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*Speaker: Honourable Ross Wiseman, MHA*

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

Before we start today's proceedings, I want to welcome a couple of special guests to our gallery. We are joined today by the Mayor of Bishop's Falls, Bob Hobbs, together with the Deputy Mayor, Doreen Tremblett, from Bishop's Falls.

Welcome to our gallery.

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

### Statements by Members

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today we have members' statements from: the Member for the District of Bonavista North; the Member for the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair; the Member for the District of Kilbride; the Member for the District of Tornat Mountains; the Member for the District of Exploits; and the Member for the District of Humber West.

The hon. the Member for the District of Bonavista North.

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

**MR. CROSS:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I stand today with jubilation to inform all assembled that the volleyball season is well underway at Pearson Academy.

On the weekend of October 9-13 the Pearson Astros Junior High Male Team was one of two schools from Newfoundland and Labrador to be invited to the Scotiabank Classic Volleyball Tournament hosted at Dalhousie University in Halifax.

The Astros served up a powerhouse attack and blocked with a stunning defence to complete the tournament successfully and travel home with the gold medal in their possession.

The Junior Astros, coached by Mr. Craig Loder and Mr. Duke Kelloway was comprised of Kristopher Winter, Alex Kean, Lucas Hunt, Jonah Winter, Kyle Gaulton, Zachary Dunn, Dylan Humphries, Alex Melindy, Cameron Gill, and Mackenzie Landry.

These Grade 7-9 students were remarkable ambassadors for our Province, and their skill did not outshine their good sportsmanship and congeniality. Coach Loder looks to a great year of competition and says his team may leave their mark in many more tournaments this season.

I request a united voice from all hon. members to congratulate the champion Pearson Astros and recognize their stellar representation of our Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

**MS DEMPSTER:** Mr. Speaker, John F. Kennedy once said, "One man can make a difference and everyone should try". I rise today to pay tribute to a man who is certainly making a difference in the fight against diabetes.

While walking on a cold Labrador night and missing his wife Liz who had passed away with complications from diabetes, he had a thought. He would walk across Labrador to increase awareness of this disease, raise funds for research, all the while educating people on the benefits of healthy living.

Mr. Speaker, eight years, 1,800 kilometres, and \$40,000 later, Guy continues his annual trek. This year, at the age of seventy, having covered Labrador from L'Anse au Clair to Labrador City, he started his walk across the Island. His most gruelling component will be the Labrador sea ice from Rigolet to Nain, once he finishes the Island portion. His commitment to this endeavour is commendable, and important, as this disease continues to escalate in our Province.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in paying tribute Guy Poole, one man who is following his passion and making a difference.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Kilbride.

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

**MR. DINN:** Mr. Speaker, Ruby Church in Goulds celebrated its one hundredth anniversary on September 10, 2013. A group of about twenty-five members of the Ruby family, the Goulds Historical Society, and other supporters marked the day by inviting ninety-three-year-old Mrs. Violet Ruby, who was married at St. Matthew's in 1944, to add a ceremonial dab of paint to the exterior of the building to signify the work needed to spruce up the structure.

In 1913, a local farmer, George Ruby, built this church because the main Anglican church was thought to be too far away. While St. Matthew's was never consecrated as a church, the cemetery was. St. Matthew's was regularly used for worship until 1964, when St. Paul's Anglican Church was completed just up the road.

Since then, the Goulds Historical Society has worked very hard to preserve this structure. In 1988, the building was designated as a registered heritage structure, having great historical, cultural, and tourism potential. It is probably the oldest building in Goulds.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in commending the Ruby family, the Goulds Historical Society, and others, for their dedication in preserving this historical gem.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to pay tribute to the Inuit of Northern Labrador who fought alongside the Royal Newfoundland Regiment and sacrificed their lives in World War I. I pay particular respect to Lance Corporal John Shiwak, Charles Mesher, and William Groves, who laid down their lives at Beaumont Hamel.

Mr. Speaker, many of our Inuit ancestors saw action in World War II, as well. Some of them included Frederick Frieda, Edward Webb and Thomas Flowers from Hopedale, Abia Millie from Hebron, Edward Gear, George Budgell, Max Budgell from Rigolet, Levi Pottle from Back Bay, Job Lane from Big Bay, Abraham Ford from Black Island, Richard White from Kauk, William Winters from Kammasuk, Douglas White and Peter Bright from Nain.

Mr. Speaker, many of these Inuit were immediately classified as snipers because of their superior marksmanship. Mr. Speaker, those Inuit soldiers from Nunatsiavut were proud to protect their homeland. They fought and died with their fellow Newfoundlanders and Labradorians so that we can enjoy our freedom today.

I ask all hon. members to join me in paying tribute to the Inuit soldiers from Nunatsiavut.

Lest we forget!

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. FORSEY:** Mr. Speaker, the Lions Clubs International foundation presents the Melvin Jones Fellowship award to Lions members for the dedicated humanitarian services to their town, province, and country. The two most recent recipients of the award are Lloyd Thompson and Arthur Snow; both are members of the Botwood Lions Club.

Mr. Speaker, criteria for the award includes contributions to the Lions Club and community, work on projects, and working hard on a volunteer basis for your community. It is the highest award you can receive in the Lions. The Melvin Jones Fellowship is named for Melvin Jones, founder of the Lions Clubs International.

Mr. Speaker, these two gentlemen have over 100 years combined of volunteer service with Lions. I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Lloyd Thompson and Arthur Snow on receiving this prestigious award.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. GRANTER:** Mr. Speaker, I stand in this hon. House to congratulate Gary Graham on receiving a Doctor of Laws degree at Grenfell Campus Memorial University's spring convocation 2013.

Music teacher, organist, and choir director, Dr. Graham has been a force in the musical, cultural, and artistic life of Corner Brook since 1966. He has contributed much to the AIDS Committee of Western Newfoundland, the Status of Women Anti-Violence Walk, Western Memorial Regional Hospital Foundation, the Children's Wish Foundation, the Corner Brook Rotary Club, Theatre Newfoundland and Labrador, and Gros Morne Summer Music. For his efforts and guidance, Dr. Graham was recognized by the Province in 2004 as one of the first recipients of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador.

For his contributions, especially to the many young students he directed in music and his contributions to the cultural and music fabric of Corner Brook and Western Newfoundland, I ask all hon. members to join with me in congratulating Mr. Gary Graham on the conferring of Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree from Grenfell Campus, Memorial University.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Before we move into Ministerial Statements, I want to acknowledge two councillors from the Town of Fortune. Dave Holloway and Yvonne Harris are joining us in the gallery today as well.

