring and for market adjustments to help address hard-to-fill positions in a coordinated and fair manner. There's a policy for red circling where an individual employee's employment contract does not align with the classification for their current scope of duties. For collective bargaining staff, the provisions of the relative collective agreement must also be respected.

So my officials consulted with the Department of Justice and Public Safety and Treasury Board Secretariat, we reviewed the act to look at what we had to change to make sure that their compensation was aligned with government policies.

There was an order-in-council, OC2022089, which was issued on April 7, 2022, to extend the application of relevant sections of the *Financial Administration Act* to the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation. This confirms Treasury Board authority for all matters relating to personnel management; to determine the conduct of collective bargaining negotiations; to determine the personnel requirements and provide for the allocation and effective utilization of personnel; for the classification of positions to determine the pay which persons employed are entitled to services rendered, the hours of work and leave of those persons in related matters; for pensions or gratuities other than those which are specifically provided for; and for other matters including terms and conditions of employment not otherwise specifically provided for the Treasury Board considers necessary for effective personnel management.

On April 14, 2022, amendments to the credit union regulations were published in the Gazette, providing that the minister rather than the board shall appoint the board chair from amongst the board members and the

minister, not the board, shall appoint the CEO.

So on June 6, 2022, a new board was appointed and is chaired by Joan Marie Gatherall. There remains a single vacancy which will be filled imminently. I thank the previous board members for their service and I have full confidence in our new board. I also thank them for their service.

An updated position description for the CEO position was submitted to Treasury Board and a decision was made in July and the job vacancy has been posted and recruitment is underway.

Speaker, Bill 8 which is debated in the House today is the culmination of these efforts. Bill 8 specifically states that the compensation policies of the government of the province are to apply to the employees, officers and committees of the Guarantee Corporation. This legislatively prohibits any inconsistencies from the compensation policies of core government.

Bill 8 also removes the authority from the board to make bylaws respecting remuneration of the employees, officers and committees of the Guarantee Corporation. This further contributes to the alignment with core government. For core government, Treasury Board pursuant to the *Financial Administration Act* determines all remuneration policies and the *Financial Administration Act* does take the precedence in such matters. These amendments remove any inconsistency or ambiguity.

The Guarantee Corporation already submits its annual budget to the Department of Finance but the act is currently silent on that requirement so Bill 8 trenches this requirement within legislation. To improve administration and reviews the budget, Bill 8 also changes the year-end from December 31 to March 31 to align with core government.

We are also removing the reference to board quorum from the act. This will be moved into the regulations to give us greater flexibility. Bill 8 provides us with the opportunity to ensure that the credit union reflects gender-neutral language.

So this will ensure, Speaker, alignment of one more ABC with core government and is another step toward fulfilling alignment of all ABCs with core government. I also think this is what taxpayers in the province would want.

I am excited to be working with the new board of the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation and their staff as they work hard to protect the savings of credit union members and ensure the effective regulation of the credit union system in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

C. TIBBS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Again, we appreciate the minister bringing forth legislation that's going to help the province here. This bill will clean up the Credit Union Act to clarify that the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation is subject to Treasury Board guidelines, which is truly important to match the fiscal year with that of government and to give the minister greater oversight. Of course, that's important as long as it can go along with the government calendar it makes things much easier to get things done.

The Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation is a provincial Crown corporation established to ensure deposits to credit union members and associate members in Newfoundland and Labrador. The corporation is responsible for administration of the Credit Union Act and regulations for ensuring compliance with the

act and regulations by credit unions and for the stabilization of credit union systems.

The corporation administers various credit union insurance programs provided by the Credit Union Bonding Program, a national credit union risk-sharing insurance program managed by CUMIS insurance. The corporation is also an active participant in national and regional credit union related organizations.

The credit union system in Newfoundland and Labrador is comprised of eight credit unions with offices in 36 locations, approximately 60,941 members and assets in excess of \$1.4 billion. The system employs 293 people, which is very important here in Newfoundland and Labrador as well.

In the past, it has been the practice of the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation to follow Treasury Board guidelines on HR matters, but the board would set its own remuneration policies. However, the *Financial Administration Act* specifies that Treasury Board remuneration would apply, and an OC clarifies that FAA applies to this act as well. Because of the discrepancy in this act, it is being modified to clarify that the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation is subject to Treasury Board guidelines. I think that's the whole point of the change here today.

