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Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Good afternoon everyone.

Before we begin, in the public gallery, I'd like to welcome Nikita Ryall and Margaret Connors. They are here this afternoon for a Member's statement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

SPEAKER: Today, we'll hear statements by the hon. the Members for the Districts of Terra Nova, Topsail - Paradise, Labrador West, Baie Verte - Green Bay, Bonavista and St. John's East - Quidi Vidi, with leave.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the lives of the Hunt family changed on May 4, 2019. After a courageous battle with cancer, their young son, Darian Hunt passed away.

Family and friends wanted to ensure Darian's memory lived on. The Hunt family, along with friends and the community, focused on supporting other families that are and continue to experience the hardships and financial burdens that childhood cancer may cause.

With the continued support of family, friends, the school and the hockey communities, fundraising began. Donations have been made in Darian's memory to various groups such as the Candlelighters, Ronald McDonald House and the Janeway oncology unit.

As well, they've managed to get 600 pairs of pyjamas and they've been donated to

oncology wards in hospitals in Toronto, Halifax and St. John's.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: During the Annual Darian Hunt U15 Hockey Tournament, the DH-11 symbol is worn proudly by all hockey players from right across this province.

Childhood cancer, like many cancer journeys, is financially challenging. The Hunt family continues to help ease some of these financial burdens to families through their fundraising efforts.

I'd like to ask the House to please stand with me and applaud Troy, Neda and Kaiya Hunt, who still, in the face of adversity, show their unwavering support and commitment to others in need.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, today I rise to recognize three young exceptional entrepreneurs, the Forsey boys: Zander, age 13; Beckham, age 12; and Lincoln, age nine, from the District of Topsail - Paradise.

It all began about 10 or 12 years ago when parents, Brad and Jaime, started a family garden. With very little knowledge of gardening, they learned as their garden grew.

It was seven years ago when the three brothers decided to have a Crazy for Carrots sale fundraiser and give the proceeds to charity. For the first 3 years, they donated their earnings to The Gathering Place and for two years after the Terry Fox Foundation. Just last year, they donated to the Hurricane Fiona efforts and

most recently, this year, to help support the family of the late Lincoln Walsh. Just this year, from the sale of carrots, they have raised nearly \$600.

Each year, the brothers design and deliver brochures to neighbors and to help promote their Crazy for Carrots fundraiser and they are always so touched by the generosity of their neighbours and people in the community.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate these young entrepreneurs who are a shining example of what community means and wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

I rise today to acknowledge Faith's Haven Animal Shelter. Faith's Haven has been a non-profit organization in Labrador West since May 2010. They are an animal shelter run entirely by volunteers. Recently, they've acquired a piece of land and are working diligently to build and open a proper shelter for the animals in Labrador West who find themselves needing help.

Charlie, a tuxedo cat, is one of those animals. He arrived at Faith's Haven Animal Shelter homeless and severely underweight. The amazing volunteers took time out of their day to make sure Charlie was eating and warm.

Dory, a mixed breed dog, is another animal that Faith's Haven had the privilege of helping. Dory arrived at the Faith's Haven pregnant and needing a safe place to have her puppies. Dory ended up having eight puppies who are now all finding themselves in forever homes. Because their current shelter does not house dogs, Dory was helped by volunteers in their own homes.

These are a few examples of the way that Faith's Haven has helped the many animals in Labrador West. I encourage all Members in this hon. House to join me in thanking Faith's Haven Animal Shelter and their many volunteers for their tireless work in Labrador West.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. WARR: Speaker, today I rise in this hon. House to recognize a remarkable individual, Dr. Todd Young, and his medical team at Main Street Medical Clinic. Team members include doctors, RNs, OHS, addictions, LPNs and administrative assistants spanning from Stephenville to Springdale to St. John's.

Equal access for equal service for equal need is a cornerstone of health care. Improved access to rural health care, seniors' health care, managing addictions and homelessness, innovation and leadership in health care delivery, recruiting and retaining health care professionals, all priorities of Dr. Todd Young.

Under the innovative leadership approach of Dr. Todd Young, Main Street Medical Clinic was the first virtual health clinic prior to COVID-19. Medicuro, a secure online service offering virtual care through website or the app, appointment time is guaranteed within 24 hours.

The addiction services offer a road to recovery through a rapid access opioid treatment program. Dr. Young travels to his satellite clinics across the Island, treating patients while building working relationships with pharmacists in their communities.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Dr. Todd Young, founder and operator of Main Street Medical Clinic in

Springdale, our very own trailblazer and virtual care and team builder extraordinaire.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Speaker.

Today, I recognize Gerald Thomas of Musgravetown, volunteer extraordinaire.

Gerald and his wife, Gertie, reside in Musgravetown, where together they raise three wonderful children: David, Angie and Jennifer. During that time, Gerald spent much of his time volunteering and giving back to his community.

Gerald was inducted as a member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Volunteer Hall of Fame in 2013. He was the founding member of the Musgravetown Fire Department in 1975 and served in all capacities there, settling currently and for the past 20 years as their fire chief.

As an emergency first aid instructor with the St. John Ambulance for the past 25 years, Gerald has also been an active presenter and lecturer in local schools on topics such as first aid and fire safety, while also continuously assisting in community special events.

Gerald is a 35-year member of the Triple Bay Eagles Ground Search and Rescue and has served seven years on the local town council, 20 years on the local school council and serves on three different communities with the Heritage United Church in Musgravetown. A volunteer extraordinaire.

I ask the Members of the 50th House of Assembly to join me in acknowledging and celebrating the volunteerism of Gerald Thomas of Musgravetown.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Does the Member have leave?

AN HON. MEMBER: By leave.

SPEAKER: Leave is granted.

The hon. the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

J. ABBOTT: Speaker, I stand to acknowledge the great work of the Chalker Place Neighbourhood Centre, and the dedication of staff and volunteers Nikita Ryall, Margaret Connors and Michelle Hutchings.

The centre is a community organization that enhances the lives of families living in social housing in my district, offering educational, social and recreational programs and activities for special occasions such as Halloween, Christmas and end of summer.

Nikita Ryall, program coordinator, shares her time between three centres. She spends countless hours ensuring residents have the resources they need to thrive and succeed.

Margaret Connors, a long-standing volunteer, began tutoring in the home of a senior and continues to volunteer educational and recreational services for children and youth at the centre.

Michelle Hutchings, a dedicated employee, spends numerous hours volunteering and participates in various programs at the centre.

This centre is instrumental in inspiring young people to be engaged, volunteer, take on leadership roles and become successful adults. I am proud to acknowledge three youth from the centre have recently received the much-coveted Fry Family Scholarship.

Speaker, I ask this House to join me in recognizing staff and volunteers at the Chalker Place Neighbourhood Centre for their continued impact and success.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you, Speaker.

I stand today to congratulate Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador and the Professional Municipal Administrators on the success of their annual conferences held this month in St. John's and Gander respectively.

These conferences are excellent opportunities to build upon our regular discussions with members of the municipal sector about priorities and opportunities for their communities.

These individuals work tirelessly every day to make our communities the best possible places to live, always striving to enrich the lives and well-being of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Discussions range from housing supports and social well-being to economic development, climate change impacts and mitigation, and collaboration and service sharing. These topics were also the focus of discussion at the Premier's Forum on Friday at the Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador conference, which encompassed rural and regional development and opportunities to continue building a sustainable future.

Our government continues to support municipalities, including a \$6-million increase over two years to Municipal Operating Grants, more than \$2 million

announced for Age-Friendly Community Grants in March 2023, and a combined \$1 million for Community Collaboration Grants and Accessible Communities Grants.

I look forward to ongoing discussions and continued work with municipal leaders as we continue to collaborate to build strong, vibrant communities.

I ask my hon. colleagues to join me in congratulating municipal leaders and staff who have received long service awards this year. Their work is recognized and very much appreciated.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Speaker, and I thank the hon. minister for an advance copy of his statement today.

We, too, in the Official Opposition want to acknowledge the work and dedication of our municipal leaders and their administrators. These individuals go above and beyond to make our municipalities the best place to call home. We applaud their efforts to make the lives of every Newfoundlander and Labradorian better each and every day.

These conferences are a great opportunity for the municipal leaders and their staff to network, learn and grow from the various sessions, personal interactions and keynote addresses that take place throughout the weekend.

Yes, government did increase support to municipalities, but many continue to face significant financial challenges, boil orders and other constraints like adequate capital works funding, that the government has failed to address since coming to office a decade ago.

We recognize those municipal leaders and administrators who received long-service awards, who have truly served tirelessly for the betterment of our communities.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

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

Our caucus also congratulates MNL, their team and staff on a successful conference, and we were pleased to join them in many of the forums and discussions throughout that weekend. We heard repeatedly from delegates about how municipalities are asked to shoulder great responsibilities, but don't always have the means or resources to fulfill them.

We, therefore, call upon this government to do more than just discuss challenges like housing, social well-being and climate change, and actually provide municipalities with the tools and resources they need to get the job done and support their communities.

Thank you.

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.

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

The premier of Quebec has been forthcoming on many occasions with details on negotiations about the Upper Churchill contract. Our own Premier has finally broken his silence.

So I ask, Speaker: Will this Liberal government commit that any deal will be fully debated in this House before ratification?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Premier.

S. COADY: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I will say that it is a positive thing that the Government of Quebec has come to Newfoundland and Labrador seeking to ensure that they have a good, solid conversation with our province regarding the Upper Churchill. This is, of course, in anticipation of 2041, which in terms of hydroelectricity, is tomorrow, not 2041.

We are having productive discussions with Quebec; we'll see where these discussions certainly lead us as a province. We think we are in a good negotiating position; we have three strong members of our team that are leading those discussions. We'll see how they go over the next few months, and see if we can find a path forward.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: My question was a simple one: Will they commit to fully debating this in the House of Assembly before ratification?

Speaker, we have one chance to get this right; our history in dealing with Quebec has not been a good one. Will the Liberal government commit that the full details of any deal will be fully released with no redactions and no exclusions?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm happy to stand up to this, and obviously any deal with Churchill Falls or Quebec is one that I think has been waited for by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians for decades now, and I don't think it's any more important to anyone than us to recognize the importance of it to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

And I can guarantee you that as this moves forward, the deliberations right now should be negotiated behind closed doors; I'm not a fan of playing cards with the cards showing to the other side, to let them know where you're trying to go. But the reality is that every Newfoundlander and Labradorian is going to want to know what this deal means and how it would be applied, and when the time comes there certainly will be an opportunity to do that.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, I think that was a partial commitment and it's good to hear. But, Speaker, will the Liberal government also commit that any deal will be referred to an independent panel of experts for robust review, assessment and analysis as recommended by Justice LeBlanc?

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

A. PARSONS: Certainly happy to take this question. Again, I think we're getting a little ahead of ourselves now; this is something that has been decades and decades in the making. I was happy, actually, to read the interview in *allNewfoundlandLabrador* this

morning talking about the good position that we happen to be in.

So we're going to continue to work towards a deal. We have tremendous opportunity here and we're going to do it in the best interests of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. That's probably the best we can say. Now, we're not going to have negotiation certainly out in front of everybody right now. That's not to the best interest of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. But I will say this, I have full faith in the people that are involved in this –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

A. PARSONS: What I will say to the heckles over there, I'm not going to take any advice from that crowd about dealing with hydroelectric projects, that's for sure.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, again, we're talking about recommendations that were made by Justice LeBlanc and all we ask for is a commitment. We didn't ask for the details of the deal at this present time. We understand there are negotiations happening. We just wanted a commitment on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, today we learned the Liberal government plans to borrow an extra \$700 million, increasing from \$1.5 billion to \$2.2 billion.

Can the minister explain?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Premier.

S. COADY: Certainly happy to explain the reason why we may borrow up to \$700 million more, Speaker. I will say that we've been very focused on ensuring effective debt management. That's what we've been doing in the last number of years, making sure that we have, for example, plans and processes in place. Our net debt is very high in this province.

The reason why we may borrow up to \$700 million more is to ensure strong and responsible liquidity, as recommended by bond rating agencies, Speaker. This is very important to make sure we have enough liquidity going forward. We have some changes to accounting standards that we need to make sure that we have that liquidity available.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, can the minister confirm how much money they are going to put into the Future Fund this year?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Premier.

S. COADY: Certainly, by the end of this fiscal year, we should have approximately \$300 million in the fund. I think, based on Public Accounts, we'll put in an additional \$129 million, if memory serves. But think of it this way, Speaker, we have \$300 million; we've earned \$4 million on that in the last six months, on the money. I think it's \$168 million roughly that we have in that fund today.

That money is earning interest. That money will be used to pay down debt in the next 10 years. Think of it as similar to a sinking fund, making sure that we're being very responsible when debt comes due that we're able to fund that debt and pay it down.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, in a briefing this morning the officials with the minister's department confirmed that their borrowing of that \$700 million extra, \$130 million of that is to put money into the Future Fund.

Can the minister confirm that they're actually borrowing to put money into the Future Fund?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Premier.

S. COADY: Well, Speaker, we are in a deficit situation here in the province. Of course, we're going to have to borrow to put money into the fund, like we borrowed to put money in sinking funds. That is a very prudent, responsible and fiscally responsible way to pay down debt into the future.

As I've said, we've earned, in the last six months, \$4 million on the monies that we currently have in the Future Fund. This is about fiscal discipline, and I know the Members opposite do not know much about fiscal discipline considering what they did with Muskrat Falls and the record deficits they had when they were in government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, there are lots of comments on the other side about Muskrat Falls and I'd only be too happy to get *Hansard* out and start quoting about how wonderful they think that Muskrat Falls is.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear

T. WAKEHAM: How does borrowing to make a contribution to a Future Fund – it's like using a credit card to open up a savings account.

How does this make sense to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who are struggling to make ends meet?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Premier.

S. COADY: Again, I certainly would not take any advice from the Member opposite when it comes to fiscal discipline, Speaker. I mean, it was the former government that got us into this trouble through Muskrat Falls and through record deficits.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

S. COADY: I'll take the advice from financial experts who are very pleased to have a Future Fund, especially considering that it will be used to pay down debt into the future. This is about financial discipline and this government, certainly, is all about that, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: We're going to borrow money at an interest rate so we can put it in a savings account to earn money at an interest rate. There are lots of people in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, if you're going to borrow \$130 million, they could certainly use some of that to help them with their everyday lives.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: This Liberal government knows how to tax. Carbon tax drives up the cost of fuel which drives up inflation. High grocery bills are driven up by the sugar tax. The minister wants to paint a rosy picture but it isn't rosy for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I ask the minister: Will you cancel these inflationary taxes and allow the people of Newfoundland a better lifestyle?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Premier.

S. COADY: Thank you for the question, Speaker.

Allow me to say to the Member opposite, I won't be schooled by him on fiscal discipline because the former Progressive Conservative government certainly didn't prove themselves as having any.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

S. COADY: I will say to the Member opposite that we have been very prudent. We have taken good financial advice.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Deputy Premier.

S. COADY: Certainly, we want to make sure that we have financial discipline but we've also invested in the people of the province, giving back over \$500 million, Speaker. But let me go back a decade ago to when the Members opposite were in government. If I go back over 10 years ago, there was over \$2.1 billion in oil royalties compared to \$1 billion today. They had a deficit of \$389 million when they were taking in that amount of money.

SPEAKER: The minister's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: That's the exact minister who said we wouldn't have a deficit by 2021; it is 2023.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Speaker, yesterday to the shock of the province, the minister of Housing said, "... we have to encourage

people who are experiencing homelessness to look at our shelters.”

Speaker, just last week the minister condemned the private shelter for horrible conditions after his department sent individuals to stay there.

