

The House met at 10 a.m.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Government Business

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 15, An Act to Amend the Memorial University Act, Bill 39.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Government House Leader, that Bill 39, An Act to Amend the Memorial University Act, now be read a second time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 39, An Act to Amend the Memorial University Act, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act to Amend the Memorial University Act." (Bill 39)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you, Speaker.

I am pleased to stand before this House to introduce An Act to Amend the Memorial University Act, Bill 39.

As those of you watching will probably know, MUN was established 98 years ago, nearly 100 years old. It was a memorial to Newfoundlanders who lost their lives in the First World War, a historic event that devastated this province as well as my own

community, where I grew up, in Manchester. It was rededicated later to encompass war dead from World War II.

It had 57 students when it opened. By 1949, when Canada joined us, there were 300 and it was renamed the Memorial University of Newfoundland. Since then, it is one of the largest universities in Atlantic Canada: 300 programs, 19,000 students, 118 different countries. It has a renowned teaching staff and it has campuses in Harlow, England as well, as across the six in Newfoundland and Labrador.

It's one of the top 20 research universities in Canada and slowly increasing its influence on the world stage. Memorial has just been awarded its largest research grant in its history: \$91.6 million with the Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada. It's a co-lead and it has received this huge federal support, looking at collaboration with Inuit communities in Arctic waters. It will address and respond to something which mariners have wanted for centuries, which is basically an opening of the Northwest Passage. It will look at related environmental impacts and it will also go to support Inuit communities for cost-effective and cost-efficient resupply.

I preface my comments on the act with these to show that Memorial is an integral part of this province and it's a jewel in the educational crown of Newfoundland and Labrador. It has experienced a really challenging year, there's no doubt about it, and we, in the department, as well as on this side of the House, have been working with the administration, with the faculty and with the students as the university steadies and stabilizes itself. I meet regularly, for example, with the new interim president, as recently as yesterday. I've had calls with MUNFA and MUNSU recently and we have regular contact between my department and those bodies.

The success of Memorial is our success, Mr. Speaker, and we need to work towards

that. As part of a collective commitment in that direction, Bill 39 is simply a first step. It is one which will enable teaching representation, faculty representation on the Board of Regents, the administrative governing body.

This is not, however, the end of these changes to the MUN Act. It is merely a first step on that road. These amendments here are also in line with women and gender equity, introduce gender-neutral language throughout and it has to update references to other pieces of legislation whose names have changed in the 26 years since the act was originally written and proclaimed.

These amendments actually remove the disqualification provisions that were placed in the original act that prevent faculty teachers at Memorial from sitting on the Board of Regents. With these amendments, faculty representation can be selected to fill the Lieutenant Governor in Council appointments. A specific number has not been set, but the exclusions have been removed from the legislation to ensure that teaching representation can occur. It will fall under the existing 17 LGIC appointments currently allotted under paragraph 22 of the existing act.

This means that there will be no new seats on the board; this simply doesn't alter anyone else's representation on the board, except the LGIC. It will maintain the current board's size of 30 and, as I say, it doesn't take away from any of the other groups, be they students, be they alumni that are elected and such.

The faculty representatives will be identified for LGIC approval in direct consultation, which has already begun, with faculty representatives at Memorial. This will include in that discussion submission of some names for this time around and the creation of a process to kind of regularize and automate this for further iterations of the Board of Regents in the future.

These amendments are solely intended to ensure the representation of teaching faculty on the board. It addresses a request of the university and of MUNFA and recognizes a practice which, in some respects, whilst unique in governance fields is actually recognized in boards of other universities and higher learning establishments.

This was something during the labour action earlier on this year that we actually made a commitment to do. MUNFA were pleased with this; they're obviously new to the idea of the mechanism of selecting names and they have gone away to think about this and talk about this. We are actually now, through this amendment, fulfilling a promise that we made to MUNFA, MUNSU, the public and MUN itself during the job action.

This is, as I say, not the end of the process. Further substantive amendments to the act and indeed potentially a rewrite of the act will be coming down the line as the Auditor General's report comes out about the performance review and it would proceed. I have said to MUNFA on at least one occasion – probably more – that they will be part of the discussion process around what a revised governance structure might look like in the future. But in the meantime, this gives them a seat at the table, this gives them the ability to participate in administrative decisions when and where appropriate.

So with that, Speaker, I really urge the House to support this. It was asked for by Memorial, it was asked for by MUNFA and we are delighted to be able to stand and propose this. I will be happy to listen to comments from other Members in the House and then deal with any questions in Committee. With that, Speaker, I'll take my seat.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

It's my pleasure to get up and speak on this revision of the MUN Act, Bill 39. It's not earth shattering but it is necessary. It's a result of the strike and the settlement of the strike that faculty members were part of the agreement, they would be made part of the Board of Regents. They wanted a seat in the decision-making of MUN and government is following through on that commitment, which is fine.

As people will remember, during the strike, we, as an Opposition – I spoke on behalf of our Caucus – supported that when the strike was in midstream. We were willing to come in during the strike and do what we're doing here today, if that meant facilitating a resolution to the strike at the time. The thousands of students who were on the street and the faculty members were on the street in the bitter cold, trying to stand for what they believe in and what they felt was their right.

I guess, better now than never. But this was something we agreed to a while back, so it's no shock to anyone in this province or in this House that we support this now.

But with this MUN Act, with the changes, you especially bring the MUN Act back on the floor of the House of Assembly and make those adjustments, those revisions or amendments, but, also, you're bringing the MUN Act here to the House and as we've done recently, last year, I believe, with the Schools Act. There are lots of things we could talk about within the MUN Act and about MUN, and it's a valid conversation because, as we know, there's an ongoing review going on with the MUN Act. It's been going on for some years, maybe the last year or two.

I've had a keen interest in the ongoing situation at MUN over the last number of

years, and the former minister, me and him had a very open dialogue about it. There was some public back and forth, I had a lot of media back and forth and actually meetings with the former president of MUN, because MUN is – and the minister rightly states, it's something that goes back 98 years. There's a sense of pride in this province. It's not something that should divide us, it's something that should unite you.

Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador, it has changed its name, it's a sense of pride and it was a memorial to our fallen soldiers. It has a lot of meaning. It's our only university. It's a great university. As a matter of fact, my two daughters, and I'm sure a lot of people in this House, attended university, me included. But over the last number of years, the university is in the news for all the wrong reasons. I don't think government can fix all of those problems, but I do believe there's a responsibility on whatever government is in power to have a look, the deeper dive, and to not hide behind the autonomy of MUN.

I've never agreed with it. Quote me on record, whoever wants to quote me and listen to my commentary, I have never agreed with the autonomy of MUN, the way it's being used. In my opinion, it's not the intent. It does not lead to good decisions.

Nobody should be given a carte blanche on how to operate and how to run a facility such as the size of MUN, such an important facility, such money involved, I mean, hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars, thousands of students. It's higher learning in this province. Nobody should ever have the authority that MUN has, the unfettered right and how dare you question what we're doing.

That's what you're being told. I was told first-hand by the former president – questioned why I'm out speaking publicly. I respectfully answered the question, because it's what I'm hired to do, what my

responsibility is. We should, that's our responsibility.

As the Loyal Opposition of this province, in this Legislature, one of our main roles is how public money is spent. The Minister of Finance is well acquainted with this. She understands our role. We have to question all the expenditures in the province, it's what we do. We don't always agree, but it clearly states in the Official Opposition, one of our main roles.

We're pumping hundreds of millions of dollars into Memorial University, why shouldn't we question that? We question it everywhere else we spend money. But for some reason, you go to MUN, you spend this money, you're not allowed to talk about it and you're questioned when you do talk about it.

What's usually the guard and usually what they hide behind is the autonomy. I don't have any issue with MUN looking after their education piece, the research piece at MUN, that's what they do; their staffing, how they instruct, that should be what – they're professionals, they should be doing that work. But when you get outside of that and you get into some of the stuff we've heard, my God, it goes on and on.

I've got one issue, it's a very sensitive issue and it's worth mentioning again in this House because we don't know where the decision is to with that. The "Ode to Newfoundland" – something that runs deep with me and I think it runs deep with everyone in this Legislature.

We voted in this Legislature, and in turn, I think, Mr. Speaker, there was letter that came from the House of Assembly to the president of MUN, at the time, we strongly, strongly support it reinstating the "Ode to Newfoundland" at convocation ceremonies. We support it. If you want to sing the "Ode to Labrador" – we've done it here in this Legislature when we closed last spring, if

I'm not mistaken. We actually sang both of them.

We were trying to set the example. This is your Legislature and I do not know to this day where that's to. I mean, we've got new leadership at MUN now. Will they come back with it? My daughter is convocating at the end of this month and I do hope, when I go there as a proud parent, I will stand with everyone else and we will sing the Ode.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: But I do not know right now if that's the case, but if this Legislature – and we have a Premier and we have our minister and 40 of us here – vote and support something like that, we are responsible for the \$9-billion or \$10-billion budget, government is and we're holding them accountable as expenditure, then we've got this beautiful university that's down the street here and they've got their Senate and their Board of Regents and we're not allowed to question them on decisions of that magnitude, that nature.

That's beyond education and research. That's who we are. That's who we are as a people. I've said it before and I'll repeat it because I've got a lot of passion on this one. I've got a lot of passion on a lot of things but this one is one of the ones I've got a lot of passion on. To this day, I get cold shivers whenever the "Ode to Newfoundland" is played, I get cold shivers and I think everyone in this Legislature feels the same way. It gives me a sense of pride that nothing else does with me like the "Ode to Newfoundland".

I have a lot of pride when "O Canada" is sang – and to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, I'll play along, my Bruins actually lost in the playoffs, but I was looking forward to listening to "O Canada" being played every night when they played the Leafs, but, unfortunately, now they're gone. I do have a lot of pride in our national anthem, but the "Ode to Newfoundland" is

different altogether for all of us – and I don't need tissues no – and it's something that we should all be very proud of and it's something that should never go unfettered.

This comes back to this autonomy piece. That should be stopped – full stop. This Legislature says that should go back in. That's the stuff that should go back in. You know, if we find expenditures are not being spent right, our money – it's our money, most of this is our money – we should have that right. You know, when you see this trip to Fogo Island, \$100,000 – it's part of the MUN Act, Mr. Speaker, the MUN Act is opened up here.

SPEAKER: We're discussing one portion of our MUN Act.

B. PETTEN: What?

SPEAKER: We're discussing the appointment of –

B. PETTEN: The MUN Act is on the floor of the House, Mr. Speaker, and it came with the Schools Act, so it is – you have to open to do any work, so it's fair game. My point is, why should you not question that?

My point, Mr. Speaker, you look at the relevance and what have you, because I think this is relevant because it is the MUN Act. We can't cherry pick, take one out and talk about this if we're opening the MUN Act and it's fair game. That's public money, but when we're reviewing the MUN Act, which is my point, that's coming up for review because that's what's needed and when the AG comes back, that's just stuff that should never happen again. That should never happen again.

We witnessed a strike. There was no leadership shown at the time. Let's be honest, there was no leadership shown. This is where government – and my point I'm getting to, when you look at the autonomy of MUN, the disservice was to the students and the faculty. I believe that

government should have approached and went over and sat around the table. It's too important.

You just can't pump in hundreds of millions of dollars and walk away and say okay, we'll leave it to them. They've not proven that, Mr. Speaker. It's about accountability. It's about transparency. It's about spending of our money in a proper manner. We should all have grave concerns over stuff like that.

This Legislature – getting into the MUN Act – we've questioned and I've questioned this issue, too, on the president's contract. That's come through this House. That's in the MUN Act, the hiring of the president. We have a new search now; are we going to spend another \$200,000 or \$300,000 to find someone to go over and run that university? I'd say if you put a job ad in the local media, the local Telegram here you'd probably find qualified – we haven't got them here in this province and we have to go spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on searches? I think that's a discredit to the people of this province. We have a lot of qualified individuals in our province that have a lot of love and a lot of passion for that university.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: I'm sure they have a lot of passion for the "Ode to Newfoundland."

Let's get someone on board and to go over and bring the university back to where it needs to be, Mr. Speaker. We're revising the MUN Act, we have so much work to do and why not get some feedback from everybody? I know that government doesn't like to hear what we have to say a lot of times, but there are a lot of times we might make sense if government wanted to collaborate with us.

I know that the Board of Regents and the Senate and what have you and faculty have submitted stuff to the Department of Education on the possible changes to the

MUN Act. Will they enforce it? We don't know. Maybe we have suggestions.

As we speak here today, and some of my colleagues will also, we're going to offer to point out problems that this stuff should never happen. All of these examples I'm giving are relevant because they're all about MUN's autonomy, which is part of the MUN Act, which is part of something that – and not this government. There have been governments over the generation hiding behind the fact we can't do anything because MUN has that right. MUN has this unfettered autonomy. But that should never be.

Because if you look at strikes and, like I said, you look at the Fogo Island Inn, you look at a law school and you look at expanding the footprint, these are all this government's decisions. These were decisions that were read in budget documents in this House, but then you turn around we're not increasing the footprint and then, a week later, we're hearing that there's expansion gone in Labrador.

I'm not against an expansion in Labrador, but I do believe that government makes the decision. Whether you agree or not, that's government's decision. It's in a budgetary document. It's a serious document and you're saying not expanding your footprint and then, the next week later, there are meetings going on that you're going to expand up in Labrador. So what gives? You're not a private enterprise; you are a branch of government. Government has a very integral role to play in Memorial University. So why not have that say?

We seen what happened and we're into a new search now. But why we're in the news for all the wrong reasons – and I sat down at a town hall last week and we heard student after student come up and they questioned the tuition freeze – why the tuition was raised, why it was lifted and why government cut funding. That bared most of the conversation on that town hall.

Then our answers were coming out – the president was there, the new acting president and our Minister of Health who was filling in for the Minister of Education. They fumbled with it. They fumbled back and forth. They were almost like we can talk to this one and this one talk to that one. It became so, I guess, disjointed, one of the students actually stood to the podium and they got the mic and they almost gave a cross-examination of the minister and the president – who's responsible? Now, I'm not making this up. This is all on record.

He was like: When did you find out? Now, Minister, when did you find out? It became a back and forth, and did we ever find out? I don't know if we really, really know. But just say what happened. The province said they're cutting back on the tuition offset and MUN had no choice to raise tuitions – is that what happened? We're not getting a clear answer on that.

It did become a finger-pointing game, but this is why government got to play a larger role. That's why I find it frustrating; you have \$1.4 billion in the Department of Education and you have your K to 12, you have your post-secondary and you have early childhood development. The brunt of the money goes to post-secondary and K to 12. We have the school district that looks after the schools, but they have a close role. They're being brought into the department, and rightfully so. The minister, whatever minister or whatever government should stand up and hold account to anything in our K-to-12 system, take responsibility. If it needs to be fixed, fix it. If we need a new school, get a new school. If we need retention and recruitment, we need it. If we more student assistants – and on and on the story goes.

But when you go over to MUN, we can't speak on that. We've got nothing to do with that. You've got to go talk to MUN about that. That brings me back full circle to my concern about the economy. I think it's very dangerous. I think when we look at the MUN

Act, when we review the MUN Act, I encourage government – I don't think they'll be ridiculed for it – to actually make those changes.

If I'm not mistaken, there is some legislation out and I may be mistaken, but I know I've read it. It's not in front of me right now, but I think it's Alberta maybe. I'm not sure if Saskatchewan got something. They actually were bold and they brought in legislation to take more control back from the university. They didn't like where the university was headed. They didn't like where things were going. But the world continued on. There's post-secondary education still happening in those provinces. But government has a larger role, so what's wrong with that?

We have \$3.5 billion or \$3.6 billion being spent in health. Do you think the Minister of Health doesn't have any say in what's happening over at the Health Sciences Centre today? Sure, we've got Eastern Health; we're amalgamated under one board. But do you think the minister don't have an ultimate say, or the Premier? I mean, I hope they do. They should. Yet, we'll go back to MUN again, which the annoying part of it is that's what's defensible, we can't interfere – we can't interfere. It's obscure, Mr. Speaker.

So if you're bringing in the MUN Act and this bringing faculty in, well, that's just something that needed to be done. We were willing to do this two months ago. But when you do these changes, do the right changes; do what's right. Government needs to have a more active role. You're appointing 17 members to the Board of Regents. Some of them are going to be the faculty. You've got 30 members on the Board of Regents looking at the university and 95 seats on the Senate looking after the university. That's 125 seats altogether – people – for less than 20,000 students. There are 40 of us in this Legislature that represent over half a million people in this province.

Now, does anyone want to tell me the dysfunction in that number? Does anyone want to challenge me on those numbers to say what's wrong with that? Does that make sense to anyone in this Legislature? Maybe I'm missing something. If I am, I'm always open to being corrected. I have no problem with that. But if anyone can stand up and tell me what's normal about that – we can close our eyes, turn it over and say that's not there, don't forget about that because that's MUN, the autonomy of MUN. No, we can't go there. No, MUN got their own rights. Don't do that.

They have their meetings. They must have their meetings down to the stadium somewhere because they can't fit over there – there's not a room big enough at MUN – or over at the Arts and Culture Centre somewhere. How are you making a decision? Can you imagine? There are 40 of us in here now and we're bad enough. Can you imagine 120 or 150 of us trying to make a decision? It's true. It's laughable because it's true. How do you make a decision? Can you imagine trying to come to an agreement?

It's unreal and then I look at this stuff – I can go on and go on because I think it's valid. We're at the opportune time now when we're talking about the MUN Act and the changes – and the Auditor General is there. I stood in my place in the House of Assembly and I asked and I repeatedly asked and I spoke out and I called out, the Auditor General had to go into MUN. There was no clause to let the Auditor General go into MUN. There was no provision there. We need to make the change.

I stood in this House and I asked the minister of the day about the contract for the president of MUN. At the time, he didn't even know. He really didn't and I felt bad to a degree because I think he was blindsided. He really didn't realize what the contract was. I dug further and we found out what the contract entailed. Actually, that contract goes through routine Cabinet, the hiring of

the president and the contract, all goes through routine Cabinet. Now, I knew that anyway from my previous life when I used to be closely associated with the former administration. I wasn't an MHA but I knew how the things worked.

So you're taking that contract and then hiring. You bring it up and you're sitting around a roomful of, probably, six Cabinet ministers in routine Cabinet, if I'm not mistaken, and they're saying aye or nay to these things that don't need a lot of debate as they're coming through, but it's still in Cabinet; it's a portion of Cabinet. Yet, you're going to have all of this input into the contract and the hiring and everything, but then when it comes out, you're going to say well, we have nothing to do with that. That wasn't our decision. That's MUN. We had nothing to do with it. Actually, like I said, the minister didn't even realize what the contract was.

So what's missing there? Isn't that accountability? Isn't that transparency? Isn't that really taking your eye off the wheel? I'm not knocking who runs MUN. But my sweet God, I mean, we're hearing in the news for all the wrong reasons on a constant, constant basis. You don't even read the headlines story when you've got all these VPs leaving, all this turnover in staff happening at MUN. That's real, too.

Is that healthy? It's not healthy. But this is where government really needs to stand up and take some ownership of that university.

The minister rightly points out there's a sense of pride in that university; it means a lot of the people of this province, and it really does. We cannot let this university go the way it's going because, you know, right now enrolment is down 20 per cent this past year. Now, they're saying a lot of it is on the tuition increase and no doubt, I think a lot of it is. But the reputation of MUN is not helping the cause either. If you're not really familiar with MUN, even if you are, even if

you're watching this, who is running this show? What's going on?

There's more than tuition sometimes. That's one factor, cost will always be a factor, but you've got to feel good about where you're going. There has to be a sense of pride to be a MUN graduate. What you're seeing now, I think, that's factoring in there and no one wants to talk about that; nobody wants to talk about it.

But government has a real opportunity when the AG goes in, because, like I said, I stood in my place in this House and I asked for the AG repeatedly to go in to MUN – repeatedly. Finally, we made the legislative change and, right now, as we speak, the AG is in MUN doing a deep dive.