Similar to this, the fiscal year of the corporation is being changed to that of government – that's the corporation – and subject to budget guidelines and the budget process. It makes sense that they have the same financial year.

We have no issue with that today, Mr. Speaker. We'd go along with that. It definitely lines them up to the same point of the year. Logistically it definitely makes sense and it's something that we're going to support here today.

I do have a couple of questions in Committee, but I thank the minister again for bringing forward quality legislation.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER (Trimper): If the hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL speaks now she will close debate.

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Speaker.

I just want to thank the Member for Grand Falls-Winsor - Buchans for his feedback and I appreciate everyone's support.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Thank you.

Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 8 be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

The motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act to Amend the Credit Union Act, 2009. (Bill 8)

SPEAKER: This bill has now been read a second time.

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

S. CROCKER: Presently.

SPEAKER: Presently, thank you.

On motion, a bill, "An Act to Amend the Credit Union Act, 2009," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole presently, by leave. (Bill 8)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 10, second reading of Bill 14.

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, I move, seconded by the Government House Leader that Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Real Estate Trading Act, 2019 now be read a second time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Real Estate Trading Act, 2019, now be read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act to Amend the Real Estate Trading Act, 2019." (Bill 14)

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Speaker.

In 2019, we brought forward substantial changes to legislation governing real estate in this province, the first significant changes since 1965. It's imperative that we have legislation that reflects current best practices to ensure appropriate consumer protection and market confidence. We have a large number of real estate transactions

and given the magnitude and importance of this, we do keep a close eye on it.

The *Real Estate Trading Act, 2019* and regulations were informed through a comprehensive process engaging industry stakeholders and seeking feedback from residents of Newfoundland and Labrador to strengthen the regulation of the real estate industry and enhance consumer protection.

When the *Real Estate Trading Act, 2019* came into force in September 1, 2020, the proclamation of paragraph 6(1)(e) and sections 9 and 10 were deferred. Paragraph 6(1)(e) and sections 9 and 10 all relate to establishing and operating as a personal real estate corporation. The ability to incorporate came to the forefront during consultations that informed the 2019 amendments.

The original legislation from 1965 referred to an employer-employee relationship, with the brokerage employing a salesperson. The legislation did not allow a licensed salesperson the ability to incorporate. The industry has such evolved that some salespeople operate as independent contractors.

There was strong support from the real estate industry to allow salespersons to form a real estate corporation. Salespersons requested the ability to incorporate similar to other independent contractors in other industries.

So we have seven other jurisdictions in Canada that allow personal real estate corporations, Speaker. Government added sections to the act that would allow the establishment of personal real estate corporations. The House did approve those sections and the effective date was delayed to allow for the development of an IT system allowing and tracking these licences, Speaker.

I'm pleased that the new licensing system has been in operation since October 1,

2021, and this new system allows residents to apply for many different types of financial services online including insurance brokers, mortgage brokers, security advisors, along with real estate brokers and salespeople.

Prior to this system, the application processes for licences was entirely paper-based and, Speaker, it's part of the savings for this, because we moved things online, we were able to do a reorganization and allowed us to invest it in extra residential tenancy adjudicators, Speaker, to try and relieve the backlog over there.

So we intend to proclaim paragraphs 6(1)(e) and sections 9 and 10 into force once this bill receives Royal Assent. In doing so, the full *Real Estate Trading Act, 2019*, as was approved in this House, will be in force. Speaker, the one thing about legislation, there are always opportunities to continue to modify and make improvements. Despite these recent changes, through our continued review and feedback we have received from the industry, there are a few new things we're bringing forward.

So first, Mr. Speaker, increase clarity in relation to the requirement for bonds. Secondly, the direction for the preparation of report and issuance of an order upon the direction from the superintendent of real estate brokers and salespersons. Thirdly, enhanced administration of real estate occupational licensing. The references to new bonds included in sections 7, 9 and 47 are no longer applicable.

The *Real Estate Trading Act, 2019* now requires all real estate brokers to pay into a real estate recovery fund. This fund serves the same purpose as that of bonds. Real estate brokers were given a transitory period to pay into the fund, and that transition period has now expired. New bonds are not required, but current bonds remain in effect and may be called in the coming years. Section 24 of the act, which establishes the framework for calling bonds, is being amended to ensure there is clarity

in relation to those bonds that were previously purchased.