How can the Premier continue to stand with this minister?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Premier.

S. COADY: I have to address the preamble, Speaker. When I go back two years ago, I said that we were on a path towards surpluses, a plan for a balanced budget. The Members opposite don't even support the balanced budget legislation, even though our net debt is comprised mostly of deficits.

So I say to the Member opposite: I won't be schooled on good financial discipline by anyone on the other side.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: We know she won't be schooled and we know she won't listen; she has proven that time and time again.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Speaker, homeless people across the street, with whom the Premier and the minister have refused to talk to, have been very clear: they do not want another unsafe shelter. The Premier's answer to homelessness made national headlines for rat feces, mould and deplorable living conditions.

Speaker, why is this Premier encouraging these individuals to go live in these conditions?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Premier.

S. COADY: Again, to the preamble, allow me to say to the Member opposite that we have been very fiscally disciplined; we've paid down and made sure that we are getting towards balanced budgets to ensure that we can eventually address the horrific debt that the former Progressive Conservative government left the people of this province.

But I will say to the Member opposite, we've been able to make record investments across our economy in things like transportation and things like housing. We've been able to give back to the people of the province over \$500 million in cost of living, including lowering our provincial gas tax by over 8 cents, Speaker.

We've been very responsible in how we're dealing with the people's money, unlike the former Progressive Conservative government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Obviously homelessness means nothing.

Speaker, the homeless people across the street, with whom the Premier and the minister have refused to go talk to, have been very clear: they do not want another unsafe shelter. The Premier's answer to homelessness made national headlines for rat feces, mould and deplorable living conditions.

Speaker, why is the Premier encouraging these individuals to go live in these conditions?

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

Happy to answer this question because I have been over and visited the individuals that are staying in tents on more than one occasion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: As have all the ministers on this side of the House.

The Member opposite knows, if he has been driving past there over the last few weeks, that the number of tents have been reduced day by day. That is because people from CSSD have been over there every day asking them what are their needs; what are they looking for; do they want shelters; where do they want shelters; and what is important to them.

They have housed day after day people who were in tents in the places that are better for them, not only with a roof over their heads to keep them warm and dry but with wraparound supports.

It is very clear that there are fewer tents there today than there were a month ago. We continue to work with people, not only there, but throughout the province that need shelters and homes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: I'll remind the minister that they have moved from the cold, windy spot down to the Colonial Building. You should probably go visit them down there.

Speaker, the tent residents that I have met with and spoken to do not want shelter. They fear violence, drugs and unsafe conditions. This was all confirmed last week to national media; yet, the minister is continuing to tell people to look to our shelters.

When is the Premier finally going to take action and replace this minister?

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

P. PIKE: I would just like to say, for the record, that I did get an opportunity – and the Member opposite was there at the time – to speak at the rally that the tent encampment people had, those individuals had. We are continuing to work with all of the individuals in our tent encampments to hopefully put them into shelters that provide wraparound services. These wraparound services will enable them to hopefully move into more permanent, supportive housing and that is the continuum that we are following.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROT: They moved from one place to another, it's obviously not working.

Speaker, first the minister said he built 750 homes, when there were really 11. The minister was going to repair 32 units in Corner Brook, which we now discover are going to be torn down. Now, in the middle of a housing crisis, he is continuing to encourage homeless people to go into unsafe and deplorable conditions.

When is the Premier finally going to show some leadership and intervene?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills.

G. BYRNE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The hon. Member speaks of the situation in Corner Brook. In a court called Dunfield Park, which is a very important social-

housing complex that has been around since the 1960s. I had an opportunity to visit Dunfield Park to examine it with the CEO of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation and the minister just this past number of days.

There was some interesting information that I was able to glean. Some of the units in that particular area have been vacant since 2007. There was an extended period of time since 2007 where nobody has been in some of those units.

I'd ask the hon. Member if he has any information that he can share with me and with the people of Corner Brook as to why in 2007 there was decay in that particular area?

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The minister's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

While the integration of the English School District was supposed to save money, which would then be invested back into the classroom, not a penny has been saved to date. The Liberal government is tracking costs.

Can the minister tell this House how much savings have been found?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

K. HOWELL: Thank you, Speaker.

As the Member referenced, we are in the process of integrating the school district into government. As we do that, we're able to identify certain efficiencies, be able to streamline services, be able to work more

collaboratively with all those who are involved in the development of our curriculum, implementation of plans for education in the province. Those things are going to take a little time. As we move forward and continue to work on the integration plan, any cost savings that have been identified will be reinvested into the school system.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Government has no cost analysis, no savings and no plan for any. In an email last week, staff of the English School District were told about rebranding for buses, uniforms and buildings.

Speaker, how much is all this going to cost?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

K. HOWELL: Speaker, as I said, we are in the process of integrating the school district into government. To this point, there have been no costs identified. The Member has referenced certain things such as uniforms or busing and those things are things that would take place in the normal sitting anyway and there would be an allocation of funds for those types of expenditures. Those things will be addressed as they roll up. As things are needed to be replaced, then we'll be implementing the new branding or any opportunities that we have to address that within the current envelope, we will certainly take advantage of that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

The email also lays out a process for new email addresses, letterhead and logos. Again, the minister has yet to save a penny in the process designed, as she just said –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

P. DINN: – to put more money into the classroom, curriculum development and education.

Speaker, aside from upheaval in the school system, will any savings be achieved through this rebranding?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

K. HOWELL: Thank you, Speaker.

One thing that we've been emphatically clear on as we move the school district into government is that front-line services, teachers and students, won't be directly impacted by any upheaval or any disturbances in their education plans. We've made concentrated efforts to do that on an appropriate timeline so as not mess with the school calendar year or to make changes in the middle of a semesterized learning. We've been very attentive to those details and ensured that the things that we've done and the changes that have been implemented won't have a direct impact on the front line and the way teachers teach.

Again, as he's mentioned, we have options for new rebranding, but those will take place over the course of time as we continue to integrate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: It is very sad, Speaker. One out of three seniors in

our province does not have enough income to meet their basic needs.

I ask the Premier: Why has his Liberal government failed our seniors?

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

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through the Health Accord, as the Member knows, a 10-year plan to transform health care in this province, we are a year and a half into that plan. We've already put a number of measures in place for seniors, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to do that each and every year as we transform health care in this province.

Free drivers' medicals; we've also; through other departments; increased the Income Supplement for seniors, Mr. Speaker; we've had a number of other issues where I can certainly guarantee we are not ignoring seniors. Whether it's joint replacement, which is predominantly seniors, of course there are people of other ages; cataracts, which is predominantly seniors, of course there are people of other ages. The long-term care and personal care review. We've done a number of initiatives focused on seniors.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Speaker, even the Seniors' Advocate has said that this government has not done enough. Our seniors cannot afford the basic necessities of life. Imagine, 60 per cent of our seniors are going without food. This is disgraceful.

Why is this Liberal government accepting this, that seniors cannot afford food or other basic necessities?

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

T. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, again, we've increased the supplement, we've eliminated the drivers' medical for seniors, we've reduced the cost of registration for motor vehicles and we've had impacts on the taxes on insurance. These are all meant to make life a little bit easier.

The issue that the Member said: seniors are ignored. Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that they're not. We have a seniors' care framework that is part of the Health Accord that we are working on rolling out. We've provided funding to MUN for geriatric training. As I said, the acute care of the elderly is another program that we are about to announce and that will be announced in the coming days.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Speaker, we are all hearing that seniors feel that they're being ignored. People who have worked so hard all their lives and now in their senior years, they expect to live a comfortable life. Yet, they cannot even afford to buy groceries, or even afford to heat their homes.

How is it possible that this Liberal government is so out of touch with the people they represent?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Premier.

S. COADY: Allow me to answer this question, Speaker; it's a very important question. Seniors are important to Newfoundland and Labrador and to all of us. That's why we've made significant investments and that's why we have a Committee on seniors within government.

But allow me to say that we've increased the Seniors' Benefit. We've increased the Income Supplement. We've increased the funding for self-managed care in the home. We've increased community care home professionals. We've increased the personal care home professionals. We've made reductions in provincial gas tax. We pay now for seniors who want to continue to drive. We pay for their medicals.

Speaker, we're putting a tremendous amount of money here. Is it enough? We always want to do more.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Mr. Speaker, we are cognizant of the impact of the delay in the start-up of the snow crab fishery this year. It is critical that we have the process ready in advance of the 2024 season.

Can the minister update the House on the status of the pricing panel deliberations?

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

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Very important question, because the answer is important as well. I think you were looking over there, but I'm now the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture, just to point that out.

L. PARROTT: (Inaudible.)

E. LOVELESS: If you want to listen, I say to the Member for Terra Nova, you'll get an answer because you said during the leadership that you've learned to listen, so I encourage you to listen.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

E. LOVELESS: Mr. Speaker, the Premier of this province recognized that it is important, that's why the Premier took it upon himself to look at the issues around the lateness of the season that happened last year. We cannot afford to let happen this year what happened last year. The Premier recognized that. He has a panel that's looking into it and we look forward to the recommendations of that moving forward in the decision-making process.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Mr. Speaker, I'd love to know what the status of the negotiations or the deliberations are. That I don't know. But I want to move on to another question.

A harvester in the District of Bonavista posted a picture of an Icelandic cod fillet for sale at a big grocery chain in the province: \$28.64 a kilogram. One cod fillet: \$28.64 per kilogram. The MSC, Marine Stewardship Council, blue label added significant value for the product.

Why don't we have this MSC label in Newfoundland and Labrador, and what has the government been doing to facilitate it?

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

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

While the harvester in Bonavista is telling him that, I'm hearing similar stories across the province. So we recognize there's a challenge there, because we have crab, we have lobster, but I've always said that cod is very important to this province. It was, and it still is, and hopefully when we see the plan next year it will be even more.

You talk about quality. I firmly believe that if you've got quality of a species, everything else will fall in place. But I recognize that

and we're pushing it; we will be in talks with the federal government, even through the Fisheries Advisory Council that represents all industry stakeholders, and that is a very important topic and we will be further discussing it in terms of making a decision on that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

Yesterday the minister spoke about hearing a residential school survivor on the radio talking about the harsh treatment he received. This individual is a constituent of mine and if the minister would speak to him, he would also tell her about how hard it is for Elders now to access life-saving medical care.

So I ask the Premier: Will he ensure that residential school survivors have quality of life, including access to timely and adequate medical care they are entitled to?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Labrador Affairs.

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

Yes, I'll reiterate again to this House that apologies that were committed to in 2017, delayed a little by COVID, I'm pleased is now going ahead. Our Premier has made a commitment that he will spend three days, most of it in the District of Torngat, and also there will be an apology in Goose Bay.

So there will be six apologies that will happen. Speaker, I was just thinking today, while we come to work and we live in a country where – other parts of the world where there's wars and things happening, and we're so fortunate to live in the best country in the world. We do have some

painful chapters, residential schooling being one.

I'm pleased that we were able to come to this place now where our Premier is moving forward on a long-standing commitment and we're going to see the apologies carried out this week.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Speaker, the painful chapters continue when Elders can't access timely medical care that can be life-saving.

When an apology comes from a high level, government to government, about great harms that have been perpetrated against children who grew up into generations of repeated trauma, there is an expectation that it will address the consequences of the harm done.

So I ask the Deputy Premier: Will she commit to addressing the ongoing intergenerational trauma caused by the legacy of residential schools and give our Elders, the survivors, their families the quality of life that they deserve?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Labrador Affairs.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

There is no question that we have a sad legacy of residential schooling. A number of constituents that I represent, myself, Speaker, I've heard the stories for more than a decade – absolutely gut wrenching. We can try to understand but we really can't. Children as young as four, five, six and seven years old, taken from their community, away from their culture, loss of language.

So, Speaker, as we have moved forward, led through my department carrying out

these apologies, very mindful that those apologies, what the text looks like, the details in each community is all led by that particular government. Today I believe, with regard to the question the Members are asking, it would be Nunatsiavut Government that have told us what they want the apologies to look like and how they look in Rigolet may be different than how (inaudible) –

SPEAKER: The minister's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

As talks over energy are progressing with Quebec's Premier Legault, Quebec's power demands are competing with Labrador's growing industrial need.

How will the minister ensure that the power needs of Labrador and the province are secured before any deals are signed?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm happy to have this question from the Member opposite. It's a conversation we've had a number of times. The good news, I think, that we need to keep in mind here is that there continues to be huge opportunity for Labrador here. We have industrial customers that continue to look for power, and that's something we're doing as well.

So, again, like everything we do, we're worried about Newfoundland and Labrador first. We'll worry about everybody else second. What I can say is that these talks continue to happen. I have tons of confidence in the teams that we have operating here, whether it's the 2041 team,

or the team within IET, the team at Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro.

Again, we know that there's a need and there's a demand. We'll continue to work towards that and the conversations will continue on.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

Labrador West lost its Green Depot in August – one of the most productive ones in the province, actually. Residents are very upset that MMSB never stepped in to prevent recycling from going into a landfill.

Is this what this province considers good environmental stewardship? What will the minister do to get this back?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am so excited that I got this question come from the hon. Member.

Effective yesterday – so very timely – we secured a permanent location in Labrador West Green Depot. That's great news. The hon. Member is correct. It is a very integral part of our recycling program right across our province; every community, we're going to try to maintain that.

The new location is planned to open December 1. I look forward to the first cans coming through there and being brought to market.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Speaker.

I give notice that I will on tomorrow introduce a bill entitled, An Act to Amend the Liquor Control Act and the Liquor Corporation Act, Bill 62.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

Are there further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to stand today and present this petition:

We, the undersigned call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to amend the *Limitations Act* to remove limitation periods for civil child abuse claims where the abuse complained to have occurred against a minor.

The above-mentioned legislative changes should be retroactive and apply regardless

of the expiry of any previous limitation period.

I know all Members on this side of the House have been standing and raising petitions and asking questions in the House of Assembly on this matter. This is a serious matter. I know I heard the Minister of Justice and Public Safety say it is before the courts, but I trust that government will really look into this and see what can be done.

As I mentioned before, and I'll mention again, if we are going through the whole process of truth and reconciliation, we must do it for all people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I think it is an important process that we need. I'm sure there are many people that were abused at a young age who never had any whereabouts, how to go about filing a claim or what to do with the trauma that they experienced – it would very difficult to do anyway.

So this is something that I think this government should look at. I think it is something that government should make a commitment that they will change because it is a part of our past that we must make reconciliation to. It is part of the past that we must say that we must take care of our youth. It is part of the past that we can say that if you were abused in any way at a young age, that we will stand up for you.

I urge the government, again, to look at this and make some commitments to it. I always hear the idea that it's before the court. Well, Mr. Speaker, the reason why it's before the court is because they are fighting for the statute of limitations to be removed. I'm confident that once the court case is done, will the government make a commitment that they would reverse the statute of limitations and remove the statute of limitations.

This is something, Mr. Speaker, that when you go through trauma, you need some closure. In order to get closure, you need government to help out.

I urge the minister that when the opportunity comes up, if it needs to be done, to bring legislation back to this House of Assembly. I'm sure you'll get unanimous support.

I trust that the government will give this serious consideration. I thank everybody on this side of the House that has been raising this issue on numerous occasions through Question Period and petitions for this. If I had more petitions, I would raise it every day possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Speaker.

Cellphone coverage throughout the District of Bonavista has deteriorated from bad to worse in the past year. In fact, it is difficult to maintain or make a call while travelling our two major routes, Routes 230 and 235.

The lack of cellphone coverage is impacting tourist accommodation ratings within the district, which runs the risk of economic loss to operators for something which is totally out of their control.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to account for the diminished services throughout the District of Bonavista and announce their plan to improve cellphone coverage throughout the district and province.