Maybe we need a forensic audit, I don't know. But I tell you right now, Mr. Speaker, there are definitely serious issues in MUN. I'd be shocked if the AG don't come back and find some serious, serious issues with the overall expenditure funds at MUN, how things have been spent. I can't see how it doesn't. I think there are serious problems there.

You have infrastructure needs, the place is dilapidated; it's serious, some of the building over there. I attended MUN many years ago. Like I said, my two girls have been there. Yet, you can spend endless monies on other things, so where are your priorities? You have to prioritize.

Tuition offset: they increased tuition, now enrolment is down 20 per cent, but it didn't change spending. Life is still going on. I've said repeatedly spending was out of control, like a runaway train. I got some criticism for that, too, but that doesn't bother me. Criticism means that you must be hitting a nerve, you must be getting to the core of the problem, but government can change this.

Again, I'm calling on them now and I'll continue to call on them, as this MUN Act, when we get back in here and we do the

MUN Act, we open up and deep dive, when the changes come for the MUN Act, I really strongly think government needs to take a more leading role.

It's fine to put 17 members on a 35-seat board, appoint 17 members, but you don't have the controlling interest. You haven't got 20, you haven't got 18; you've got 17 of 35, to my knowledge, that's around 49 per cent. You really don't have control of MUN. On top of that, you don't want to control MUN. That seems to be the nature. It's too much. They don't want to deal with it. It's a headache, we don't want to touch it. Let's hope it goes away and fixes itself, and it's not. It's actually a real sad statement to say that but it's not. MUN is not fixing itself. It doesn't appear to be. The way we keep going, it's not going to.

I'm soon going to wrap up here, Mr. Speaker, but I do think it's worthy of conversation. This legislative change, like I say, it's a minor change. It's not a major one, but it does give us, and I hope my colleagues, an opportunity to speak about MUN when they see the need.

The Premier can see MUN from his office window. We all can look out through a window and see MUN, yet we treat it like it's a foreign operation. Yet, we pump in hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars. Thousands and thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians go to a university that's there as a memorial to a fallen soldier, representing Newfoundland and Labrador's only university, and we're going to sit back and we're going to say no, we have nothing to do with this. We'll give them the money and we'll let them appoint the people; you go off and run the university and let's hope for the best. That's not good enough, Mr. Speaker.

We'll support this legislation, but we are looking forward to the AG report on MUN, which we'll have lots of questions then, I'm sure, but we're also looking forward to the

new MUN Act, the new changes coming to this Legislature.

I do, once again, implore government to make sure they take the bull by the horns, proverbially, take control of MUN and get her back on the track because it's too important for the people of this province to let it go the way it's going.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Speaker.

My colleague from CBS has stated that we will be supporting the bill, which we surely will, but I just want a few moments to discuss and give a commentary on what the amendments are in the bill.

Back in my time, when we brought in school councils in the K-to-12 system, I remember, at that point in time in the K-to-12 system, we had school councils and school councils had a wide representation: we had students, we had the community and we had staff on that council.

Research would state that the ideal committee size is seven. We mentioned before when we were looking at the Schools Act – and I referenced that before – my colleague from CBS mentions the size of the Senate and the size of the Board of Regents. These are very large bodies. I don't need to elaborate on that point, but these are large numbers and to see the effectiveness of a 95-member Senate, then I would say that would be a sight to behold.

I have four children and all four children, at one point in time, touched down at MUN. I would think that what they got out of MUN was rewarding. I think we can look at MUN in a lot of aspects. We've got 40 Members here in the House and I would hazard to

guess that the vast majority have touched down at MUN in order to be conferred with a degree or they had experiences with MUN. It is invaluable that we make sure that MUN fires on all cylinders, that it continues to do the best job that it possibly can and whatever supports that we can provide for it.

I stand to be corrected, but at the briefing – at least I jotted the note down that – there was communication back in 2021 about representation on the Board of Regents. I jotted that note down and I wouldn't want to speak it here in *Hansard* to confirm it, but at least the minister may, but that would've been a nice time to make sure that the staff had representation on the Board of Regents. The same model as the school councils would have because committees that run institutions ought to have representation from those key stakeholders that would be a part of the university.

To think that faculty were not represented on the Board of Regents was pretty wild. I didn't know until the strike. Remember, the strike didn't occur in '21, but back in '21 I'm assuming that we had the representation.

I stated that when the Heritage students were here, or Mrs. Dooley's class from Heritage, I had mentioned Jamie King. Jamie King went on and established Verafin. But he was a student at MUN. He went through MUN and that speaks of what great things can come out of our institution, and we know where we are in technology. I say that university, the K-to-12 school system when it comes to robotics and technology, I think we're moving along.

I would say when we look at the membership of the Board of Regents, they state that there are three there from the College of the North Atlantic. I'm sure that the Marine Institute would be represented there and that would be there. Even though it's not stated, I know. But in the blue economy where we are in Newfoundland and Labrador with the importance of ocean research, with the importance of our

environment, with the importance of the fishery, then I would assume that the Marine Institute would be represented. But it wasn't stated, nor stated here, in the presentation or the briefing we had, nor stated in the legislation.

I would say when I visited the Joe Brown aquatic centre in Logy Bay and the manager –

J. WALL: In the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis.

C. PARDY: That's in the beautiful District, yes, of Cape St. Francis. There it is.

I requested a tour when I first got the fisheries portfolio. I contacted a gentleman by the name of Danny Boyce, who was the manager of the centre. He was most gracious in accommodating me. Now, just as a side note, he is from Bonavista. I want total transparency every time I speak – total transparency in this House and I am very proud of that.

But anyway, we went down and what I anticipated to be 25 minutes was three hours. We visited some classrooms that were down there. Here were all these scientists with designated tasks and research assignments and there they were. He then showed me their collaboration with the aquaculture industry. They were serving as a hatchery for cleaner fish.

For those people in Bonavista watching, cleaner fish are lumpfish. We call them cleaner fish because they are integral in the aquaculture industry because a big part of their diet is sea lice, and sea lice occur naturally in our waters.

They are MUN and when I looked and went through that centre to look at what research they were doing, the interaction with students, that is MUN, that is something that we ought to be very proud of and we are.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. PARDY: We are.

Through their efforts and through their collaboration and association with the aquaculture industry, they can't produce enough cleaner fish and lumpfish to serve our growing aquaculture. But have they made an impact? From that Joe Brown centre in Logy Bay, MUN, every cleaner fish is utilized in the aquaculture industry to a great success that they negate any usage for antibiotics, and it all came from MUN here.

Cleaner fish are being used now exclusively to get as many as you can in Cooke Aquaculture, and they're using it everywhere over in North America and whenever or wherever they are into finfish, they utilize it, and it started here at MUN.

So when we look at an act that I would say that has 95 members in the Senate, we have 30 members in the regents, we want to make sure that act is as current and as progressive as we possibly can – progressive and transparent.

I just want to state, in another few moments, an issue I would have with a lot of the legislation that we currently have. Somebody may be able to speak, or the minister later, to enlighten me, and I love to be enlightened on different matters. But I would find since I came into the House in 2019, and we went through the briefings with the Health Accord, more often than not, it will be Cabinet, Lieutenant Governor in Council, who decide membership on the Board of Regents, the representation.

In the last bill we discussed, as far as collection of the health data – and most of us took part in presentations and briefings on the Health Accord and I'll match the two now in a short time. In the Health Accord, Dr. Parfrey referenced, in my interpretation, the part of keeping the health collection of data separate from the political world, to make sure that nothing ever interfered with data. Because that data dictates and

determines what we do in everything we do health related. The importance of having untampered data would be critical.

So when the last bill came that we discussed, that was one of the hang-ups, issues, that I had. I looked at it and said, the data ought to be totally separate and independent, arm's length from politics, because it's too important.

When I look at the membership of the Board of Regents and when we look at the Senate, a lot of these appointments are by Cabinet. I would say 17 appointed by Cabinet. Four student reps at the Board of Regents appointed by Cabinet. A lot of viewers now, whether it be in the District of Bonavista, would say if there's any chance that we're politicizing these critical organizations in any degree, that ought not to be acceptable. We talked about autonomy, we talked about independence, especially in our academic institution; we ought not to be determining as to representation on a lot of these boards, in my opinion. I think we need independence.

The students that are selected from MUN, who would be on the Board of Regents, ought not to be approved, in my opinion, by Cabinet or given a nod. No more should the collection of health data be controlled by a political party if the quality of HEALTHe NL is not totally independent. If I've misspoken, I'm sure the minister will address that when he gets an opportunity to speak.

I was talking to Glenn Blackwood at the Marine Institute recently, good man, lots of knowledge. The latest one I spoke to about the university was David Vardy, and David won't mind me using his name, but when we talked about the president and there being an opening, he was talking to Lorne Wheeler at the time, and I referenced when I was teaching, having four children, and there were many summers that we would hook on the trailer that we had and sometimes we would explore. We would go to campgrounds between here to Toronto.

That was one of the luxuries of teaching as a profession, that myself and my wife, we could do that with four children.

But the story is that when my children got old enough to work, we no longer could take off and explore. Myself and my wife were sitting in our living room one time and we looked back on those travels that we had and two of us, we had a consensus, we thought the best campground that we had in our travels, in our journeys when our kids were growing, was the closest one to us at Terra Nova National Park. It was right here.

Often you will think there's something bigger and better somewhere else. We default sometimes; you think there's something bigger and better, we must pursue it. Only after your search, you'll find out that you had it all along.

The message would be, when we look for a president for the university, if someone ever said to me that we don't have the talent or the globally educated individuals in Newfoundland and Labrador to be able to serve as president, I disagree.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. PARDY: I disagree.

So when Cabinet, through the Board of Regents, are going to be in search for a new president, make sure you have a good look here in Newfoundland and Labrador because we have qualified and capable people in a globally networked academic institution. I'd like for us to make sure we don't always think that it's somebody from outside to come in because we need that. We've got it here in our province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. PARDY: With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take my seat.

Thank you for the opportunity to have a few words on this bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Member for Bonavista for that. I agreed with a lot of what he had to say. I also agree with much of what the Member for Conception Bay South had to say.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting because we discuss any number of issues in this House, we have over the years and there'll be many discussions long after I'm gone. But the one thing I've found in my 12 years so far is that there are some things that everybody's ready to jump up and talk about and there have been other issues that, even though you may talk to a lot of people who might feel a certain way and give you feedback, nobody wants to bring it up. Nobody wants to bring it up because it's politically sensitive; afraid someone's going to get upset if you raise the issue and so on.

I can think of a couple that just come to mind right off the bat. Someone mentioned actually yesterday – and this has come up over and over again – people said: Paul, why don't you raise the issue of Government House and the total waste of money on taxpayers of Government House? Nobody ever brings it up. Everyone's afraid to bring it up, everyone's afraid to have that conversation: millions of dollars wasted on Government House.

Why can't we just simply pay somebody a stipends or whatever to be the Lieutenant Governor? They can come in, they can assent to the bills, read the Speech from the Throne and go home out of it. Let's turn Government House into a museum and hire some students in the summer, get rid of all those salaries and expenses. If someone wants to have a garden party in the summer, let some community group or organization have a garden party and invite

everybody. Let's save ourselves a pile of money.

Nobody wants to bring that up. Everyone's afraid to talk about it, but you'd be surprised how many people would agree with that; an awful lot of people would agree with that but they're afraid to talk about it.

Another one that comes up, the RNC and the horses; beautiful horses and all that, but given the fact of all the crime we're having and lack of –

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Bring it back to the bill we're discussing today.

P. LANE: I will, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

P. LANE: I guess the point I'm trying to make is that there are these difficult conversations.

Again, they talk about the horses and do we really need them given the crime rates and everything else; police officers could be put to better use. Not that we're against horses, it's just how people feel.

Another one that's come up is MUN, and this is where I'm bringing it right back. That's the point I'm trying to make. For years and years, I've had people come to me, I'm sure other Members have as well, and conversations around the campfire in the summer, conversations around the dinner table, at a social event or whatever, you're talking to people and that's another one that's come up over the years: Memorial University.

People having that sense, that feeling, could never really totally put their finger on it, but having that feeling in their gut that there's not enough oversight and wondering how taxpayers' money is being spent, particularly when you hear about crumbling

infrastructure and issues and so on like that. People questioning priorities when they hear about monies being spent on other things and who is making these decisions and so on.

I'm glad we're finally having that conversation. I agree wholeheartedly with the Member for CBS. He's actually repeating what I've been saying in this House now for a long time, not just as it relates to MUN, but the broader conversation of us, in this House of Assembly, the 40 people who were elected to represent the people of Newfoundland, duly elected, to have a look at the finances of where all the people's money is going.

MUN is one of them. So is Nalcor. I've talked about the Department of Health and the \$3 billion that goes to the Health Authority and we're counting paperclips in the minister's office. We're just passing over the fact that there's \$3 billion gone to the health authorities and no one can ask a question of anybody about how that money is being spent.

MUN falls into that same category. It's not about discrediting MUN. It's not about discrediting any of the people who are on the Board of Regents. It's not about discrediting faculty. It's not about discrediting administration. I know that's why people have been afraid to raise it, because how dare you question me. That's been the sense.

But it's about the fact that it's the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that over many, many years have pumped millions and millions and millions and millions of taxpayers' dollars into that institute. It's our money. It's our university. We want it to be the best university it can be. Everybody wants that.

But at the end of the day, like anything where taxpayers' money is being put into a program or a service or whatever the case might be, people have the absolute right to

know and have openness and transparency and to know how their money is being spent. To simply say we've put it in the hands of this – in this case Board of Regents, or in the case of NLC, the Board of Directors or whatever – let them handle that, I believe we're shirking our responsibility in this House of Assembly by allowing that to continue.

So we do need to have a bigger role in the oversight of all of our agencies, boards and commissions, and that includes Memorial University. In that regard, I would agree with the Member for CBS wholeheartedly. He gave a number of examples of things at MUN. He talked about the "Ode to Newfoundland," which that's the one that really I think everybody here in this House would disagree with that decision. I hope that when he goes to see his daughter convocate that they will play the "Ode to Newfoundland," and I hope they play the "Ode to Labrador" as well, 100 per cent.

But I also look at other things in terms of the autonomy. Here's one for you and a lot of Members might not realize this one: We have blue zone legislation in this province. Under the *Highway Traffic Act*, people park in a blue zone, which is taking away access for people with disabilities who need access, the fine – I think it's gone up to \$800? I could be wrong. It was \$400 I think.

SPEAKER: You're gone off the discussion altogether again.

P. LANE: Yeah, believe me –

SPEAKER: So I ask the Member to stay relevant; we're discussing MUN.

P. LANE: – I'm getting to it. It's totally related. I'm going to tie it in for you right now, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to tie it in.

That is for people to have access. Now, parking fines falls under the MUN Act. I don't know if Members knew that. MUN controls their own parking fines. I don't

know if people knew that. They do; they control their own parking fines. I'm assuming, guessing that the rationale at the time was, well, poor students, b'y. We can't charge them \$50 for parking next to a fire hydrant because they can't afford it. But if someone else parks on Water Street, well, too bad. Suck it up and pay your \$100. But a student can't afford that, so we'll only charge them \$10 or \$20. I'm guessing that was the rationale. I don't know, but I'm just guessing.

Twenty dollars, if somebody parks at MUN now – it doesn't have to be a student. Anyone in this House of Assembly could go to MUN now to a function and say I have nowhere to park and \$20 is nothing. Sure you'd have to pay that if I had to pay to park somewhere in a parking lot somewhere. I'll park in the blue zone and I'll deny someone access. The worst thing that's going to happen: I'm going to get a \$20 ticket. We are going to bar someone the opportunity, a student or otherwise, to gain access to the university. We're going to take up one of their blue zones and the only penalty is \$20 because MUN controls the fines.

I've brought that up in this House before as well in the past. Nobody did anything about it. I have requested that someone from, I think it was TI, the minister at the time, contact MUN for God's sake and at least for blue zones, let's get them to make the change and up the fine. Nobody did anything about it. As far as I know, that continues to be a thing. Totally unacceptable. That is somewhere where someone should be able to step in and say, listen, this has nothing to do with academic freedom; this has nothing to do with deciding what courses are best. No one's telling anyone how to teach or how to determine curriculum, but things like this, yeah, we're going to step in.

This is allowing for discrimination to continue for people who have disabilities not to be able to gain access to a public university. There's something wrong with

this. If you're not going to fix it, we're going to fix it. That would be an example, to my mind, of something where there should be some oversight.

On the amendment itself, of course, I will support the amendment. It was something that was agreed to. I totally agree with having all stakeholders involved on the Board of Regents. I would agree with my colleague from Bonavista, though, when he talks about the 17 appointments that's done totally by Cabinet. We have an Independent Appointments Commission; they should go through that.

Now, I say that tongue in cheek, given the fact that even the – let me say, go through the Independent Appointments Commission after you've fixed the Independent Appointments Commission and take away that clause that allows the minister to ignore any of the recommendations and appoint whoever he or she wants anyway and nobody is any the wiser. Fix that, then go through the Independent Appointments Commission.

The only other point I want to make – and again I want to reference my colleague for Bonavista; he raised this around the Marine Institute being a very integral part, very valuable part of Memorial University. I think there should be some consideration given that if we are going to be appointing, whether it be faculty or whoever, even if they're not necessarily faculty, but if we're going to be appointing people to the Board of Regents, we should ensure that we're going to have some representation from the Marine Institute side as well, because obviously they're going to have, perhaps, different issues and concerns or whatever. I would like to see in the process, if it's not already there, some recognition of the fact that there's MUN here, there's the Marine Institute and both institutions, even though they're part of the broader one, should have representation.

I would take that a step further, and say even Grenfell College out on the West Coast, they probably have some of their own issues and concerns in that region as well. Likewise, I think there should be some representation from the West Coast or from Grenfell College so that they have some input as well. If you're going to do it, try to do in a way that everybody has, all the stakeholders, whether it be in terms of whether they're administration or whether they're faculty, or whether they're students or whether they're in the East Coast of the province or the West Coast of the province, or MUN proper versus Marine Institute, we need to ensure there's a good mix so that everybody's concerns can be brought to the table and hopefully everybody's concerns can be addressed.

With that said, I'm going to conclude again just by saying that I will support the bill. From my perspective, this is important to do, but I'm anxiously awaiting the debate on the entire act. That's really where the debate needs to happen. I think the minister said we've already consulted with the stakeholders on this piece of legislation. I would hope that we will further consult, once this is passed, with the stakeholders because right now all we're saying in this bill is that it gives the minister the ability to appoint faculty but it does not say how many.

So the minister could say, okay, we'll appoint one faculty member of the 17. Should it be one? Should it be two? Should it be 10? I don't know what that number should be. I understand the rationale is because they want to have flexibility, especially since we're going to be going through a complete review of the act. I get that; I appreciate that. But before you just simply pick a number yourself, I would hope that you would consult with all the stakeholders to determine what would be a reasonable number for now at least.

With that said, I'll take my seat and I'll support the bill.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm going to take a few minutes as well to speak to the bill. Obviously, I think all of us will be supporting this bill today. While the bill appears to be a relatively minor bill in terms of a couple of items, it does have a critical piece to it and that allows for the fact there be representation on the Board of Regents. But it also allows us to stand up and talk about Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador and the significant benefits that, as a province, we get from having our own university. It's not only a fantastic educational institution, but it's also very, very much a significant employer in our province when you think about the campuses all over the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I graduated from Memorial University, like many people here, but I also had the opportunity to play varsity basketball and represent Memorial University as a basketball player in the AUS. Later on, when I finished my playing career, I had the opportunity to coach as the head coach of the varsity MUN men's team at Memorial University for a number of years. So I have a long history with Memorial University and I'm very proud of that history.

So when we see the stories in the news, lately, as one of my colleagues has alluded to, about the university, many of those stories have not been positive ones. Yet, there are so many great positive attributes at Memorial University of Newfoundland that I'm sure people will speak to.

When I think about all of the programs that are offered at MUN, my colleague from Bonavista talked about the Marine Institute, a world-class facility that we have right here

in Newfoundland and Labrador with the ability to make changes in terms of how the world deals with all the climate change issues and things that are happening and the Logy Bay facility. I mean, this is critical infrastructure, amazing that we, right here in Newfoundland and Labrador, can actually develop that.