Another change provides the superintendent of real estate brokers and salespersons and inspectors reporting to the superintendent with broad powers to look into contraventions. Legislation also has a robust provision for the application of penalties when a contravention has been identified. This does not explicitly provide a framework for how inspection could lead to a hearing. So to ensure that the appropriate legislative authorities are in place, we provide authority for the superintendent to direct an inspector to prepare a report, which triggers the superintendent's authority to conduct a hearing under the regulations.

So it will allow the continuation of a real estate broker or salesperson's licence, subject to the cancellation, suspension or revocation by the superintendent. The superintendent will continue to have authority to cancel a licence if a licensee does not follow the required standards or rules. We're also allowing criminal record checks to come from the commissionaires. They have offices throughout Canada, and we're trying to make things easier and more efficient for people in this industry to fulfill their requirements.

Bill 14 builds on the past work to improve consumer protection and have an efficient streamline process for people in the industry.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Thank you.

I now recognize the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

C. TIBBS: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Grand Falls-Windsor is definitely represented between myself and the minister today, I can tell you that.

This bill follows up on the 2019 changes to the legislation. In 2019, the act went through a Committee of the House of Assembly to make changes. There are some things changed at that time that we have had unintended consequences, and some things recommended at that time are now being added to the legislation, which is very important afterwards.

The 2019 legislation can be interpreted as meaning if a real estate licence expires and is not yet reissued, the agent does not have a licence. However, sometimes there is a backlog processing and an agent may be waiting to renew their licence, with their paperwork and their fees already paid, with full intention of renewing their licence.

The bill will clarify that an agent's licence, if expired, will continue until cancelled by the superintendent. The agent will continue to be able to practise while waiting for the renewal to be processed. That is very important because we know that government does get busy. The departments get busy. If there is a backlog at a certain point of the year, we want to ensure that nobody misses out on any business and they can continue on to do their work. So, again, that is very important.

In the 2019 legislation, it included transitional provisions to phase out the need for agents to provide a bond. In 2019, it was determined that a fund should be established to take the place of these bonds and this is now the case. Again, it is extremely important.

The legislation is being updated to say that bonds are no longer required, but any bonds which are on the books will continue to be enforced. The 2019 legislation also says that a criminal records check must be completed by the RNC or the RCMP, however there are other organizations that

can provide this service so the legislation is being changed to include "or another organization approved by the minister." There are other organizations out there that can offer criminal record checks on a background and we want to ensure that they can be used as well.

The act is being clarified to note that an inspector report is part of the legal process of the powers of the superintendent. This has been happening in practice but was omitted from the legislation. Some provinces already have this option and some real estate agents wish to incorporate as a business and have their licence awarded to the corporation. The 2019 legislation allows this, but this section was not proclaimed so the minister will proclaim it with these changes.

So, again, this is the third piece of legislation brought forward today and this one is just revisiting some legislation. We're happy to clue it up here and make sure it's on the right track. We'll have questions in Committee.

Thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER: Any further speakers?

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

P. LANE: Thank you, Speaker.

Just to say for the record that I support the amendments. It is primarily housekeeping issues I think we would say. Although certainly the issue that relates to real estate agencies being able to carry on while they're waiting for their licences to be processed and so on, obviously that would have significant positive impact on the agencies themselves. But besides that, my colleague already outlined what the other changes are. I see nothing here that would prevent me from supporting it, so I will.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Thank you.

If the hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL speaks now, the minister will close debate.

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Speaker.

I appreciate everyone's feedback and happy to answer any questions in Committee.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Thank you.

Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Real Estate Trading Act, 2019, now be read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

The motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act to Amend the Real Estate Trading Act, 2019. (Bill 14)

SPEAKER: When shall Bill 14 be referred to a Committee of the Whole?

S. CROCKER: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act to Amend the Real Estate Trading Act, 2019," read a second

time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 14)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Mr. 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 Bills 8, 9 and 14.

SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair so the Committee of the Whole can consider the matters to them referred: Bills 8, 9 and 14.

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 is carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Warr): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Credit Union Act, 2009.

A bill, "An Act to Amend the Credit Union Act, 2009." (Bill 8)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

We are debating clause 1 on Bill 8.