This petition comes from, as you know, the District of Bonavista and we've had Airbnb owners in the Trinity Bight area who would often get feedback and doing online surveys which attribute to their rating and their scale by saying that they could not get cellphone coverage. On a couple of them, they would say clearly that is the only thing that we had

an issue with was the cellphone coverage, everything else was perfect.

But we have seen an erosion in the cellphone coverage in the district and I think it maybe province-wide. I thought it may have been when – or if they have taken the Huawei equipment off the cellphone towers, but I think the department states that is not the case. Whatever is leading to the diminished service, I'm not sure. I don't know if it's a quick resolution but it certainly should be one that we should be engaging in to find out what improvements we can make.

Someone in the Trinity Bight area that is working will often have to drive 20 minutes to get cell reception if they had to make a critical call. When you have to drive 20 to 30 minutes from a large centre, a large tourist centre in order to get cell reception, that's not quite right.

I know that the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL on Wednesday past had stated that she welcomed her colleagues to talk about all the efforts we make in terms of bringing cell coverage across the province. I know it's a huge task. All we're asking is what are the interventions to pass and when can we expect to see service restored to what it was over a year ago?

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, this is not a petition that I haven't heard before. I think that many of us that live in rural Newfoundland and Labrador feel these concerns and we know that it is a difficult province to cover. That's just the sheer reality of it.

Just a few points that I would put out there. First of all, it's hard, given the fact that when it comes to cell service, that it is actually federally regulated. I think it's hard for the province to take on full responsibility for something that doesn't fall on us, including the financial cost of doing so.

What I can tell you is the amount that it would require to put the service where everybody expects and would like to see it, is something that I don't think that any government is prepared or able to do right now. That's just a reality. The other thing is that I don't think we can take the responsibility away from the providers themselves. They are all very well-to-do companies and we work with them to leverage funds.

But does that mean that we do not try? Of course not. So just a couple things I will toss out. The first one: I think three times in the last number of years we've done a small cell EOI submission, where we ask communities to reach out about cellular coverage. In fact, we just got some back from 2023. I have 70 communities here that have applied. It will be funded by the provider, it will be funded by provincial government and the community puts in a very small provision as well.

I was saying to the Member that I don't know if you have any communities that applied; I have a list here and now we're working on the acceptance. That's one means.

But I will say, the biggest concern that I have –

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The minister's time has expired.

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, an anti-temporary replacement worker petition for the enactment of anti-temporary replacement worker legislation.

These are the reasons for the petition:

Anti-temporary replacement worker laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; and in British Columbia since 1993; and the federal government has committed to introduce such legislation by the end of 2023.

The use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or a lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community, the local economy and the well-being of the residents.

Anti-temporary replacement worker legislation has been shown to reduce the length and divisiveness of labour disputes.

Since 2015, the right to strike has been clearly protected under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* because it helps to stabilize the power imbalances between the worker and the employer, and the use of temporary replacement workers undermines that right.

Therefore, we, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout.

Once again, I bring this on behalf of the residents of Labrador West who would like to see this. We just have to look back at Vale, D-J Composites and there are a few other ones there that we saw what happens when temporary replacement workers are brought in on site during a labour dispute.

Once again, we press the government and the Minister Responsible for Labour to look at this, to bring this legislation forward and to follow in line now that the federal government has seen that it was something that needs to be brought forward as well. They are bringing it in at the end of this

year. We should explore and try to bring it in to coincide with that legislation.

It does work and we want to make sure that there's a balance there. If the employer can use temporary replacement workers, we seen what happened in Vale, we seen what happened in D-J Composites, it creates a very divisive and nasty engagement.

We want to avoid that and make sure that there's a balance there. To make sure that no one has the upper hand and it's a fair and equal in the bargaining room.

Thank you so much, Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Speaker.

The background to this petition is as follows:

An extension was approved to the Robert E. Howlett Highway on March 25, 2014. An environmental assessment, design and engineering of this project was completed and continued residential and commercial growth has increased traffic flows to the Southern Avalon.

Therefore, we petition the House of Assembly as follows: To reinstate the approved extension of the Robert E. Howlett Highway to improve and ensure the safety of the travelling public to the Southern Avalon.

Speaker, I've done this one in the previous session for sure and I drive it every day. The amount of traffic that's on that, it's incredible. In 2014, the PC administration had that and it was left on the table by the Liberal government, the same as the school that was cancelled in 2015 by the Liberal government.

Hopefully, they get some more stuff back here. They didn't forget to cancel the rest of

the schools that were in their districts, but they did forget the one up our way.

There's an increased traffic flow in this area. It's something that should be added. It's 9.6 kilometres that they're looking for an extension. With an offshore base in Bay Bulls and another proposed one in Fermeuse, I mean it's critical for the area to get this traffic flowing and getting around the residential areas.

It's something that I hope the minister when he's looking at it in his new portfolio that he can look at this and have it in his budget for next year to have a deep look at this and go back and review it. It's certainly, like I said, for the commercial growth that we're going to see, based on the offshore, exactly what we need up our way is to get this road. The minister himself travels this road every day so he knows how important it is.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

J. ABBOTT: Speaker, I'll speak quickly to it.

The Member talks about travelling it, that we don't have it built yet, but we're getting there. We have announced it. We are funding it and you, too, will be there when we cut the ribbon.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DWYER: Finally, a photo op that we're going to share. That's awesome; that's collaboration. You're going to share a photo op with us, excellent. Thank you, I appreciate it.

SPEAKER: Your time is ticking.

J. DWYER: These are the reasons for the petition, Speaker:

The closure of the Canning Bridge in Marystown has had a devastating impact on residents, fire and emergency services and the local economy.

The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure are well aware of the poor conditions of the bridge, most recently documented in a bridge inspection report completed in January 2020, which confirmed the Canning Bridge was in poor condition.

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 immediately begin the process of replacing the Canning Bridge.

We know the process has started. The reason why I am presenting the petition again today, Speaker, is because there is a concerned citizens' group that has been formed. I've reached out to the department to see if they would meet with them. That was not given approval, but I am here today to say that they're doing their homework and they're finding out a few things that I think the department is not quite aware of yet.

I'm here today, through this petition, to not only explore, I guess, the option of the Bailey Bridge because of the concerned citizens' group, but I am here today presenting this petition because I want to ask the minister if he'll commit to a meeting with the administrators of this new group, which is a group that has grown to over 600 people, and I would attend that meeting as well.

I think it is very important that we listen to the boots on the ground and we get a better understanding of the impact that this closure is having on the people of Marystown.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. ABBOTT: Thank you, Speaker.

As the Member knows, we did have a public meeting in Marystown earlier this month. We did meet, as part of that, with the concerned citizens' group so to say we didn't meet or didn't want to meet would not be correct. As I said yesterday, once we have the work done, the analysis done on the possibility of a Bailey Bridge we will certainly want to go back to Marystown, talk to the town council, talk to concerned citizens, including the group the Member refers to, as part of that analysis.

Thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

This petition is for improved inclusion for Northern Labrador communities to participate in the Newfoundland and Labrador incentive rebate program.

We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador who urge our leaders to ensure that residents in Northern Labrador communities are included, will be given due consideration when the provincial government develops or develops in collaboration with others incentive programs such as the Oil to Electric Incentive Program and residential rebate programs such as the Residential Construction Rebate Program.

The Oil to Electric Incentive Program eligibility criteria is for – and I quote – all households in the province that are heated with fuel oil, excluding households in communities with diesel electricity generation. This single criteria excludes all

six communities in the District of Torngat Mountains.

With the extreme high prices charged to Northern Labrador residents for home heating fuel and gasoline, compared to other regions in our province, residents are now forced to try to switch to the equally extreme high-priced electricity to heat our homes.

Now, Speaker, this is a very important petition and I draw attention to: equally extreme high price. What does that mean for electricity? Nineteen cents a kilowatt hour, why would you try to switch to electricity? Because last year, to heat your house with stove oil was costing residents between \$1,000 to \$2,000. I have to say, for to heat your house \$1,000 to \$2,000 a month, that's just a month. Then when you look at the cost for a family of four, another \$1,860 just for food.

People in my district can't afford that so what they have to do is they have to choose between food and heating their house. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change spoke about \$17,000 a household could be entitled to get the insulation to switch over to these more efficient heat pumps.

So at the end of the day, Speaker, there is money out there for everybody else in the province but us. Not just the North Coast, also Southern Labrador communities are excluded from this. With the 30 years advance of climate change and the cry across the world to switch to renewable energy, why did Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro leave us high and dry?

They did not do any work at all to get us off these diesel generating stations. They left us there and now we're not eligible for \$17,000 to switch us over so our Elders will be warm, so our children will be warm. We might be able to buy a little bit more food or heat our house a little bit longer so it's not so cold in the morning when people get out

of bed and have to go to school or have to go to work.

And for our Elders, you know, we talk about reconciliation. At the end of the day, Speaker, the harms are continuing because people can't afford to have quality of life. I know my time is running out but it's so important –

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Motion 8.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Premier, that notwithstanding Standing Order 9, this House shall not adjourn at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, November 1, 2023, but shall continue to sit to conduct Government Business and if not earlier adjourned, the Speaker shall adjourn the House at midnight.

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.'

Motion carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Motion 10.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Premier, that pursuant to Standing Order 11(1) this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 2, 2023.

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.'

Motion carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Motion 7.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Leader of the Official Opposition, that in accordance with Standing Order 65, the Public Accounts Committee shall comprise the following Members: the Member for Exploits, the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's, the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay, the Member for Labrador West, the Member for St. George's - Humber, the Member for Lake Melville and the Member for Cape St. Francis.

SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Motion 6.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Premier, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act to Amend the Pension Benefits Act, 1997, Bill 61, and I further move that the said bill be now a first time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce Bill 61 and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL to introduce a bill, "An Act to Amend the Pension Benefits Act, 1997" carried. (Bill 61)

CLERK (Hawley George): A bill, An Act to Amend the Pension Benefits Act, 1997. (Bill 61)

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

J. HOGAN: Tomorrow.

SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 61 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 4.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Premier, that An Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015 No. 2, Bill 56, be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015 No. 2. (Bill 56)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015 No. 2," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 56)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 3.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Premier, that An Act to Amend the Buildings Accessibility Act, Bill 52, be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act to Amend the Buildings Accessibility Act. (Bill 52)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act to Amend the Buildings Accessibility Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 52)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 2.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister for Education, that An Act to Amend the Schools Act, 1997 No. 2, Bill 43, now be read a third time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 43 be now read a third time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act to Amend the Schools Act, 1997 No. 2. (Bill 43)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act to Amend the Schools Act, 1997 No. 2," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 43)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 13.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister for Industry, Energy and Technology, that An Act to Amend the Mineral Act, Bill 59, now be read a second time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 59, the *Mineral Act*, be now read a second time.

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General for the introduction there.

Today I'm speaking to Bill 59 –

SPEAKER: A mover and seconder, please.

A. PARSONS: I'll move it and seconded by the Minister of Education.

SPEAKER: Thank you kindly.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act to Amend the Mineral Act." (Bill 59)

A. PARSONS: Thank you.

Bill 59, An Act to Amend the Mineral Act, certainly is something I'm very happy to stand here today in the House and speak to. It's been a little while coming, but I want to say, first of all, a big thank you to everybody within the Department of IET and everybody that participated in consultations for their input.

Today we are dealing with amendments to the act and as everyone is aware, the *Mineral Act* regulates the issuance and maintenance of land tenure for the purpose of mineral exploration and mining in the province. I just wanted to put a few stats out there about the impact that mining has on the economy of the province.

In 2022, the total value of mineral shipments was \$5.2 billion, an estimated \$243 million spent on exploration and the employment for the same period was estimated to be 9,021 person-years. So back in 2022, the department sought input on ways to improve the *Mineral Act* and the *Mining Act* and there are a bunch of changes and thoughts that were brought forward. I guess what I would say here today is that we are not done with piece of legislation. We still have more work to do.

But in the process of doing this, several issues were identified that will require action prior to our review being finalized. The reason being so is that they're either time sensitive, they're an impediment to investment in the industry or they will cause and are causing significant administrative burden.

For that reason, we thought it was important, in this session of the House, to get the amendments put forward now. We want to make sure that we do some modernization of the legislation, bring in some best practices from other jurisdictions as it relates to mineral tenure, mineral exploration and if we're talking about a possibility of reduction in exploration and investment, that's not something we want to do. So if we feel that we can change the legislation to avoid that, that's something we felt important enough to bring to this House of Assembly.

The proposed amendments that we have here, there are two main themes: one being licence terms and one being licence reinstatements.

As it relates to licence terms, we have a number of licence holders in this province. Vale is one example where they have mineral licences approaching the maximum 30-year term that's provided for in the legislation. Some of these, in November of next year, just a year away, their licences will reach that expiration point, which is, obviously, right now, negatively impacting our current exploration investment decision. So if you're a company, you feel that you might have a possibility that you are going to lose this licence. Yeah, you're probably a little hesitant about making further investment decisions without having some kind of certainty of mind provided and that has been made loud and clear to us and, certainly, we are supportive of that.

This amendment will enable unlimited one-year extensions after 20 years, provided though that the holder meets the annual expenditure requirements to ensure that exploration activities do not become dormant. Important to note I think in this House, that most jurisdictions already have open-ended licence terms. So doing this will bring our province in line with other Canadian jurisdictions.

Now, as it relates to licence terms, the amount of the assessment expenditure requirement is set in regulation. If it is found that claims beyond 30 years are not being explored, the regulations can be adjusted to increase the requirements.

The amendment related to licence reinstatement is being presented because right now our act doesn't have a mechanism for the reinstatement of mineral licences that have been expired or cancelled. In some cases, it's not the issue of the other company applying. Sometimes the error does fall with the Department of IET. That's the reality. Sometimes these things do happen.

The Mineral Rights Adjudication Board, I mean they can go in and they can deal with the reinstatement of a licence, but it's a pretty onerous affair to say to someone, even if they made an innocent mistake or somebody within the department made an innocent mistake, not having a mechanism to allow for discretion to fix this, I think is an injustice to all of us.

I can say, Speaker, something that I've dealt with a significant number of times since I've been here, and I've heard it directly, myself, I've had Members opposite reach out and, in some cases, I don't think this is a company or an investor that's doing something through any kind of negligence or trying to do anything difficult. The reality is there's a lot of paperwork here. Everybody's busy and sometimes you can overstep these by a couple of days.

Anybody who's ever practised law knows when it comes to limitations, it's something that you dread and you worry about. Well, it's the same thing here. Again, we don't necessarily need to send everything to the Mineral Rights Adjudication Board.

This amendment will enable licence holders to apply to have it reinstated within 30 days after cancellation or expiration. The process includes that the mineral claims recorder

must be notified within 30 days and must remedy the reason for expiry or cancellation.

There will be a fee for the licence holder associated with this reinstatement of the cancelled or expired licence if the fault rests with them. It's proposed to be set at \$100 per claim, with \$1,000 minimum per licence. However, if the expiry or cancellation is the result of an error by the department or the MinLAP system or mineral claims recorder, there is no fee to be charged.

This act itself has been amended a number of times since 1976. I think the last one's actually were about nine years ago, 2014. I can say that the amendments that we are making are consistent with what we heard in our consultation stage when we talked to stakeholders, Indigenous governments and organizations, dealing with the public. Basically, what we're trying to do here is provide more flexibility for licence holders to maintain tenure.