Welcome.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Ministerial Statements.

### Statements by Ministers

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to highlight what has been gained through the recently signed Agreement-in-Principle on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union.

Mr. Speaker, years of tough negotiation by the provincial government has achieved unrestricted access to the richest seafood market in the world, and created a new era of opportunity for the provincial fishery. Tariff barriers as high as 20 per cent and end use restrictions on our high quality seafood will be no more. These gains are expected to generate \$25 million for the provincial fishing industry when the agreement comes into effect, and add as much as \$100 million to the industry annually.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we created an unprecedented cash infusion into the provincial fishery when we successfully negotiated a new \$400 million federal-provincial industry enhancement fund. With this fund we will advance research and development. We will explore new marketing initiatives. We will increase fisheries science activity. We will enhance provincial fisheries infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, with this fund we will make the

industry more competitive than any other time in its history, and the families that rely on the fishery will benefit for generations to come.

Working in consultation with industry, we will seize the opportunities emerging from this Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement by providing support to processors, both large and small, to help them successfully enter new markets. We will help harvesters pursue innovations and efficiencies with harvesting technology. We will support the development of new value added products that generate employment for plant workers, and we will engage in promotion that differentiates our products throughout Europe.

Mr. Speaker, the terms negotiated by this Province through CETA are landmark achievements that are good for the fishery, good for our nation-leading economy, and good for communities in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. They were made possible by the vision and tenacity of our Premier, and have the potential to grow the production value of our fishery well beyond the \$1 billion mark it has already achieved to date.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of St. Barbe.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, when we look back on the tenure of this government, the disasters and the boondoggles, the giveaways and the losses, it will not be the loss of three paper mills, it will not be the disastrous expropriation of the Grand Falls paper mill, it will not be the \$12 million white elephant that the Premier, when she was Minister of Natural Resources, approved in Roddickton, an absolute throwaway; it will be the loss of our historic protein in the fishery.

When the Premier stood up last week, she honoured and said the key mover and shaker, the key architect of this disaster, was the Deputy Minister of Innovation, Business and Rural Development, Mr. O’Rielly. Mr. O’Rielly was appointed February 23, 2006, as the Deputy Minister of Fisheries.

In his biography, as produced by the government, it said, “Mr. O’Rielly served in management positions with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, including assistant deputy minister with the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture...” He also worked for Argosy Seafoods and Clearwater Fine Foods. “He also worked as an independent fisheries development consultant...” and he put together a large clientele of industrial clients.

This is the same gentleman the Premier tasked with putting together the CETA deal for her, six years in the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and now –

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

I remind the member that his time has expired.

**MR. BENNETT:** Thank you, Sir.

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

**MS MICHAEL:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement, but it is time government came clean on their plans for the \$400 million they will be spending to enhance the fishing industry.

Mr. Speaker, I ask them: What is their plan? How much will be spent on marketing, and what will that marketing plan look like? What area of fisheries science will see extra money? What infrastructure projects are in the works, and who is going to be involved in the decision making? Will all of those who are going to be affected be involved in the decision making?

Most important, Mr. Speaker, will the workers who are most going to be affected by whatever the changes are, will they be involved? Will this government tell us how they are going to benefit specifically?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Does the hon. the Member for the District of The Straits – White Bay North have leave?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** By leave.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of The Straits – White Bay North.

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

I would like to thank the minister as well for an advance copy of his statement.

The removal of the tariffs is certainly extremely positive –

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** – and I would encourage public consultations with harvesters, processors, and community stakeholders. I also see opportunity for small-scale fisheries to benefit, and will be sharing my views.

If we innovate, we can move forward with long-term sustainable fishery jobs, which can offset and replace those that will be lost that are lower paid and short term. So I look forward to hearing more on this.

Thank you.

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

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

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

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

I rise today to inform hon. members of the provincial government's ongoing efforts to improve and strengthen the transportation network throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our Provincial Roads Improvement Program, with a budget of \$59 million this year, has delivered on a long list of upgrades this past construction season, ranging from guide rail and culvert replacements to rehabilitation and resurfacing of dozens of kilometres of asphalt on our highways.

Mr. Speaker, significant progress has been made this year on all three phases of the Trans-Labrador Highway and construction continues on the Team Gushue Highway with major underpass work now taking place. The Conception Bay South Bypass project is nearing completion with a \$4.4 million tender award for paving and a \$2.9 million contract for the construction of Scott's Road underpass. The four-lane divided highway from the Massey Drive Interchange to the Corner Brook Industrial Access Road is also close to completion with \$6.5 million in contract work invested this year.

Bridge replacements and repairs are also playing an important role in our overall infrastructure improvements this year. We have invested more than \$1.8 million in rehabilitation projects, including Sandy River Bridge, Horwood River Bridge, Parsons Pond Bridge, North Harbour River Bridge, Little Salmonier River Bridge and the Curtis Causeway Bridge. We have invested over \$5.3 million in bridge replacement projects including Main Point Bridge, Gull Island Bridge, English Harbour East Bridge and Traverse Brook Bridge. Construction of the new lift bridge in Placentia is well underway and construction has begun on the approaches for the replacement of the Sir Robert Bond Bridge.

Emergency repairs played a crucial role in transportation upgrades this year. Over \$1.8 million in repairs were necessary on the Trans-Canada Highway near Pasadena following damage after record water levels were

experienced on the West Coast. A berm was constructed at Exit 12 to reinstate the ramp and the Trans-Canada Highway and further repairs to the Trans-Canada Highway and the ramp at Exit 13 are now nearing completion. A rain storm on the Burin Peninsula also caused damage requiring quick action. More than \$675,000 was invested to undertake emergency repairs in Lawn, Lord's Cove and near Cow Head Lookout.

Mr. Speaker, since 2004, we have invested more than \$1.4 billion to upgrade our roads and highways to enhance the transportation system here in our Province and improve the safety for residents, tourists and businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John's South.

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

I thank the minister for a copy of the Ministerial Statement.

Mr. Speaker, I urge government to ensure that when we do replacements of infrastructure and upgrades on infrastructure that we look at climate change, we look at the future, we look at stronger storm surges, and we look at extreme weather conditions and flooding. Some of the work that has been carried out was because the infrastructure was not able to handle these extreme weather conditions. We need to start focusing on that when we put infrastructure in place in the first place.

We are still having protests in areas like Conche, La Scie, and Harbour Breton because of poor road conditions. Some of the secondary roads, Mr. Speaker, are still not addressed.