The Chair is recognizing the hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Chair.

Clause 10: Now that the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation will be subject to Treasury Board guidelines with regard to remuneration, will any employees be red circled or get a reduction in pay? If so, how many?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

So no employees will receive a reduction in pay. They will receive the same pay that they're currently getting and there will be two outstanding employees because one is no longer there – two remaining.

Thank you.

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

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Chair.

Clause 12: This clause notes that the quorum of the board shall be determined in accordance with the regulations. Can the minister explain what the quorum is now, what will it be and why it is moving to regulations?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

So currently the quorum is a majority of members. We're not planning on changing that but we'd like to have it there in case we need to, for example – we could say that our government representative had to be there if necessary. But, at the moment, it is the majority and we are not planning to change that.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

P. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, just for my clarity, unfortunately I missed the briefing, so I just want to make sure I understand. When we're talking about setting up salaries and so on, we're not talking about the actual people that are working in the bank are we? Like, if I go to the Public Service Credit Union here and the clerks are here at the bank or whatever, we're not talking about setting their salaries. We're talking about a corporation that's sort of an umbrella organization that looks after the credit union. Is that right?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

So excellent question. There is a Crown corporation which is the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation, CUDGC, and they fall under my responsibility. They oversee the credit unions in the province. There is a deposit guarantee fund of which the government is the sole shareholder. So the government is responsible for, you know – we're on the hook, essentially, for the money invested in the credit unions up to a certain amount and that Deposit Guarantee Corporation oversees the credit union system to make sure that people's money is appropriately being managed.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: Thank you, Chair.

It would seem then, certainly, that this is an effort by government to clean up a mess that they did find after the problem arose and, obviously, it indicates that oversight is lax. There is always someone willing to take advantage. I'm just wondering why the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation, or the CUDGC, was allowed to operate without the guidance of Treasury Board on all matters regarding human resources.

As I understand it, when it came to the quorum, not always was a government member notified or in attendance and even when they were they weren't necessarily given the proper information. So I'm just wondering: Why was it so long without that oversight?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

I guess what I'll say is that there was a board and they have a series of different legislation that applied to them. I know we have a lot of different – there's the *Financial Administration Act* and the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation legislation and my understanding is that there was – I don't know if assumption – that's probably too loose a word – that they had to abide by Treasury Board policies. I think that when it was reviewed explicitly, for example, when they wanted to pay a different member a higher salary that there was no explicit direction in legislation that they had to do that.

We're cleaning it up. I can't say exactly all the rationale. As soon as this was brought to our attention we immediately came up with a plan to remedy it. As I outlined in my speaking notes there were multiple items including. Firstly, was an order-in-council and then we've changed the regulation. This is the third and final thing we're doing to remedy that.

That's the best I can say.

Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: Fair enough.

The next question sort of stems from that then, it's broader than maybe the minister. Will government commit then to doing a search of legislation and regulation to ensure that all departments, agencies, boards and commissions have the measures to ensure good governance?

As the minister just pointed out, there was nothing in the regulations so I guess what I'm looking at is that maybe there's an all-encompassing way of dealing with this. I don't know if that's possible, but sort of not a – I don't mean to use the word omnibus, but something that captures all of this so that it's not coming back to the House each and every time.

I think we've seen certainly with the AG report on Nalcor and this that maybe there is a need for some oversight. I understand certainly that there was an assumption. You would assume – I think you'd be fair in assuming that people who are appointed to these boards would have a level of understanding of what's the expectation and trust and everything else. I know the preparations or the instructions that we're given in terms of any Committee, I would assume that's the case.

I can forgive the minister or any government assuming, really, that they should be in good hands. But human nature being human nature, I'm just wondering going forward if there's any way to maybe look at any way we can have all-encompassing legislation to deal with this?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the Member for their feedback and question.

All of our ABCs have different rules. In *Budget 2021*, our government did commit to reviewing all the ABCs. So that's what's kind of ongoing.

I do want to clarify; I don't think there was a malicious intent of the board. I think it was just they wanted to compensate people for what they thought was appropriate. Unfortunately, that didn't align with Treasury Board guidelines and I think what taxpayers across the province would like.

Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 17 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 17 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 17 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act to Amend the Credit Union Act, 2009.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

CHAIR: Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 9, An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act.

A bill, "An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act." (Bill 9)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Chair.