Security is obviously critical to exploration and investment. This will allow for that to continue. Other than that, I could continue on. I think I'll get some questions on this in the Committee stage. I look forward to that and the comments by my colleagues across the way as we go through this particular debate.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is always an honour to stand and speak and certainly when it's a bill like Bill 59 that helps the province, in my opinion. I think it's long overdue. It's good to stand up and speak.

We all know what the mining industry means to this province. The minister just talked about \$5.2 billion in exports and certainly \$242 million in exploration. Those types of things throughout the province, both Newfoundland and Labrador, are huge. If you go to Baie Verte - Green Bay, you understand what's happening out that way, Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans. All of these districts have some mining going on. Then you go to Labrador West and certainly Torngat Mountains area and everything. Mining is a huge part of this province and I've long said that it's a key to our success going forward.

The purpose of this bill, it's an amendment to allow unlimited one-year renewals to mineral licences that was currently capped at 30 years. It's also going to allow for the reinstatement of mineral licences in specific circumstances, which is currently not allowed.

Our look at this is pretty simple. These changes appear to be appropriate when you look at the jurisdictional scan right across the country. The legislation is going to remove the term limits on licences and I understand that this is the best practice, certainly as the minister stated and as our research shows right across the country.

When you look at what happens when someone's getting to the end of a licence and the inability to renew something that they've invested so much money into, you would think that this is a no-brainer and these changes are long overdue.

It's also going to allow for the reinstatement of mineral licences in certain circumstances which, again, is appropriate and, as the minister said, discretionary allowances are an important part of this; allow of the extension of expired mineral licences in certain circumstances. Again, sometimes through no fault of their own, individuals forget to renew, the department has made a mistake but there are always extenuating circumstances. As the minister indicated,

him and I have had that conversation not just with these type of licences but with quarries also. So they're very similar in that place.

Replace reference to trial division to the correct reference to Supreme Court. Again, just a housekeeping type of change; incorporate some gender-neutral language; replaces Public Inquiries Act with the correct reference to the *Public Inquiries Act, 2006*. So those are the types of things, just housekeeping and cleanup, very important.

What I will say is I don't take exception to any of this. I guess the bill is good. It's solid. It moves the industry forward. It gives stakeholders an opportunity to maintain mineral rights that they already have and, in the case of someone being there 30 years, you don't have to think too hard to understand the amount of money that they've invested into that stake or claim. It's very important for them to be able to move it forward and not lose the money that they've invested.

So there's not a whole lot more that I can say on this. It's a pretty clean bill and I applaud the minister's department for bringing this forward.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

As someone who worked in and from a very heavy mining area and actually partook in the review when they came to Lab West to discuss this and a few other things, it's good to see that all the money that's spent in exploration up there and the amount of time and effort and everything that goes in there, their investment, they make sure that they can keep it.

As I was told one time, from the time that a prospector stakes a claim until the time the mine can potentially open up, it's usually about 30 years. So it's not a fast process to start the mining activity, but it's good to see that the minister mentioned Vale and, you know, they've got some claims coming up, 30 years. I know there are some claims in Labrador West that have lapsed and gone back and that thing in the last 30 years.

So protecting that investment is important. We do want to make sure that we can make mining viable and done in a proper and respectful manner. When you speak to mining companies and stuff in Labrador West they talk about how, the reserves they got, they're touching on 60, 70 – I think in one case this one company said that if we do this right, we can be here for 200 years mining the iron ore.

It's important that we make sure that we protect those claims and also make them viable and worthwhile if we are going at it. We see that in a lot of other applications. So if this is something that's been normal across Canada, it makes sense just to move it here because we want to make sure that it's appealing. Make sure that, you know, companies are not going to lose mass amounts of investment when they're moving forward but, at the same time, we also want to see that and how it's done correctly.

I do agree with these changes. I did partake in the review when they came up to Lab West to speak with prospectors, mining companies and junior miners. I know this is only one little topic that we actually touched on. I'm hoping to see the changes of some other stuff that was mentioned in those consultations.

Other than that, I fully support the idea that we should make these changes and make sure, going forward, that we could make it so these companies can protect their investment, make it more viable and make sure that companies can actually come up and actually do work.

On the second part, they're talking about being able to reinstate licences after certain circumstances. Submitting a day late or an error or something in the electronic filing system or in other circumstances with the department where there is an error or something like that and being able to get their licence back to them is important, too, because in trying to get through 10,000 things, sometimes you might forget something and, at the same time, that's a massive investment that someone could lose out on.

So with that, too, it's also a good change.

Thank you.

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

P. LANE: Thank you, Speaker.

I, too, will be supporting Bill 59, I guess, for the same reasons as everybody else. We stand this House of Assembly on a regular basis and it is the role of the Opposition, of course, to point out all the things we don't have in place: the doctors we don't have; the teachers and specialists we don't have; some of the services we don't have; money for housing; and money for this and money for that.

The reality of it is you need to be able to pay for that. Here in this province, we are a resource-rich province and that's what we rely on to be able to pay those bills and provide those services.

That's why sometimes I get a little bit frustrated when I hear people in public and even in the House from time to time not supporting our oil and gas and our mining industries. How else would we pay for all the programs and services we have? How else would we pave roads and everything else if it were not for resources like our mining, like our oil and gas and like our fishery, like aquaculture and all these things? We have to find opportunities. We

have to find ways to generate revenue in order to pay for all of this stuff.

As the minister has said in the past – and I do agree with him – no matter what kind of a development you do, of any kind, whether it be oil and gas, whether it be mining, whether it be aquaculture, whether it be wind and hydrogen, there are going to be some impacts on environment and there are going to be concerns and we have to mitigate against them as best we can. But, at the end of the day, there will be no future, we'll all be sitting here in the poor house and have no money for anything if not for the resources that we have and for allowing companies to come in and to extract those resources so that we can get the jobs, we can get the economic spinoff and we can get the royalties.

Certainly, the mining industry has been an important one for this province, behind oil and gas. It doesn't bring in the same kind of revenue but it brings in a lot of revenue – I'm not sure what the numbers are; maybe the minister could tell us just as an aside. Just some idea what we're actually bringing in from mining in this province. Certainly, it may not be the billion dollars we're getting from oil and gas but it is a lot of money and it goes a long way to providing services.

Anything that we can do to enable, in this case, our mining industry to not just survive but to thrive and provide some standards and certainty and allow for investment to happen and to encourage investment and so on, then that's what we need to do. This is just one step along the way. I understand the minister has said there is probably some further legislation, further amendments to this bill that will come at a later time to enhance the legislation around mining in our province, but these are some things that they felt there was an urgency to bring forward. I don't see anything here that's unreasonable.

Basically, as has been said, it's being put here to protect investments. Let's not kid

ourselves, we all know that oil and gas companies, mining companies, they're in it to make money. We all know that and they make big profits. But the bottom line is, if you don't have mechanisms in place and framework in place, things to protect those investments, they're not going to come here to invest. Yes, they make a lot of money, but so do we. We benefit as well. We benefit, as I said, from the jobs. We benefit from the economic spinoff. Towns benefit from the taxation and the money being spent in their communities. People benefit from the jobs, as I say, and the province benefits generally in terms of the royalties that come into government coffers that allow the provision of public services.

With that said, I will certainly support this. Anything we can do in this House that's going to encourage more mining development or expansion of existing mining developments, then certainly I think it's something that we need to do, for the long haul.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

C. TIBBS: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I'll just take a moment to speak on this as well. We're trying to cut off some red tape and make things a little bit easier for the mining companies as they come into the province here. We all know how important it is. I've always been an oil and gas guy, very proud of it, but I'm also very proud of our mining. We have a lot of mining now in Central Newfoundland and Labrador and ever since I became an MHA, I got to visit the good folks in Buchans and see some mining traditions. It's absolutely phenomenal to see. Of course, we support it.

We know how important the mining company is to Newfoundland and Labrador and how many businesses come into it, and we want to keep them happy. We want them to know that Newfoundland and Labrador is in fact open for business. Whether it be royalties, whether it be jobs, whether it be spinoffs, it's absolutely extraordinary to see what mining does for this province.

I'll just put one more lens on it that some people don't always look at sometimes. Marathon Gold in Grand Falls-Windsor in Central Newfoundland and Labrador: they've put millions upon millions upon millions into that project. They haven't received a nickel yet.

But what they have done is the community benefits that they've offered to my community, the Member for Exploits, what they've done for the Lionel Kelland Hospice is absolutely extraordinary. I just wanted to point that out for any companies that come here and just thank them for the work that they do –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. TIBBS: – before they make any money. It's really important to the communities that we live in and any charities and stuff like that. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank Marathon Gold for what they've done and Tim Williams the outgoing COO, for everything he's contributed. Unfortunately, he had an untimely departure, but we've certainly appreciated and welcome the new COO and look forward to a successful mining year in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

I appreciate the commentary from my colleagues across the way and happy to know that the bill is on the right direction. Hopefully, like I say, there is more to come.

I will point out just a couple small things here, just in case people are wondering. There was a *What We Heard* document. Sometimes the work is there and people just don't realize it. Sometimes their constituents don't know it was done; this is online, can be accessed in case anybody listening may want to have a look at what we actually heard here.

The Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands mentioned – one of the figures I have here – last year our mining tax revenue was \$189 million, about 8 per cent of our GDP. And that's not including billions in shipment and the years of employment and everything else.

I'll leave it at that for now; I just appreciate the commentary. We'll look forward to Committee and moving forward.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 59 be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act to Amend the Mineral Act. (Bill 59)

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

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

J. HOGAN: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act to Amend the Mineral Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 59)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 59.

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 Bill 59.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Warr): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 59, An Act to Amend the Mineral Act.

A bill, "An Act to Amend the Mineral Act." (Bill 59)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Chair.

As I said in my preamble earlier, when we talk about the mining industry, obviously there's exploration going on all over the province. You can look at the Northern Peninsula, the Burin Peninsula, the East Coast, the West Coast, and certainly all of Labrador. So it's a huge area across our province and represents about 8 per cent of our GDP, as the minister said, so it's a very important thing.

When coming to this bill, I guess, there are a few questions we have, and I'll start off with what consultations were completed by the minister and his department?

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Chair.

It's a good question when we talk about consultation. So I'm just going to go in here. What I can say is that consultation, I think, was both direct as well as we did online consultation and targeted consultation. I know we would have dealt with the prospectors group. We would have dealt with Mining Industry NL. We did put it out there so anybody in the province that had an interest, there was public notification given.

When I talk about specifics, there are so many licence holders that would have been a part of this. Again, while I may not have met with all of them on that specific issue, in their constant meetings with the department and ADM, Alex Smith, and his team, they would have put out the concern there that the timing was running out on the number of years.

Vale is a big one. I actually have a list here; I thought it was interesting so I'll just go through some of the people. Rambler was one of them; CFI was one of them; Vale is the largest, probably, number of licence holders; IOC was there; I think Champion was there. I think that was about it. I might be missing a couple.

So that's probably the specific consultations we did. Let me see, I'm just reading here. Again, I would be remiss if I didn't mention Indigenous governments and other organizations.

Yeah, there we are.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

We've got a job to hear the speaker, so if I could just – thank you.

I'm recognizing the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology.

A. PARSONS: I'm done.

CHAIR: Okay, I couldn't hear.

We're back to the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The minister listed out five. I believe there are six companies but I'm okay with that.

I'm just wondering that list, is that the specific amount of companies that are going

to be impacted by these changes or are there more?

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

A. PARSONS: There may be more but I think those are the ones that are right on the, sort of, precipice of the 30 years ending either in 2024 or 2025. That doesn't mean that there aren't more in '26 and beyond. I wouldn't have that list there.

Obviously, I think if we didn't make the changes, absolutely there would have been more impacted. But when you look at Vale, specifically, the number of licences and the impact they have in the province, that was one of the big reasons for moving now. We're doing this anyway and that sort of jived, I guess, with what we're trying to accomplish.

CHAIR: The Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: I know you probably don't have it right at your hands, the number of companies impacted is clear, six, but I'm just wondering how many licences in total are impacted because each company would have numerous licences.

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you.

That's a good question. Of course, I don't always necessarily have it at my fingertips, but I think I have it here. I'm just counting here: 20 right now that I have that were in '24 or '25. That's what I have here in front of me.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: During this process, did any companies provide any concerns on the amendments?

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

A. PARSONS: I can say that specifically in my numerous meetings with companies and everybody else, I've never had any specific concerns whatsoever put to me.

What I would say is that in my meetings with staff on this particular act, there was none brought forward to me. That doesn't mean as we move forward that there wouldn't be more. What I gather is there's pretty much general concurrence on this one. This wasn't really causing any consternation with the industry.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Does the minister know if other jurisdictions in the country allow open-ended terms?

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

A. PARSONS: I think now with this change, we were the second last province that didn't have open ended. Now, with this, there is one other province that – yeah, one other I'm pretty sure. I think Alberta actually still doesn't have open ended. I might be wrong but I think that's right. But everybody else has already been open ended so we are joining the ranks.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: With respect to the licence reinstatement, does the minister know how often an individual has lost a licence by simple error or missed deadline?

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

A. PARSONS: I wouldn't have that exact number. What I can say, giving you general anecdotal evidence from myself, I wouldn't put it into the dozens by any means but I would say in the last year it was probably over 10.

That is not on the department itself. Sometimes there was a MinLAP error, which is a technical concern. The majority of cases seem to be the company themselves. In many cases, we're not talking the big companies that have lots of human resource to handle these; we're talking the smaller ones.

So, again, what I got there, it's less than even the number I just referenced. So it's not as common as you think, but not having the means to do something was, sort of, an irritant when we aren't talking somebody trying to do something wrong. It's an error and there was no means to rectify the error without having to go through a quasi-judicial process, which is a pain for everybody involved.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: I guess all things aren't equal in the mining industry when you talk about iron ore versus rare earth minerals and the volume of product coming out of the ground and all that stuff. It's a little different.

This is a bit of an open-ended question but I'm just wondering: Does the minister think that \$1,000 fee is a sufficient deterrent for companies like Vale or IOC, as an example? I'm talking about volume more so than I am specific companies and what the potential is.

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

A. PARSONS: The comment you make is exactly right, it is not equal because we are dealing with some very small resource-challenged companies versus some of the

very large ones, especially up in Labrador, the iron ore companies that capital is not an issue.

I will say that when this impact happens, it is especially negative and difficult for these companies. In some cases, the \$1,000 maybe a significant amount for them. I don't think \$1,000 is significant for a company like Vale, but it's hard to put in two tier.

I think the best way forward for everybody here and what I would like to see is a situation where nobody loses it through something like this. It's in our best interest to have (a) companies licences being renewed on a timely basis, but, more importantly, that they're actually doing something with the licence as well, which is what we thought was important. There's no point to have it if you're not going to do it. If you have this, we want to see you invest money, spending money, doing all those things.

This is the last resort. A lot of times we are able to work with companies to remedy issues. This is the last resort. I hope we don't have to see it.

Maybe it's not a big deterrent but I don't think we need to have a huge deterrent effect here given how often we see it.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: That answer actually leads to my last question. I guess it's around requirements to maintain a licence. Will there be legislation coming forward that changes or outlines the requirements to maintain this licence going forward?

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

A. PARSONS: I can honestly say at this juncture, just being so caught up in this particular set of amendments in the core act

we're about to do, in the critical minerals review, which I'm about to talk about tomorrow and a few other things, I'm not fully aware of that. Again, I can have a conversation with the department on – because some things are not legislative, they're more in the regulatory side of things. It's not something that's here. It's certainly not the last set of amendments that I think we'll see here.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

Just starting with this, I know one of the changes being made is about reinstatement after, I guess, an error or a document wasn't submitted or a day or two late.