So I think these are critical pieces of it, but, as was said, we seem to be in the news for all the wrong reasons. My colleague from Conception Bay South spoke about the Ode and what I find interesting is there has been a lot of discussion already this morning about the numbers, the numbers on the Senate and the numbers on the Board of Regents. What was disappointing about that decision on the Ode was, not only that it was made, but the decision appears to have been made or was made by a very select group, whether it was the president and a couple of VPs, but I don't think the decision was made by the Senate or by the Board of Regents. I stand to be corrected but that was the information provided, that the decision was made very arbitrarily.

That decision had a significant impact and reaction in the province and, again, if I can go back to my colleague for Conception Bay South, one of the things he said early on when he got up to speak, he said: we should not allow an issue to divide us. That is exactly what that issue did. It divided the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and that is not what that Ode was about. That's not what Memorial University is about.

It is about bringing together people of Newfoundland and Labrador, providing a facility, a university where our children from all over Newfoundland and Labrador, and indeed the world now, want to come to Memorial University to be educated, to learn and to become the future leaders, not only of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, perhaps other countries. We've seen that, we're seeing that and we continue to see it.

I would argue that you can go all over the world and you will find graduates of Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador who are the best in their professions, the very best and that's the legacy that we should have at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I do not want Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador to have a reputation as the cheapest university in Canada; I'd much prefer it to have a reputation as the best university in Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: So when we start to look at funding and how we review funding, again, I would argue that the university cannot simply balance its books on the backs of the students that attend Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador. That's why it is so important when we talk about tuition fees and why the students stand up passionately and talk about the impact of those tuition fees and what it is costing them to get their education, it needs to be reviewed.

My colleagues earlier talked about autonomy. Well, I would argue we all agree with the autonomy of our university. But with autonomy, I would argue, comes accountability; accountable for the decisions you make and accountability for the money you spend. With that accountability comes transparency, the willingness to say here's how we're spending the money. Here's how we're going to improve the education for the people that attend Memorial University of Newfoundland. Because it's that transparency and it's that accountability that has been called into question many times over the last months, even year.

We've seen the turmoil. We have a president who resigned and many VPs who resigned. So there is a lot of turmoil right now at our university and we need to fix it. We need to find a solution. That solution

has to start with accountability. That solution has to start with transparency.

My colleague for Mount Pearl - Southlands has risen many times – and I will give him credit – to talk about the fact that the health authorities and the university should be in here going through an Estimates process, just like every other government department. I agree 100 per cent with him.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: As a matter of fact, I will tell you that I would argue that many of the people that run the health authorities, and perhaps the university, would welcome that opportunity. They would welcome an opportunity to come here and sit down and open the books up so that everybody would have an opportunity to sit and listen and talk to them. I believe they would welcome that.

That's something that we have talked about in this House but we have not yet reached a conclusion on it. So let's stop the delays, let's find a way of making that process happen. Because, again, I would argue that they would welcome that, welcome an opportunity to be more accountable, to be more transparent and to sit here and go through Estimates with the people in the House of Assembly. I just think that's a normal thing to do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: Again, it's not about blame.

I did attend the session the other night with the students and I commend the Minister of Health who stepped in. He sat there and took a lot of heated questions. My colleague from Conception Bay South was there, the Leader of the NDP was there on a panel and members of the university. It was a good discussion, but, at the end of the discussion, it got down into blame. It turned into who knew what, when and where. That was unfortunate because the messaging of what we were really hoping to talk about or

what really needed to be talked about, the impacts that it was having on people, got put behind. All of a sudden it became about did you know this, or who made this decision or who made that decision? That's unfortunate because that again comes down to the whole idea of accountability and transparency.

So what I hope comes out of this – this is the first move in a move that changes the MUN Act, and it's an amendment that we're all going to support. But I would hope that there will be more. I hope we will see the fact that we will come here in the House and talk about it through Estimates and talk about MUN. Because as I said, it's not about infringing on autonomy. It's about the accountability, it's about the transparency and it's about everyone in Newfoundland and Labrador being proud of the education facilities that we call Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador. Let's restore that pride.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER (Warr): The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

With regard to this, I guess there's been a lot of discussion around here, Speaker, to independence and transparency. We have no issue with transparency. I'm always a little bit leery about when we get into areas where it might impinge on the academic independence of an organization, and I say this from this point of view. In a related matter, I don't know how many not-for-profits I speak to out there who are afraid to voice their concerns publicly because they have beholden to the government's purse, that they received government funding.

So my concern always with any institution, any organization that is receiving government funding, that somehow if it

comes to the point where they are afraid of having that funding jeopardized that they remain silent. That's, I guess, something that I would not want to see. It's a fine line we follow in that area about maintaining the independence of an educational institution. I would argue that these institutions are – whether it's CNA, the Marine Institute, Memorial University – are world class precisely because of their independence. They have decided where to go and what programs to offer. So it comes down to how do we make sure that it's world class. With here, very clearly one of the sticking points in the MUNFA strike was the need for collegial governance.

Does allowing for faculty representation on the Board of Regents equate to or result in collegial governance? Does it necessarily improve the transparency? We have plenty of Committees here in-house where you might argue they're collegial. But, in the end, the majority will win and that majority is usually to be determined by the fact that there are more government Members sitting on the Committees and not always include independents.

In many ways, what MUNFA was calling for was for more of a say in university decisions and a general commitment to collegial governance. For the union, however, collegial governance is in a much broader principle than a seat. In the end, if it's a seat or two seats or three seats even for that matter, that will not necessarily result in a collegial model because that one, two or three voices representative from the faculty will be silenced, will be muted.

When the Premier committed to amending the legislation to allow faculty on the Board of Regents, MUNFA welcomed the gesture but stated that it was insufficient to address the root causes of the dispute. They said that. Specifically, the union was looking for a commitment generally worded to the effect that the university administration would abide by the principle of collegial governance.

As MUNFA noted during the strike, Speaker, collegial governance does not cost Memorial a penny. So administration's unwillingness to move on this issue isn't really about money, it's probably more about power and reflects, they figure, the attitude or the administration's desire to shift education in the province towards a corporate, profit-driven model.

I would argue, Speaker, that even if there's too much more interference or if we shift to where the government has too much influence in the university or in educational institutions, that's exactly where we'll end up.

The Board of Regents makes decisions on the key administrative issues such as property, business, revenue and other matters. The union took issue with the secrecy behind, which many of the key decisions of the board were taken. Again, one of the things that I've heard ask for is about transparency. No issue with that. Such as the hiring of Dr. Vianne Timmons or the removal of the "Ode to Newfoundland" from the convocation ceremonies. So the question is: Will this be sufficient? Will having a member on the Board of Regents be sufficient to create a greater sense of transparency? Don't think so. Not really sure yet.

As part of the deal that ended the strike, the university administration agreed to form a committee involving faculty and student representatives to conduct a university-wide investigation and report on the state of collegial governance.

So here's where I would go with this then. Will this amendment, in effect, nullify that committee? Will they be able to say well, we've got our collegial model now, we have a representative of the faculty on the Board of Regents; therefore, we no longer need to follow up with this committee? I would hope not. I would argue that what is being proposed here – albeit, not a very finely tuned approach, but maybe a little bit blunt,

compared to what the faculty was asking for, and maybe less broad, but I would hope that the work of this committee would proceed. The committee would be struck. The committee would proceed. We're back here looking at implementing those recommendations; they're somehow making them part of the *Memorial University Act*. So that's the concern.

The other thing that MUNFA notes and it's in the wording of what I'm looking at, the amendment, about teaching staff. MUNFA has members of its faculty association that are not necessarily teaching staff. So if indeed, if this wording here of this bill is limiting it just to teaching staff or is it looking at faculty members that MUNFA represents? That's basically the other concern there. Maybe that's something that could be the subject of an amendment as well, something that we would consider bringing forward to allow for that.

In principle, it's a first step. But I think I'm certainly also a little bit concerned in terms of even how the process is going to be – if it's through an Independent Appointments Commission, because it's been referenced here a few times of just how independent the Independent Appointments Commission really is. I would say we've seen evidence here; certainly I have in my first year of being elected.

I think in many ways, if we're going to choose someone or if there's going to be a faculty representative, then clearly and certainly it would have to be that MUNFA, the faculty, has a clear indication that this is who we want and this is who we are choosing, pure and simple, as the person who will best represent faculty concerns on this.

But I would argue that, I think the collegial model will certainly address, Speaker, a fully implemented collegial model will certainly address issues of transparency. I think we'll find that the decisions will be more in keeping with what we expect of a

careful deliberation and fulsome debate. At least we can be assured in this House and the people of the province can be assured that yes, it is transparent. But I think a collegial model of governance is key here that goes beyond simply putting a faculty member on the Board of Regents, it goes much further beyond that. We have to be thinking along those lines.

With that, Speaker, I'll take my seat.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

P. DINN: I'm being too polite.

Thank you, Speaker.

I'm thinking of yesterday when I gave you the opportunity to answer.

It's great to get up and speak to this bill and the changes that are being made. I think it's been spoken to a bit already today. This one is to allow for faculty representation on the Board of Regents. In listening to the Minister of Education, earlier, he spoke about how long this establishment has been here, 98 years. It was founded in 1925 and it's a living memorial to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who died in the First World War.

One thing that immediately sticks out to me on this, and I know the minister mentioned this is a first step towards many other steps that will be taken to look at the *Memorial University Act*, but one thing that sticks out to me is the fact that it's called Memorial University of Newfoundland as it's referred to many times. Many times it's just Memorial. But if anything needs to be changed, I think we need to be talking about Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador. It's our provincial university and we need to recognize that. We know that we

have campuses up in Labrador. So if there's a change coming in the act, I would like to see it being the Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador act.

As we talked about earlier, we talked about the "Ode to Newfoundland" and how, out of the blue, there was no singing the "Ode to Newfoundland" at convocation. Here we are talking about a university that was established in remembrance of those who died in World War I. So we should never have gotten to that point in time. In fact, we should have taken a step forward and made sure that the "Ode to Labrador" is also included at convocation.

If it's our university, which we're all so proud of, and so many people have gone through those doors and have come out better equipped for the world ahead and to find jobs and employment – I know my brother mentioned it not too long ago, I'm one of three brothers and three sisters. I'm one of seven. I've got three brothers and three sisters and each one of us – and this is a more an accolade to my parents than it is to us – have come out with at least two university degrees, out of seven of us. Everyone has at least two. I'm proud to say my children have had each had as well, two post-secondary diplomas or degrees. So it's done its part in the province in giving people that opportunity, that access to a post-secondary education.

We talk about the autonomy of Memorial University. Yes, it's governed by a Board of Regents, which is a large group. The current structure is you have you're the chancellor, the president, the vice-president, six members elected by alumni, 17 appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, four student reps. It's a huge group that look after the university. That's not where it stops, of course. We talked about the current structure of the Senate and, again, chancellor, president, vice-president, academic and it goes on. It's about 95 seats. There are huge numbers there governing the university.

What's happening the past weeks around the university, yes, it hasn't been positive on the reputation of the university. When you look at rankings across the country when it comes to universities, the minister mentioned that we rank fairly high in terms of research, but there are many other areas around that universities are ranked by. It's unfortunate we – although I have to say, there are a lot of good universities across Canada, but the university ranks around 24, 25, 26 in terms of different categories. I think we can do better there in terms of promoting our university as to what it provides.

What it provides, of course, is driven by an excellent staff, excellent teaching community, professionals and programs that it offers. But there is a little difference when we talk about how each is governed. I think of our post-secondary system here in the province, I mean, we have private trainers, we have the public system, the College of the North Atlantic and we have Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador, as I call it.

The university, as we know, is run by the Board of Regents. It has wide latitude in most operational areas. The Board of Regents is responsible for the management, administration and control of the property, revenue, business and affairs of the university. While, if you look at the College of the North Atlantic, government has a more substantial role there. Government's role is to develop and enforce legislation; provide necessary resources, leadership, direction and support through the development of clear policies and priorities; and to implement provincial strategies.

So there is a difference in it, too. I'm not suggesting that we govern Memorial University like we do the College of the North Atlantic, but there are some steps that can be taken to improve how Memorial University is operated. I'm sure the Auditor General's report will tell us as such what those areas are.

But I go back to my years working with the provincial government and I dealt with the labour market, training people to fill roles that are needed. That's why the university, the college, the private colleges, you go there to better yourself and, at the end of the day, hopefully find employment or find something to do afterwards.

I know when you look at the private training institutes and the college, part of what's governed there is when they offer a course or a program, there has to be a labour market opinion or a labour market review done. You have to demonstrate that those programs are in demand, there are people wanting to go in those roles and they're going to end up employed. The university, of course, has much more academic autonomy there, and I'm not arguing it shouldn't, but when you go into the university, what's being offered is not driven by the labour market, it's driven by, essentially, what students and the public would like to do, some of the programs they want to do.

It would be argued that well, this program, you're going to be more successful in afterwards than this program. But it gives individuals that choice. They have that choice to do that. When you look at the overall operational piece around the university, that comes with some challenges. To have faculty reps allotted to the Board of Regents makes all the sense because they are the ones dealing with the students. They are the ones who know what their area of expertise is going to lead to. They're the ones who are on the ground dealing with students. It's a bit unbelievable that, in actual fact, they were not represented on the Board of Regents. So, going forward, that is a good step, there is no doubt about it.

Like the minister said, it is the first step of many. I believe he said it is not the end of the process and there is a possible rewrite of the act, which, like any piece of legislation, we need to sit down and have a

look at it. We need to sit down to see: Does it still make sense in this day and age?

I'm glad to hear that. Now it may not happen tomorrow, but it's certainly something that has to be looked at as we move forward and look at, potentially, a revised governance structure. We have to do that. We have to make sure that the shine on this jewel of a university in this province continues to be bright and actually brighter if it can be.

Most people don't even think of the Marine Institute when – some people think of that as a separate entity but the Marine Institute is certainly a big piece of the puzzle when it comes to education and offers many, many world-class programs.

We can't ignore what else the legislation is doing. It is also looking at gender-neutral language in the act. I remember a year or two ago when government was bringing legislation to the House, I did ask for an amendment on that. It's good to see that all future amendments now are taking that into consideration because it's definitely where we need to be to ensure that all our legislation is inclusive, that everyone feels welcome when it comes to, especially, gaining their education.

That is something we haven't talked about a lot in the discussion today but it is a very, very important piece. It is more than just housekeeping, changes to the legislation. It is certainly a sign of the times and ensuring that our legislation, no matter what the issue is, and especially around our access to things like health care and education, that we show that we are all inclusive and that all are welcome.

I have no problem speaking to the fact that this is a good piece of legislation. It is a step in the right direction; the first step of many. I look forward to seeing the many more steps coming forward that will ensure that this university continues to be a jewel in our education crown in our province here, continues to improve and continues to

ensure that we're managed, it's managed the way it should be.

Because keep in mind, this is our university, collectively. This is our university, Newfoundland and Labrador's university. There's a huge chunk of our resources, our tax dollars that go in to keeping this university running. We want to make sure that we get the best return on investment.

I remember talking to the nursing school and talking about how some of their buildings or entrances are eroding. That's a piece that the money goes toward. But we also want to ensure that we continue to produce students, individuals that have come out there, more educated than when they went in, and able to become a contributing part of our society, regardless of what they choose.

At the end of the day, it comes down to making sure that the university, our university is maintained and operated with the best input from all parties or faculty that ensures we're doing the best we can to continue to be one of the best universities in Canada.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER (Bennett): The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

I, too, like my fellow MHA for Topsail - Paradise, I can speak on this legislation, too.

Bill 39, An Act to Amend the Memorial University Act, this change will allow faculty to sit on the Board of Regents. That's welcome, but I don't call this good legislation. The reason why is, I do have some concerns about it.

What's the intent of the appointment for faculty to the Board of Regents? Also, who will be appointed? Where will the list come from for the selection for the appointment? What will the means to the appointment be? These are some of the concerns I have with Bill 39. This legislation is long overdue and I do congratulate the government on bringing it forward, but, first off, we need to make sure it's good legislation.

Now, we've all witnessed the MUNFA strike this winter. What the faculty association was calling for was more say in university decisions. They wanted a general commitment for collegial governance. So actually opening up the act to allow faculty to sit on the Board of Regents, really does not meet this intent. In actual fact, when you talk to the faculty association, they were calling for more than just one seat. Now this legislation comes forward allowing them to have a seat on the Board of Regents, but there's no guarantee – this legislation does not ensure that faculty will actually have a seat on the Board of Regents. This should be stronger legislation. We should see more representation of the faculty on the Board of Regents.

For us, like I said, this legislation is welcomed, but I don't think it's satisfactory. I listened to the Member for Bonavista talk about appointments made by Cabinet and he talked about a need for more independence. Representation on the Board of Regents shouldn't just be Cabinet nods. It's so important. Also, now, we're sort of lulled into this sense, okay, we're going to have faculty members appointed so that would actually be welcomed and more transparent. But in actual fact, there's nothing there to ensure that the proper faculty will actually get on the Board of Regents.

When we asked about it, my party asked about it in the briefing and in actual fact we were told how the appointments will be done is government will decide on the route. We already talked earlier about

transparency. My leader here from St. John's Centre talked about transparency. These appointments need to be transparent and they can't all be through political influence. So it's so important for us to look at that.

The Premier committed to amending the legislation, but in actual fact when MUNFA spoke on it they said that it was a welcomed gesture but the gesture was insufficient to address the root cause of the dispute of the strike. The faculty was looking for a commitment, generally worded to the effect that university administration would abide by the principles of collegial governance. That's really important for us.

So we need to have a stronger voice and the only way that can happen is by ensuring that faculty is actually appointed to the Board of Regents and that it is the right faculty; that this is a transparent appointment.

So who is going to do the appointments? Is it going to be the Lieutenant Governor or is it going to be the Independent Appointments Commission? We even had some comments about the Independent Appointments Commission, that legislation should be overhauled. So, for us, we do have a lot of issues with this.

Now, if we did have faculty on the Board of Regents, they would have had a say in some of the things that went on this past winter that were very concerning. We looked at what happened with the president of the university. When the president was appointed, there was no faculty on the Board of Regents. They didn't actually have a direct say into that. The removal of the "Ode to Newfoundland" from convocation, that was very controversial. The faculty had no seat on the Board of Regents, no input into those decisions. So, in actual fact, if we had faculty on the Board of Regents, we'd probably have better decisions being made that would actually not cause so much controversial situations.

Just looking at the legislation here, for us, we need to make sure that the faculty is appointed to the board. Right now, these changes does not allow for that to be a given. We also need to make sure how the appointment is going take place. Is it transparent? And also who is going to be shortlisted for the appointments?

Also, speaking of MUN, right now MUN doesn't have faculty representation on the Board of Regents. It's considered an outlier. When you look across Canada, most of the universities do have faculty on the Board of Regents.

The minister also spoke on a couple of other things earlier when he introduced the legislation. He talked about this welcome monies that's going into MUN. He talked about Arctic research and expanding the Labrador Studies. But, for me, when it comes to Labrador and it comes to MUN, when it comes to doing Arctic research, when it comes to actually all research in MUN, we have to make sure that when research is being conducted, we should also ensure that the peoples, especially the Indigenous peoples who participate in a lot of these research where the university gets their information from to substantiate their studies, that the Indigenous people are protected from being taken advantage of, from being used.

A lot of times Indigenous people share their knowledge, their history with university professors. A lot of times, if they're not protected, they lose ownership of their information. From what I can see, MUN is actually not protecting Indigenous people from being taken advantage of, from losing their rights to their knowledge and their information that they do share with researchers. So that's another really important thing I'd like to talk about during this amendment.

Just looking at the options, would I vote for this legislation? In actual fact, I'm still making up my mind. The means by which

the selection of faculty to serve on the board remains vague and opens the door to the potential for greater government interference into MUN affairs, despite their commitment to grant the university greater autonomy. So that potential is there. It hasn't been addressed.

There are concerns that the government could use this legislation as a means of stacking the board with allies to do its bidding. To me, that's concerning. That's one of the issues. So how the appointment comes about, how the list is formed to put forward the recommendations on the faculty that can be appointed, also the means of who's going to appoint the faculty, that needs to be resolved. That's the only way we can have good legislation.