Will there be any public education and awareness accompanying the increase to fines?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

We set the laws in our department; we don't usually do the awareness activities. We did find money to do a thing around the helmets and the changes to the off-road vehicle legislation.

So we don't have any paid advertising activity, Chair. We are obviously promoting through social media and hopefully it will get media attention. I guess the laws are not changing. We're increasing the fines, so we're not planning on spending any money in advertising.

Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

C. TIBBS: I thank the minister for the answer. I would encourage her to take a look at it because we should have some more to this.

Will the department track how many speeding offences were ticketed by month before and after this change is implemented so we can see the progress of the legislation?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

So I know the Department of Justice and Public Safety, along with the RNC and the RCMP, do track tickets. I'm not sure if it's by month but I have seen various reports, so we will be keeping track and we don't have to make any changes for that to happen. We will continue to monitor and see how well our deterrents are working and we'll certainly bring additional things back to this House if these are not deterrent enough.

Thank you, Chair.

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

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

Are there enough traffic services, police officers on our roadways to help slow down drivers in the minister's opinion?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

Unfortunately, I guess, I can't quite answer that question; I'm not responsible for enforcement. I think we could all use more enforcement. I just want to thank our enforcement partners and they've contributed a lot to the changes to the legislation that we have across multiple areas in my department.

Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Chair.

Can the minister give an update on the highway traffic camera initiative? I know we debated it some time ago. It was very important. I think that Newfoundland and Labrador is one of the provinces that do not use this tool right now but it has been

successful in other provinces, and I guarantee it will be successful here.

Just to follow up on that, when will these start to be used, the highway cameras? Where will they be used? If a car is caught speeding, will the registered owner get the fine or will the driver be able to be tracked down? I know in other provinces, if I borrow the Member for Cape St. Francis's car and I speed and the ticket is issued, it goes right to him. Now, he can come track me down afterwards –

J. WALL: I will.

C. TIBBS: He will.

I can review them again, but those are the questions for the minister.

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

It's an excellent question. A very big party for me; our team are working on a plan essentially. So it is law, the regulations are in effect right now, but my department is working with Justice and Public Safety, working with Municipal Affairs, working with Education and working with Transportation and Infrastructure, so that in 2023 – I committed in 2023 speed cameras will be available.

So as a government, we will have speed cameras in school zones and construction zones. We will also make it available so that municipalities, it will be a prescriptive process, so if they want to put speed cameras in their municipalities they do X, Y, Z. I can't say exactly what that will be yet, but we're working on the process so that it's easy for everyone, who wants to use speed cameras, to use them in their municipalities and as a provincial government we'll be doing it in construction zones and school zones. The plan is for 2023, and it can't come fast enough in my personal opinion.

Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

S. STOODLEY: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR: Go ahead.

S. STOODLEY: I will just say with respect it will be the registered owner who gets the ticket, sorry.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Order, please!

I just want to recognize the minister again. I didn't know if your tally was on.

The Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Sorry about that. I just answered the other question. It'll be the registered owner who will get the ticket.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

C. TIBBS: Thank you very much, Minister, for the answer.

I know this is a little bit off, but it's fantastic news that we're getting this information now. We just heard about construction zones; we heard about school zones. What about on the Trans-Canada that goes through towns such as Grand Falls-Windsor and Whitbourne and several other towns, that actually goes through the towns here in the province? Will we see some cameras on the Trans-Canada as well?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

I can't say it with 100 per cent certainty, but if at all possible and if it's up to me, we will be putting speed cameras on the highways.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

C. TIBBS: Thank you very much, Minister.

The legislation notes minimum fines for a person's first offence, second offence, et cetera. How long does an offence stay on someone's record? I'll just give an example, if a person gets a speeding ticket in 2010, and it's their first offence and another ticket in 2020, would the 2020 ticket be considered the first offence or a second offence? What is the time limit?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

That's an excellent question. In terms of the demerit points, I believe it's six years. I'm just waiting for my team to tell me the answer about the first offence and second offence. If you have another question, I can come back to that.

C. TIBBS: (Inaudible.)

S. STOODLEY: Okay. It's two years.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

C. TIBBS: This is a little bit off as well, but just wondering if your department or the government themselves have looked at legislation to give municipal enforcement – and you may have some great, highly trained municipal enforcement officers out there – to give them some more tools in their tool box so they can do the job, so they can keep our drivers safe as well.