How often has that happened in the department and how often is it recorded? How often have these slip-ups happened and required them – was it they had to go to the mineral judicial board to get these sorted out, now we're going to do it in the act? How often does it happen? Is it something that frequently happens or just something you just picked up on?

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

A. PARSONS: The description that I was given by the staff is less than a handful of times. It is not something that happens a lot. But at the same time the comment was that when it does happen it is impactful on these people that are involved, which is why we don't want to see it, especially on our end. Again, it is a rare occurrence but it does happen and now we have the ability to remedy it without having to put everybody through the board.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: When consultations were proceeding through engageNL, one suggestion was to amend section 31(6) of the act to permit the extension or renewal of the leases during the planned period of remediation or closure plan. Was this amendment not looked at, or is it something that is going to come on later on?

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

A. PARSONS: There is more to come. That one wasn't included in this because it wasn't – right now, the biggest concern, I will say, was the timeline on the licences in the 30 years, which had, obviously, the impact on investment.

The second part was while we were doing that, we wanted to bring in the change for the errors we were seeing; it is something even I've seen in my short period of time here. There is more to come so hopefully we will see that. I mean, not that I have any specific thoughts one way or the other; in fact, I'd love to hear your thoughts on it as someone who has probably seen it more than me. So there is more to come, these three are not all we're going to see out of the whole *What We Heard* and what's going on in mining.

The big thing, though, is we are absolutely in a global competition, not just a Canadian competition. So I'm all for anything that can make it easier – or sorry, we'll say less burdensome from an application or investment point of view, more certainty. Keeping in mind, obviously, that with everything with resource development, which was mentioned I think by one of my colleagues on the other side, we have a balance in terms of remediation, environmental impact. So more to come yet.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

Has the government considered not requiring a separate licence for exploration on lands already covered under an existing or producing mine lease?

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

A. PARSONS: I can't say whether that has been discussed at the lower levels of the department in terms of having had a direct conversation with the companies. It hasn't come to my attention. I guess sometimes the reality is when you have a department that is so broad just in the number of resources, that that one hasn't percolated up to me yet. But what I would say is that there is more to come and we are open to not just *What We Heard* but what we are hearing. That is a snapshot in time but that doesn't mean that we cannot continue to listen to concerns that are brought forward.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

Did the government give any consideration to explicitly withholding licence approvals for companies who have previously failed to comply with the act and regulations?

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

A. PARSONS: Not at this juncture. So, from my knowledge this is not a common occurrence; it's certainly not something we see a lot of. I think sometimes there is discretion if somebody's doing something, we'll say not exactly – sort of behind closed doors, as opposed to coming in and working with us. Right now most of what we see is error. It is not intentional by any stretch.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

Given the extension for the 30-year-plus extension, now, so year over year after so many years, and I guess as long as they meet within the spending requirements of the regulation, do you expect this will be an increase in activity in the mining industry or investment, or do you think it will just be a status quo?

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

A. PARSONS: It's hard to tell. I think that's a crystal ball question. I think if anything, it's certainly not going to do anything to deter investment, especially from when you look at a group like Vale, who's got a pretty significant presence here, when you look at IOC and companies like that.

So I would like to think that it will have a positive impact, but to say that I know that it specifically will have an impact on investment decisions, I can't say that. The one thing I will say, whenever you go to a PDAC show or an MRR or any of these, the big thing that people want to know is certainty. Nobody likes the idea of investment and losing that investment for something that's completely out of the – nobody wants to see that, especially if you don't foresee it coming. So anything we can do to increase certainty for that investment bodes well for us, and that's where, sort of, our heads are.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

Is there any consideration given to how to modernize the way the notifications are given that claims are open for staking, other than using the Gazette?

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

A. PARSONS: What I will say – and it's not just for this part; this does tie into the next

piece of legislation as well. We've got a great thing going in terms of gazetting; in fact, we are ahead of many places in the country in terms of what we have, but we do have some technical fixes that we need to put in. Anything we can do to increase the opportunity for people to be aware, I think would be a good thing. But it always comes measured down to: technical change requires investment.

Right now, when you think about it, I will point out that the work that's being done here we have not had an increase in the number of staff that are doing this, especially during the last few years of boom times. So kudos to them, anything we can do to make that easier is great, but at the same time, when you think about across everything, investment decisions, sometimes it's difficult. Although I will say I do foresee some investment decisions coming soon.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

With the ability to renew a licence for unlimited one-year periods, is there now a chance that some licensees may use this as an opportunity to sit on the claims indefinitely when another party might have some interest in them or to extract them? Do you see that it might have a backwards effect?

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

A. PARSONS: No, because there's still a requirement and necessity to do a minimum amount of work, and the fact that it's one year will allow us to be able to – it's not a long period of time. One year allows us to keep an eye on it, see what you are doing and avoid the situation that you are describing.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

With this change, you're going to set it after one year to make a claim, is there going to be a matrix or something set up to establish that they are fulfilling their duty, to make sure that they're doing this and they're not trying to skirt the rule in any way?

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

A. PARSONS: I can't say whether there would be a matrix, per se, but like anything, we always want to have observation of the industry by people within the department. We constantly hear from people as well. There's always a lot of competition of people, whether they are doing what they're supposed to do, people like to report that.

So we'll continue to have the people that we have on the ground continue to do the work monitoring. Even if we hear something we keep an eye on whatever we can. Whether there's a matrix up or not, that's a conversation to have within the department. I can't say for sure, but I'm not worried about a lessening of the observation that goes on.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Further questions?

Hearing none, shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 18 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 18 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 18 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 Mineral 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 Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 59 carried without amendment.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 59 carried.

Is the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay and Chair of Committee of the Whole.

B. WARR: Speaker, after riveting debate, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 59 without amendment.

SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and directed that Bill 59 be carried without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

J. HOGAN: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

J. HOGAN: Tomorrow.

SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

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

SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 12, An Act Respecting Quarry Resources in the Province, Bill 58.

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm here with Bill 58, which I will move second reading, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services.

SPEAKER: It's moved and seconded that Bill 58, An Act Respecting Quarry Resources in the Province, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act Respecting Quarry Resources in the Province." (Bill 58)

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

A. PARSONS: Round two, Speaker, and we are here now doing the *Quarry Resources Act*, which is a new take on a previously existing bill which was called the *Quarry Materials Act, 1998*.

Just a couple of things that I would point out, Speaker. I certainly expect some questions and debate on this one. I had no idea until I got in this department, the impact

of quarries across the province, the number of people that reach out to their MHAs, who then reach out to the department on issues arising from quarries. That's one of the reasons that we are here with this piece of legislation.

Going back again, 2019, the department started the comprehensive review of the *Quarry Materials Act, 1998*. Obviously, this one was delayed. We wanted to have this here sooner but, with the impacts of COVID, that had an impact on the timing. I have to tell you, Speaker, this was a significant piece of work by the team within the department.

The purpose of this was to examine the policies, the operational issues and, I guess, the focus being on the development of our quarry resources. These are a non-renewable resource. I think we need to remind people of that sometimes. We have to keep in mind responsibility. We have to keep in mind sustainability and competition.

Same thing, there was consultation with stakeholders, Indigenous governments and organizations and the public and I would point out again for anybody that might be interested, there is a pretty sizable piece of information here called the *What We Heard* document. So this is what was heard by the department during the consultation stage. This is available publicly and online if people were so interested in having a look at that.

The big decision here was that this wasn't simply going to be an amendment of the existing legislation. This is going to be a new piece of legislation. So we will be repealing the Quarry Materials Act and we will be bringing forward the *Quarry Resources Act*.

For those who are not familiar, quarry resources are, again, non-renewable. They include sand, gravel, rock, clay, soil that can be used in their natural state and in construction and agriculture. This is what is

building our roads. It's building our bridges, schools, houses, you name it. Quarry materials are essential and supremely important. It's about a \$30-million per year industry; about 550 person-years of employment.

So the purpose of this act is to, again, show some efficiencies here, transparency, fair management and regulation of the resources that we have. This is a little summary, Speaker, of what this new act will do. Number one, it will redefine quarry resource to clarify the distinction between minerals and quarry resources. It actually adds in dimension stone and gemstone and it removes peat from the definition.

It continues to provide for the expiration of quarry resources; creates a new streamlined land tenure system for quarries by creating a two-year, non-renewable permit and two classes of leases for longer term operations. We think that that is of benefit. It requires holders of expiration licences, wayside permits and leases to rehabilitate a site in accordance with the rehabilitation standards that are prescribed in the regulations.

There will be an enhancement of compliance monitoring and enforcement of quarry operations. It establishes resource management areas to enhance short- and long-term management, again, of our quarry resources. It enhances production and royalty-related reporting. It increases regulation-making authority and does, as I said earlier, repeals the pre-existing act.

So we're continuing quarry resource management in this province, but this legislation is more comprehensive and there's a need for that because sometimes there is a little bit of a Wild West feel when it comes to quarries and the regulation of them and knowing the fact that we have to manage them properly. Like any other resource, they belong to the people of this province, which means also that there's a cost to them and that cost, the royalties that

come from that, go to the people. That's why we're enhancing royalty review. We're keeping an eye on compliance and management in here as well.

So this is also, I would point out, looking at other jurisdictions, bringing in best practices. We will also remove the duplication of regulation of quarries that was under the *Mining Act*, enhance reporting of production and self-assessment of compliance. There's some ticketing there for minor non-compliance.

It eliminates subordinate quarry permits, which means that a permit for an already permitted site is no longer needed. What would be needed is permission from the wayside permit and/or leaseholder. This new act requires better planning from quarry operators and rehabilitation in accordance with regulations.

In the new act, quarry resource management areas are similar to the current Materials Act but the process is defined for awarding quarry tenure if the quarry management area designation would be removed.

This new act outlines matters that may be considered prior to the renewal or issuance of exploration licences, wayside permits or leases. It will consider suitability of plans submitted; compliance history of applicant; the reason that an alternate source of quarry resources is not used; land-use implications and haul routes.

It also outlines reasons for suspension or cancellation of a exploration licence, wayside permit or lease which are in contravention of the act, an order or a condition, including false or misleading information in the application, insolvency or failure to pay fees and royalties.

One thing to point out here, and this is important to everybody – especially to those people who call us about our quarries and then we act on behalf of them – when you

come to the department, the department is forced to do a referral to multiple other departments. It takes 21 days at a minimum.

If you're dealing with Indigenous organizations and governments, it's actually 30 days. One thing I've noted here and I'll point out, increasingly, one of the challenges – and we talk about this – is municipalities. Municipalities are consulted as well, so sometimes we get the angry phone calls. We deal with them but the reality is we have to wait to get input back. As we all know, we all have municipalities that are strapped as it is when it comes to their staff and the work that they're doing. Sometimes I always say that a little bit of patience by everybody is necessary.

I'm going to get into two other things as well that, I think, are important here. I'll get back to my notes and then I'll say those after.

That part, again, a number of departments are important in this process. Transportation and Infrastructure will continue to be responsible for the operation, rehabilitation and reporting of quarry sites and may have to implement processes for management of its wayside permits and leases.

Now, this new act excludes peat, which is obviously an organic substance located in many wetlands. That will now be regulated by Crown Lands and Water Resources, which falls under the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture, as well as Environment and Climate Change, respectively.

I can say that it was asked – I actually have the letter here from the peat association of Canada that was looking into that. I think it's Sphagnum Peat Moss Association of Canada. I think they're going to be happy with this change here today.

So peat extraction will no longer be regulated under the act. Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture can provide land tenure

instruments under the *Lands Act* to enable for the exploration and extraction of peat. Extracting peat and processing will continue to require permitting under *Water Resources Act*, administered by Environment and Climate Change.

What I can say is that the consultations in this were quite extensive and we do expect that stakeholders will, generally, be supportive. That's not to mean that every stakeholder is going to be necessarily 100 per cent happy because it involves change. That's our goal, though, is to work with them.

A couple of points I want to make now and I apologize, I've got a million notes here and just a few things I want to mention before I sit down on the second reading portion of this.

Number one: one of the issues that was presented to us is that – and this requires, I think, coordination amongst Transportation and Infrastructure and our department and others. I've had great conversations with the minister for that department and staff. A lot of times what you're seeing is work is awarded. The contractor gets the project, needs to get the quarry up and running right away, comes to us and you know what it's like, it's never fast enough.

One of the things we've talked about is better coordination amongst everybody when we talk about department to the department to the contractor, everybody needs – that's not to me a problem that can't be remedied but it involves coordination. It's not just a government problem. We have to work with everybody on that.

That is a conversation I also had with the Heavy Civil Association who are supportive of this. We sat down and talked with them. I really felt the need to have a frank conversation with them. They are important. They have a lot of members that are doing a lot of the great work throughout here. Yes,

we want to have regulation. Yes, we want to have certainty, but you also want the industry to know what you're doing and why you're doing it and that's why those consultations were important.

I want to put out this point. I had their names here and I apologize, I'll try to get to them after. You would be amazed, Speaker, all the quarry work that's done in this province, which is significant, it's not a huge, mighty team of hundreds of people. It's a pretty small group and I'm pretty sure they're listening here now and watching. I've got to tell you, I'm totally impressed and I want to thank them for the work that they put into this. It's often very difficult work.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. PARSONS: I appreciate and they appreciate these sentiments from my colleagues in the Opposition. They do tremendously hard work. It's not always easy. It's often frustrating. Contractors are frustrated and they have to deal with this. I had a meeting with them this morning, we were talking about it. They do great work and what we're trying to do is make everybody's life a little easier, a little more understood.

One of the things I talked about, and this is sort of outside of the realm of this, but just an indication of where the department is going and this comes down to notification. I think increasingly we live in a society where people want to know where their matter is. It's customer satisfaction and, increasingly, government has to be more customer-satisfaction oriented as well.

So one thing we've talked about is that sometimes when you outline your problem, if you don't let the person know what you're doing, they don't know if anything is happening. So I get the email come in, they'll say I'm having this issue. Unless I tell them that I had it or that we're working at it or this is where it is, you might not know that anybody ever received it. By the time you

actually get the fix – because it's not always a simple fix – that person is so ticked off that sometimes it doesn't matter what the fix is. That's when things get really, really not good, is what I would say.

So one thing I want to talk about and this is not about extra resources, but some kind of redeployment. We're going to work on working with contractors, interested parties and associations on letting people know where the matters are. In many cases, they are not within the department. Like I said, they've been referred out to municipality. They've been referred to ECC. They've been referred to FFA. They've been referred to TI. A million different groups, all which need time because, again, we're not going to waive the timer just to give people that because, again, if we don't have effective management, we're just wasting a resource that there isn't more being made of. We know that's a depreciating asset and it's more valuable now and this is going to continue to be valuable. But I think people want to know, especially people that are in the business of doing this work.

Again, there's a lot of paperwork to this. We're just going to try to do what we can to work with them to make sure everybody knows where we are so we make the process a little bit better for everybody. Not only will that be better for contractors; that will be better for the staff doing this work because oftentimes they feel when somebody is upset, they feel this. It's more constant and it happens more often than people would like to see. Sometimes, I've got to tell you, I don't appreciate it; I get the frustration, but sometimes it's like all of us, we get frustrated. It's about where we direct it. So this is us saying we are trying to make this better. We know it's important.

On that note, I'll take my seat. I'm going to listen to the comments from my colleagues. We'll get into the Committee stage. Overall, I would say I think this is a good piece of legislation and hopefully one that does make it better for the people that rely on it.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's always a pleasure to stand and speak, certainly on the quarry resource bill, Bill 58. It's some very significant changes. It's a pretty big document. I wish that we had been involved a bit, I guess in the consultation stage. But I guess we could have went online and done it behind the scenes and no one would've known who we were.