We have a ferry replacement strategy that I will remind government is long overdue. We need the ferry replacement strategy looked after, Mr. Speaker, because this is something that people in

coastal communities require. I ask government to look at the ferry replacement strategy and deliver on their promise.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John's East.

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

I would also like to thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. I would also like to reiterate, too, that some of these repairs that he is talking about were due to extreme weather events. Yes, the government's transportation plan – if it has one and it should have one, it should have one in the very near future – should be readily adaptable to that, to climate change.

At the same time, in order to have a transportation plan in place, government would be able to save money in the long run by doing that, by having that transportation plan in place so that we know what roads and everything are going to be worked at in the future.

Government are projecting to collect close to \$180 million in gasoline taxes this year. To see that there was only \$59 million put into roads, I think that some more questions have to be asked about the distribution of the monies when it comes to roads and indeed for our ferry transportation.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Does the Member for St. John's North have leave?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Leave.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John's North.

**MR. KIRBY:** Thanks to the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Team Gushue

Highway goes right through St. John's North. While it has been a headache for some, we are certainly looking forward to its completion. It will ease the morning commute, the evening commute, and also help relieve some traffic pressure on neighbourhood roads.

Some suggestions for the hon. minister going forward; I think it is important to get tenders out as early as possible so that companies can know and plan for the work that has to be done. It is also important to partner more with municipalities. We can package up municipal road building and infrastructure projects with projects that are provincial to get a lower cost and a break.

We are always concerned about safety on our highways. We would like to see more twinning and more of those rumble strips to make sure everybody is paying attention and wide awake.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday we asked the Premier about the cost of internal and external renovations for the Confederation Building. The minister replied and said it was around \$50 million.

Government's own documents show that this is not true. The cost just for the external renovations is expected to be \$51.1 million, 150 per cent over the original budget.

I ask the Premier: Now tell us, what is the total budgeted for the internal renovations?

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

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

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

It is almost embarrassing to stand here and have to answer a question in the fourth day sitting in the Legislature and the Opposition has nothing better to talk about, nothing more pressing with issues than to talk about the renovations that are happening on the building.

If you check Hansard yesterday I said the renovations for the exterior of the building, with the windows, was about \$50 million. I think \$51 million is about \$50 million. So, that is very close to where it is at, and a price has not been put on the interior yet.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** I am not sure about the minister, but when it comes to \$50 million of the taxpayers' money, Mr. Speaker, it is important to the Opposition, and it is important to the people – especially the ones struggling from day to day to try to make a living.

Government's ATIPP documents show that the internal work on the eighth, ninth, and tenth floors of the Confederation Building alone is expected to be \$6.52 million – just for phase I, Mr. Speaker. The internal renovations are expected to take four to six years.

I ask the Premier again: What is the total cost of the renovations for the Confederation Building, and what assurances can you give the taxpayers that you will not exceed the budgetary amount?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to correct the member from across the House. It is not renovations that are being done to the eighth, ninth, and tenth floors; it is repairs that are being



done – mechanical and electrical repairs that are being done those floors.

It is very difficult to put a solid price tag on it until you get in and you find out how much repairs need to be done there. So until we get that work done, we really cannot put a final price tag on that.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, this government has been promising a fiscal framework with municipalities since 2008. This weekend is the MNL convention. It will soon be 2014 and they are still waiting for government to fulfill the promise.

I ask the Premier: What is the status of the fiscal framework negotiations, and why have you failed to live up to your commitments?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

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

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

Very much looking forward to the next few days at the Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador Convention. Engaging in a new provincial-municipal fiscal framework with our municipalities in this Province remains a very high priority for the Department of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

In fact, in my first few weeks on the job I have already had two meetings with the President of MNL to talk about that very issue. I look forward to providing an update to the participants in the convention this weekend, and we are on track to deliver on the new fiscal framework over the next couple of years.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** I take the minister at his word, but the commitment was made in 2008 and that is why we need to keep the government's feet to the fire.

Mr. Speaker, municipalities are facing new responsibilities and extra costs on a daily basis. New sources of revenue are critical for the sustainability of our cities and towns.

I ask the Premier: Budget 2014 is fast approaching; will the fiscal framework be addressed in this Budget?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, we are well aware of the needs and concerns of municipalities large and small in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is why we are reviewing and working on a new fiscal framework. It is why we have arrived at a new MOG formula, and I am pleased to say that for many communities in Newfoundland and Labrador they will receive an increase in Municipal Operating Grants in 2014.

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

**MR. KENT:** In addition to that, we have extensive consultation planned over the next year with municipalities, with local service districts, with people who live in unincorporated areas, with anybody in the Province who receives municipal services. We want and need their input to ensure that we get this right because it is important to all municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, it is great talk but there is no commitment that it will be done in 2014, as was committed in last year's Budget.

Mr. Speaker, in May 2012 government passed a new Animal Protection Act and announced \$50,000 for the SPCA to develop a public awareness campaign. We know now government has reneged on this commitment, and I voted for this act with the commitment of this funding.

I ask the minister: Will you commit today to work with the SPCA and provide the \$50,000 you promised?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, what the member refers to is obviously our government's commitment and concern for the animal welfare in this Province and our commitment and concern to work with those people who are committed, Mr. Speaker, to work with communities and work with families who have pets, who have animals that need the proper care.

Mr. Speaker, yes, I am more than willing to continue to work with the SPCA on behalf of government and to do all we can to show our support for animal welfare in this Province.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Will you reinstate the \$50,000 your government committed for education on the new act which you introduced?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I think it would be fair to say that our government has shown our commitment. We have a new act. We have committed new money. We have budgeted more money to the SPCA, Mr. Speaker, and we are trying to work through a process with the SPCA to be able to help with issues in communities.

Collectively, Mr. Speaker, we will work together to try to address those issues. Certainly our funding that is needed to help support those issues, when we get it right, Mr. Speaker, we are certainly going to be there to support the SPCA.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, just on that note: Will the minister please commit, because it is all of our responsibility to ensure animal protection in this Province. It is a serious issue. I voted personally for this bill because it is a great bill. We need the education.

I ask the minister: Will we do it collectively and do our duty right and commit the \$50,000 for a public awareness campaign to show who can enforce these regulations and what the regulations are across the Province? Would the minister please make that commitment for the sake of the animals in this Province?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate it when the Leader of the Opposition acknowledges the good work of government, and acknowledges the work that we have been doing on behalf of animal welfare in this Province. Obviously, when we are talking money, those are budgetary decisions that will work through a process.

Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, I think we are clear, and I think the people of the SPCA are clear that

we will continue to work with them. There are some issues, in terms of enforcement issues and so on. We are aware of those, but we will continue to work with the SPCA in the spirit of the act that we brought in, Mr. Speaker, and in the spirit of commitment that this government has made to animal welfare in the Province.

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

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

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

I assume the \$50,000 will be used, if necessary. I thank the minister for that.

Mr. Speaker, in 2011, the Member for Humber East and Humber West said that the construction of the new hospital would begin in 2012. This past August, the Minister of Health said it would start in 2015. Just two weeks later, the Minister of Transportation and Works said he did not know when the construction would start and would not give a timeline on the construction.

I ask the Premier: Will one of you make a commitment to the people of Corner Brook and Western Newfoundland, which they deserve, when can they expect a true date of the construction of the hospital to begin?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, there is a commitment I can make to the people of Western Newfoundland, and that is we are committed to building this hospital and that is why we have invested – or said we will invest \$500 million to it.

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

**MS SULLIVAN:** Mr. Speaker, the work that we committed to starting is actually underway right now. There is a very interesting process that the

member opposite might want to know about, in the way that we are now working with the consultant to map out and to actually, through lean processing, work out what every single room in that facility is going to look like, how it can have the best patient flow, and how it can work best for the people of Western Newfoundland.

This is a state-of-the-art facility and we are really proud of the work that we are doing there. We are moving forward as committed.

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

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

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

Yesterday, the Minister of Justice asked for examples in delays of justice in Labrador. One docket case alone, Mr. Speaker, includes three assault charges, one resisting arrest, seven failures to comply to a probation officer, twelve breaches of undertaking, all while waiting for the initial charge of assault to be put on the table.

I ask the minister: Given that the docket is full of similar cases, do you believe that this is truly protection of victims' rights?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Justice.

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

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

As I said to the member opposite yesterday, our primary focus is on protecting victims. We are not about defending criminals, as was suggested by the member yesterday.

As he would also recall, I talked yesterday at great length about the significant investments we have made in the justice system in Labrador. I will also remind the member that I sent him an e-mail twice asking him if he would forward me some confidential information rather than raise it

in this House. I would gladly go and have a look at specific circumstances to see if in fact was an issue that the government could deal with, or were we talking about a judiciary issue which is completely independent of government.

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

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

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Mr. Speaker, I can gladly forward the docket. There are all kinds of examples on there.

Mr. Speaker, by the time the offender makes it to court, breaches of undertaking are often thrown out and the offender is once again put on probation, all in the interest of the court's time. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, there are a lack of resources.

I ask the minister: Given the existing backlog of the court's docket, will you now provide the required resources to deal with the terrible delay of justice?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Justice.

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

**MR. KING:** Mr. Speaker, investment in the justice system – and I am not going to repeat everything I said yesterday and over the last number of days and weeks. Clearly, if investments are required we are prepared to look at it.

It is shameful for any member of this House to stand up and question the independence of a judge in this Province and expect that the Minister of Justice is going to tell judges what to do. I am sorry, I do not have that authority nor do I want that authority.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, following the public backlash from extensive cuts to the justice system in the last Budget, the minister announced a review of the Sheriff's Office. The minister said this review would be important in helping to determine the optimal resourcing levels and structure of the office.

I ask the minister: What is the status of this important review?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Justice.

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

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

The member is correct. We in fact did carry out an extensive review of not only the Sheriff's Office, but of Legal Aid and many other parts of the Justice Department. We did that upon the advice of a number of independent individuals, and it was good advice. I believe you are going to see continued improvements in the Justice system.

We made significant gains over the last eight to ten years, investments in policing, investments in court services, investments in victim services, investments in justice in Labrador. I expect that the report the member refers to will be available to me in the very near future. Once I have had time to read the report and assess the implications, including the financial implications to government, the report will be made available to the member with a briefing, if so desired.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, this review was to be completed and submitted to government by September 13. Obviously, it has been delayed almost two months now.

I ask the minister: Why was the report delayed, and when will it be finalized?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Justice.

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

**MR. KING:** As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, from our perspective, it is not about the timeline as much as making sure you have a quality report, and the individual doing the work has travelled across the Province. As I understand it, they have met with individuals in the system, in the Sheriff's Office system, and talked to other people who are connected to the legal system, connected to the judiciary. They have talked to people who use the system to seek advice and input. They have visited facilities to look at whether there are structural changes required.

I am anticipating a very comprehensive report, but unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, since I am not the author of the report I cannot say why the report is delayed. I can only say that I have been given good advice to expect a report in the very near future.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, last spring I asked the minister about implementing full-day kindergarten and he responded that his department was investigating and looking at the numbers.

I ask the minister: What is the update on when we can expect implementation of full-day kindergarten in our Province?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, we continue to look at the full-day kindergarten. We have never ruled it out. Mr. Speaker, we have decided our investments are where research would tell us to invest, in those earliest years. It

is why we are now on the third year of a \$4.3 million investment in our zero to three years, Mr. Speaker, and we look forward to that continued investment.

We do our decisions based on research, Mr. Speaker, and that is where exactly we have invested our funding.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, the full-day kindergarten would come after the baby blankets, not before.

Our Province lags behind in early childhood education and our children are paying the price. The minister claims space is one of the challenges of adding full-day kindergarten.

I ask the minister: With all the savings he claims from school board amalgamation, could he not redirect some of the school board savings to help our small children?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, let no one in this Province question our investment in education. Let no one question it.

Mr. Speaker, we still have the best student-teacher ratio of all provinces in Canada.

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Since 2003, we have increased the per pupil investment by 70 per cent. Never question our commitment to education and if he has a further question, I will continue my list.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John's South.

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

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has recently upped its predication on how much sea levels are rising. Government's current policy only allows a fifty-metre buffer from the coast. While this may be appropriate for development in some areas, it is clearly inadequate in others.

I ask the minister: We have seen communities affected by coastal erosion such as Daniel's Harbour; are you prepared to revisit the department's policy on coastline development to better reflect the recent findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

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

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

As the Minister of Environment, I am confident with the legislation that we have in place regarding our coastlines. Mr. Speaker, further to that, this Province has always taken climate change very seriously. We have the office established. We certainly make sure that we are aware of the research. We want to make sure that our policies and the way we do business in this Province and the way we look at industry and we look at greenhouse gas emissions makes us a leader within Canada, Mr. Speaker.