This government has to start working on good legislation. We've got to take some of the control back. What we're seeing right now is a lot of appointments are happening at the direction of the minister of Cabinet and a lot of times we are set up to have political interference.

Speaker, that's my greatest concern here. We need to have more clarification on the selection process of how any appointments for MUN faculty will be made to the Board of Regents. But at the end of the day, we need to have faculty representative on the Board of Regents.

Speaker, I'll end my comments there.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DWYER: Thank you, Speaker.

I think the minister is ready to help with our debate.

Anyway, we're here to talk about the MUN Act and having that opened up is very important. But, of course, it gives me great honour to stand in this wonderful House and speak on behalf of the people of Placentia West - Bellevue and the people that went before us to give us that opportunity to be heard in our district.

First thing I would like to say, Speaker, is congratulations to all the 2023 graduates of MUN.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. DWYER: I see all the posts by the parents and the students, and to see the amount of awards and everything, scholarships and everything that everybody is getting, I think that is the true impetus of what this university was meant to be.

I must say that being from Marystown, originally, MUN is my alma mater as well. I know a lot of people that have graduated from MUN, that have gone on to be world leaders and they're right from my own district, right in Placentia West - Bellevue. I think that if we put in the effort, we can certainly find a president for MUN right here in Newfoundland and Labrador. That's a made-here-in-Newfoundland and Labrador solution, educated by our own people, going to be providing an opportunity for our own people and I think that a president from Newfoundland and Labrador would be quite impressive, actually, because we certainly have the people here to do it.

I would go one further to say that if we do go to select – now that we have the MUN act open – why don't we look at the fact that, if you're going to be the president of MUN, you should be a graduate of MUN. I have no problem with that; it was built by our people, for our people.

So to say that, I think it is very important that we do have a liaison from government and that is just as a checks and balance to hold the school or the institute accountable.

As my colleague for CBS had stated, I don't know if 49 per cent is the right amount to put on there because that seems to me that it is really not going to be working. So, to me, it's either the minister or an ADM or someone that would sit on the Board of Regents, along with faculty members, to make sure that we are getting the best bang for the buck. Because at the end of the day, these amendments that we're here to discuss today are long overdue.

This act is really archaic in nature, just in the administrative side of making sure that we're being gender neutral and stuff like that, that's a big deal today. We want to make sure that everybody, while they get to enjoy their own personal uniqueness, they also get to be a part of a greater institute of learning. Like I said, I know that there are a lot of people here in this House, including our Pages, who are very proud to be Memorial University students.

If we were following an outdated piece of legislation, this opens up the university to many vulnerabilities and that includes liabilities. We want to make sure that we're doing the right thing because it's the right thing to do. I think everybody has heard me say that in this House before. This is our university and it's our opportunity, if we're putting the money into it that we do on an annual basis, then, I think, Speaker, that we should have a little bit more say in that and the autonomy needs to be lessened so that there are more checks and balances. There's no doubt about that, because we don't want liabilities. That's certainly not something that we, as a government or we as a province, want to take on for no reason, all because we have somebody else making decisions for us that don't have any checks and balances in place.

It's our hope on this side that these changes to the MUN Act will be more accommodating for, not only the students, but the faculty as well because that's an important piece. We want to make sure that this institute of higher learning is being run

the proper way, for the simple fact that there's no incumbency then or hiccups in the road to getting that great education that we know MUN has provided. That's the reason why we do attract so many international students.

As my colleague from Stephenville - Port au Port said: we don't need to race to the bottom. We don't need to be the cheapest university because people want to know that they're getting a quality education from quality people, from a quality faculty and they know they're included in a community that is all about higher learning.

So autonomy at MUN is eliminating the checks and balances and the accountability to the people of the province that supports the university to offer higher learning to the people of the province that want to avail of it. If we had this autonomy and there are no checks and balances, then what is the chance that we're going to get a true ability to have everybody learn at their own pace?

The real thing here is that, while we want our people to avail of it, it's the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that deserve the transparency and accountability on how their money is being spent. We do it in every other aspect of our government, and if we're putting this kind of money into Memorial University, then there should be some checks and balances because it's the people's money. It's not the other side's money. It's not this side's money. It's not the Third Party's money or the independent's. It's all of ours collectively. So it's us together who have to make sure that it's the transparency and accountability on how their money is being spent.

At the end of the day, government is responsible for MUN and therefore should continually hold the administration accountable on running a successful university on behalf of the people of the province. Our fallen soldiers that are memorialized with this great institute need to be shown the respect and pride that our

ancestors deserve for creating this great life that we all enjoy in the most beautiful place on earth, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Seeing no other speakers, if the minister speaks now he'll close the debate.

The hon. the Minister of Education.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Thank you to everybody who has contributed today. It's great to see such broad support. It's interesting, the debate between autonomy and independence is one that we've had internally, we've had with MUNFA and we've had with MUN.

To answer some of the questions upfront, the selection of the names for teaching representatives would come from the faculty association themselves. I have asked them, through MUNFA, to provide a few names. They will come out of the LGIC allocation. It's important that we do keep an LGIC allocation, as without that MUN runs the risk of losing its status as a government reporting entity and under those circumstances accountability to this House would disappear.

The issues that have been raised, I think, are ones that we will take and have fed into the bigger rewrite of MUN for later.

In terms of this particular amendment, it's very straightforward: teaching staff from Memorial or its affiliated colleges would be eligible and have that prohibition removed.

So with that final comment, Speaker, I'll take my seat and be happy to deal with questions in Committee.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 39 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 (Barnes): A bill, An Act to Amend the Memorial University Act. (Bill 39)

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

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

L. DEMPSTER: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill "An Act to Amend the Memorial University Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 39)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I move that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 39.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against?

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 39, An Act to Amend the Memorial University Act.

A bill, "An Act to Amend the Memorial University Act." (Bill 39)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Chair.

Hopefully, I'm in order here in this part.

As we noted, one of the key points that we emphasize, that we brought up here, is the whole motion of what collegial governance is and that it can't be restrictive, it's got to be inclusive. It's also got to be more than just simply appointing a token individual to the Board of Regents. It's got to allow for that growth of collegial governance.

One of the things that is clear there, Chair, is with regard to the notion of teaching staff. So with that in mind, I'd like to move an amendment, seconded by the Member for Labrador West.

I move the following amendment: That subsection 31(3) of the bill be amended by removing the word “teaching” and that subsection 32(2)(b) of the bill be amended by removing the word “teaching.”

Moved by me and seconded by the Member for Labrador West.

CHAIR: Order, please!

We'll just take a few minutes. I ask the Members to stay in their places until we clarify this amendment.

Order, please!

This House is going to recess so we can take a look at the proposed amendment to see if it's in order.

Recess

CHAIR: Order, please!

The amendment was ruled not in order so we're going back to clause 1.

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 12 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 12 inclusive carry?

The Chair is recognizing the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: Round two; let's try this again.

CLERK: So what clause do you (inaudible)?

J. DINN: I got clause 3.

I move –

CHAIR: Order, please!

CLERK: Clause 2.

CHAIR: Shall clause 2 carry?

The Chair is recognizing the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: Chair, I move the following amendment: That clause 3(2) of the bill be amended at the proposed subsection 31(3) by deleting the word “teaching.”

This is seconded by the Member for Labrador West.

I have already spoken prematurely on this, but nevertheless it comes to the realizing of the need to broaden the definition.

CHAIR: Thank you.

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: Clause 3.

CHAIR: Shall clause 3 carry?

The Chair is recognizing the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: Third time is a charm. I'll try this again, because the next one is on four.

Chair, I move the following amendment: That clause 3(2) of the bill be amended at

the proposed subsection 31(3) by deleting the word “teaching.”

It is moved by me; seconded by the Member for Labrador West.

CHAIR: Thank you.

This House will now recess so we can determine whether the amendment is in order.

Recess

CHAIR: Are the House Leaders ready?

Thank you.

After reviewing the amendment, it is said to be in order.

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

J. DINN: I’ll be brief, Chair.

It comes down to this: teaching staff is restrictive. There are certainly members of MUNFA who are in administration, who are researchers, who work in other roles that would be potentially denied the opportunity to sit on the Board of Regents as a result of this.

Maybe this is a case of splitting hairs, but considering that language is all important in a piece of legislation that we’ve gone through, in numerous pieces of legislation changing language to gender neutral, I think we recognize the importance of language and what it means and how it is interpreted in a piece of legislation.

So with that in mind, removing “teaching” actually allows for a broader interpretation, certainly all the members of the MUNFA who are not necessarily in teaching roles but are also performing valuable services in the working of the institution. For that reason, I ask for people’s support, Member’s support in this amendment. It’s a small but important amendment.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Education.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

In the interest of brevity and clarity, this is beyond the intent of our discussions with various stakeholders. It’s not something we have looked at, something that would set a precedent and it could be included in a further discussion. This, however, was the substance of the specific request. So, at this stage, owing to a lack of consultation, at least on that score, I would vote against this.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Shall the amendment carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

CHAIR: The amendment is defeated.

On motion, amendment defeated.

CHAIR: Shall clause 3 carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried,

On motion, clause 3 carried.

CLERK: Clause 4.

CHAIR: Shall clause 4 carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried,

On motion, clause 4 carried.

CLERK: Clause 5.

CHAIR: Shall clause 5 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried,

On motion, clause 5 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 6 though 12 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 6 though 12 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 6 though 12 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 Memorial University 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, that the Committee report having passed the bill without amendment, carried.

CHAIR: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Chair, I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 39.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 39.

Is it the pleasure of the Committee 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 39 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 39 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

S. CROCKER: Now.

SPEAKER: 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 Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Speaker, I move that this House do now stand in recess.

SPEAKER: This House do stand recessed until 2 p.m.

Recess

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please! Before we begin, in the Speaker's gallery today, I would like to welcome Steve Crewe,

mayor of Hermitage-Sandyville, and Verna Anderson, who are visiting us this afternoon for a Member's statement.

Welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Also in the public gallery, welcome to the Killick Trefoil Guild, Dianne Batten and Jeanette Snelgrove, who are also joining us for a Member's statement this afternoon.

Welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: We also have a new Page joining us today. I would like to welcome Ericka Padua-Sanchez to the House of Assembly this afternoon. Ericka is from the Philippines and is completing her master's program in political science at Memorial University.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Today, we'll hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Terra Nova, Topsail - Paradise, Labrador West, Baie Verte - Green Bay, Bonavista, and Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune with leave.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to acknowledge a project built in rural Newfoundland to empower youth through cycling adventures: the adventure biking project.

The focus of this project is leadership, personal growth and active living outdoors. The areas of Eastport and Glovertown, in the beautiful District of Terra Nova, is a perfect place for this project. Youth involvement is one of the keys to its success.

Youth biking programs in this area, like the Sprockids, focuses on safe riding. The program has grown to include winter biking for all ages, night riding, an adventure bike program for elementary kids, which consist of backpacking 101: ride, pack, cook and eat.

Recently, a group of teens graduated through the adventure biking project and they became the homegrown leaders that will guide the next generation of riders in Glovertown and Eastport.

A maintenance program set-up by student mechanics is a new addition this year, offering tune-ups and bike checks at the school. Active living and youth engagement are the keys for a healthy future.

Please join me in congratulation the adventure biking project, Mr. Poole and all of the student leaders.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Today, I recognize and congratulate a group of ladies who are not only great but also are a very community-minded group.

The Killick Trefoil Guild is a group of Guiding ladies who have been active since October, 2003, and was formed when they decided they were ready to go on to Guiding's next stage, which was Trefoil Guilds.

The guild includes 17 ladies from Paradise to Seal Cove, 10 are part of the original group, ranging in ages from 50 to 75. They meet every month with the emphasis on service, fellowship and fun. They are very active in outreach, where you will find them making and filling bags for women's shelters, Choices for Youth, assisting with

The Gathering Place, food banks, Salvation Army, preparing meals at the Ronald McDonald House or visiting senior's homes to sing and share a lunch with the residents.

They continue to be active with Guiding groups in the area and I thank them for the huge contribution to the district through their dedication to community values.

Mr. Speaker, I wish them continued success.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, I rise today to thank the committee and volunteers for the immense amount of planning that they have been doing in the past few weeks for the Come Home to Wabush week.

From July 22 to July 29, the committee has planned a jam-packed schedule of events for everyone to enjoy. The events range from a Jean Lake beach day, pet parade, teen talent show, community artisan market, many local bands and an art wander show which will be showcased around Jean Lake.

There have been many people who have contributed to the community that is there today, I take pride in our history and a Come Home Year is the perfect way to remember and celebrate them. I want to thank each member of the committee for their hard work and determination to continue planning despite the challenges we've faced with COVID over the past few years.

For those who are travelling, I hope that when you arrive home this summer, you rekindle old friendships, make new ones and enjoy your time in Labrador because we look forward to seeing you.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in welcoming the former residents back home to Labrador, back home to Wabush.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay.

B. WARR: Thank you, Speaker.

Today, I rise in this hon. House to recognize a 16-year-old resident of Springdale, Zoey Tizzard. Recently, Zoey participated in the Exploits Rotary Club speak off for Adventure in Citizenship Program winning first place for her essay about why she's so proud to be a Canadian. During the month of May, Zoey will travel to Ottawa for five days for winning first place in the Adventure Citizenship Program.

Zoey also claimed first place at the Springdale Lions Club zone speak off, first place in the Lions Club International District N3 Zone 4 speak off in Botwood and second place in the provincial Lions Club speak off in Corner Brook on April 29.

Zoey is a level II student at Indian River Academy, president of the School Leadership Program, president of the student council, emcees most school assemblies and the Silver Gliders Ice Shows. She tutors, volunteers and participates at the annual Kiwanis Festivals, always placing first or second and has always been called back to play at the Stars of the Festival.

I ask my hon. Members to join me in congratulating Zoey on her many speak off awards and wish her continued success as she travels to Ottawa.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Speaker.

Mrs. Rosalind Coleridge of Trinity who was born on August 24, 1936, sadly passed away in late 2022. Rosaline was born in Trouty, Trinity Bay, and raised during the Great Depression and Second World War. After meeting Boyd Coleridge, she moved to Trinity. They operated a B & B for over 20 years meeting lots of people and capturing many stories and friendships.

Rosalind was both well spoken and well written, publishing a wonderful book in 2009 entitled: *Sufficiently Blessed: Growing Up In Trouty*. She also had an extensive love of poetry.

The book portrayed a very active Rosalind Janes growing up in Trouty as she always dreamt of writing a book. She did so splendidly, capturing the hardships and memories of her youth. Rosalind was also one who freely voiced her opinions writing. It is very sad today to think that a Newfoundlander, with fish in abundance and being raised on this commodity, is no longer allowed to catch one fish outside the recreational fishery. She knew it ought to be different.

I ask the Members of the 50th House of Assembly to join me in celebrating the life of Rosalind Coleridge, who was a passionate advocate for social justice and our beautiful province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Fortune bay - Cape La Hune with leave.

Does the Member have leave?

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

SPEAKER: Leave is granted.

The hon. the Member for Fortune bay - Cape La Hune.

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last Sunday evening, an example of community and regional spirit was on display in Harbour Breton. I received a call from Steve Crewe, mayor of Hermitage-Sandyville, that there was a fire in Harbour Breton, it is not a good situation and residents are being evacuated from their homes.

Mayor Crewe contacted surrounding community fire departments as a support to the Town of Harbour Breton and there was a tremendous response. I immediately called Deputy Mayor Roy Drake of Harbour Breton and he was on site helping the fire department. I kept in contact with him and also with Mayor Lloyd Blake and Councillor Loretta Abbott, who is also a nurse practitioner, and others. They were at the Lions Club helping supervise and helping those evacuated from their homes and needing help. After extensive work, the fire was out.

A sincere thank you to the fire departments of Harbour Breton, the firettes, Hermitage-Sandyville, Conne River, Milltown-Head of Bay d'Espoir, St. Albans, St. Jacques-Cooib's Cove and others that were on call, to the businesses in the community that provided rooms to stay and food, and all others who helped in any way.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members to join me saying a job well done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Labrador Affairs.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, our government is making important investments in *Budget 2023*

through the new Department of Labrador Affairs.

Safety is a priority for winter travel in Labrador; \$3.3 million has been allocated to enhance snowmobile travel for isolated Labrador communities and we are working with service providers to replace or repair grooming machines, garages and emergency shelters, and to purchase trail markers and signage.

Participation in sports promotes active living and builds character, particularly among youth. More than \$800,000 has been allocated for the Labrador Sport Travel Subsidy, which funds travel support for Labrador athletes aged 18 and under, Special Olympians, sport organizations and Labrador school sports teams. With an increase of \$100,000 in *Budget 2023*, this fund also supports participation in provincial competitions, development camps, Indigenous games and junior varsity sports.

Responsibility for medical transportation assistance programs was transferred to the newly created Department of Labrador Affairs effected April 1. We are currently reviewing these programs to improve medical transportation assistance and ensure they operate as effectively as possible. A \$1 million allocation in *Budget 2023* will assist with implementing program improvements.

Speaker, *Budget 2023* delivered a range of investments across many departments that benefit Labradorians and all residents of the province. I am pleased to be able to highlight some of the initiatives that are administered by Labrador Affairs.

We listened and we are responding.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement.

Speaker, I rise today to recognize travel programs for the people of Labrador and in the case of the Medical Transportation Assistance Program, MTAP, for the province as a whole. Additional funding to enhance snowmobile travel for isolated communities is indeed welcomed news. Additional funding for athletes from Labrador to participate in provincial competitions, development camps, Indigenous games and junior varsity sports is also good news for the region. Although additional funding for the Medical Transportation Assistance Program is a step in the right direction, the minister will certainly have her hands full with these programs, which are new to her department.

The Opposition continues to hear heartbreaking stories from families that have to travel for health care from all over this province. As health care continues to erode in this province, MTAP will be more and more important going forward.

We look forward to hearing the minister's plan for a complete overhaul of these programs to ensure that community groups, churches, not for profits and others, don't have to reach into their pockets to cover the cost for medical transportation in this province.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. It's encouraging to hear talk of investment in Labrador. Our snowmobile trails are our highway and they deserve

proper investment. It's disheartening when government still refuses to address critical Labrador issues such as exorbitant food prices, lack of housing, travel prohibiting airline costs, harmful decisions impacting students' education, removal of the Labrador Affairs office in Labrador West and no MTAP office in Labrador.

Please invest in Labradorians' quality of life.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Are there any further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

D. BRAZIL: We recently learned that Grieg salmon are now going to be trucked from the Burin Peninsula to be processed in Bay de Verde. This announcement came as a shock to the region. The people of St. Lawrence feel deceived and are demanding answers.

Premier, what are you going to do about this situation?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, we incredibly value the aquaculture industry in the province, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to work with that region to ensure they're supported. This was a decision between two businesses, Mr. Speaker. We don't have a role to play with respect to that business decision, but we will be there to support the people of St. Lawrence.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

I remind the Premier that it was his administration that supported this company to do work in this particular area to ensure that employment was available to the residents of that area, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker, this new is devastating to the local workers in the communities along the Burin Peninsula who were given a false sense of hope that Grieg salmon would be processed in St. Lawrence. The Liberals have said nothing about this.

Premier, what do you say to these residents?

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

E. LOVELESS: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question.

Aquaculture, I know how valuable it is, I have it in my district and it's certainly no different than the Burin Peninsula, but as the Premier has said, this is a transaction that occurred between two companies. I don't sit with either company, but I do sit with the aquaculture industry. We'll be there to support as we did in the past and we'll do it now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

I remind the minister that, again, they invested money in this company to do work in a particular region. The company now has moved somewhere else, I suspect to save money for the company, not for the

taxpayers or not for the residents of that area, Mr. Speaker.

The Liberals were quick to make an announcement but have since gone quiet. The residents feel let down by Grieg and by the Liberal government.

Premier, what do you say to these residents?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I previously stated, we'll be there to help them, Mr. Speaker. The company is still doing work on the Burin Peninsula. It's just that this portion of their work is being transferred, as I understand, still within the boundaries of Newfoundland and Labrador.