I know we've got some great municipal enforcement officers out there, but to have them not being utilized and people getting away with speeding and whatnot, I don't think it's very wise. I think that they can be utilized better. Just wondering if there have been discussions, Minister, for municipal officers.

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

I know that municipal enforcement officers can enforce the *Off-Road Vehicles Act*, which we've talked extensively about in this House, Chair. Unfortunately, they do not enforce the *Highway Traffic Act*. They don't enforce moving violations. I'll certainly take that away to have further discussions about, but at the moment, they do not enforce the *Highway Traffic Act*.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Chair.

I'm just wondering, I think the rule is if you're impaired driving, the first time you lose your licence; the second time, if you get caught again, there's a certain time limit but I don't think it ever falls off your record, as far as I know. If you get caught the third time you go to jail or serve time.

So I was just wondering in stunt driving, does that disappear after two years? Lets hope it don't; I hope it stays there like the impaired driving charge.

I'm just wondering if that is something that you would consider or have considered.

Thank you.

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

I'm just having a look through my documents. I don't know if you have another question while I have a look.

Oh, sorry, the two years is for points.

Sorry, just a second, if you have another question I can come back to it.

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

P. DINN: I guess it's related. You had a question asked about if a car is caught speeding will the registered owner get the fine or the driver. You've answered that it would be the registered owner. But is there a process to appeal? As an example, if my car is used by one of the other Members and gets a speeding ticket and I get the ticket in the mail, is there a process for me to appeal that it wasn't me in the car, it was someone else?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

I have answers for both questions, sorry. So just to be clear, the demerit points are two years, the tickets stay on for five years. So, sorry, I gave the incorrect information. The tickets are five years, so that is all tickets. There is no difference in different types of

tickets. So first offence or second offence, that would be for five years.

I guess in terms of an appeal, I'll have to go back and check the regulations that we have. I guess anyone can appeal a traffic ticket. Just like if I get a ticket when I am parking and it's on my windscreen, you can appeal that. So there would be the same appeal mechanism for a ticket that you got automatically.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clause 2.

CHAIR: Shall clause 2 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 2 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

CHAIR: Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Real Estate Trading Act, 2019.

A bill, "An Act to Amend the Real Estate Trading Act, 2019." (Bill 14)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 22 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 22 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 22 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act to Amend the Real Estate Trading Act, 2019.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report Bills 8, 9, and 14.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bills 8, 9 and 14.

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 Baie Verte - Green Bay and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

B. WARR: Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bills 8, 9, and 14 without amendment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The Chair of Committee of the Whole reports that they have considered the matters to them referred and directed him to report Bills 8, 9, and 14 without amendment.

When shall the bills be received?

S. CROCKER: Now.

SPEAKER: When shall the bills be read third time?

S. CROCKER: Tomorrow.

SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

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

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call from the Order Paper, Order 9, second reading of Bill 11.

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

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

A. PARSONS: She's good but she's not (inaudible).

SPEAKER: She was on a roll.

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Government House Leader, for second reading of Bill 11, An Act Respecting the Winding Up of Judgment Recovery (Nfld.) Ltd.

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

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act Respecting the Winding Up of Judgment Recovery (Nfld.) Ltd. (Bill 11)

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

I am pleased today, on behalf of the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, a role that I used to enjoy, to introduce Bill 11, which is the Winding Up of Judgment Recovery (Nfld.) Ltd. So when you look at this piece of legislation – in fact, I haven't had many pieces in this new role so this is a bit of a throwback here getting to talk about legislation.

When you look at this, it's very small. It is not a huge piece of legislation but it does have some substance. It is taking care of something that's been around our province now for decades and decades. I'll try my best to do a little summary of why we're here and what we're here for.

For background, Judgment Recovery (Nfld.) Ltd. is a statutory corporation created back in 1960, the purposes of which were to pay victims of automobile collisions the legal damages they would be entitled to recover from uninsured at-fault drivers. So in 1994, amendments were made to the *Automobile Insurance Act* that repealed most of this act, except for the sections that provided authority for the corporation to continue to pay claims from accidents prior to 1994. This included the recovery of money from judgment debtors in respect of those accidents.