We have targets set for this Province. We continue to monitor our targets and we want to make sure that as we move towards 2020 that this Province becomes the leader within Canada for greenhouse gas emissions and to deal with the issues of climate change.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John's South.

**MR. OSBORNE:** My question was about coastline development, not emissions.

We know that the Island of Newfoundland has been assessed for potential coastal erosion; government has had that report for two-and-a-half years. Its findings are startling, Mr. Speaker, concluding that over 250 communities are at high sensitivity, twenty-five of those at extreme sensitivity, for coastal erosion.

I ask the minister: When will you act on this report? Do you have any plans for a similar study for the Coast of Labrador?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

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

**MS SHEA:** Mr. Speaker, climate change is not something that is unique to Newfoundland and Labrador; it is something that all parts of the world are dealing with.

Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that this Province identified since we took government in 2003. We have set up our Climate Change office. We have experts in that office who inform the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Our investments speak for themselves. We have not closed the door on any environmental issues in relation to climate change.

Actually, Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that we continue to look at what causes climate change in Newfoundland and Labrador, whether that is greenhouse gas emissions, coastal erosion, or any other effects that we have to deal with. It could be the weather changes. We want to make sure we are aware of these issues and we have the proper investments to make sure we look after the health and safety of the people of this Province.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John's South.

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, government has had the report for two-and-a-half years. They should be aware that over 250 communities are at high sensitivity and twenty-five communities at extreme sensitivity.

Are you going to change the coastline development policy of fifty meters or not, for the communities that are at extreme sensitivity?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

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

**MS SHEA:** Mr. Speaker, as I said, I am quite confident in the legislation that we have in Newfoundland and Labrador. In addition to that, we have information. We are more than willing to work with our communities to ensure safety in these communities. I hope the member is not suggesting that we resettle 250 communities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The more information we have allows us more ways to consult, to deal with, and to look at options to deal with issues. When a report outlines issues, it does not mean we have to change everything, but it certainly means, Mr. Speaker, we are aware of issues. We have to implement the necessary solutions when we are dealing with particular problems.

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

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

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Mr. Speaker, 696 safety directives have been issued to two mining companies in Labrador West in the last year. Eleven of the twenty-six workplace fatalities in the last year were in the mining sector, yet there have not been any full-time occupational health and safety officers in Labrador West for the past three years.

I ask the minister: Why has your government failed to fill these important OHS positions in Labrador West?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, any discussion about safety is an opportunity. We currently have two positions for inspectors in Labrador West, which have been vacant for about three years. We have gone through several unsuccessful attempts to fill these vacancies. The labour market conditions in Labrador are causing issues with public and private sector organizations, and we are doing the best we can in terms of fulfilling these vacancies. We are very confident in our protocols and our inspection protocols with regard to inspecting the priority areas in Labrador and the rest of the Province.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, for a quick question.

**MS DEMPSTER:** Mr. Speaker, depriving people of standard services is unfair and unjust. Many communities in our Province are doing without broadband or they have substandard dial-up service.

I ask the minister: What is your plan to ensure our residents and business leaders are treated fairly by providing them access now to high-speed Internet service?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Innovation, Business and Rural Development.

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

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

I appreciate the member's question because it gives me an opportunity to talk about all the wonderful investments we have made in broadband in Newfoundland and Labrador. Since coming into power in 2003, Mr. Speaker,

we have spent \$29 million which has leveraged \$115 million.

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

**MS JOHNSON:** Mr. Speaker, in 2003 we had 114 communities with broadband; we are now over 500 communities, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS JOHNSON:** Just recently this year in the Budget we announced another \$6.2 million for further investment, and that RFP will be coming soon.

Thank you.

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

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

**MS MICHAEL:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, the Minister of Health and Community Services said her department is looking at increasing the hours of physicians and other health professionals in ER departments during peak times.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: When will these additional physicians and nursing professionals be in place to cope with emergency room congestion?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated yesterday, we are exceptionally concerned about wait times in all areas of health care, and that is why we have invested so much money into ensuring that we improve our wait times right throughout the system.

In fact, we have seen some phenomenal improvements in our wait times, which is a testament to how well we are doing the work. We have A plus ratings, where once we had C ratings, Mr. Speaker. We have been acknowledged by CIHI. We have been acknowledged by the Wait Time Alliance and so on for doing exceptional work here. The people in our Clinical Efficiency Division, Mr. Speaker, really need to be commended for the extraordinary work they have done in improving wait times.

We have invested money now in our emergency departments, and I have every confidence that we will see the same kind of good results there as a result of those investments.

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

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

**MS MICHAEL:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Too bad I did not ask a question about wait times.

We continue to hear about understaffing problems in our emergency rooms. One senior I am aware of, and there are more than this one, was put in a room by herself for several hours with no attention from staff, no water, no food, no blankets.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Does she realize the urgency of the need for more ER staff in our hospitals?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, our mandate as a government in terms of health care is to provide quality care. Mr. Speaker, we are delivering on that. We have seen that through the accreditation process



at Eastern Health which was 94.2 per cent, at Central Health which was in excess of that, at about 95 per cent, and at Labrador-Grenfell as well. The accreditation is currently underway now at Western Health.

We are seeing that quality care is being provided in all of our health care authorities, Mr. Speaker. That is our mandate. That is what we are going to continue to do, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MS MICHAEL:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The minister forgets what was said about ER in that accreditation report. Since Budget 2012, government has promised to set up Rapid Response Teams at hospitals to help seniors avoid long stays in the ER and return home with short-term supports.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: When will these Rapid Response Teams be up and running?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, she is quite right, we are actually leading the way here. This is a very innovative process of putting in place rapid response. We committed to doing two, but in actual fact we have decided now because of the success of the two that we have started with that we are going to have four Rapid Response Teams right throughout the Province. We are seeing incredible results with them.

The ones that she is asking about are in place, Mr. Speaker, and we are continuing on through the Province. As I said, when we can look at CTAS or doing the triage system and identify the patients who can be seen faster and take

them out of the emergency wait rooms and into other areas of the hospital, we really do make huge improvements in the overall wait times in those emergency rooms.

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

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

**MS MICHAEL:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Much of the emergency room congestion across the Province is due to people not having access to a family doctor.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Will the department look at establishing primary health care clinics, a proven solution to ER congestion?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I am really happy to stand here today and talk about the improvements that have happened in terms of being able to have access to family physicians in Newfoundland and Labrador, and to specialists in Newfoundland and Labrador. Mr. Speaker, right now we have more doctors practicing in this Province than we have ever had in our history.