That does nothing, I know, to help the residents of St. Lawrence. We will be there to help them, but they are still doing work on the Burin Peninsula. I'm sure the Member from Marystown appreciates that, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's again false promises to the people of the Burin Peninsula being let down again, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: Another day and boats are still tied up.

Premier, the people of our province need action now to save the crab fishery.

Will you convene an urgent meeting with the FFAW and ASP immediately?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As we have already stated day after day in this House, this is fundamentally a market issue, Mr. Speaker. I don't control the economics. I have asked the Member opposite does he expect that we subsidize the harvesters or subsidize the price of crab or subsidize the processors, Mr. Speaker.

What we have done and what the Minister of Fisheries has done is offered an opportunity for both sides to get together and communicate, Mr. Speaker. As the minister said yesterday in this House, they got together on Friday and they thought a deal was reached; unfortunately, it fell apart.

I can say that we expect that the two sides get together. We will offer a venue, we will even provide the food and the Mary Brown's if you want, if the two sides will get together and try to hammer this out, Mr. Speaker.

I don't control the economics and I don't think that a Conservative Member would want me to interfere in the economics of a marketplace, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, we're not asking the Premier or that government to take sides; what we're asking him is to show leadership here and take a lead to ensure a valuable industry in this province still stays viable.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: Speaker, as long as parties are not talking, we're never going to get a deal. The Premier's hands-off attitude is contributing to the stalemate in the fishery.

Why is he refusing to get personally involved?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I'll reiterate again, I have spoken with both sides. I have full confidence; the utmost confidence; all confidence in the Minister of Fisheries from this (inaudible).

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. FUREY: I met with both sides myself, Mr. Speaker. I am open to meeting again; however, this is between two separate parties. This is essentially a labour dispute. Both sides have to get together, we'll provide a venue, we'll provide again the food and we'll provide the time. Both sides have to get together. Both sides agreed to a process going in; both sides now need to agree to a new process, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

We respect the fact that the minister has taken a lead in this in trying to come up with some solution here, but it is up to the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador to show leadership and take a lead in making sure that this industry still flourishes in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The cost of living is soaring, plant workers are running out of employment insurance, boats are tied up and businesses are starting to suffer.

Once again: Why is the Premier refusing to personally get involved?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I'll say again, I have been involved. I have talked to both sides and, once again, I have full confidence in my minister to facilitate discussions between the two sides, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. FUREY: The minister has done a great job and has spoken with them each and every day. That is what a good minister does; that is what someone who has confidence in the minister will allow them to do, to be engaged, to be empowered and to lead the discussions appropriately within their portfolio, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

We know what a good minister will do. We want to know what a good Premier should do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: Speaker, according to media reports, an eight-year-old boy from Howley has not been to school in weeks because there's no student assistant to accompany him on his school bus.

Speaker, apparently the local MHA has provided no assistance.

Can the minister update this House on efforts to get this child back in the classroom?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the local MHA, I am happy to report that we've worked with the Department of Education under serious (inaudible) and I've

also spoken with the parent impacted, Mr. Speaker, and we're working towards a solution. As I understand it, there has been a solution put forward and this student will be back in school.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: I'm not always a fan of the media but I guess the media did their job this time. They shamed the Premier into coming out and doing his job as an MHA. So I'd say, if it's not solved, they're working on a solution. It's not solved, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker, the lack of online option means that this child is falling further and further behind. The minister has dismissed staff shortages in the education system and most recently teachers in Labrador.

Is he aware of the student assistant challenges?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

The case in point has been resolved, as the Premier pointed out, after his intervention and ours. The school district has looked into it and there was a failure of communication as to the fact that this child was not attending school in an appropriate fashion. As soon as that was obvious, it was dealt with, Mr. Speaker. It was dealt with promptly.

Student assistants are a challenge. There's no doubt about it. However, we have this year, across the system, added extra student assistant hours over and above what was originally allocated to respond to increased demand and we'll continue to monitor it.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Speaker, this is what we say in this House over and over again. They react. There's no proactive. It's always a reaction and if it's something negative they try to react. It's not how you govern. We see it over and over again and we continue to see it here today.

Speaker, we also see children with autism turned away from child care centres and the Carter Churchill case is still fresh in everyone's mind.

Is the minister worried about the message this department is sending children and families who have children with exceptionalities?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me take an opportunity to address the ongoing preamble with respect to proactivity, Mr. Speaker. I can see why the Member opposite, and frankly the entire Opposition, is a bit confused because they're blinded by the results of the proactive strategies of this government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. FUREY: Let me tell you some of those results, Mr. Speaker, because we have been proactive with respect to jobs, remember that famous slogan: jobs, jobs, jobs? They promised three. We gave you 25,000 in two years. We continued, Mr. Speaker, because of our proactive approach to add 11,000 new Canadians to Newfoundland and Labrador. Because of our proactive approach, Mr. Speaker, we've lowered the debt. We've decreased the –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

A. FUREY: – debt-to-GDP ratio, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

A. FUREY: We've made investments, Mr. Speaker, with respect to Come Home Year and –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

You have five more seconds, Mr. Premier.

A. FUREY: Well, I have a list that goes on, but it will occupy more than five seconds. So out of respect to you, Mr. Speaker, I'll sit down.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Speaker, this is very shameful.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

If it continues, Members will be named and will lose their speaking privileges.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Speaker, what you just witnessed there now is the most shameful thing I've ever seen.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

B. PETTEN: You have a Premier of a province getting up and going on with his rhetoric. We're blinded all right, and I can't

use the word in this House of what we're blinded with.

I'm talking about children with exceptionalities. This man, our Premier, got up and went on with his theatrics. It's shameful.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

SPEAKER: Pardon?

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

SPEAKER: Someone stand.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: When someone rises, I'll acknowledge them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

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

J. HOGAN: I'm trying to respond but there are loud noises; lots of loud noises. Do you know why there are loud noises, Speaker? Because they don't want to hear all the great things that have happened in this province under this Premier's leadership.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: It's very convenient. It's very, very convenient that when it got loud in this House is the second he stood up to say all the great things that he's accomplished since he's been Premier. What have they got to say? No response other than scream and yell so they don't have to hear. They want to plug their ears –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

J. HOGAN: They'd rather plug their ears –

SPEAKER: This is the last warning.

You have 15 more seconds.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, 15 seconds is not long enough to list all the accomplishments, but they'd rather plug their ears than listen to the truth. I think we heard that yesterday. The truth hurts. The Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure stressed it over and over: they don't like to hear good news. Well, do you know what? Go to another House because it's all good news in here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Another one auditioning for the Peter Pan cast.

I'm going to ask that question again. I don't know about anyone else in this House, but I think this is a very important question. We don't need to listen to that nonsense. That's nonsense.

Speaker, we also see children with autism turned away from child care centres and the Carter Churchill case is still fresh in everyone's mind.

Is the minister worried about the message his department is sending to the children with exceptionalities?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The children with exceptionalities are incredibly important to this province, Mr. Speaker. We understand the complexity involved in ensuring that they get the appropriate education. There is often no simple solution to every single individual student, but we endeavour to ensure that they are all looked after.

I would remind the Member opposite that case in particular that he speaks of, some of those decisions date back to unfortunately a different administration, one of a different colour, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: The same applies on this side; different administration when stuff happens. You just have to remember that when you're speaking about it.

Speaker, the sole-source procurement of a new prison has become tangled in confusion and controversy. Documents obtained through ATIPP clearly indicate the minister's expert consultant raised flags about the process saying: "We do not have any experience with less than two bidders on P3 projects"

Speaker, why does the minister blame the exploding cost increase on inflation when he was warned by his expert?

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

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The hon. Member likes to create a certainty, or uncertainty, I should say. I'm going to read out the process, so listen, it's important. A request for proposals was issued as part of an open and fair process to build a new correctional facility. Two proponents dropped out due to other commitments – not my issues – leaving only one proponent, Avalon Corrections Partners, led by Plenary Americas. External legal, financial, procurement, technical and fairness advisors – fairness advisors – are helping us ensure that the proposal is compliant with RFP requirements, meets the needs of the province and provides best value to taxpayers.

The problem here is, once again, he's scared we're going to get the project done.

SPEAKER: The minister's time is expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Speaker, the problem is he didn't listen to his experts; that's his problem. He's talking about listening.

Speaker, the minister's senior engineer also stated: This is certainly uncharted water for me. The minister was warned by not one but two experts.

Again, why did the minister ignore warnings about the sole-source process from his own officials?

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

E. LOVELESS: Mr. Speaker, let me say, it was not a sole-source process. Here we go again, false information, he likes to do it, his leader likes to do it.

To clarify, it was not a sole-source process. There were three proponents involved, one was selected and we're working through the process on that.

The main goal here is to replace the penitentiary that needs to be replaced. One of the Members over there visited the penitentiary and said it should've been built yesterday. They want to delay it, the other two, so you might want to talk, the three of you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: We didn't say anything about delaying it; not one word about delaying it. It needs to be done.

Speaker, their documents also quote the tender price results from a single bidder will be 30 per cent higher than the low tender resulting from three bidders. This confirms what we predicted.

Why is the minister now shocked with cost escalation when he was warned by his own experts?

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

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will say that it's a fair and balanced process that we're going through.

The Member wants to say about escalated costs on a project: Muskrat Falls.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: If you want to waste your QP this way, go ahead.

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Speaker, he spoke about leaders yesterday, if we had a leader there'd be a shovel in the ground today.

Speaker, we now understand the sole-sourced Liberal price is now half a billion dollars, which is 65 per cent, more than estimated. Again, this fiasco lands at the feet of the minister.

Can the minister confirm the price is now half a billion dollars? Yes or no. You never answered –

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

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

All the shovels are up in Muskrat Falls.

I say to the Member, I know you don't like it. We're going through a process; we're attempting to get this much-needed project done. Like your leader in front of you, there were many times they couldn't get it done, like the Corner Brook hospital, I think it was announced 10 times, I believe, and he might have been the minister, too. He's quirking there but he knows the difference.

We have said we're going to get this project done. We're moving forward with it. The Member across the way should be patting us on the back for what we're trying to do here, instead of playing cheap politics.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Speaker.

I had to high step a way over there across from the stuff that they have on their shovel.

Minister, again, can you confirm the price is half a million dollars over budget? Yes or no.

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

E. LOVELESS: Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, I said in the media and I say it here again today and I say to the Member I'm going to keep saying it, we're going through a process right now in terms of what our next steps will be. All I say to him, I know he loves for me to hear to say it: Stay tuned.

He wants to talk about investments and all that stuff. We're investing in a wonderful

budget and plan which he's going to vote against, every one of those.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, in 2017, the Auditor General reviewed home support services in this province and said: to ensure seniors are provided with timely and safe home support services. Six years later, none of the AG's recommendations to this has been implemented. That's proactive. Our seniors built this province and now this Liberal government is abandoning them.

I ask the minister: Why is the care for our seniors not a priority for this government?

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

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have received a copy of the AG's report. We are reviewing it, Mr. Speaker. I do undertake to ensure that the recommendations that are in the report will be adhered to, but I can say to the Member opposite, we have put in place an expert committee to look at long-term care and personal care in this province, Mr. Speaker, that is something we've proactively done to ensure that seniors get the best care they can get. That the employees in this facilities are working in a facility where the working conditions are the best that they can be, Mr. Speaker.

I know I have limited time to respond. There are a number of other things that we've done for seniors including in this year's budget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: This expert committee is obviously six years and eight months too late. They should have been on this six years ago.

The Liberal government is not even monitoring to see if seniors are receiving the supports they need. This is absolutely shameful, Speaker.

How can this government sit idly by without ensuring that our seniors are receiving the home support service that they need and rightfully deserve?

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

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I know in this year's budget there was funding for home support services. In addition to the expert committee on personal care and long-term care, Mr. Speaker, we are looking at home support services and how we can improve that; how we can improve the Home First program.

We are undertaking measures within the department to ensure that the seniors, whether in their homes, in personal care or in long-term care are getting the best care that they can get in this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Speaker, there's absolutely no confidence here, we're six years late already on this. So promises are just promises.

Speaker, the AG has said that health authorities need to contact seniors in a timely manner. If seniors are not contacted issues with their home support may go undetected. The AG raised these issues six

years ago and the recommendations are critical to the safety of our seniors.

I ask the minister: When can seniors and their families expect this government to take their issues seriously?

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

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We are absolutely taking the issue seriously, which is part of the reason we put the expert panel in place to provide us with the advice on how to improve personal care and long-term care facilities. It's part of the reason, Mr. Speaker, we're looking the Home First program to ensure that it has the proper resources it needs.

One of the challenges, Mr. Speaker, in home support and the Home First program is, obviously, recruitment. It doesn't matter whether you're looking for a plumber, an electrician, a home support worker or a doctor, there are shortages across all disciplines within the workforce, not only in this province, but in every province in Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Speaker, the Government House Leader says we do not want to hear all the great things happening. Let's try this one.

The Telegram reported the story of a senior named Mary who was living on a fixed income. Mary never expected to use food banks or choose between heat and food. She said: "I never thought it would be this bad."

The Marine Atlantic and carbon tax increases will only push her grocery bill higher.

How much higher will the Liberals' decisions push Mary's grocery bill?

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

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

I did read the article in the paper and we have been following up. One of the things I just wanted to make sure the House knows, and certainly those listening, is that our seniors in the province are receiving both federal incomes supports as well as provincial supports, that averages around \$2,000 a month. So that's just a baseline.

We're working through our budget to make sure that we can supplement that through other programs, other services and that if an individual is in the need that was described, then our department will work with that individual to meet those needs.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Speaker, there are lots of Marys out there; lots of Marys out in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Government House Leader states that we, and by de facto all the residents in the District of Bonavista, don't want to hear all the good news in this House.

Here's another one. SeniorsNL is reporting a 20 per cent increase in calls to their office – more than Mary – largely from low-income seniors trying to make ends meet.

Food First NL says the cost of living will – quote – push lots of people deeper into food insecurity. One in four children live in food-insecure homes.

What are the seniors and children in communities without food banks supposed to do?

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

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

As I think all Members know, we are, in this province and throughout the country and really the world, experiencing a lot of pressures in terms of the cost of living. Our department, along with the Department of Finance and others, are addressing those issues as they present themselves.

We've increased our budgets, we've looked at poverty reduction strategies and we've come at it from a wellness approach so that we can make sure we deal with all the issues at one time for the community at large. We're working with our food banks; we were working with Food First NL to make sure that we know that the individuals concerned are getting supported as we can do that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

Right now seniors in my district and in the rest of Labrador who require Level 1 or Level 2 personal care are forced to leave their communities and reside down in Mary's Harbour or on the Northern Peninsula; 600-plus-plus-plus kilometres away. Private operators have not filled the large Labrador gaps, Speaker.

Families in the rest of Labrador have to travel great distances at crushing expenses to support their loved ones in care; people in my district can't afford that. All seniors in Labrador deserve to receive the health care

they need without being cut off from family supports. Human rights, mental health and quality of life are at risk for these seniors, Speaker.

I ask the minister: Will this government commit to building a publicly funded personal care home at Level 1 and Level 2 in Central Labrador?

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

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We do want to ensure that seniors throughout the province have the care that they need. We do understand that there is a shortage of personal care homes in the Member's district and in other areas of Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, the personal care homes are privately operated, and while we do want to see personal care homes in areas such as hers and in Labrador West, they are privately operated, but we are looking at options to provide incentives to allow personal care home operators to find it more attractive to build in these areas.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

It is crystal clear from the Carter Churchill ruling that teachers on the ground knew what the problem was; they voiced their professional concerns and proposed reasonable solutions but were ignored for three-plus years. Even worse, they were told not to talk to parents about their suggestions. The system ignores the experience and expertise of teachers at its peril.

I ask the Premier: What steps will his government take to ensure that the

Department of Education and the school district listen to the experience and expertise of teachers and not simply rely on the reports of district and department management personnel in making decisions?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Indeed a very good question. There are informal ways of garnering teachers' opinions, but there are also formal mechanisms. For example, I will be meeting with the NLTA executive tomorrow and that's part of a regular scheduled meeting. The NLTA is perfectly able to add anything to their agenda; happy to discuss it.

My staff meet with them on a regular basis and probably end up on the phone with them at least daily. Those channels are open, we listen and we're working together, for example, on a recruitment and retention plan, co-created. So I would argue that the Member's concerns have been addressed.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

E. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, there are many citizens on the West Coast who do not have a family doctor, which is a crisis. Emergency departments are overcrowded, many waiting up to 14 hours to be seen. There's no collaborative team in Corner Brook. Nurse practitioners can fill this void.

April 22, 2022, the former minister of Health stated in the House: We need to integrate them fully into a primary care service that makes sense and serves the people well.

I ask the minister: What is the status of these discussions with the nurse practitioners?

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

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, I will say that all of those in our nursing profession, including nurse practitioners, are very valued and provide a very valuable role to the people of this province. It is important that we get nurse practitioners into our family care clinics throughout the province, Mr. Speaker. We have eight of these clinics now announced last year; 11 more this year, Mr. Speaker. They will cover the entire province and residents throughout the province and nurse practitioners will play a vital role in these facilities, including in some cases nurse practitioner-led clinics, not only in terms of family care clinics, but in terms of other clinics in the province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

E. JOYCE: I'll just remind the minister that's not going to help the people who haven't got a doctor now until they're set up. You can't make that decision, Minister.

This government has asked the Opposition on many occasions: How can you make a difference? A clear answer for the Corner Brook-Bay of Islands area is to allow nurse practitioners to bill MCP directly. It is a concrete example of how you could make the health care system for thousands of people on the West Coast. This government can make the decision, this government can help with the doctor shortage in Western Newfoundland.

I ask the minister: Would you please immediately allow nurse practitioners to directly bill MCP to take the stress of the

residents who don't have a family doctor until the collaborative teams are set up? Please help these people.

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

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With the 11 additional family teams that we've announced this year, we are going to more than double the coverage by family teams.

Our priority in this province, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure we have enough people within the public system to provide the services that people in Newfoundland and Labrador need. Only when we get enough people in the public system can we look at incentives that allow people to operate privately, if then.

We are focused on the public system, on nurse practitioners within the Family Care Teams, on nurse practitioners within the health authorities and our hospitals, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that some of the Category B sites can operate virtually in the event that a physician is not available, for example. We need to continue to staff up nurse practitioners within the public system.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

I give notice of the following motion: That for the purpose of reviewing the Estimates of the Executive Council in Committee of the Whole House, debate shall proceed in the same manner as adopted by Committees of the House reviewing Estimates; that is, in 10-minute, question-and-answer periods.

SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: I'm glad to hear such agreement with my petition even before I get a chance to speak to it. The Minister of Tourism – this is fantastic; I'm glad to hear the support.

The residents of Noels Pond are concerned with increased ATV traffic on Wheeler's Road, a 0.8-kilometre stretch of road that runs through the community.

Wheeler's Road is mostly a dirt road and it connects two highly travelled ATV trails in the area. Residents, particularly in the summer, have their homes covered in dust and, in the spring and fall, the road turns to mud.

The road was last paved in 1976 and only 0.3 of a kilometre was paved at that time. The road is a mess and needs paving and upgrading in a desperate fashion.

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 pave Wheeler's Road to ensure the safety of its residents and ATV users.

Speaker, the Minister of Tourism certainly appreciates the fact that Newfoundland and Labrador is becoming an ATV destination, a place where people want to come and ride their ATVs across our beautiful province. This particular area is part of that trail. But one of the trails comes out on to Wheeler's Road right now and Wheeler's Road is not paved. As a result of that there's a tendency for these ATVs to whiz up and down that road as they make their way to the next intersection. It creates all kinds of dust in the summer and spring, and, of course, in the fall and winter the road becomes extremely muddy.

What the residents are concerned about – this is the same road that their young children play on. They're concerned about the traffic and they feel that if the road was paved and looked after and signage put up, then both the ATV users could use that road safely and the people who live on that particular road would feel safe in allowing their children to go out and play on that street.

Again, this particular 0.8 of a kilometre of a road is a road that's maintained by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure. So I'm calling on the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, in the millions of dollars that they've announced for road improvements, to find a way that they can actually pave that 0.8 of a kilometre.