This bill "redefines quarry resources to clarify the distinction between minerals and quarry resources and to remove peat from the definition and add dimension stone and gemstone; create a new tenure system for quarries by creating short term 2 year, non-renewable wayside permits and 2 classes of leases; require holders of exploration licences, wayside permits and leases to rehabilitate a site in accordance with the rehabilitation standards prescribed in the regulations; enhance the monitoring and enforcement of quarry operations; and establish resource management areas to enhance management of quarry resources."

Probably one of the only people, I would say, in this room who has actually had their name on a quarry permit, at one point I held six. So I understand how this process works. I would agree with the minister, there was lots of room for improvement and some of these improvements, although they will be difficult to navigate for people applying for new quarries, I think in the end it will make the job much easier, not just for the department, but for the individuals who have the quarries. They'll have a better understanding of how they operate and what it is they need to do.

There are some concerns that I have with what I would say are misses on this, but the

other things I'll say is that all the changes have been very necessary.

The minister talked about municipalities, he made reference to quarries being inside municipal boundaries and all that kind of stuff. I've always noted, certainly as someone who had his name on quarry licences, we've got quarries operating inside of municipalities now and we see very little by means of industrial hygiene and the department has very little to do with the blasting when it's happening now. It's all at a high standard from a health and safety standpoint, but if it's inside of a municipality, I think that needs to be looked at a little tighter.

Again, the minister talked about the speed of these permits. There are situations where I would say – and we just ran into one actually. I talked to the minister about it and he did his best to help me. In the instance, which happens on a regular basis, where an individual doesn't renew a quarry permit, it was an annual renewal and if they didn't renew it, the quarry was abandoned, but that quarry had been operational maybe as early as two months ago, or four months ago. I believe government missed the boat on this. They ought to have a 12-month period where the quarry, although it's deemed abandoned, I'd say government says that the quarry can still be utilized or used as a subordinate if someone goes through the department in order to do it to expedite a process.

In some instances, when you're looking for a certain type of material, if it's a certain type of sand or a certain type of rock or armour stone that's required, government still would have the ability to get the royalties, based on what's excavated out of there. In some instances, in rural Newfoundland, specifically, it's the only quarry that's available there. It's the only place where some of this work could happen.

So if you go to the Southern Shore, as an example, the lack of quarries that are down there. If there's a basement that has to be poured, well if the basement has to be poured, then through the sieve test or anything, there's a certain class of rock that has to go in there, certainly there's a certain type of sand that has to be used. Right now, on the Southern Shore, there are houses that aren't being built because the individuals don't have access to sand that's required to do concrete.

A quick remedy would be to give access back to an existing quarry that nobody has. This is a bit of a different story but the reality of it is, is that the quarry was abandoned in order to combine a couple of quarries into one under one licence. Whether an individual was right or wrong in that process, there's still an individual quarry there. So it was a fixable thing.

The elimination of subordinate permits, I get both sides of that. I will say that through my years in industry, we used to allow people to have subordinate all the time. Here's my concern with it: While you have now the ability to tell someone they can go into that quarry and collect any of the materials they need and the royalties still get paid, it also opens the door for people to just go into that quarry and take the materials. There are businesses on the East Coast that hold quarries on the West Coast and they don't necessarily know who is in there and who isn't in there.

In the past they'd go to the individual, get a subordinate and you'd know what was going on. Well now, an individual can go there and if somebody from the department goes and says: This isn't your quarry. I got permission to be here, that's all they have to say. There's no requirement for subordinate permit anymore, and in the past that subordinate had to be in their hands and there was an ability to monitor, police and make sure it was being done the right way.

The other issue with the lack of a subordinate is that a lot of individuals that hold these quarries, you go in and they've got their Class A, their Class B, their 18 inches minus, their 36 inches minus, their sand, their armour stone, everything is all separated in different areas. So now with the lack of subordinate permit, an individual can go in and take what they want and maybe just walk out of there without anyone ever knowing it happened.

That has historically always happened in quarries, but the subordinate permit kept honest people honest, I guess is the best way to put that.

Again, I already talked about the temporary permits.

One of the other things that I would say, on this Island specifically, we have a – I won't say shortage – but we have a lack of two things and one of those are decent sand quarries. Access to sand quarries is obviously mostly at the bottom of a tributary or a river system, so it's hard to get access to some of them.

Then with the new EIS and all the new actions that are involved in getting access to that, it's going to make it a little harder, but at the end of the day the environment is very important, I understand why we're doing it. But at some point, based on our climate, our usage of sand in the winter and our usage of sand for concrete and everything, I believe that we need to make sure that this doesn't get to a point where we don't have access to the essential sand that we need.

The other thing that's not talked about – I don't know if it's an organic or not, and maybe the minister can defer back to someone in his department to see if he can get an answer on this – but I'm glad to see peat come out, it's a necessary – everyone knows what peat is, how it works. The problem with peat when you're trying to understand the volume and the mass, the

water that's in it makes it heavier, from a royalty standpoint and all that, makes it entirely almost impossible to measure.

Glacial till – it's another thing that we have a major shortage of in this province, and nobody understands it. So when we're talking oil tanks and berms, or any work around water areas, glacial till is a very important component, and most people probably don't even understand what it is. Glacial till is a substance that obviously was dragged in by glaciers. It holds water in a way that allows you to work and permeate around berms, around oil tanks and all that.

When it hardens up, it actually becomes the best material that's out there. From an engineering standpoint it's what these berms, if you go to any oil tank around, if you look out across St. John's Harbour and you look over at Irving and you see these big berms. Well, you see the stone on the outside, but underneath that, it's all composed of this glacial till. It has to be put in at a certain temperature, can't be too wet, can't be too dry. They mould it up and then the rock goes on top, and when that hardens up, it's impenetrable.

I would argue that it may be considered an organic, but I don't know if it would be an organic. Yeah, it's a different way to look at it. Anyhow, it is what it is.

I'll go back to the abandoned dormant quarries that we have here. I would say to the minister, there's an opportunity to look at some of these quarries that have been abandoned. Historically, people hold onto them, but there are quarries that have been abandoned and there are instances where people need access to materials quickly. I think the department could do something in that area, because if you look at these quarries, they've been remediated, abandoned, you know that the material is there, you know that it has already been approved from an environmental standpoint and everything. I think the department has an opportunity there to allow subordinates

to go into these quarries to access material without holding that licence, I guess. There are some areas where you do it.

The other thing I'll say is that – and this is a Department of Transportation issue – we have quarries across the Island that the department holds – some of the finest quarries in the province. From time to time the department allows businesses to utilize that quarry under a subordinate permit. But there are times when they don't, and all things aren't equal.

I would implore the Minister of Transportation to talk to the department and make it equal. What I say by that is when you go into a Department of Transportation quarry you're not taking their material. Their material has been screened and the crusher has gone through and it's made into the type of material they need. If I want to go in as a subordinate, I go in and I have to do all that same stuff myself. So I go in, I do my own blasting; I make my materials, screen. You know, you put it through your crusher and you make exactly the type of material you need for the work you need. You know how many tons you're taking out of there.

The department, as you go across the Island, there are areas where the Department of Transportation says: No, no, no. You're not going in our quarry. And it's not because of a lack of resource, because the resources are there; they're some of the best quarries in the province. But there are other departments, from a Transportation and Infrastructure standpoint that say: Yes, absolutely, come in, do what you need to do, take what you need to take. And it's just – you're never taking the department's resource. You're creating your own. You're crushing the rock yourself and utilizing it.

That is based on geography, and we all know what geography means when you're transporting stone. It means that a job can be done cheaper and that's good for everyone. That means there's more work, more jobs. It means that there's an

opportunity for the department to help move things along from an economic standpoint. I think that that's an important thing to do.

The quarry resources in the province are obviously all non-renewable. They include, like I said, sand, rock, clay, gravel, all these things and they're in a natural state, until somebody goes in and creates the quarry and does the blasting and does the work they have to do.

I'd be curious to know exactly how many quarries there are here in the province, but there are a substantial amount of quarries. I would argue there are a substantial amount of quarries that are underutilized or not utilized, which I think is a problem. I do believe that's a huge problem. I believe that there are a substantial amount of quarries that are abandoned, that have not been remediated to a state where they needed to be remediated, and this bill will cover some of that and help us get to that point; very important again.

There are quarries that affect water resources around the province and most people don't understand that. So if you go and you start a quarry and it could affect the water table, it affects the vegetation around. So from an environmental standpoint, again, this bill is good.

I'm not sure if this bill limits the size of the quarry, now, under the 10 hectares to initiate an environmental assessment. But the whole idea that all the departments are involved I think is good, from the standpoint that it protects the people, and it will, eventually, while the individual who is applying for it may not feel like it protects them, in the end it will.

The process, I think, in some instances – I don't know if there's a way to streamline it, but it would be really interesting to find out if there's a way to speed it up. And when I mean expedite, I don't mean expedite what happens inside the Minister of Energy, Industry and Technology's department. I

mean, once it leaves there and it goes to the environment or water resources or it goes to municipalities, any of these things, it needs to go faster.

The other thing I would say is that in the application process, I think a lot of times people go apply for a quarry and they don't understand that if they're inside a municipal boundary, they have to go to the municipality and get permission in order to do it. Municipality really has final say, because if they say they don't agree, that quarry is not going to happen. That means the individual has to have their due diligence and their homework done in order to make that all come together.

I've got lots of questions, but I think they're just housekeeping questions. We support the bill and welcome the changes. Probably fair to say that some of these changes are long overdue. I will say I firmly believe that some of these changes will be troublesome for some people in the application process, but I think once the kinks are worked out it will be okay.

I hope that – there's nothing in this bill that jumps out to me that says it will be a difficult process for permit holders that already have a permit for a specific quarry – nothing changes for them. I don't think that we're going to go backwards and tell them that they've got to do environmental assessments if they already hold the licence.

We support the bill and I look forward to asking questions in Committee.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

I won't take too much time. I'll just start off with – this is interesting; this one's home. My wife's stepfather, my father-in-law, my

hunting buddy, he actually works in a quarry in Lab City. And I tell you one thing, that man loves his job and he loves crushing rocks, I tell you that. It's pretty interesting now that I get to debate that. I'm sure he's not listening but he'll definitely appreciate that I mentioned him.

First of all, I do want to say that I do thank the department. They did come to Lab West last December, I believe. They came to Lab West and they did hold consultations with quarry owners in Labrador West. I was lucky enough to join with them when they went through this.

They had a lot of interesting commentary about how it affects them and how their current regulations and how the current stuff did affect them and things that they'd like to see and some changes. Obviously they did bring a list of complaints and whatnot with them as well when they came, the stuff that they wanted to see changed. I'm glad that the review was encompassing, but we're doing a repeal and replace, so it is a large piece of work and I do appreciate the department doing it in such a way that benefits a lot more people.

I do have a few questions that I think I'll save for Committee, but in the meantime I do agree that this is a bit long overdue and that we're moving to more, I guess, more standardization with a lot of the stuff, but at the same time we're also moving more in line with the rest of Atlantic Canada on some of the rules and stuff in how quarries operate.

I just did a quick count there in my head; there are 11 operating quarries in Lab West alone right now, and doing everything from what my father-in-law does, which is railway ballast and cement stone, to road sand, Class A, Class B and a bunch of other different things. Stemming, I believe, is another thing they do for blasting. There is a bunch of other stuff that they do operate there.

It is just interesting to see how much volume of stuff gets moved and how quickly they move it. I had the opportunity to go up with my father-in-law and he showed me some of the equipment and some of their operation. Coming out of the mining industry and seeing the scale of mining, just to go up to a quarry it's still impressive how much material they move through a place, the equipment that they use and how busy it is. I do say that again, that Tony has a busy job up there in that quarry.

Once again, I'll just take my seat and I have some questions for the minister.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Thank you, Speaker.

It's certainly always good to get up and speak on a bill, and Bill 58 is an interesting bill. I know my colleague for Terra Nova is pretty learned in quarries, pits and that stuff. I have had a lot of calls, a lot of concerns regarding quarries and pits in the area, especially obtaining permits and the use of quarries in the Central area. It's certainly an interesting resource and I am glad to see that, as the minister said, they did their public consultations and they're taking all stakeholders into consideration as they made those decisions on the quarries.

But one interesting thing to me in the quarries was that the peat was taken out of the quarry permits, which was something that I know the industry in my area certainly is very, very interested in. I have had many conversations with a company in my area that uses peat for extraction, to make different sorts of fertilizers, different sorts of absorbents for oils and that kind of stuff. Actually, this company is probably one of our better exporters in the province. They export a lot of material that way outside the province.

They've been at it since 1983 and I know they've had concerns with regard to the ability of peat; with regard to the permits, they were concerned that the high cost that they were incurring in those permits and that, was extravagant, actually, so this is good to see that the peat is taken out of these quarries for the production of peat.

The business was struggling with high costs, especially with the fees and permits. But under these regulations now, the permits – they did say an average of the location that they have there in that area is probably 75 hectares of land. And where it's peat, you know, the regular pits are a lot smaller than that, so when you look at the cost that they had to pay for the quarry permits, compared to the hectares that they had to pay for peat, you're looking at extravagant cost, probably on an unfair basis.

So they're really glad to see that this is happening, to see that the cost of those fees just to get the permits – because they pay the royalties as well. It's good to see the peat is taken out of this and I'm sure they'll certainly be excited with regard to getting those costs reduced.

Now, the minister did say that – I think, we did ask in the briefing yesterday that it is moved, and I think it is gone to Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture and I don't know if that'll come under the Crown Lands Division or under Agriculture. The minister does agree with me. So that's good. I think that's where they wanted to see it, was in that area. It gives them some breaks on if it is considered a farm or whatnot, to be able to extract that peat. So that is a good bill in regard to that, and I will certainly agree with the bill with regard to the permits.

With regard to the peat, peat is good for food security. Again, it does the absorbents for all across the world, for oils and that kind of stuff so it's good. But the cost alone is because the weight of it, to extract it, the weight of it alone where it's water, it needs

to be dried to get the peat active. That's the exorbitant cost, so that's a good point to see, that the peat will be taken out of the quarry permits.

With that, Speaker, I do think that I may have a couple of more questions regarding the peat part of it in Committee. Again, to see this bill changed like that, yes, I certainly agree with the quarry resources on Bill 58 and we'll have a couple of questions in Committee.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you for the comments from my colleagues across the way.

What I'm going to do now is I will answer some of the questions. I was writing furiously during second reading, trying to get some answers here. Thankfully, I do have people who are listening and helping with the answers on that. This is certainly not my background when we're talking about quarries or peat, but I tell you what there's no disputing the importance that it has.

I'm just going to go through this now, very quickly. I know there will be more in the Committee section. So I'll try to get this in order. Right now, just based on the questions we got, starting with the Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition, there's a two-year minimum for existing permits. There is a transition period. Coming back to the point you made about yes, it's going to be sticky. We recognize and acknowledge that. We will work with people.

The class B lease will provide for a 10-year tenure. There will be no need to renew. The subordinate will require permission of the permit holder. So, same as it is now, it does require permission and the permit holder is responsible to restrict the access. I think the key point here is the elimination of the subordinate permits. That was done sort of under red tape reduction. I get the point that the Member is making, but I think, overall, this is the path forward.

When we talk about sand and how that is a crucial resource, the good thing about this legislation it does have a focus on resource management going forward, which is one of the reasons we are doing this. I'll get to some other points the Member makes after when we talk about the usage of the resource. Glacial till is not organic. Luckily, what they're telling me is that we do have it present in Newfoundland and Labrador, so not an organic.