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

**MS SULLIVAN:** We have 1,155 doctors, Mr. Speaker, more than we have ever had in our history. We were also early adapters of nurse practitioners in this Province, to the point now where we are 123 per cent better than anywhere else in Canada in terms of the per population ratio on nurse practitioners. We are seeing huge improvements there.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John's East.

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

I think the minister needs to go down to Burin and look at the doctor situation there because there is a chronic shortage already.

Mr. Speaker, the recent release of the Province's ambulance review speaks to several changes and severe changes that are needed in order to have more effective patient transfer and care. Paramedics were consulted on the matters involved, as well as other public. Now government has started a new round of consultations. We would like to know why?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I will respond to his preamble first. I was in Burin two weeks ago – he was asking me if I should go down – and had many conversations around the doctors. We are working on recruitment. We have seen some improvements in the recruitment in doctors down there, Mr. Speaker, and we are continuing to work on that. Things are moving.

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

**MS SULLIVAN:** Now, Mr. Speaker, as to part two; in terms of the ambulance review, we are very happy with the recommendations that have come forward through that ambulance review. Our goal is to see a more patient centric ambulance review.

We have the recommendations. Now that we have them we are going back to the various stakeholders of the ambulance operations in this Province, that being the ambulance operators, the ambulance health professionals, and those who use them, Mr. Speaker, to see where they sit with those recommendations.

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

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

The hon. the Member for St. John's East, time for a quick question without preamble.

**MR. MURPHY:** Mr. Speaker, the new consultations spell yet a further delay implementing a fix. Paramedics are getting tired of the delay, they want relief. When are they going to get it?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I have no idea where the member opposite is getting that information. I have been speaking with ambulance operators; I have been speaking with the professionals. Mr. Speaker, they are very happy that we are consulting them at this point in time. There will be no delay. We have committed to having that done by early December and then moving on, as was suggested within the recommendations that came to us.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

### **Tabling of Documents**

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

In accordance with section 19.(5)(a) of the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act, I hereby table the minutes of the House of Assembly Management Commission meetings held on April 23, May 15, and July 16, 2013.

Further tabling of reports?

Notices of Motion.

**Notices of Motion**

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act to Amend the Law Society Act, 1999. (Bill 23)

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

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. KING:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board will move that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider a resolution relating to the advancing or guaranteeing of certain loans made under the Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957. (Bill 24)

**MR. SPEAKER:** Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

**Petitions**

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John's North.

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

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS violent workplace incidents involving convenience store clerks and gas station attendants are a serious health and safety issue; and

WHEREAS many public and private sector employees are being left in vulnerable situations, especially in the opening and closing of their buildings and establishments; and

WHEREAS all workers deserve protection from danger and harm; and

WHEREAS current government regulations are inadequate in providing even basic protection for those vulnerable workers; and

WHEREAS it is the responsibility of employers to keep workers safe, and the responsibility of government to ensure employers adhere to regulations;

We, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge government to immediately enact legislation and regulations to protect workers in hazardous workplaces, including late shifts in convenience stores and gas stations. This legislation must direct employers to have a minimum of two workers on site after 10:00 p.m. and before 6:00 a.m., or have a secure barrier between the worker and customer in place before these hours.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I say, Mr. Speaker, it is certainly troubling and concerning, if not disturbing, that we have seen such an increase in the number of violent incidents in workplaces in our city and other parts of the Province over the past few years. Oftentimes this involves people working for minimum wage in the service industry. A lot of those workers are younger workers. These are people who are perhaps trying to earn a few bucks to go to university or college, or people who have no other alternative. This is the only work they can find. So it is increasingly dangerous for those workers because of these sorts of dangerous incidents.

Certainly, lots of people have opined and hypothesized about why it is that this is happening, some combination of our economic situation and social conditions in the Province. I do not have an expert opinion on that, because I

am certainly not an expert in this area, but I think we need to try and do more to protect those workers and ensure that their workplaces are safe. I think the ideas in this petition are a good place to start.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

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

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS Labrador-Grenfell Health employs a nurse practitioner at St. Anthony, able to take appointments and operate a full scope of practice for which nurse practitioners are licensed to operate; and

WHEREAS Western Health at Port Saunders and Norris Point on the Great Northern Peninsula has similar nurse practitioner practices; and

WHEREAS nurse practitioners have advanced education and training beyond the registered nurse level and provide comprehensive care ranging from health promotion and prevention to diagnostics and treatment, including ordering diagnostic tests, prescribing pharmaceuticals, and performing procedures within a legislated scope of practice, and

WHEREAS nurse practitioners are alleviating physician shortages in rural areas across Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador by operating clinical practices in collaboration with physicians and other health practitioners, leading to better access to services and shorter wait times; and

WHEREAS residents from Eddies Cove East to Reefs Harbour deserve to have regular nurse

practitioner clinics that are available to other residents on the Great Northern Peninsula;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to ensure that a nurse practitioner clinical practice be established at The Strait of Belle Isle Health Centre to be fully integrated with the clinical practices of physicians.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by residents of Blue Cove, St. Barbe, Foresters Point, Reefs Harbour, Flower's Cove, Savage Cove, Pines Cove, and Green Island Brook. It is highly important that when you have health care professionals on staff, when you are able to recruit nurse practitioners, that they be fully utilized and able to practice the full scope. It gives a better value for our healthcare dollar, and certainly makes sure that healthcare operates in a way that meets the needs of people.

So the residents of my area are certainly asking for nurse practitioner clinics to be fully integrated at the Strait of Belle Isle Health Centre.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

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

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

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, to the hon. House of Assembly for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS home care allows the elderly and people with disabilities to remain within the comfort and security of their own homes, home care also allows people to be discharged from hospital earlier; and

WHEREAS many families find it very difficult to recruit and retain home care workers for their loved ones; and

WHEREAS the PC Blue Book 2011 as well as the 2012 Speech from the Throne committed that government would develop a new model of home care and give people the option of receiving that care from family members; and

WHEREAS government has given no time commitment for when government plans to implement paying family caregivers;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to implement a new home care model to cover family caregivers.

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, one example of one family who is really pressing this matter is a family in Port Saunders. One of the family members has been regularly sending e-mails and letters to the minister and to the Premier pleading. The situation is that there is an elderly relative and she suffers from dementia. Because of this, she does not really take to strangers very easily.

She is not easy for a home care worker to manage. People suffering dementia have all sorts of issues. Certainly caregivers may have a difficult time dealing with people who are stricken with dementia.