S. COADY: Billions.

T. WAKEHAM: The Minister of Finance says billions, so that makes it even more impressive and maybe the same guarantee that we had the last time from the Minister of Finance, when it came to Cold Brook, that if the Minister of Transportation doesn't find the money, she will.

Thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation for a response.

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

The Minister of Transportation, I'll take this on his behalf. Mr. Speaker, we do, in Tourism, understand and appreciate the value that ATV tourism is bringing to the province. It is a growing industry. We have a great product here in Newfoundland and Labrador to offer, all kinds of reasons. One of them being there's a loop and we can leave Port aux Basques and go to Argentina.

So I'd be very interested to have a conversation with the Member opposite about what options might be there and even with the Trail Association to see what options might be there. If this is a piece of the trailway that we can connect better, I'd certainly be interested in having that conversation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

P. DINN: Thank you.

WHEREAS there are many hopeful mothers and couples in this province dealing with infertility issues and require medical assistance to conceive; and

WHEREAS the costs associated with our out-of-province fertility treatments, specifically in vitro fertilization, is extremely cost prohibitive; and

WHEREAS there are doctors in this province trained in in vitro fertilization and have the desire to set up an IVF clinic in the province; and

WHEREAS the province is dealing with an aging population and serious population growth challenges;

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 establish a fertility clinic within the province providing full fertility services, including IVF, for hopeful mothers and families. And in the interim provide financial assistance to access out-of-province fertility treatment and services.

Speaker, I've presented this petition many, many times in this House and still waiting. We did get government to concede to a \$5,000 program, I believe it was last March for those to travel outside. We heard back that that amount is very small in comparison to the cost associated with obtaining these services out of province. It was only last week or a couple of weeks ago during Easter I got a wonderful email from a first-time grandfather on a child. His granddaughter was born through IVF on first attempt. They said, thank God because they would no be able to afford a second or third, even with the assistance that's there.

So back in March 16, 2022, when this was announced, this \$5,000 subsidy, it was also indicated that an evaluation of the program would occur after one year to ensure it's meeting its intended objectives as well to help inform any future initiatives. We're beyond that year now. I would suggest that the evaluation would show, you know, mediocre uptake because, as I said, many people cannot come up with the extra funds to go away.

We have a province that's struggling with population growth. We're seeing a population growth as a result of some immigration, but what are we doing about our natural growth? There are so many families out there who want to conceive and have children and it's not happening under this. There are doctors here who want to set

up a clinic, who are quite capable of setting up a clinic and, from what I understand, at very little or no additional cost to residents.

I'm hoping that this evaluation will be presented and tabled in the House soon and that we will see some actual planning going forward for an IVF clinic in this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: These are the reasons for this petition:

All schools in Labrador West are dealing with massive substitute teacher shortfalls. They need more teachers, IRTs, guidance counsellors, school psychologists, support staff, maintenance workers, bus drivers and custodians.

We regularly hear about potential teachers who could fill some of the vacant positions but can't accept the jobs because they cannot find affordable housing in the region. Government assured residents it would work on existing teachers' apartments and add units to the empty first floor of the former Labrador School Board building. That work has never been carried out. Potential teachers can't take jobs as there is no affordable housing in the region.

The CSFP has an extra challenge as, unlike NLESD, it does not own housing in Labrador West. Labrador West's affordable housing shortage is a recruitment hurdle.

Maintenance on all schools has fallen behind and is leading to poor learning environments.

Therefore, we petition the House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to meet with Labrador West teachers and support staff and create a plan to address

the issues of staffing, maintenance and teacher housing in Labrador West.

Once again, Speaker, I get up to talk about this petition about the need for some communication, some dialogue and to listen to the teachers, the workers, the support staff, the parents of Labrador West when it comes to education. They're finding it very challenging; teachers are finding it very challenging right now in the situation. They spend most of their time on internal coverage, kids are missing classes and right now one of the IRTs had to close their walk-in resource room because they had to go and fill internally for another class. Now some students that require that service are without that service because they had to go do some internal coverage.

Right now, the students and the teachers in the region are at their wit's end. They are frustrated. It's bothersome that there's no one addressing the issues, no one listening to them and they just want to be able to discuss this directly with the department and find some way forward. But, right now, they're finding roadblocks and they feel like no one is actually listening to them and their concerns.

Yes, I understand my region is unique in some situations when it comes to, on one hand we're very lucky to have such a great economic engine in the province in my backyard, but sometimes that economic engine creates other issues. That's where we actually need to have some dialogue and actually discuss some ways forward and not just brush it under the rug.

Once again, Speaker, I ask that this government look at this issue, meet with the teachers of Labrador West directly, meet with the support staff, the workers, the bus drivers, the people that actually make a difference in children's lives, listen to what they have to say and come up with a plan. Because they're the ones who know because it's their backyard.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Speaker.

The residents of the Bonavista Peninsula are pleased of their majestic landscape and super pleased that Disney utilized this in their recent filming of *Peter Pan & Wendy*. The movie showcases the treasures of our district, but in order to get to these treasures, they are often subjected to very poor road conditions. Economic development for the district and the province ought not to be so negatively impacted by stretches of bad road.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to review its roadwork criteria to ensure that tourism sites on the Bonavista Peninsula paves the way with better roads for our valued tourists.

Mr. Speaker, in order for tourists to come see these majestic sights that they can see on Disney, *Peter Pan & Wendy*, they've got to travel by road, most do. In order to get to these sights, whether they are part of the Geopark UNESCO sites, they have to travel over roads which are not in great condition. Sometimes there are very short sections of road which poses the problem for tourists that can be addressed.

Just to give a few examples in the short time I have. If you came from Port Blandford to enter west, come off the ferry at Port aux Basques and you come from Port Blandford into Bunyan's Cove, into our district, Route 232, that road, as the Member for Terra Nova can attest, is terrible road. It is a terrible stretch of road and that is what visitors coming from the West Coast into our historic district will first get to encounter – that road.

If you want to see the Sea Arch in Tickle Cove, you'll have to travel over a challenging stretch of road to get there. Stories are told where, on occasion, tourists

have been known to turn around and did not get to see the Sea Arch because of the roads.

Spillars Cove: I spoke in this House on two occasions of the lady, Janey Phillips, who many, many decades ago was blown over the cliff, about 110 feet, catapulted to the beach below and survived. Many people would like to go to Cable John gulch in Spillars Cove; they also see The Chimney stack, which is part of the UNESCO Geopark. But there is a short stretch of road, less than a kilometre, that you have to pass over that is in bad shape.

So I would say to you, the Random Passage Site on Route 239 –

SPEAKER: The Member's time has expired.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

Private Members' Day

SPEAKER: I call upon the Member for Exploits to bring his private Member's resolution.

P. FORSEY: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member for Bonavista, to move the following private Member's resolution.

WHEREAS Crown Lands' enforcement of the provision of the *Lands Act* abolishing squatters' rights against the Crown has created undue hardship for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who honestly, and in good faith, have occupied and developed their lands; and

WHEREAS historical titles in Newfoundland and Labrador trace back centuries, and are

relied upon by the public but not by the Crown; and

WHEREAS people have occupied their lands for generations based on informal title, without interference from the Crown; and

WHEREAS people have strong local community support for their claims of title and face opposition from the Crown Lands Division; and

WHEREAS municipalities maintain comprehensive records of the land ownerships and are not considered by the Crown in determining title claims; and

WHEREAS applicants for the Crown lands access are frustrated by inordinately long waits of months and years for their applications to be resolved, even for land which has long been occupied; and

WHEREAS the policies and practices of the province's Crown Lands Division are impeding economic development in Newfoundland and Labrador and imposing high costs upon the public; and

WHEREAS this issue impacts potentially thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, many of whom may not yet even know it.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House urge the government to move expeditiously to bring forward legislative amendments to ensure fair reconciliation of existing claims for people seeking title to the land they have occupied in good faith for generations and which is recognized within their communities, and to take steps, in the interim, to address Crown Land actions against occupied properties in the province.

Mr. Speaker, Crown lands has been an issue for decades, we know. It certainly needs legislative changes in order to bring forward some changes to the Crown lands. I've heard from lots of people with regard to

Crown lands, from sometimes flawed applications, to the approvals, but, certainly, as of late, section 36, Adverse possession. This is what the big issue is today regarding Crown lands, section 36, Adverse possession.

I get a number of calls from people to say that I tried to sell my house, I want to move into a smaller apartment. I want to sell my house, I want to downsize, only to find that they can't sell their property because they don't own their land.

So in the first statement there it says: "... enforcement of the provisions of the Lands Act abolishing squatters' rights against the Crown has created undue hardship for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who honestly, and in good faith, have occupied and developed their lands." They believe they own their lands, they really do. They have deeds. Unfortunately, they haven't got titles from the Crown to own their lands. They've had documents. They've got deeds. They got, you know, certificates saying that they own their land but then they're impeded by the Crown Lands.

Only as of last week, on Friday, I was talking to a lady that went to get her land changed over from her husband. The will was done out to her husband to get her land done. She owned the land for 35 years, and this is the response that she got back from the Crown – and not only occupying and beautifying the lands for 35 years, she also got a note there and a legal development fee of \$1,000 is required as a result of unauthorization of occupation without benefit of title. After 35 years, she thought she owned the land and that's what she got, in addition to the fees and lawyers to try to go back to get this done. So, Speaker, it's been quite a problem for people to have this addressed.

WHEREAS historical titles in Newfoundland and Labrador trace back centuries, and are relied upon by the public but by the Crown. So those deeds are relied upon by the

public, relied upon by the lawyers, banks and that kind of stuff to transfer house to house but it's not recognized by the Crown.

This has been going back since in the early 1800s right up until now. We certainly need one Registry of Deeds probably, one registry of titles from the Crown. We know there's some work to be done prior but starting out today at least have one registry, registry of titles, so this can be documented. So moving forward that we certainly don't have this problem again. We need legislation brought in on all of that.

WHEREAS the people have occupied their lands for generations based on informal title, without interference from the Crown. Again, that's where they get the deeds and the Crown not to be instilled on them. So, probably, if the Crown brought forward – actually in the 2015 review, not only this review, I know the government has gone out now for review of Crown lands as of late January, but this review done back in 2015 when this could have been, I'm not saying all fixed up by now, but at least the process could have been started. Eight years into this now, we shouldn't be doing these battles now.

Actually, for one document, in 2015, they recommended that they issue a quick claim. A quick claim is a certificate stating that in the interest of the Crown – the issue of the claim of document would all go back to the applicant and leave out of the Crown interest. So that's another thing that they can do.

WHEREAS municipalities maintain comprehensive records of land ownerships which are not considered by the Crown in determining titles. Even the Crown doesn't consider the title of the land that's owned in the municipalities and the municipalities have records. The applicants are paying taxes on that land. After keeping the properties up, they own that land and they're paying taxes to the town. That's not

even considered for the title to be passed to them.

WHEREAS applicants for Crown lands are frustrated by the long, long waits of months and years for applications to be resolved, even for land which has long been occupied. Again, long wait times. When they're trying to get this done and trying to get their property sold, they still can't get titles from the land even though they've owned it for long times. This process can go through costly lawyer fees, wait times for years and years, and probably still not done before they get a chance to even have their houses or properties passed down to an individual or a loved one that they want to leave it to. This can take years and years to get done. So that certainly needs to be recognized.

So, Speaker, again, we've been getting lots of complaints with regard to section 36 of Crown Lands and we would like to see some action taken upon especially section 36. There are a lot of problems plaguing Crown Lands but legislation right now would be a thing. Without legislation we can sit up here and talk about the PMR all day long, we can talk about addressing Crown lands, we can come up with ideas and we can come up with options. But without legislation coming through the House of Assembly for changes to bring that up to standards, then we're not going to fix the problem with the Crown Lands right now to move this process ahead for peoples to be able to sell their properties and lay claims to their properties and get their valued document.

Another thing is that I did mention the Registry of Deeds and the price of the land. Plus, when they go back to get title for the land, which they think they're going to get title for the land, then they're stuck with current day pricing of their land value. So that needs to change as well. We need to find a solution to a price that would be adequate at that time compared to back then, because that adds to extra cost to the individuals trying to get this done, along with

the lawyer fees. Certainly then with fines of \$1,000.

The big thing would be to bring forward legislation to have the Crown lands (inaudible).

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Member's time has expired.

P. FORSEY: Thank you.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay.

B. WARR: Thank you, Speaker.

It's a pleasure for me to get up to speak to the private Member's resolution that the hon. Member for Exploits read into the House a few short minutes ago.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not here to disagree totally with his comments. I mean, I believe that legislation is an important part of the operation of this House. Legislation will continue to be amended and changed. It has been over the years and will continue as we move forward.

I just go back in my own time. I got elected to this House of Assembly in November of 2015. I recall, Mr. Speaker, that it was the first 37 of the first 50 calls, and we record every call in our office, and there were 37 of the first 50 calls that we received back in 2015 or 2016, maybe, early 2016, were Crown Land files.

Mr. Speaker, apparently they didn't get fixed or completed before the writ was dropped by the Member prior to me being elected. That's no fault of his. It's a big district, a lot of work, and we have a lot of cottages, cabins built on Crown lands. I just made a note, Mr. Speaker. I know one particular area in my district, there are 270 cottages that people have built in one area, Kippen's Ridge, on the route going between South

Brook and Robert's Arm. It's cabin country, cottage country.

Now, there are some pretty nice cottages on these Crown land plots, but I'm suggesting that \$40,000, \$50,000 per cabin, that's a lot of money, Mr. Speaker. That is a lot of money. You guys can do the math. It's millions and millions of dollars of development that has happened within our province.

I remember last evening the first thing I felt that I should do was go and speak with the Crown Lands office in Gander. I listened to my hon. colleague, the Minister of Labrador Affairs, last night in her delivery, she spoke about building relationships. Right away, I could tell that Crown lands – and that was as a new MHA – would become an issue for me in my district, especially given the issues that I had, the files that I accepted with the new position.

So I took the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to visit the Crown Lands office, both on the West Coast and in Central because I'm sort of halfway between. I remember meeting the manager in Gander, a fellow that I met for the first time and never knew the man before. I remember walking in his office and I could not see him. I could literally not see – he had his head down into his files and he had files all around his desk.

I looked at him saying: Where are you to? Anyway, up pops his head. I said: Man, that's a lot of work. His comment to me was: We were cut five people in the Central office in Gander. Prior to our Liberal government, there were cut five positions in that office. Mr. Speaker, he told me that the amount of work that he was challenged with – actually, his staff were challenged with – he was a manager and he had to take a lot of the work himself just to try and get it done. I did take the opportunity to build that relationship with him. He's been a source of information for me since.

Mr. Speaker, just if I could read into the record. It is imperative that in order for our province to continue to move forward with respect to economic development, population growth, tourism and recreation in a prudent manner, we must establish clear title to land ownership within our provincial boundaries. I think that goes without saying. Because as the Member had alluded, I get the same calls and I get the same issues as the Member for Exploits has described here today.

"We realize there are current challenges to Crown title, and our goal is to provide a clear framework for moving forward that falls within the legal duty to manage provincial Crown lands responsibly for the benefit of present and future generations" of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. "The adverse possession, or what we know as 'squatter's rights,' is one of the greatest challenges involving Crown lands. These challenges before us today, there is no one to blame..." – there isn't, Mr. Speaker, there is no one to blame – "we only have to reflect on our 500 years of settlement to realize how we have arrived at the present situation regarding land ownership.

"With the arrival of settlers, land ownership developed organically as our forefathers harvested our abundant resources, but in 2023, we are continuing to develop our province and its abundant resources, we all realize that ownership requires a much higher and definite degree of clarity. Our government is considering updating the Lands Act to achieve this objective to protect the land interests of the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador" To achieve this, we undertook an assessment of the provisions of section 36 of the *Lands Act* to determine whether changes are necessary regarding adverse possession, otherwise known as squatter's rights. "In 2015, the Provincial Government undertook a review of the **Lands Act** with a focus on assessing provisions in section 36. This section focuses on adverse possession of Crown lands – commonly referred to as

'squatter's rights.' Adverse possession against the Crown was abolished after December 31, 1976." The Member spoke to that as well. "The final report of the 2015 review recommended that the Province maintain its position on adverse possession. In addition, the report supported the Crown's ability to quit its claim to lands where the Crown is satisfied that someone else may have acquired an interest in those lands based on the criteria noted in the Act.

"The Provincial Government is currently considering three changes to the **Lands Act** to clarify adverse possession against the Crown and to protect the land interests of the people of the province. This initiative was also prompted by recommendations in the report from the Premier's Economic Recovery Team. To assist in this process of updating of the **Lands Act**, the Provincial Government engaged the public and key stakeholders for input.

"The changes being considered includes: Changing the possessory period from the current 20 continuous years immediately prior to January 1, 1977, to 10 continuous years immediately prior to January 1, 1977. No other period of possession would count in acquiring an interest in Crown lands."

Our second change, Mr. Speaker: "Setting a definitive time period within which persons making claims to Crown lands based on adverse possession have to make those claims; and allowing the Crown to issue a document that does not grant title or transfer any interest, but instead declares the Crown claims no interest where the conditions of adverse possession have been met.

"As part of the review process, Government sought public and stakeholder feedback to help inform the potential amendments to the **Lands Act**. All feedback will be considered as the Provincial Government explores potential amendments."

We are fully aware, Mr. Speaker, of the gravity and importance of this issue to many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We are deeply connected to this land that we call home. It is essentially an extension of our being. We realize to that, to arrive at a fair and equitable resolution will require collaboration, co-operation and consultation with the residents and stakeholders of this province.

In January of this year, we embarked on seeking public input. We obtained input through the online questionnaire on engageNL website and we held a virtual session that garnered feedback from various organizations, including the Newfoundland and Labrador branch of the Canadian Bar Association, Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador, Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Realtors, the Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, Public legal information Association of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Association of Newfoundland Land Surveyors.

We will certainly use the results of these consultations as we move forward. We have been proactive in working to bring this important issue to a just conclusion and will continue to do so, Mr. Speaker.

With that, I'll take my seat, Mr. Speaker, and listen to the rest of the debate.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm going to give a couple of real-life examples of where people are ensnared in the current Crown lands situation a little later, but I want to throw out a little refrain that some of you may be familiar with: You

got to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em."

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Know when to walk away and know when to run.

C. PARDY: Now that's good.

I would say to you the court system beginning in June will see a lot of people and landowners, who've lived for decades upon decades in the District of Bonavista, have to go to court again taking up an objection from the Crown in order to get their land that they've lived on for generations. Thus, I'm glad to speak to the PMR today and hopefully to be able to shed a little bit of light on it.

The well-respected Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay had suggested, and talked about, this has been an issue for a long time. He says that legislation is what happens in this House. It's not at the Crown Lands offices, it is what happens in this House, the legislation, that has such a significance to the people in Newfoundland and Labrador – it's legislation.

In 2015, the *Lands Act* review was done – August, I think, in 2015 – and presented to the House. Long before my time; eight years to today. This House does legislation. It does legislation in order to make sure that people aren't adversely affected. We've had no legislation since I've been in this House regarding Crown lands and we haven't had it since 2015. That's the problem. We need some legislation in this House. I would say if we don't have legislation, we need a policy directive from the government, from the minister, in order to provide relief or a path forward to those people who are being – and borrow the term – adversely affected by not owning their home or trying to sell their home.

I'll give some examples of that: 37 out of 50 calls at the hon. Member's office. You think that would lead to, in the last eight years, some movement on Crown lands issues.

We wouldn't be here today, eight years later, standing up asking for assistance for the residents who are being taken to court by their own government. It's like something that we would watch on Robin Hood, where all of a sudden we're taking them to court, the only objection would be the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

When I say know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em, I would like for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to fold them, let that court look after the quieting of titles and not object to these people who've lived on their land for decades upon decades and generations upon generations. That's an injustice.

Not this House but the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador, in 1977, met. They met with a goal. The goal, I guess, was to be unanimous to help people out with land claims to make sure that you didn't look at whole communities in Newfoundland and Labrador and find out that there is no ownership.