The point, talking about the permitting and sort of the quick access, right now, a couple of things: These wayside permits that are coming in will provide for that short-term access that you referred to where we need to get somebody to get access. Somebody has to be responsible. Right now, when people come in, depending on the circumstance, we do have a prioritization mechanism within the department where if somebody actually says why they are there and what they're trying to do, because there is a difference between somebody who needs it now, somebody who maybe has a bit of time, but overall there's been a focus on that as well.

I agree with the Member when he says better use of the resource. Again, the main point of why we are doing this. In fact, there are some holders that don't need a quarry. We can do better co-operation throughout the industry. People do not need their own quarry. Maybe there's a better way to get the material that they need without occupying, underusing, things like that.

I do think you'll see some consolidation as we move forward here. We'll see how that goes. There is no size limit but you're correct, 10 hectares is what triggers the environmental assessment. So, again, no size limit from our perspective, but obviously you know what's going to trigger you to do the extra work that is required.

The point about the municipalities, absolutely – and I've seen this myself now, again, early on in my tenure here. I had a person reach out directly, talking about how come we can't get this permit. So I went and looked into it and was told the municipality hasn't said so. When I brought that back to the person – and I thought I was doing a great thing because I was saying, you reached out to me personally. I reached out to get the answer. I reached out back to you to give the answer. They said well, you're the minister; you can do what you want. I wish that was how it worked sometimes. But the reality is municipalities have rights here and that's why we have to consult with them and that takes time.

Existing permits will become class A or B leases and may require some planning but will not require reapplication, which I think is an important thing here. Again, I'll reiterate the two-year transition period. The Member for Lab West brought up about quarries. Yes, they are indeed small surface mines. We are dealing with surface mining here is what it is.

The Member brought up peat, and I think the company is Hi-Point Industries – am I wrong? So while we never heard from Hi-Point, we did hear from their association representative and received their points. We've changed the legislation. It will be Crown land management under FFA as it relates to land tenure for that.

This was the change that was requested and we brought in. So I thought that was good. We also said to the company if they ever want to talk to us directly, we're more

than happy to hear from them. But, again, their association reached out.

Some stats that were put out there: Last year, 1,300 quarry permits renewed; the department received applications for 200 quarry permits; and there were 100 quarries that required leases. It's amazing. I've got a ton of information here that I may get a chance to go through. Maybe just talking about some of the costs that are involved. So I'll try my best during the Committee to get into this.

I agree with what the Members are saying, particularly the Deputy Opposition House Leader. Yeah, this is change. Change can sometimes be difficult but change sometimes is necessary and we have a non-renewable resource that needs to be better managed by our department for the betterment of everybody that needs and requires the resource.

We will work with industry. We will work with everybody, as I can say, and I have no problems standing up here and saying that I've heard from a number of Members of this House directly – both government and Opposition side – and I've always tried my best to get answers to people back. Sometimes not the answers that our constituents want. But we need to be able to do this. It's a big deal. So, again, I'm very lucky to have a department that is also super responsive when that comes in – and I found the list.

These aren't people that often get recognition for the hard work so I'm just going to toss some out there: Kevin Sheppard, Andrea Devereaux, Julia Andrews, Stephen Connors, Emily Elliot, Kirby Way, William McInnis and Colleen Mooney are all under Deputy Alex Smith. So I want to thank these individuals for their work in this and on to Committee.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 58 be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting Quarry Resources in the Province. (Bill 58)

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

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

J. HOGAN: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act Respecting Quarry Resources in the Province," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 58)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I move seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader that this House do now recess for 10 minutes.

SPEAKER: This House do stand recessed until 4:15 p.m.

Recess

SPEAKER: Are the House Leaders ready?

Order, please!

The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 12, Bill 58 and I do now move that this House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 58.

SPEAKER: And a seconder to that motion, please.

L. DEMPSTER: Seconded by the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology.

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 Bill 58.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Warr): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 58, An Act Respecting the Quarry Resources in the Province.

A bill, "An Act Respecting the Quarry Resources in the Province." (Bill 58)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair is recognizing the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In the briefing notes we were told that the new bill contains provisions that were consistent with feedback the government received from public consultations. Were these the public consultations that were carried out in 2019-2020, and have there been consultations since that time?

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

A. PARSONS: I think it would be sort of expansive, so these would have been the consultations that started a while ago. But I can tell you that consultations actually went right up until just a couple of weeks ago; I personally met with the Heavy Civil Association. Again, it was done online so everybody had an opportunity to take part. We did reach out directly to Indigenous governments and organizations, but yes, it definitely was across the board, from what I gather.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: The minister indicated that there were currently 1,300 quarry permits, 200 new applications this year. Were those people included in the consultations?

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

A. PARSONS: No, I can't say specifically that they would have been, but the big point, I think, is that the consultations were open to anybody that wanted to participate. In many cases you have people that do not want to participate for various reasons, including time. But the big thing is that it was open ended, it was online, which I personally like more.

Since I've been around, it was always difficult that if you have consultations in the usual run – St. John's, Central, Corner Brook, Happy Valley-Goose Bay – it made it difficult for people outside that realm to want to drive and go somewhere. This online option is giving people that. Plus, I would say that there was the – I wouldn't call unsolicited consultation, but obviously we listen to what we hear from people. We don't need somebody to specifically tell us, if we see something that was an issue, I think that was on the mind of everybody.

CHAIR: The Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: This new bill is going to redefine some of the materials covered under the act. Peat, as an example, is being removed from the act and the department said they're doing this because peat is organic in nature. So is it more appropriate that it be regulated by Crown Lands and Water Resources?

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

A. PARSONS: That's basically the takeaway that I'm getting, including what was asked by Hi-Point Industries. I would also point out that Hi-Point, we were originally contacted by the national association on their behalf. We responded to them in writing. We had a meeting and then we had another meeting with Hi-Point.

I'm assuming everything is okay from their perspective, but the door is always open. But from everything I've gathered, I don't think peat is appropriate in this conversation anymore. It's probably best to move there, and that would be the group that would be best to handle that.

CHAIR: The Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: So I guess other than Hi-Point and the utilization for environmental response and those types of things, how is peat being used now in the province? Is

there anyone else besides Hi-Point that utilizes it?

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

A. PARSONS: I've literally had zero input on anybody else. That was my only actual peat conversation that I've had. I haven't had anybody else reach out specifically or had much of a conversation. It sounds like they are probably the heavy hitters when it comes to that. So nothing else that I'm aware of.

But going back to why we went that way, I mean, Crown Lands takes care of land tenure; Water Resources, given the fact of the presence of water, will regulate that. It seemed like the right place to go.

CHAIR: The Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: So will this change cause those operators to incur any extra charges?

CHAIR: The Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology.

A. PARSONS: No. To my knowledge, there should not be any extra expenditure involved in this. It certainly was not the intent of anybody to do this. I will point out, I just had it told to me there is another company that the department is familiar with called Murray's, who do extract small amounts of peat for agriculture. Again, this is meant to have less of a charge, smaller rental and no royalties when it comes to peat.

CHAIR: The Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: I don't know if this is a question for the minister or not, but there are certain uses of peat that require it to stay where it is and not be extracted. Peat is considered non-renewable because it takes such a long time for nature to produce it. We all know there are issues over in the UK

now with it. Will extraction processing be limited more from now on?

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

A. PARSONS: I would say the general intent of the bill – and again, peat is taken out of it – just across government is better management of resource. So peat, whether it's in this one or otherwise, I would assume the department that will now handle it has a good understanding on these issues as you outlined. They have a wetland policy in ECC. So I'm not worried about it per se, but that doesn't mean that we shouldn't monitor and keep an eye to ensure, again, any non-renewable, we have to best manage it.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Dimension stone is being added to the act, as are gemstones with the exception of diamonds, rubies, sapphires, emeralds. For dimension stone and gemstones, the tax regime is going to remain similar to the mining tax regime rather than quarry royalties. The department said there are currently no dimension stone or gemstone operations in the province. Can you confirm that dimension stone has been handled under the mining legislation until now?

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

A. PARSONS: I'm waiting for a confirmation on that. The big point was the addition of it to the legislation. It's not something that we see much of right now and so I don't really have an answer per se. Now I could probably double back or circle back to this one after, if that's okay.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: How will the new treatment of dimension stone differ, I guess, and will it

still be taxed under the mining tax legislation, but administered under this new act?

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

A. PARSONS: What I have here now is it was originally under quarries – and then said – until the mining act. Again, when it comes to the taxation policy or royalty policy on it, I can't give you the exact part. It hasn't been a huge conversation, given the fact that there's not much activity on that front.

So I'll probably know a little more going forward, but I've got to be honest, until this legislation came along, it is not something I've had a single conversation on at this juncture.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: So the province is actually known quite well for its dominant dimension stone quarries: Bell Island, Pynns Brook, Bay d'Espoir, Goobies, Middle Brook, Benton, Old Bay, Wreck Cove, Cobbs Arm and Kellys Island, just to name a few. Kellys Island quarry, actually, produced sandstone for the Basilica, and the Harbour Grace and St. John's courthouses.

Has there been any interest or are there any prospects out there for people to revive this industry in the province?

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

A. PARSONS: Again, I usually judge interest or opportunity based on what people say to me or come to us with and we haven't had a lot of it. Everything is based on commodity pricing, as you know, and whether people are willing to invest. There are simply not a lot of conversations going on in that. But it's like everything; everything tends to go up and down.

A couple points there further to this question and the previous one. It still will require planning but it's not as detailed as was under the *Mining Act* previously, and not simply volume-based royalties so taxation structure is maintained.

Look, there's a prospect for everything. I am willing to entertain absolutely anything that comes in through the door. Right now that is not where the interest is. I will tell you when it comes to interest coming in the department, obviously there's the gold but even that is not something we get – I don't want to say international attention. Critical minerals are trumping absolutely everything when it comes to interest from the States, from over seas, you name it. Everybody is interested in that. There's a lot of attention paid based on, I guess, where the industry is going.

Other than that, I'm not sure if there has actually been a specific letter or correspondence sent to us on either one of them recently.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: I guess two questions really.

How is soapstone going to be classified once this bill is passed? We all know that over the years a lot of soapstone has come from Labrador and others from Fleur de Lys as an example.

Soapstone is an important cultural and artistic significance and it also has architectural uses. So is there any change? Does soapstone change in this?

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

A. PARSONS: Waiting to hear back on that. My familiarity with soapstone is based on my travels to Labrador primarily and just seeing what has been done.

I'm just waiting for an answer here now to see, because soapstone has not been a real big part of this conversation. I think there are special materials under NG. So I think that's what we have here, special materials under NG. That's basically where we are on that.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: So the graphite global market is very restricted with few production sites and graphite is crucial for EV batteries. Are there prospects for graphite exploration and production in Newfoundland and would that be considered quarrying or mining?

We all know that Isa Lake, as an example in Labrador West, there was a substantial graphite find there.

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

A. PARSONS: Right, graphite is one of our critical minerals. Other than that, it's not a huge conversation that's going on. Everything seems to be based on the other 24 to 25 that we have depending on it.

Like I said, I go based on what has been brought to me. I generally read most of the correspondence that comes in or entertain any meeting that comes in; I haven't had any meetings on that.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: With regard to gemstones, I'm just curious why diamonds, rubies, sapphires and emeralds have been singled out in this bill for exclusion.

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

A. PARSONS: I think the reason that they've been singled out here is just due to the fact that they are the most valuable that

are available. So that's my understanding of that. Hopefully it's not any more detailed than that; that's as much as I've got, basically.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Are there any prospects for mining gemstones in the province right now? 2019 showed some evidence of rubies, sapphires, up around the Hopedale area, and obviously we're the third largest producer in the world for diamonds.

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

A. PARSONS: So what I would say is this: I think it was back in April or May – pardon me, I can't remember when it was – they had a new mining show in Gander. That was like the first time they put it off. I actually met with some prospectors out there who we were discussing gemstones with.

Obviously, I know of their presence here, just because, literally, they took them out and showed me. Right now, there is some localized exploration for some gemstones – emeralds, sapphires, jade – but other than that there's not much advancing at this time.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: It's a good point. So next question is about rockhounding for gemstones. Will it be dealt with under this legislation, or can this be done casually by individuals as a hobby, or will it require special permitting or licensing?

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

A. PARSONS: I'm just waiting for an answer on that, because again, there's such a similarity between the two pieces of

legislation, where do they go. Again, when you use the term rockhounding, because there are some people that are into it very casually, there are some other people that just made their livelihoods from this. So I'm just waiting for an answer there, because I can't say specifically. It says here, not an issue if it's not economic activity. So I guess the descriptor will come down: What's your purpose?

It's hard to stop anybody from doing exploration, but if all of a sudden it becomes a profit-making venture, then it's like anything, you know, the government's going to get in on it.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: So it's okay to do it for the wife but not the girlfriend, is that what you're saying?

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

A. PARSONS: Hansard records forever, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Prospects for gemstone mining in the province right now – an example, amethyst is extracted at La Manche over the years, and other sites are known for minerals. Some have been classified as gemstones, such as clear quartz, crystal fluorite, pyrophyllite, calcite and others.

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

A. PARSONS: I think the general answer is similar to the last one, that not at this time. There is some localized going on, but it's small scale; it's not triggering a lot of activity or attention.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Labradorite: How will it be dealt with once this bill is passed? Historically it's been found in Nain and Tabor Island, and it's a very important gemstone worldwide.

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

A. PARSONS: So I think that would fall under dimension stone, possibly. That's what I'm hearing here, so again I presume it would be handled as per the legislation and the regulations.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Cabinet's regulatory powers, under the current act there are 14 categories of regulations, all under the direction of the minister. Under this bill there would be 20 categories of regulations, under the minister's direction, and nine under the direction of Cabinet. Specifically we note in paragraph (f) where the Cabinet can exempt someone from paying royalties and under paragraph (g) where royalty amounts can be modified for an individual.

Can the minister explain in which circumstances the government would anticipate doing this?

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

A. PARSONS: That's a very good question. It's not something I've ever had to deal with in my three years here. I've literally never had a conversation on not having somebody pay or not pay royalties, especially when it comes to this particular piece of legislation or the previous piece of legislation. I think the exemption, from what I gather, may be tied in with municipalities or municipal governments somehow.

Other than that – I mean, I've never seen a circumstance. So sometimes you can give a hypothetical answer based on what you think may or may not happen, but I haven't even seen a hypothetical on why you wouldn't use it. Sometimes in legislative drafting, I think, there's a chance to make sure you have a catch-all, for any possibility that may arise, but whether that ever arises is a good question.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: So under the minister's regulatory powers, in paragraph (a) it allows move substances in and out of the act. How far does this power extend for the minister, I guess, is the best way to put it, under paragraph (a)?

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

A. PARSONS: I think a lot of what's going on under this piece of legislation comes back down to the resource and comes down to resource protection and planning and things like that. I don't know if a situation will arise where something all of a sudden takes on a different value than it had before and needs to be extracted or maybe there's something else that we're not aware of that needs to be added.

I think that's why the power is there. I can't imagine it would ever be used for some kind of unusual thing. I think, if anything, ministers have the ability under a lot of pieces of legislation too for protection. Again, not something I've seen or had to contemplate in my time.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We'll go back to dimension stone and I'll ask, gemstones and other materials, could they be moved back to the mining

legislation under that power, just by a simple regulation?

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

A. PARSONS: I think the answer would be hypothetically, yes, but for what reason, I have no idea. I can't imagine why you would add something to a new piece of legislation that you spent four years working on, just to change it back for some other reason. I guess my general answer is anything that government ever does – even if it's regulatory and through Cabinet – you're going to have to explain it at some point. Again, that's not something that's popping up to my mind now. I do think it allows for unanticipated situations. It's always something that's contemplated, but not something I've ever seen or dealt with.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Under production reports, compliance reports and ticketing: How will the production reporting requirements differ from what we now have?