The issue is that there is a qualified family home care provider who could be hired if the program were to be extended. The alternative is that strangers provide the care. In the ordinary course that might not be much of a problem, however, in the case of strangers because of her dementia it is very difficult for her to adjust to a new person. Any turnover within every few months or so, she is dealing with a stranger in her home and she is absolutely terrorized. This is really cruel and inhumane that somebody would have to have that sort of a fate in their advancing years, past eighty years of age.

This is the type of a patient and a person who could benefit from the government making good on its promise in 2011 to fund this type of home care and they are not doing it. It was recommitted in 2012, budgeted in 2013, and it still is not being provided. Mr. Speaker, if the funds have been allocated, the commitment has been made, the promise made, why is it, these people want to know, that it still is not forthcoming?

I get calls on a regular basis. The last time around when funds were approved in the Budget, my explanation was it looks like it is enough for three quarters of the year. Maybe three months in the government is going to start with the program and take it into next year. It has not happened and these people are really pleading for relief in this situation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

I have a petition.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS hundreds of residents of the South Coast of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, including residents of the communities of Burgeo, Ramea, Grey River, and François, use Route 480 on a regular basis for work, medical, educational, and social reasons; and

WHEREAS there is no cellphone coverage on Route 480; and

WHEREAS residents and users of Route 480 require cellphone coverage to ensure their safety and communication abilities; and

WHEREAS the Department of IBRD recently announced funding to improve broadband

services in rural Newfoundland and Labrador;  
and

WHEREAS the residents and users of Route 480 feel that the Department of Innovation, Business and Rural Development should also invest in cellphone coverage for rural Newfoundland and Labrador;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to support the users of Route 480 in their request to obtain cellphone coverage along Route 480.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, it is another opportunity for me to stand up and put in a cellphone petition. Again, it is a huge issue in this Province. At this point it is not really a want, it is a need. It is a necessity all over this Province. We have very rugged terrain with a very large and different demographic everywhere.

It is an issue that affects us all. There are certainly plenty of members across the way who have areas that just do not have cellphone coverage. My district has two routes particularly, Route 470 and Route 480, that do not have coverage. It is getting to the point now where it is a safety deterrent. It is a tourism deterrent. It is an economic deterrent. It is just not acceptable in this day and age.

I can understand government does not have the ability to do everything that they need to do. However, government has no excuse not to at least have a strategy put together to say how we are going to address this. I do not even know if they can identify the areas that are not covered. I have asked for that, and I have yet to receive it from the former minister.

I look forward to working with the new minister to discuss this issue. Again, we cannot be reactive here; we need to be proactive. It is being done elsewhere. We need to get this done.

I will continue entering those petitions until such time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John's South.

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

I have a petition and I will read the petition.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act was introduced in the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador, debated, approved by Members of the House of Assembly, and received Royal Assent in June of 2007; and

WHEREAS this legislation has not been proclaimed into force; and

WHEREAS this legislation was intended to make our communities safer, and we believe if the government proclaimed this legislation into law our communities would indeed be safer;

WHEREUPON we, the undersigned petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to proclaim into law the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation that was voted on in this House of Assembly, I do believe, would make our communities safer. I know that the minister has recently announced a joint police taskforce, and I commend him for doing that. I think it is actually a very good move. It is something that will, in fact, provide results; but the reason for this legislation, Mr. Speaker, was because law enforcement can only go so far unless they have enough evidence to get a search warrant, make arrests, and take a case to trial.

This legislation, Mr. Speaker, would give the Department of Justice and peace officers within the Department of Justice a little more ability to deal with some issues; for example, on Tessier Place in my district where police had been aware of a property on Tessier Place dealing in drugs and prostitution and other very serious issues but, for two years, the police were unable to get enough evidence to shut that property down or to make arrests. The Department of Justice would have been able to do so. I firmly believe it would have made a huge difference in that neighbourhood.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that government will reconsider the safer communities and neighbourhoods legislation and proclaim it and put it into force and allow communities to make the complaints to the department and for the department to be able to investigate those complaints and make the community safer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

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

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS government has a responsibility to ensure that Internet access is broadly available so people have a right to be able to access the Internet in order to exercise and enjoy their rights to freedom of expression and opinion and other fundamental human rights; and

WHEREAS St. Carol's still remains without broadband services; and

WHEREAS residents rely on Internet services for education, business, communication and social activity; and

WHEREAS wireless and wired technologies exist to provide broadband service to rural communities to replace slower dial-up service;

We, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge government to assist providers to ensure St. Carol's is in receipt of broadband Internet services in Newfoundland and Labrador.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I guess in Question Period today, it is to be acknowledged that government has invested \$29 million and levered over \$100 million in funds to create that infrastructure, that backbone into a number of communities.

What we need to do now is where we have about 200 communities still without broadband is make sure that we do that mapping model. We know that there are communities that are close together, that there are other solutions, whether it be using wireless, or wireline, or other technologies to provide broadband and expanding that service. It is so essential for our rural communities that we have broadband so that we can grow the economy, that we can have more educational opportunities, and that we can build vibrant rural economies in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I am certainly looking forward to working with the minister and urging all government members, let's press this issue, let's get behind broadband because having an advanced economy is certainly important.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, to the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS minimum wage is a provincial responsibility; and

WHEREAS minimum wage is intended to be a living wage, but experience from minimum waged employees have proven different; and

WHEREAS because of this, these workers find it hard to support their families, local businesses and the provincial economy;

WHEREUPON your petitioners call upon all Members of the House of Assembly to urge government to increase the minimum wage and tie it to the Consumer Price Index so individuals can afford to financially support themselves, their families, local businesses, and the economy.

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, on Sunday, I attended a youth leadership function called RADHOC at Memorial University. The young people who participated – and this is the second petition; they provided two petitions to federal representatives and two petitions to provincial representatives. I appreciate that the government has addressed minimum wage over the past several years and I appreciate that government has more recently addressed minimum wage and said that the minimum wage will increase and there are set intervals.

The young people who have asked me to present this petition – actually they asked the Member for Mount Pearl South to present the petition and he thought it would be more appropriate that I should present the petition, so he asked me to do so.

The young people make a good point when they say: tie it to the Consumer Price Index. Because by tying the minimum wage to the Consumer Price Index, that would create certainty, certainly less administration, if it were tied to the CPI every six months or whatever would be a reasonable time span, as government pensions are and other government benefits are. It would be, in effect, self-indexing so we would not have

to come back as frequently and deal with minimum wages.