On the Bonavista Peninsula, look at the community of Harcourt. Look up Harcourt on the Crown lands atlas. Nobody in Harcourt owns their land. Plate Cove West down the peninsula – nobody owns their land. It's all okay until there comes the time where it's got to sell. When it goes to sell, that's when the issues happen and that's where we are.

Let me add – which is the second time is disclosing it – in '77, when people stood in the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador to make it easier on the residents to own their land, to get ownership, here is what was said. The Liberal leader, at the time, in 1976 stated the following in *Hansard*: "But it would not be our intention, for example, if a man was continuously, whatever you call that term, Mr. Speaker, in open, notorious, exclusive possession of Crown lands for a reasonable period. I do not think that would apply. Something would be worked out." The

minister at the time, Rousseau stated: “The most important principle of this bill is that nobody is trying to do anybody out of their land.” I repeat: Nobody is trying to do anybody out of their land.

I know my time is getting short.

AN HON. MEMBER: By leave?

C. PARDY: That’s okay.

I received an email from a lady who is from New Melbourne, Trinity Bay. She left and went to law school in BC. She came home to settle her mother’s land, not in my district but over in Trinity Bay on the other side. She came to sell it. She was working at the time with the ministry of justice in the BC government. After six years, she got it settled. But she couldn’t believe what she had to go through to get the land settled, what she had. She had suggestions.

You can go to our Registry of Deeds now in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Lawyers conduct transactions on behalf of people and they send it all to the Registry of Deeds. The public thinks that because you’ve got your deeds in the Registry of Deeds, you own the land. Not a chance. You don’t own the land. Whatever is filed, they’ve got a lot of inaccuracies. There are a lot of things about what’s filed – no assurance of land. I even think the lawyers may believe it in some cases – it’s not.

We need to have a Registry of Deeds in Newfoundland and Labrador that is guaranteed to know that once it’s registered in this portfolio or this department, you own that land. We start off in 2023. Too bad we didn’t start in 2015. If we had started in 2015, we’d have thousands by now. It would take some time, but the time to start would be now.

I want to read out two – in my short time left – real examples in the District of Bonavista. The first one: Mr. and Mrs. Abbott bought land in Bloomfield in 1973 and built a house

on it. A deed of this transaction was prepared and registered at the Registry of Deeds in 1975. The Abbotts bought the additional land next door to their house in 1977, which was registered in the same year. Both 1975 and 1977 deeds had recitals of history of the land and affidavits of long possession of the land.

The Abbotts occupied the property for almost 50 years, until attempting to sell it in ’21, because of health conditions, to move closer to St. John’s. The purchaser raised the title concern about Crown lands and the land was put through a quieting. Crown Lands – our government – objected. They objected to the majority of the claim and drew a line through the man’s house. Crown Lands was prepared to cede. The land ran through the house.

Ultimately, they released enough land that he owned his house, but the land that he had purchased in ’77 was taken from him. In selling his house, he would tell you today, from Mount Pearl, Newfoundland, he lost \$50,000 as a result of that transaction in his property. That is shameful.

This one was covered by CBC, the Diamonds in Catalina. I’ve got several of them but I’m only going to have time for this one.

They built a house in ’83 on her father’s land. He had it done, registered, long possession, affidavits that the land he owned was bought by somebody else and signed. Lawyers looked after the transaction. They built a home. They lived there.

They are looking to move now to a cottage, to sell their home. When they sold their home, they had one objection. It wasn’t the Town of Trinity Bay North, it wasn’t the neighbours, it was –?

AN HON. MEMBER: The Crown.

C. PARDY: The Crown. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador objected and,

therefore, they are being brought back to court now starting in June.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll say to the hon. Member, him and some of his colleagues like to say: don't bring up the past. He's gone back to the 1970s. Good years though; 1972 was a good year because I was born in 1972 on a coastal boat in Fortune Bay.

All I'm going to say to the Member, if you want to bring up the past, then I'm going to give you some of your own medicine, but I won't because Crown lands is an important issue.

I thank the Member for Exploits for bringing up the PMR, but I have a lot of changes. I have a lot of changes to be made to the PMR so I'm going to bring those.

Again, I was minister for a short period of time in that department, but certainly –

AN HON. MEMBER: Why didn't you fix it?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER: You fixed everything else.

E. LOVELESS: Well, I could come back with a comment: over here, over there, over everywhere you could have fixed it, too.

Anyway, give me my time to speak without being heckled with unnecessary comments, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

E. LOVELESS: I know they're all excited over there; they love to hear me speak because I get them all excited.

As I was saying, I spent some time there as minister and, certainly, even from my own district, representing a rural district, a lot of issues that the Member opposite for Bonavista brought up, we face it in our districts as well. There is an attempt made in the Crown Lands Division to improve; I believe things are moving in that direction.

The current minister and his staff have made a lot of progress and even the What We Heard process, there came a lot of feedback that they will use in terms of making their decisions around this.

I'll say, just for context, in terms of how long a file can take, I know one issue that has been resolved now in my district. A gentleman that was living on that piece of land for 27 years, when they wanted proper title, it was only discovered that there were three legitimate interested parties. So you can see then why staff are really at a standstill as to where we go and it can take time. But that's giving true credit to the challenge that departments face and that particular division.

Bear with me, Mr. Speaker, because I am going to go through the PMR. I do have changes and I will table them once I am done so sit back, relax and enjoy the ride.

Existing clause 1: WHEREAS Crown Lands' enforcement of the provisions of the *Lands Act* abolishing squatters' rights against the Crown has created undue hardship for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who honestly and in good faith have occupied and developed their lands; and we recommend replacing "enforcement" with "application"; replacing, "created undue hardship" with "in some cases, resulting in challenges to the claims of."

We do not, as a division, a department, or the minister, go out and approach people on

this. We investigate title when we're asked, for purposes of sales or applications by the public, et cetera, and that can require time.

The proposed clause: WHEREAS Crown Lands' application of the provisions of the *Lands Act* abolishing squatters' rights against the Crown has in some cases resulted in challenges to the claims of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who honestly and in good faith have occupied and developed their lands.

Existing clause 2: WHEREAS historical titles in Newfoundland and Labrador trace back centuries and are relied upon by the public but not by the Crown, we recommend adding "some" before "historical titles"; recommend replacing "but not by the crown" with "but are not accepted by the Crown." Proposed clause 2: WHEREAS some historical titles in Newfoundland and Labrador trace back centuries and are relied upon by the public but are not accepted by the Crown.

Existing clause 3: WHEREAS people have occupied their lands for generations based on informal title without interference from the Crown, we recommend amending by substituting the word "interference" with "a grant."

Mr. Speaker, the Crown does not interfere with title or move to remove people from their lands where title is unclear. However, Crown Lands is attempting to find – land transactions are under increased scrutiny with purchasers insisting on good title or clear title. Many people who claim land have not occupied to the extent that they claim. That requires time sometimes, in ironing out, if you want to call them, wrinkles in the process.

Proposed clause 3: WHEREAS people have occupied their land for generations, based on informal title without a grant from the Crown.

Existing clause 4: WHEREAS people have strong local community support for their

claims of title and face opposition from the Crown Lands Division, we recommend adding "some" before "people" and replace "and face opposition only from the Crown Lands Division" with "but do not have clear title from Crown Lands."

Amending this, these are blanket statements and are not totally accurate. In assessing each individual application, we refer out to multiple agencies acknowledging the potential for land-use conflicts. Even within communities, residents experience conflict over land ownership.

Proposed clause 4: WHEREAS some people have strong local community support for their claims of title but do not have clear title from Crown Lands.

Existing clause 5: WHEREAS municipalities maintain comprehensive records of land ownership which are not considered by the Crown in determining title claims, consider removing – it is not accurate to say "municipalities maintain comprehensive records of land ownership."

Existing clause 6: WHEREAS applicants for Crown lands access are frustrated by inordinately long waits of months or years for their applications to be resolved, even for land which has long been occupied, we recommend adding "some" before "applicants." Clause 6: WHEREAS some applicants for Crown lands access are frustrated by wait times for their applications to be resolved, even for land which has long been occupied.

Existing clause 7: WHEREAS the policies and practices of the province's Crown Lands Division are impeding economic development in Newfoundland and Labrador and imposing high costs upon the public, we recommend removing Crown land as a finite and valuable resource.

Existing clause 8: WHEREAS this issue impacts potentially thousands of

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, many of whom may not yet know it, we recommend removing “many of whom may not yet know it.”

The proposed clause would be: WHEREAS this issue impacts potentially thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, we recommend adding the following clauses: WHEREAS Newfoundland and Labrador’s Crown lands are administered under the *Lands Act* and allocated as a public trust; and

WHEREAS the provincial government manages this valuable resource in a responsible manner for the continuous social and economic benefit of the province’s residents for present and future generations; and

WHEREAS the provincial government is undertaking a legislative review to clarify adverse possession against the Crown and protect the land interests of the people of the province and has engaged the public and key stakeholders for input.

Existing be it resolved clause: THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House urge the government to move expeditiously to bring forward legislation amendments to ensure fair reconciliation of existing claims for people seeking title to the land they have occupied in good faith for generations and which is recognized within their communities and to take steps, in the interim, to address Crown Lands’ actions against occupied properties in the province.

Mr. Speaker, recommend amending: Replace “move expeditiously to bring forward legislation amendments” with “conclude its legislative review on the adverse possession provision in the *Lands Act* to clarify adverse possession against the Crown; replace “ensure fair reconciliation” with “with the goal of fairly reconciling”; add “considering the province’s duty to manage and allocate Crown lands in Newfoundland and Labrador for the

continuous social and economic benefit of the province’s residents for the present and future generations.”

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

E. LOVELESS: Replace “take” with “explore.”

I’ll read the last: Therefore be it resolved that this hon. House urge the government to conclude its legislative review –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

E. LOVELESS: I know you’re listening intensely – on the adverse possession provision in the *Lands Act* to clarify adverse possession against the Crown with the goal of fairly reconciling the existing claims for people seeking title –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

E. LOVELESS: I’m just reading it out; there are a few changes there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

E. LOVELESS: I know you’re listening. You love listening.

SPEAKER: The minister’s time has expired.

I need a seconder to the proposed amendment.

E. LOVELESS: Seconded by the hon. Member for St. George’s - Humber. This is the amendment to be tabled.

SPEAKER: This House will stand recessed to give us adequate time to review the proposed amendments.

Recess

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Are the House Leaders ready?

Upon review of the proposed amendment, I rule that the amendment is not in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

T. WAKEHAM: I don't want to talk about the amendment; I don't want to spend any time pointing fingers. What I want to talk about is the people of Newfoundland and Labrador who we all represent and who are impacted by this issue that has been raised by my colleague here in this PMR.

I'd ask any one of you that sit in this House of Assembly, if it was your father or mother and their house was being sold or tried to sell their house and, all of a sudden, nobody objected in the community, had no concerns about the land issue, and the only one that raised a concern was government, was Crown Lands, would you not have a problem with that? I am sure we all would. If you're living on Stavanger Drive and all of a sudden you go to sell your house and Crown Lands says, whoa, you don't own that land; you would not be long going and rushing in to say hold on a second.

These are real cases that my colleagues have brought forward about real people that are happening right now in real time in Newfoundland and Labrador, and we need to fix it. But let me go back in my district to a whole community, the community of

Mainland, the Local Service District of Mainland.

Mainland has been in the news a lot recently, because it's been the focal point of a wind farm development. The people of Mainland, the LSD of Mainland, have raised concerns about infringement on their water supply, which I'm glad to see that their water supply and their secondary water supply is protected. There will be no developments in their water supply.

But the second part of it was the Crown land application process for wind farm development. When that process was announced and the maps came out from government – not from the company but from government – those maps showed almost the entire community of Mainland under Crown land availability for companies to bid on.

So imagine you're sitting in your house in Mainland that you've lived in for 40 years, or the business that you owned in Mainland, and all of a sudden this map comes out from a government department and it shows the land on which you have your house or the land on which you have your farm or the land on which you have your business is considered Crown lands. You probably have a deed to the land. You probably have a bill of sale for the land. You've probably had the land surveyed, but all of a sudden this map comes out and shows that this land is now available to be bid on by companies who want to develop wind farms. Can you imagine the anxiety, the frustration and the anguish that has put the people through in that tiny community, that Local Service District of Mainland?

Now, apparently, the company is not interested in the land that people's houses are on or their businesses are on or their farms are on, but that doesn't help because now we've got an element out there of whether or not the people actually own the land. So that has to be fixed. That has to be corrected and they need the reassurances

of their government to tell them it's not that there will be no land provided to windmills within your community, but that in fact the land on which you have your houses and your businesses is actually yours, that you, actually, continue to live there and if you need to sell it, we'll have a process in place that allows that to happen.

The first thing that needs to happen is, clearly, there has to be a communication with the Local Service District of Mainland to straighten out this issue about ownership and about the map that came out. Somebody from government needs to clarify that so that the community of Mainland can say and the Local Service District of Mainland can tell the people that live in the community that your land will be protected and that we will work this out. Because, right now, even though the companies many not want the land, if it's still showing as being Crown land, is it Crown land? How do we fix that? Because that is a real concern for people.

We have a company in Mainland called Green Head Growers who have started with greenhouses and have created a successful business. They want to expand; they want to have access to more Crown land to be able to expand their business. They've applied for more Crown land. Whether or not that application has now been approved, I wait and see, because what happened; there was a freeze on applicants for Crown land in the area, waiting for the process to go through with wind farm development.

The LSD of Mainland and the LSD of Three Rock Cove have now joined together and have contacted Municipal Affairs in their proposal to become a town. They want to become a town and incorporated, which is fantastic news for the community and for future development. But, again, the Local Service District is concerned. What may wind up happening is they will have no room to expand because all of the Crown land just outside their community may, in fact,

already be gobbled up or provided to some other development.

There are real concerns with Crown land. My colleagues have spoken about it and I bring it here because the community, the LSD of Mainland and all of the people that live there need reassurances from their government that they do own their land that their houses are on, their farms are on, their businesses are on. For all of these people that we've heard from today, the stories, they're real. They're happening right now. It's costing people hundreds of thousands of dollars and it doesn't have to be this way.

There is a recommendation from lawyers, I believe, already into government. To summarize it and paraphrase it, it said: The easiest temporary solution is for the government to announce that it is reviewing all files on which Crown Lands have filed objections to determine if the objections are in the public interest.

What does he mean? He goes on to say: Clear parameters for not in the public interest could be occupied property, municipally approved developments or recorded title deeds, something to indicate that it was developed in good faith and it's not a, quote, land grab. There is a need for a short-term solution for all those people that my colleagues have talked about right now coming up in court cases in Newfoundland and Labrador that needs to be fixed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: This short-term solution we don't need to spend months or years developing. It can be done now. It should be done now. We can also work on a longer term solution. But I urge the government to think about that, to think about these people that you're listening to and hearing about.

They are all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We are all part of one great community and we are very fortunate to be

able to live here and stay here. If the only people that are objecting to us occupying our land or selling our land is the sheriff of Newfoundland and Labrador, then we have a problem. Let's fix it.

We can fix it; I believe you all want to fix it. Let's get it done, Speaker.

SPEAKER (Warr): Thank you.

I'm recognizing the hon. Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

I'll get up and talk to the motion there about Crown lands. I'll start there. In Labrador West we have an interesting history with Crown lands. For many years, the majority of our land was owned by large corporations. You can go back to John C. Doyle, Nalco and Canadian Javelin buying up massive amounts of mineral lands and stuff like that. Even to this day, sometimes when you deal with the Town of Wabush or the Town of Lab City, there are little squares of land that were owned by, basically, defunct companies and whatnot.

There are issues; there is stuff like that that happens in my district. But a majority of it – like I said, it's a different beast there in Labrador West. For the most part, it was an engineered town, a company-built town, so the situation is different.

I can go back and talk about my family in Central Newfoundland, listening to my grandfather talk about the historic transfer of land in the beautiful, wonderful community of Centreville- Wareham-Trinity. That's where my grandfather chose to retire, on a piece of land that belonged to his great-grandfather. It was handed down and it was next to a piece of land that was given to his father, who was handed down from his father, who was landed down from his father. Then, somewhere along the way it got transferred through in-laws and whatnot, so we have this parcel of land.

My grandfather thought he would make a great decision of I'm going to divide up my land, one piece for each of my children. He started that in the 1990s. He was going to give a piece to my dad and a piece each to my three aunts. It got finished last year, to divide up the land amongst the children so they have a place to retire. It got finished last year because of backlogs in tracking down people and all that.

I was wondering, the way of making something like that, a piece of land that there were two houses on. They were owned by the family for, I think, we can go back to 18-something, I believe it was when great, great, great, great, great, great-grandfather Gibbons landed there.

It talks about, in the PMR too, fairness and trying to make sure that's it done in the best interest, but at the same time, most people right now, who are dealing with a lot of the issues in Crown lands when it comes to their actual homes, are seniors. It's seniors trying to straighten out things. It's seniors trying to make sure that if they do pass it down to a relative, that it's done, that they don't have to worry about it anymore. There are people in their 80s and older and they are trying to straighten out this stuff so that their family still has the family home.

I know Grandfather used to tell me about land that belonged to our Feltham side of the family up in another community. It was just so burdensome to deal with it, to try to straighten it out that he just – at his age, at the time he was telling me this, he was in his early '80s – you know what, it was just too much. He's not going to bother to deal with it. That's a piece of family land that could have helped somebody in our family. It's just too much; he's not going to deal with it.

The same thing, there was another piece of land somewhere else further down the shore that was left to our family. It got so burdensome in trying to straighten it out, trying to get the affidavits and to deal with it

and everything like that. Actually, one piece of land had the family business on it up until there was a big fire down that way and it burned the sawmill down. It was an active business up until the 1960s but there's no title – there was a title but it didn't match up.

So you have all these seniors now who are trying to deal with this and they just want fair, reasonable expectations on how the process will carry out. They want to figure out what happens. I understand the way we settled this place and our history here does play a part into it. It doesn't mean it has to hold us back. It doesn't mean it has to come out with a fine or a fairer way to do the work that needs to be done.

I understand that there are a lot of competing claims and stuff like that, but there's a way to work through this. There has to be way to work through this. There's a way to collectively – we could figure out how to work through this and make the process fairer, make it just and make sure the people that are actually physically living on there – that's the ones I worry about the most; it's the ones that actually have a house on this piece of land – to find a way for them to get their title. Make sure that these seniors are living in these houses, make sure that they can enjoy their land, but at the same time, enjoy the comfort knowing that it's theirs and that any family or anything like that, that it's left to don't have to carry on the burden of trying to straighten it out. Even more so, unfortunately, when some of these seniors pass on, it actually kind of hinders the process then even more because they're not there to vouch for or to sign those affidavits and get that work done.

So we heard a story of a lady, it took six years. It took Granddad many years to straighten out the land that he currently occupies. He wanted to leave it to my family, or to my father and his three sisters, so they have a piece of home to retire to, if they do choose to. But at the same time, he was gone away; Granddad was gone away

working in Labrador for so long, too, that it didn't help the process that he wasn't actually there and it was just great-grandfather.

So, you know, this is a thing that so many people, especially on the Island of Newfoundland, are dealing with. I spoke about Labrador West and that's a whole different situation with a very fun, interesting history. If anyone is a legislative person, like me, who thinks that it's interesting, go back and look at the debates about land and Canadian Javelin and Nalco and all that. That was a great interesting time to talk about land in the 1960s, '70s and '80s, if you're interested in that fun stuff.

At the same time, we have to move forward. We have to find a very progressive way of doing this. We have to find a way to straighten a lot of this out. It's an issue that's very important. At the same time, it's an issue important for seniors who are living in homes, like many Members have said, that they might think they own their land but they might actually not.

Here's another interesting part about it: the cost; the cost to straighten all that out. Some seniors don't even have the money for the surveys and the legwork and the lawyers and all the other stuff that has to be done to get their land. That's a cost-prohibited thing. Some seniors who might be actually living in these homes don't actually own their land and realize there might be a big cost behind trying to get this straightened out for the next generation or even for themselves, for their own peace of mind.