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

A. PARSONS: I'm not completely aware of how the change is going to apply here now, other than there's going to have to be possibly the planning ahead of the game, that maybe was not necessarily done before. Other than that, I think the production reporting will see a change, for obvious reasons. Other than that, what I'm basically being told by the team in the department is that you're not going to see much difference.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: So compliance reporting, same thing: Do you see how reporting

requirements will differ from what we have right now?

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

A. PARSONS: Again, compliance reporting, I think you're going to continue to see activity there from the people within the department, same as you've always seen here. Whether you see some specific change, I'm not sure. I mean, if anything, what we want to see is continuing to support the efforts we're making when it comes to the protection side of things. Other than that, I don't think you're going to see any specific changes that I'm aware of now in terms of the approach.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: The minister talked earlier today in his opening remarks under the bill about the department's desire to work with proponents, versus to penalize them. Just a couple of questions under ticketing; under clause 45(13) and 55, they both point to *Provincial Offenses Ticket Regulations, 1999*. From a practical standpoint, how will ticketing work?

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

A. PARSONS: I'm not sure if that has to do with the actual legislative means of ticketing, if it has to fall under that or not. In some cases, I think you have to have that ability; now, how often that's going to be used – I think you need to have the means of deterrence as we talked about earlier, which is important to have, but I think deterrence comes down to also having discretion. And the vast majority of what we see is honest.

The issues that we see sometimes, I don't think are through malfeasance and things like that, but at the same time the reality is, there is. So we need to have that means. If

anything, I think the deterrence now is for the sort of minor non-compliance, which can be remedied. It might be a different approach to the bigger ticket issues.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: How many tickets does the department issue annually?

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

A. PARSONS: I don't know if they issue any. I'll wait to hear back. I think that also might be new to this act so I don't know if there was any ticketing provision previously. What I will say is this, as someone who's dealt with courts, ticketing and going to courts and having people fight in the courts does not often work for anybody. It can be frustrating, so I don't think there's a means to do that.

I think there are bigger deterrent means that we can use if need be and, again, keeping in mind the overall approach here is working with everybody for the same reason. There's a reason they want to use the quarry resource. There's a reason we want them to, and hopefully we can all work together to find a way to make that happen and deal with the other issues as they arise.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Under the elimination of subordinate permits, the question I have is what's the rationale? I understand the rationale, but I just don't know that you looked at the full scope of and effect of it. So, obviously, it places the onus directly on the wayside permit holder. Will there still be a paper document that they have to supply, whoever the subordinate is? Is there going to be proof of permission or subordinate?

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

A. PARSONS: I'm waiting on an answer back on this in terms of the actual paper or not. And just to point out to anybody who's watching this, as you can tell quarries are something that if you've never had any dealings with, it is so technical and so comprehensive and has so many parts that my fear is in the attempt to put out answers and be transparent, I don't want to put out information that is wrong.

What I will put out here is that the specific question, permit holders: they remain responsible for their sites. That's the important thing here, especially when we talk about the subordinate side of things. There's a responsibility that somebody has to hold.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: So I discussed the whole idea of subordinate under Transportation and Infrastructure's quarries and the difficulties that some people have. During the briefing, the way it was told is that this whole subordinate thing is going to be treated no different than a private business arrangement. I just ask now: Is government going to treat it the same way right across the board, or will they still block some of their quarries, I guess? That's what's been happening.

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

A. PARSONS: That's a good question because obviously, as you've already stated in your comments, that doesn't fall specifically just within our department. We have to deal with Transportation and Infrastructure. When we talk about the subordinate permit today, it does require a permit holder agreeing. Does TI agree or

not agree? I think that depends on the situation.

What I would suggest is – and again, as someone who probably has less experience with it than yourself or the minister – I think it all depends. I think that for every person that may complain and have a valid reason, I bet you there are some that complain that have no valid reason to want it. Sometimes it's just a matter of disagreeing with the department.

A big thing I can put forward – and this is just my opinion on this – is that I think the department through the minister are pretty responsive. I know the minister tries to be – sort of pumping his tires here now, but similar to myself, we try to be responsive and at least give an answer as to why or why something is not done. So I don't want to make sort of a big case for or against, because it's sort of outside my control. But I just use that logic here that, you know, usually with conversation, we can find a way, something is or is not done.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Under planning and rehabilitation, how significantly will the planning requirements – like, how much will that change for the leaseholder?

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

A. PARSONS: So when we talk about the rehabilitation here – keeping in mind this is something that comes up a lot – I've had a lot of colleagues mention it when we talk about pits and everything all over the place and the rehabilitation side. Obviously the purpose is that we want to make it safe, but we also want to make sure that it's conducive to other appropriate uses.

I think it's probably going to remain the same for class A leaseholders. I think there's a basic rehab which just requires the

removing of equipment and structures, sloping, spreading organic material to facilitate regrowth. I think those have been sort of standard, from what I gather, for some time. But in municipalities with planning authority, there may be some development regulations that require some financial assurance to be provided.

So it is an important thing. I can say that's one thing I am aware of, people coming to me and talking about just coming and developing a quarry and pit, leave them all over the place. It's kind of an eyesore. So that was top of mind when they were doing this consultation phase.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: So in clause 29(8) it states, "Notwithstanding subsection (1), the minister may issue a wayside permit or lease in a quarry resource management area where the minister determines it is necessary for work bring conducted by, or on behalf of, the Crown."

Can the minister elaborate on this? When would the minister anticipate using that provision?

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

A. PARSONS: I'm not sure if that's a situation where on behalf of another department or a municipality, there might be a requirement where the minister of the department has to step in and allow that to happen.

I'm assuming it's going to be limited to circumstances but, at the same time, giving you the means to, again, deal with a situation that arises. Maybe there's something other than that that I'm not aware of. There are occasionally situations where, as we've all said, we have to step in quickly. That's sort of where my head is.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

So no concerns about compromising the standards in the interest of expediency, I guess?

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

A. PARSONS: What I would say is that when it comes to legislation, you have to follow it. If you don't follow it, then you're going to have to answer to people.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Under issuance and renewal considerations: suitability of plans, compliance history, reason for an alternate source quarry resources, land use implications and the haul routes. Are all of these considerations new?

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

A. PARSONS: I don't think they're necessarily new, but I think part of the issue with quarries – so you go back, number one, the legislation is from 1998 so we're talking 25 years since anything has been done. The term I like to use from my three years here is sort of like the Wild West. So I think sometimes it's about maybe a little more codified than it has been previously and allowing for that to be a part of the reasoning. I think that's always been a part of the sort of logic that's been used by the department in whether to or not to.

Right now, I think it's basically been policy. Now we're seeing it put into a legislative mode.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Suspension and cancellation considerations: the deck outlines a bunch of different things, contravention of the act, order condition approval, false and misleading information, insolvency, failure to pay fees and royalties. Are these new?

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

A. PARSONS: My understanding is that it's very much the same. The only new one is the insolvency. So the same things that's been used by the department, but in a policy point of view, now it will be codified, but the same thing. I mean, some of these issues or I guess situations within the department, sometimes it's usual suspects.

So it is like anything; it is no different than when you talk about the *Criminal Code* in many ways. You look at the levels of it, there is the first time somebody has done something in culpability and then you get other individuals that it is the same thing every time. Not that I have seen a lot of that but I do know that you get some of that within the applications and people that come in.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: So under the new 10-year system, will that now allow for greater consistency with the mineral resource management?

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

A. PARSONS: The short answer is, I think, yes. That's the short answer I can give right now. That is the intent; we'll see where it goes.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Under the current act, there have been, not only quarry permits and subordinate permits, but also beach permits. Under section 7 of the current act "a person may apply to the minister for a beach permit to quarry, excavate, remove and dispose of quarry material from a beach." I can go on and read it but we don't need to.

I guess the question is what happens to the beach under this bill?

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

What I can say is that my understanding is that a beach permit is one that has rarely ever been used. There is not a great track record of that having been used within the department. My understand is that it would likely – I'm just checking to see here – it says here that they are not considered environmentally acceptable. We haven't seen a lot of them; we're probably not going to see a lot of them. I would bet you that the social licence for those has gone down considerably since the legislation, the first bill, I guess, was put in place.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Transition from a one-year quarry permit to two-year non-renewable wayside permits, I guess I'm just looking for a bit of rationalization. Why was it important to move to that direction? Is it to lessen the load on the department and make it easier for the applicant?

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

A. PARSONS: I think it was a bit of column A and a bit of column B; I think it is easier for everybody. One thing, when you think about a red tape reduction, that is one right there. One year in the life of some of these permits goes by very, very quickly and it can be a pain for people, I'm sure. The same

thing within the department. We do not have the luxury of just adding people to positions, as much as we would like to lessen the considerable load that is on the individuals that I named earlier.

What we see here is we're trying to make things better; we're trying to make things easier. It definitely will be easier, I think, from the department point of view but I don't think anybody else will complain about that as well.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: I guess one thing that sticks out for me – I'm sure the minister understands – but I don't think everyone understands the magnitude of the amount of civil work and quarrying that is going to be required with regard to wind energy.

Is there an urgency to revise this act, I guess, or the legislation, specifically around that?

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

A. PARSONS: I don't think that was contemplated when the act first went through this revision or review back in 2019. Wind was a conversation; it was in the conversation in this province for well over a decade but we hadn't made any moves at that juncture. We hadn't released the Renewable Energy Plan and we had not taken away the moratorium.

What I would say is I think the act now is good timing. This has been worked on for some time. We've got industry telling us to come on, move. There is so much good going on.

That's why I think we have it here now. I would say it's a matter of fortuitous timing when you talk about, like you said, the heavy civil works that are going to happen here, the additional heavy civil works. It's

good timing, but it wasn't sort of the reason or purpose behind it.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There's no doubt that we are heading into an era of civil excavation and work that the province has never seen before. I guess that goes to there are a lot of transitional elements and consequential amendments.

How smooth do you project this transition to be and any idea how long it's going to take?

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

A. PARSONS: I think the term that I put out earlier was two years. If you listen to the department, they're going to tell you it's going to go super smooth. But like everything, here's what I would say: I have full faith in the department. I have full faith in the staff. I think everybody, when you bring in something new, has to exercise patience.

I think the direction, certainly from the top down, has been: Look, we want to help people. We are not meant to be in the way. We are meant to try to help people with this, but, at the same time, people need to work with us and understand some of the constraints we are under, specifically the timelines, the referrals and things like that.

Do I think there are going to be hitches along the way? Yeah, probably so. Whenever you do something new we're going to have that. But I think there is an absolute appetite by the department to work with people.

We are doing this for a reason. We aren't doing this just for the sake of an exercise in time. I think this is a response to what we've been hearing and, as you said, this has been a long time coming. People in the industry wanted this so we're trying our best

to get it out there and that's the mindset that we're using.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: I agree. Listen, people in industry that I've talked to, they want it.

But in the public consultations, were there any companies, towns or groups that highlighted or had concerns about the changes?

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

A. PARSONS: I wouldn't specifically be able to say. I apologize; I haven't gone through the *What We Heard* document since the first time that we put it out there.

So what I would say is general support was felt along the way. Does that mean we didn't have specific concerns brought forward? I would imagine we did have specific concerns brought forward and put to the department, who also handled the consultation phase.

Going back to another point, part of this too is that when we look at – as we move forward – the transition is not just for industry, the transition is for us. So we are going to work towards streamlining as well, making forms easier to use, user-friendly, things like that. I mean, I think that's not a benefit for one side, that's a benefit for both sides.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: During this whole process, was this bill subjected to any kind of a, I guess, local benefits lens? I mean it's obviously important for us to maximize local rural development opportunities and employment of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

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

A. PARSONS: What I would say is with this paper – or this bill now, it was a paper originally – when it goes through, it gets exposure to most departments that would have some input or impact. So Finance would be one. In this case, you would have TI. We would have Minister Parsons – the other Minister Parsons's department on this. We would have ECC; we would have FFA.

So absolutely, it would have had a financial lens put to it. And keeping in mind one of the concerns, too, was that when you go back to the compliance reporting, when you go back to what we're getting out of this, I mean, pretty confident we haven't been getting the full benefit of the resource for many reasons.

This is another attempt to move forward in that regard so that we are getting it, and again, as stated by one of the Members opposite, the point of this is that the value of the resource is meant to go back to people to help pay for all the other services we want.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: So currently a quarry owner is responsible for their own reporting and their own, I guess, math when it comes to what they pay for royalties. It's a fairly simple calculation but is there going to be any enforcement?

Like, in the past, you'd see quarries go in and, you know, when you go in it's flat land. You go in two years later and it's 80 feet deep and full of water. There have been no royalties paid on what's been taken out of the earth.

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

A. PARSONS: It's a good question and I'm going to try my best to answer now, with my takeaway on this. Obviously, there's a self-compliance to this first part, and self-compliance can be only so good. There will be oversight from the department.

Now, we deal with the same thing when it comes to royalties on just about anything. Like, we'll get an oil company send us what it is. We have a big crowd of smart people down there crunching the numbers to make sure we're getting what we're supposed to get. It'll be the same thing here, the difference being how do you have – it's not like we're going to have somebody on every quarry or pit, as you know, sitting there watching.

What I would say is this, similar to many other resources where – I'll just use overfishing – the fact is no. Have you ever seen DFO catch every bit of overfishing that goes on? Not a chance. But when you do find it, those people are often penalized, especially in that case, penalized harshly.

So I would say the same thing here. This is not meant to be punitive. We're not out trying to penalize people, but if people want to engage in that, there will be measures to make sure we get the royalty that the people of the province deserve.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Currently, as a quarry operates they'll bring in a blasting company, a crusher and a screener. They may do 500 tons or 50,000 tons of aggregate. Are the royalties supposed to be paid on the aggregate once it's processed or once it's sold?

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

A. PARSONS: I'm waiting to get an answer on that because I'm not quite sure; I've never had to deal with it.

Actually, it's paid when it leaves the site. That's what happens.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: No more questions.

CHAIR: Thank you.

I'm recognizing the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

Just one question here right now, given that the change to the act is extensive and there are a lot of changes here. Will the department require to staff up more now to oversee this and to follow this? Is there going to be a requirement for a staffing-up now to just monitor this alone?

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

A. PARSONS: No, it's not our intention. We haven't budgeted for new support staff to be used. We don't have any new positions that we intend to create. What I would say is this is twofold. One, we'll see how this goes. It's our belief that the staff we have can handle what comes with this and in fact some of the changes that have been made can in fact hopefully lighten the load, so that we can work on the other new measures that have come in. We'll see how that proceeds.

The second part is that, I do think within the department as a whole, we constantly need to reassess where we are. One of the things I mentioned sort of in the preamble to second reading is that I would like to see a little more on, not just the quarry side of things, but on terms of the working with the public, working with the operators. So

maybe that's sort of a redeployment of resources.

We'll see how this goes, but I don't think you'll see any additional resources invested at this juncture.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: I'm good.

Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Further questions?

Seeing none, shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 58 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 58 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

On motion, clauses 3 through 58 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act Respecting Quarry Resources in the Province.

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.'

Motion carried.

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

CHAIR: I'm recognizing the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 58 carried without amendment.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 58.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

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

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for 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 58 without amendment.

SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and report Bill 58 carried without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

L. DEMPSTER: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

L. DEMPSTER: 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: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, 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.'

Motion carried.

This House do stand adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 10 a.m.