Now, since that time, all vehicle owners in this province pay for uninsured automobile coverage. You'll see that in Section D of the standard owner's policy that most people are familiar with. This is mandatory coverage in this province and it provides coverage, again, to victims of collisions involving the uninsured.

The Facility Association is an unincorporated non-profit association of insurers. They administer the uninsured automobile funds in Atlantic Canada, so those claims made under Section D. They perform the same type of functions as Judgment Recovery (Nfld.) Ltd. for all uninsured auto collisions since 1994. So you have pre-'94 Judgment Recovery and post-'94 Facility Association.

Judgment Recovery Newfoundland remains in existence solely to recover funds from uninsured who had been involved in collisions prior to 1994. That's the only purpose that they currently have. Now the board of directors of Judgment Recovery have the authority to cease operations, but they do not have legal authority to transfer assets or liabilities to another entity. That's why we are here with this legislation that's necessary to dissolve the corporation and to formally wind up the operations.

This legislation we are debating here now will allow the corporation to transfer all outstanding insurance liabilities to the Facility Association and allows us to wind up judgment recovery. This is, I would note, a request that has been made by the Insurance Bureau of Canada and the actual board of Judgment Recovery (Nfld.) Ltd. The Facility Association are ready and willing to assume all pre-'94 responsibilities of judgment recovery, including the administration of outstanding judgments as well as assets and liabilities.

The reality is, Speaker, that over time the cost to administer the collection of judgment debts has become more than it is able to collect from debtors, and so the elimination of this entity will save admin costs, and the reality is it's going to have little to no impact on service delivery.

Just in case there are questions on this, this law does not eliminate at-fault insurance debts of uninsured drivers. Just so everybody knows, Nova Scotia, PEI, they have already gone this route. They have

already passed similar legislation, which again transfers the authority to Facility Association, which I would remind everyone is there to take care of individuals under Section D for all those uninsured.

I guess I'll get an opportunity to listen to my colleagues speak about this. So we're talking about the Winding up of Judgment Recovery. I don't think this is a controversial bill by any means. I think it's taking care of something that probably could have been done some time ago. I guess if I were the current Minister of Justice I'd say why didn't the previous minister of Justice do that. But that's a conversation we'll have another time.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Speaker.

Perhaps that's the question I ask here today is why didn't the current Minister of Justice deal with it, but that's fine.

I listened with interest to the minister speak about this piece of legislation, and I do agree, it's certainly not controversial. It's pretty practical and I think an expedient piece of legislation that one would not have any problem in supporting.

I'm not going to repeat everything about the bill. It's very straightforward. I mean the summary that was given by the minister clearly identifies what's happening. I think even the title of the bill itself kind of sums up everything because it says it's Winding Up of Judgment Recovery (Nfld.) Ltd.

That's what's happening here. It's a winding up of that entity and we see that the Facility Association is, I understand, an Atlantic Canadian non-profit organization and really, in essence, they're going to be carrying out a similar function as the Judgment

Recovery. So I would suggest it's a natural fit for them to assume the assets and liabilities.

I do think that this is an important, final step in the winding up of this statutory corporation, as the minister has indicated, and we'll see the transferring not only of the assets and liabilities to the Facility Association, but the legislation also provides for the transfer of the judgment debtors as well.

So I think that that's important to note. Also another thing that needs to be noted is that we know what happened or what changed in 1994, that because of Section D and the automobile insurance plans were changed to include Section D coverage. That really is a requirement that all policies cover the insured in the unfortunate even they are in a collision with an uninsured at-fault driver. So we do note that Judgment Recovery, since that time, since 1994, they haven't been taking on – it's my understanding – any new files or paying out damages for collisions post-'94.

So I think that in essence, it's a necessary piece of legislation. I think it's good that we're doing it. We're following suit, as other provinces have done, and I think that's it until we get to the Committee.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Seeing no other speakers, if the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology speaks now, he will close the debate.

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm afraid to say anything. I don't want to jinx it here. Like I say, my colleague across the way has summed up whatever I left out. The reality is this is a necessary step; this is

a good move; it's meant to be a cost saver. There's actually not a lot of money sitting in Judgment Recovery. Anything that's left after normal winding up costs, which I assume are around \$40,000, I think there's about \$30,000 left that will go to the Facility Association.