Once again, we talk about housing in this province, too. This is an important thing because these are seniors' houses. These are the houses that they'll live in, that they occupy, but, at the same time, there are all these underlying things and issues when it comes to their actual property that they're on. So we've got to find a way to move along the process, make adjustments along

the way where we should, to find ways to actually help these people so they have fair access.

The Member, actually, in the thing: “ensure fair reconciliation.” That’s a very important statement because what it is, it’s reconciling the property that they’re on and it’s done in a fair way that you don’t find a property line drawn through the middle of your bedroom. That’s the thing that you don’t want to encounter and no senior should encounter because, in their mind, for the many generations that lived in that place, that was their home. That’s where their homestead was built and that was it. For many generations, they thought it was settled. This is where I live. This is where I put my house. In some cases, it may not be so.

So I support it and I encourage everyone to support the idea that we have to find a way forward with this issue. We’re talking about people’s homes, we’re talking about people’s piece of mind, we’re talking about the importance of housing, but also the important of seniors because, this issue right here, it is an issue that deals with them.

I encourage everyone to all find a way to move forward, find a way to settle a lot of these land issues and make sure that a senior don’t wake up with a property line through the middle of their living room.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Thank you.

I’m now recognizing the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I’m going to stand just to have a few words on this because I have a bit of history on the Crown lands and the process that’s in place.

There is one thing I want to put out and put out very clear: the staff gets a lot of concerns brought to them, a lot of time they say it’s the Crown Lands staff. It’s not the staff. It is not the staff and I’ll just give you an example.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

E. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I’ll give you an example. If an application for Crown lands comes in today, it is sent out to about 10 or 15 referral agencies. If any of those referral agencies has an issue with it, they cannot approve the application. So a lot of times when the application goes into Crown Lands, it’s the staff at Crown Lands that are the ones that say: your application was denied. But nine chance out of 10, it was denied on just a regular application, because a referral that hasn’t been sent back.

I’ll give you a good example, Mr. Speaker. A prime example is, I know a person who filed for a piece of Crown land, very small piece of Crown land, to join their land and the group that turned it down was the City of Corner Brook because it the top of it wasn’t rezoned. So everybody thought Crown Lands refused it. It’s the referral process. So I just needed to put that out there.

To give you a bit more history, I’m going back probably a long while, probably in the ’90s – the early to mid-’90s. There was a process put in place back then; the minister at the time was Ernie McLean. What it was, there was immunity for one year. People who were on Crown land had immunity to come in to get their land straightened out: one year, no penalty. It worked well.

There was an immunity given to anybody across the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador who was on a piece of Crown land, not legally; come in, let’s get it worked on. No penalty. They even gave them a reduced rate on the market value and time to pay it off. Also, what they did, Mr. Speaker, is if you already paid some leases

on the Crown land, if you wanted to buy it – another part of that program – if you paid leases, that would add to the price. That was a great move back then when Ernie McLean, the minister at the time, brought it in. I was the minister of Municipal Affairs and Crown Lands was under Municipal Affairs at the time.

I heard people here talk about development in towns. There is a policy in place in Crown Lands for any town in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador that has Crown land in their municipal boundaries, they can put a five-year freeze, not give it to anybody because they may need it for economic development. That's in place. Then you can ask for another five-year extension. That's in place for the towns.

What we're talking about here is for individuals. I just went through the same process with a person. The Division of Crown Lands, they're going by the regulations themselves. I got someone to sign an affidavit and I was the one, actually, the Commissioner for Oaths. What this lady had was this family who bought the land from the City of Corner Brook was to be divided among the four kids – there were houses there. What this lady had was a picture of what was on that land. This is not the Crown Lands staff, this is just how we need to change the policy. What was on the land was a theatre; it was a big theatre back in the day, back in the 1920s and 1930s. They're saying, well, we didn't know anybody had ownership, and there were actually buildings on it. It's not the staff's fault; it's the policy that was here in this.

Back in 2017, when Crown Lands was taken out of Municipal Affairs, it was given to the department of fisheries and agrifoods. It was taken out of Municipal Affairs. The intent back in 2015, early 2016, when we were going through, is that Crown Lands should be with Municipal Affairs because it would be dealing with municipalities. That was the intent. For some reason, at the time, I was there, whoever the powers to be,

the premier at the time, took it out and put it over with the Department of Fisheries.

What you had then, you actually had a part of the Municipal Affairs Department dealing with Crown lands and municipalities, which worked well. It worked very well. Then you took out the Crown lands and you put it in with Fisheries. That's what happened. Then part of that was because of the agricultural land, which we worked on, to get 23 per cent of land for agriculture, which was done 2017.

There was a policy driven at the time and it was going to make it easier for people, before 1955, to get their land. What happened, the policy got dropped. In 2018-2019, the policy got dropped. The policy that was going to be in place would have taken care of this. The policy didn't come forward. That's what happened.

There's a guy who was working there, who was the ADM, and he was doing a great job of it, and that was part of the policy that we were going to bring forward is to be able to find some way that people who lived on the land and they can show that I never lived there, but my father lived there back in 1920s, 1930s. There's a policy where you can walk in and say, okay, give us this information here and to make a decision. That was the intent of the policy. I understand that the government now are going to try to bring forward some policies for that.

I'll give you a good example. The reason why we need this done very, very quickly, is we're relying now on affidavits. I just got an 87-year-old lady who practically lived in the house, because they're related, signed the affidavit. They said yes, here's who lived there. They owned the land going back to 1940s. What's going to happen if the government don't soon bring in the legislation, a lot of people with that knowledge of the land and who owned the land are dying off. They're actually dying off.

They're getting older and then you won't have the history and the knowledge of it.

What you're going to find, more of the situations that we here in this House, of people who said my grandfather lived there, but because your grandfather never had something from King Charles, he never ever registered it, therefore, you have to pay for your land that you lived there and your father and your grandfather lived there for 60, 70 years. That's what's going to happen.

I know no one in this House wants that, but that is the process that is in place right now. This is why the review is one thing, but I'm going to give the government a suggestion. Go back to Ernie McLean's days. Myself and the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands discussed this at length a little while ago. Go back to Ernie McLean's bright decision where he put it across the province saying let's have one year, publicize it, send it to municipalities, if people haven't got a title to their land now, bring it forth and let's work on it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

E. JOYCE: That's the way to do it. That is the way, Mr. Speaker, that we can solve this issue.

P. LANE: Take action.

E. JOYCE: Take action.

We heard the Member for Bonavista very passionately talking about seniors up in his district. Let's not wait until they have to move out of their house before trying to sell it before saying oh, by the way, you don't own that land and you have to go through this process.

Let's be proactive. I'm urging the government: Be proactive. Bring in the legislation to make it easier for people to get the land because people are dying off, they're moving on and the history won't be there in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

This piece I was just talking about is in Corner Brook. There are only two people that I could track down to sign it. It is in Corner Brook. So imagine in rural Newfoundland where it is getting smaller, the older people, the younger people aren't there. That is my suggestion to government. Find a way that you can bring in legislation and put amnesty for a year to come in and let's work out how we can get that land signed over, turned over to the rightful owners, the people that lived there for 50 or 60 years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Speaker.

It is certainly a pleasure to get up and speak on this private Member's resolution. I just have a couple of stories. Since I got in four years ago, or close to four years ago, I cannot believe the mess that this is in. You can't blame it on the current minister; it has been going on for a long, long time. Everybody has this issue in their district. I bet you a bottom dollar that everybody has this issue in their district. So government has to sit down and take the initiative to get this ironed out.

I got an email here – I'm not going to read out all the email, but I'll try to give the brief details but it is not very brief. It started in 2012 and they purchased a piece of land from a private owner, and there is transaction evidence linking back to the original owner. He said the original owner, as an uncontested fact in the community, it was validated via affidavit in 2019 on the Crown Lands application. The purchase was done without the use of a lawyer, as has been customary method of transaction. Right or wrong, he said, that was on for years in this province.

He said I paid the tax and the taxation structure of the town for property owners within the municipality since 2012. Fast-forward to 2014, the land was excavated and he was going to start to build a house, which he thought was a prudent idea. Let the ground settle in and he's just going to jump on it and start doing it. He said, in 2015, he applied to Service NL to install a septic system, sized to accommodate to the three-bedroom residential dwelling on the property he was planning on building. He said he understood this approval to be Service NL being okay with me constructing a home here; otherwise, it would be pretty silly to determine someone from proceeding without a residential construction permit.

He said he then spoke to Crown Lands on Higgins Line. I stopped in to discuss a grant that was pursuant to – with his understanding, with the purpose of filing an application for a remote cabin in his area, which happens to be up in Cappahayden. He said I later filed this application and was granted title to that land. He later explained he heard various details and know how it came to obtain the land – explained to him that the grant pursuant to application was intended to facilitate ownership in these exact scenarios as well. As that was likely the easiest route I could take to obtaining legal, clear title for the purpose of attaining a mortgage.

Now we go to 2019. He had submitted his application, as encouraged by the Land's officer, with the optimism that it might be, at present, the easiest route for achieving the clear title. Now he goes to December 19, 2021. I was issued a notice, via registered mail, of Crown Lands identifying that Her Majesty the Queen, in right of Newfoundland and Labrador, claims to be the owner of that title, piece of land. I was given 60 days to make an application under the *Quieting of Titles Act*. I was quite taken back by this notice and subsequently elected to consult legal advice on the matter.

After several thousand dollars' worth of legal consultation was incurred, I was left with two options for ownership. Option one: Pursue the quieting of title avenue with an estimated cost of \$40,000 to \$50,000 in legal fees, with no certainty of outcome – none. No certainty it's going to happen. Option two is forfeit the land and reapply to the Crown for the hopeful opportunity to purchase the land for a second time from the Crown, at a price that the Crown deems to be acceptable. That, he said, I have no say in and hope that it goes away, which it didn't.

So it's important to note that the value would be estimated to be \$4,000. This is a piece of sentimental value in his own history of his family. He paid for it. So he paid for this already.

He said: In the town which his family had called his home for generations, this is not attractive, long-term investment, this is about continuing to call my hometown home. So then he moved forward to 2022 again, after requesting the extension for 60 days, which was granted for further legal review, he said: I've elected to take option two; I officially forfeited the land.

Now, can you believe that? He bought the land, he forfeited the land to the Crown at midnight on April 13. He said: I clicked send on my electronic Crowns application for number two on the same parcel of land. So he gave it back to them and then he filed an application for it.

On July 27 – that was this year – the letter stating that the land in question was zoned as rural conservation where residential development is not permitted, which was the justification for my Crown lands application number two to be denied. This denial came on the same piece of land that was, in 2015, deemed suitable to construct a three bedroom household. It's near laughable, to be truthful, when we get into it and we all run into it. This is our job to get it straightened out.

He said: I figured out how to apply to rezone the land with the help of the person that were in the office. He helped him greatly, he said. I'm not going to say the name, but he helped him greatly. He said: I then reached out to Crown Lands and begged them to put a pause on the application, as opposed to a formal denial, to allow me to work through the rezoning process. I was informed that denied is denied and that I can reapply when the rezoning is complete.

So at that point, he said, my tongue was getting numb from biting it so hard – and I don't blame him. He said: I elected to pretend there was a demonstration of normalcy and elected to comply with Crown Lands. He said: I wanted – I won't say the name. Let me just go down through here. He said: I will state clearly and fully transparent what I was signing up for and clearly told that I would be liable for costs associated with rezoning the land before we ever made a move. I agreed to cover the costs at the time. So he agreed to give it back to the Crown and pay the fees when it gets rezoned.

So going through that, he had to put it into paper. It cost \$1,867 for him to do that. The total fee for the invoice with rezoning the entirety of the south side heading south to be rezoned. It should be noted – no, I can't say that because of the gentleman's name. So after all that he applied it back in.

So I get an email yesterday from him. It said: Just providing you an update. I received my letter from Crown Lands approving me to buy it for \$14,100 – that he already paid for it. This will be the second time I've purchased this land. He said: I'm exhausted, demoralized and burnt out fighting this one and dealing with the government. I've never heard of a piece of land in that area for more than \$6,000. Now they're offering it to him for \$14,100. So this price, he said, is simply silly. This is absolutely shameful.

Do you have any update on the rezoning that they charged him \$1,800? So I did ask the minister, because he owned the land and paid for it and he agreed to get it rezoned, no problem, and agreed to turn it back to the Crown so he could buy it back. It's \$1,800 to do all that. I would think, and I can't say from a stroke of a pen, but to go to the department, at least if he's going to buy back his own piece of land, you could take care of the rezoning, which he did agree to do.

But think about it, he bought the land, he's paying to get it rezoned so he can buy it back. Now he's going to buy it back at \$14,100 or – and I told him yesterday, after speaking to the Member for Bonavista, he has 60 days to appeal that price on the land that they got. So he's going to look at that avenue, but that's going to cost him \$60 again.

So he's getting this invoice wondering if I could speak to it; maybe they can take care of it. It's just so demoralizing that it happens.

You get elected to come in here and change rules and regulations. I have to say, coming in here, the legislation that we've got come through, I'm going to say except for motor vehicles when we did the helmets, that was a good debate, most of the legislation we do here is weak. This is the kind of stuff we can dig in on and make it better for people.

Now, we've done some good legislation, I'm not saying it's all weak, but we've had some legislation that we're going in changing words, and you get it done. I mean, this is a piece of legislation – we're in here four years and every single Member is in here dealing with Crown land issues and we don't see the foresight to be able to bring that up and change it and get some chatter going on about it. We're all chatting about it on the side, for sure, or speaking to the minister, for sure.

Again, as the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands said, it's not the people in the office, they can only deal with it based on the rules that they're given. It's our job to change them in this House of Assembly, to make it fit for people to be able to get their right to their own land. That's the bottom line.

There was a report done in 2015. There has been nothing enacted. Now, there has to be something in there that's worth changing – has to be something.

My parents, I'm sure they have their house paid off long ago. They're living in their house – well, I'm 57 so they're in it that long – or 56, soon be 57. I'm going to say the house is over 100 years old where they're living. I'd have to wonder if they really own the house, because back 20 or 30 years ago, when you got a mortgage, the lawyers weren't involved that much to say we're going to quiet that title. They just took it and done a mortgage on it and proved that it was yours, or thought it was yours. It never went back. We really need to work on getting that in place to make this better for everybody, not only me; Members here, Members on the Liberal side, the government side, everybody has a hand in this to make this better.

Again, why can't we strike up a Committee to see where this goes, not another review? Let's get this moving and get this done so people can get their own land back, be able to put it on paper and prove that it's theirs. If they want to sell it, sell it. If not, this is where it's to.

We have to get this done. We're in here four years, let's get something done here to prove that it's something that's worthwhile, you can hang your coat on to say that we did something very successful.

Thank you, Speaker, I appreciate your time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Thank you.

I'm now recognizing the Member for Exploits who will close the debate on the PMR.

P. FORSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It certainly has been a great debate on the PMR. They were good discussions. I heard a lot of stories of people from constituents of their areas; lots of support for the PMR. It was a great one to bring in. I'd just like to thank the Members for their contribution to the PMR and their statements.

The Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay, I'd like to thank him for his comments. He agrees that there has been a lot of disputes in his district with regard to Crown land. As said, there are a lot of concerns with Crown land, especially getting applications and those land issues resolved.

I know the Member for Bonavista has some real big issues in his district. It seems like the rural part of that area has a lot of problems. I've had a lot of discussions prior to this PMR with the Member for Bonavista. I like the fact that he says: know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em. Because when you bring your case to get registered, that's when you have problems. It seems like the people would rather hold them than take it to the land registry to get it done, because that's when they have to pay a lot of money. They'd rather fold and hold, rather than continue the process of getting their land changed. We need legislation in that area to certainly get that done.

He also mentioned the Registry of Deeds, which, of course, we do need one registry of titles for Crown land. We can start now with that. In the meantime, we still have to look at the Registry of Deeds that's there to get something straightened out on that to cross over the titles. But we can start now to issue the new Crown title and in 50 years' time, hopefully, we won't be back in this situation.

The Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune seems like he didn't like the PMR. He

wanted some changes and he came with some amendments. Some of the amendments we looked at, with regard to some of the wording, it wasn't too bad. But when it got down to the BE IT RESOLVED, we want to expeditiously bring forward legislation to have this resolved, it seems like the Member didn't want to bring in legislation to have this resolved.

So that's where the problem lies. The review was done in 2015. Crown Lands, now, is doing another review or taking proposals from engageNL. They're already taking more proposals. The review was done in 2015. It wasn't adopted and now you want another review. By the time that review is done and you bring it back to the House of Assembly, again, we're still talking years. We need some legislation brought forward and we can get that straightened out and have this corrected.

The Member for Stephenville - Port au Port, he's getting the same criticisms from the constituents in his district. Not only constituents, but he's getting it from communities who are finding out that they're losing their lands altogether, creating chaos in the communities. We shouldn't be creating chaos in communities, creating chaos with constituents. We should be helping those people and making life easier for them.

The Member for Labrador West, another situation, the family thought that their land was passed down from their grandfather, thought all this was done but they find out, when they go to sell the lands, that was their grandfathers and their fathers, when they want to possess their land, it's not there to do so. They don't have the title – even though they've been on that land for decades, keeping the enhanced properties, looking after the properties, paying taxes on that properties. They've been there for years and years and years, yet the grandfather, what they thought, only with a deed and some papers had done, they thought it was theirs. So really their

grandfather didn't have it passed down to them, which is a loss to the families, loss to the people involved.

The Member for Humber - Bay of Islands talked about the application fees, for starters. He talked about how long just to get a new piece of property, new piece of land, getting the application approved on that. He talked about the long wait times involved in just to get the applications on pieces of property. I know sometimes I've asked that question just on approvals and the minister has said that they've been working with the department with regard to that and the faster approvals, but he's still getting longer wait times. He says that, because of the many departments involved, it creates a long wait times. They start with Crown Lands. They go to Service NL. They go to Transportation. They go to Municipalities. They go to Forestry. They go to many different departments and, each time, each one has to look at that application, it forces down the line.

One of them might take 30 days, somebody else might take 60 days, and then they have to go through another assessment on that. So it does take a while to get the land applications approved, but we need faster times on getting land applications approved, just that alone, because that can certainly help with our industry and help with our economy with quicker approvals of Crown lands.

The Member for Ferryland mentioned about a gentleman or an applicant in his district and he says there's a mess in his district with Crown lands issues. So there's a mess in that district as well. He's been dealing with a case now from 2012. A person wanting to buy a piece of property and, 11 years later, it's still not resolved, until that applicant pays \$14,000. After all the fees he's after paying, all the applications he's after going through, still needs \$14,000 and 11 years later. So that's not quick process at Crown Lands. That's not quick movement of getting this addressed.

Mr. Speaker, it was good to bring this PMR to the forefront here. But what we need right now, Speaker, it seems that the current legislation is not working. We need to bring in new legislation to correct the problems of Crown lands. There was a review in 2015. There are proposals in to Crown Lands; it's time to act.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

All those in favour of the resolution?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

AN HON. MEMBER: Division.

SPEAKER: Division has been called.

Call in the Members.

Division

SPEAKER: Are the House Leaders ready for the vote?

Order, please!

All those in favour of the resolution, please rise.

CLERK: David Brazil, Barry Petten, Helen Conway Ottenheimer, Paul Dinn, Lloyd Parrott, Tony Wakeham, Jeff Dwyer, Pleaman Forsey, Loyola O'Driscoll, Craig Pardy, Joedy Wall, Chris Tibbs, James Dinn, Jordan Brown, Lela Evans, Paul Lane.

SPEAKER: All those against the resolution, please rise.

CLERK: John Hogan, Lisa Dempster, John Haggie, Gerry Byrne, Bernard Davis, Tom Osborne, Siobhan Coady, Pam Parsons, Elvis Loveless, Krista Lynn Howell, Andrew Parsons, Steve Crocker, Sarah Stoodley, John Abbott, Brian Warr, Paul Pike, Sherry Gambin-Walsh, Scott Reid, Lucy Stoyles.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

CLERK: Mr. Speaker, the ayes: 16; the nays, 19.

SPEAKER: I declare the resolution defeated.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that this House do now adjourn.

SPEAKER: 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.'

This House do stand adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.