So again, it's not a lot, but again, that's why we're here. Sometimes the bills are not the most substantive. Sometimes we get into big debates. This one is just about doing the right thing, and normally a thing that not most people are aware of.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 11 now be read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting the Winding Up of Judgment Recovery (Nfld.) Ltd. (Bill 11)

SPEAKER: This bill has now been read a second time.

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

S. CROCKER: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act Respecting the Winding Up of Judgment Recovery (Nfld.) Ltd.," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 11)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology, that this House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 11.

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 (Warr): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 11, An Act Respecting the Winding Up of Judgment Recovery (Nfld.) Ltd.

A bill, "An Act Respecting the Winding Up of Judgment Recovery (Nfld. .) Ltd." (Bill 11)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Chair.

I just have a couple of quick questions. Can the minister provide some information about the actual assets and liabilities of Judgment Recovery (Nfld.) Ltd. which will be transferred into Facility Association?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There are no financial implications, number one, the provincial government associated with this bill. Judgment Recovery, from what I gather, has \$70,000 in the bank account. They need to pay audit service, legal fees and shredding in accordance with the retention schedule. The cost is estimated at \$40,000.

So if there's \$30,000 remaining, that will be transferred to Facility Association upon the commencement of this legislation which I think is scheduled for December 10 of this year. I am not aware of any other cost implications or there's no impact on Treasury.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you and that leads into my next question.

So when you indicate December 10, 2022, the act is planned to come into force then but that's the middle of a month on a Saturday. Can the minister explain why this date was determined and not the start or end of the fiscal or calendar year, or the start or end of the month?

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

A. PARSONS: That is a fantastic question, Mr. Chair, for which I do not have an answer.

I will report back. I get what the Member is saying and maybe I have that wrong but if necessary – I think it is mentioned in there. If there is a reason, I would be happy to report back to the House even during the normal sitting and if not, if it is an oversight, I would suggest we move to the following Monday or first business day would probably make the most sense.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: And the final question is: With respect to the rights of judgment creditors, can the minister just elaborate or provide some information about the transfer of the rights of judgment creditors into the Facility Association?

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

A. PARSONS: What I gather from this, there is no legal impact through this passage of legislation that will impact creditors or those that are awaiting payment. In this case the reality is pre-1994. I think what's there is there. I don't think there are a whole lot of changes going on. If anything, post-'94 with the facility is where most of it rests. It shouldn't have an impact on anybody there. If anything the other side of it too, I would guess, is with the statute of limitations on a lot of this.

I don't think there's been a whole lot of activity, if anything it's just a housekeeping thing where the Insurance Bureau came in and said we'd like to see this done, other provinces have had it done and no other reason not to have done it now except this being asked and it seems to make sense.

CHAIR: Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 5 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 5 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 5 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act Respecting the Winding Up of Judgment Recovery (Nfld.) Ltd.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move the Committee rise and report Bill 11.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 11.

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 Baie Verte - Green Bay and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

B. WARR: Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them

referred and have directed me to report Bill 11 without amendment.

SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and directed him to report Bill 11 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

S. CROCKER: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

S. CROCKER: Tomorrow.

SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

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

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 2, third reading of Bill 12.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL, that An Act to Amend the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act be now read a third time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the said bill be read a third time.

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.'

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act to Amend the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act. (Bill 12)

SPEAKER: This bill has now been read a third time, it is ordered the bill do pass and its title be as on the Order Paper.

On motion, a bill, "An Act to Amend the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 12)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call from the Order Paper, Order 3, third reading of Bill 15.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that Bill 15, An Act to Ensure Fair Registration Practices by Regulating Bodies, be now read a third time.

SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that the said bill be now read a third time.

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, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Monday, October 31, at 1:30 p.m.

CLERK: A bill, An Act to Ensure Fair Registration Practices by Regulating Bodies. (Bill 15)

SPEAKER: This bill has now been read a third time, it is ordered that the bill do pass and its title be as on the Order Paper.

On motion, a bill, "An Act to Ensure Fair Registration Practices by Regulating Bodies," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 15)

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 do now adjourn.

SPEAKER: Before I call for the motion, I'm going to remind Members again that the Future of The Vote is going to be here tomorrow so I ask you to take items off your desk. I do thank you for your co-operation and decorum today during today's debate.

It is moved and seconded that the House do now adjourn.

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.

This House do stand adjourned until Monday, October 31, at 1:30 p.m.