Dealing with minimum wages every so often creates a conflict between employers and employees and it certainly would be unnecessary if the government would adopt the approach taken by these young people. That is the purpose of this petition, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, very much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Orders of the Day.

### Orders of the Day

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

**MR. KING:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 13, and I would like to move:

WHEREAS, in accordance with section 45 of the House of Assembly Act and section 39 of the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act, the Commissioner for Legislative Standards has recommended to this Honourable House:

- 1) that MHA Brazil be reprimanded by the House of Assembly for failing to file an accurate disclosure statement; and
- 2) that MHA Brazil be reprimanded by the House of Assembly for violating the Members' Code of Conduct.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House of Assembly concurs with the findings and recommendations of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards and asks that the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island stand in his place in this House and apologize to this Assembly for his failure and violation as cited by the report of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Is there a seconder for the motion, the hon. Government House Leader?



**MR. KING:** The Member for Gander.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Government House Leader, to the motion?

**MR. KING:** Yes, to the motion, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have a few comments that I want to make, and I am not going to be long, but just to recollect for a few moments. Upon learning that there might be a possible problem or issue with respect to what we are talking about today, I want to be very clear that our government and the Premier acted very quickly to make sure that we demonstrated openness, transparency, and accountability in trying to determine if in fact there was an issue. We took it very seriously.

There were a number of reports that were conducted. I think it is very clear that the member realizes a mistake was made and has certainly been very openly apologetic to members of his constituency and this House.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate from government's perspective that we all recognize there are expectations of us as Members of the House of Assembly, both inside and out. Certainly, I am sure, on many days people question whether we live up to their expectations in the House, particularly in Question Period when we do have a little bit of sport and a bit of fun. The reality is people do hold us to high standards. When it comes to the behaviours that we exhibit outside of the House of Assembly in carrying out our daily duties, we recognize there is a high standard and people have high expectations. We are responsible for living up to those expectations.

What has happened here, Mr. Speaker, I submit, hopefully never will happen but could conceivably happen to any one of us at any point in time. We have standards that apply to us. We have a Code of Conduct, and I am sure all of us, perhaps even right now, are wondering if there is something that unintentionally or otherwise we have done or are doing that could put us in a conflicting situation.

Many of us, as you would know, Mr. Speaker, are involved in our communities outside of politics. We are involved because we live in the communities and we want to stay connected with people and to reach out to the residents. We are involved, frankly because, for many of us, it was involvement in the communities – such as the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island – that launched most of our political careers. It got us engaged in working with the public and in advocating on public issues, and garnered an interest in us to take that a step forward.

We all recognize the issue we are talking about. We all recognize the standards that we live by. We all recognize I think that there is close scrutiny on our actions and on what we do. It is fair to say – I am sure all members would agree – that whether a mistake was made, whether it was intentional or whether it was innocent and unintentional, we have to take responsibility for our actions. The motion that I have brought forward today on behalf of government simply reflects that intent, that the member take responsibility for the actions.

My wish, Mr. Speaker, coming out of this motion today, assuming that the House will support the motion, would be three things; first of all that the member will in fact stand in his place, do as the motion asks and apologize and accept responsibility for the actions. I have every confidence that the member did no ill harm here, did not intend to do anything wrong, and will apologize and has learned from it.

My second hope, Mr. Speaker, is that all of us, besides the MHA for Conception Bay East – Bell Island, will also learn something from this incident. Perhaps if nothing else, the Code of Conduct that perhaps many of us do not often read, from time to time maybe we should read it and make sure that we are not doing something to ourselves or putting ourselves in a situation unintentionally that puts us in a breach of the code. As I said, I hope all of us have learned something from this and perhaps develop a keener understanding of the rules and the expectations.

Third, I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that the public will see in this a couple of things; number one, perhaps a recognition that we are all human. Politicians are no different than members of the public. We do things sometimes that cause us to perhaps exercise bad judgment or perhaps make a mistake, oftentimes unintentional.

We are no different – and I say this a lot in my district when I talk to people - the only difference in the forty-eight of us here is that our names went on a ballot and we won and got the right to sit in here. We are no different than the other people we represent. I would hope the public would see today perhaps that there is a very human side to members of this House.

Secondly, I would hope that the public would have respect for this House of Assembly and for the people in here in seeing that we are taking the issue very seriously, all members here, and that we are holding one of our own members accountable for the actions that have occurred. We are going to take the appropriate action today.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I have made a few points that I thought were important to make on behalf of government. I want to conclude my remarks and invite my colleagues, whoever may wish to speak next.

Thank you.

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

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

I stand today as the House Leader for the Official Opposition and to speak to the matter before us. I am speaking today on behalf of the entire Opposition caucus.

Today, in front of us we have a motion that stems from a complaint and a subsequent report by the Commissioner for Legislative Standards. The facts of the matter have been laid out by Mr. Powers, and I certainly do not see any need to reiterate or rehash these matters. I think the

report speaks for itself and lays out the situation very clearly.

In many ways, we are here basically because of serious events that impacted this Legislature back in the mid-2000s. Again, the facts of that time have been laid out very well, have been very well reported. What happened did lead to a very comprehensive review and a report that was filed in 2007 by Chief Justice Green, the Green Report that we all know very well.

It certainly was a dark period. The purpose of this was we needed to rebound and we needed to restore confidence in us, members of the House of Assembly, as public officials. That is what we need to do, is restore confidence in the people that we represent. The Code of Conduct was born, legislation was created, and a guide for members was created as well and established.

Being an elected member of the House of the Assembly carries with it a great responsibility. We have a duty to those that we represent, and I am very confident when I say that every single one of us in here takes that duty very seriously, every single one of us. What happens, though, when it involves one member of the House it really does have the effect, in some ways, of affecting all of us as members.

One other thing that comes out of this as well is it is very hard for us, as members, for one to judge another. Therefore, we did establish the position of a Commissioner of Members' Interest, whose task was the duty of ensuring that there are no conflicts of interest; ensuring that the confidence is maintained, and to make sure that the people know we are in here and we are doing our job and doing it well, and again, looking out to those we represent and whose trust we are here to maintain.

We accept the findings of the Commissioner in this case. Looking at the report, the Commissioner has found that the member breached the code due to an oversight. To me, an oversight is similar to an absolute liability offence in many ways. The lack of intent, even if there is no intent there, it does not remove the

responsibility or the wrongdoing. So the commission of the act alone is enough to satisfy the wrongdoing, even if the offender or individual did not intend to commit said act.

In the world that we live in, the political world, perception is reality. The appearance of wrongdoing, or just being perceived to be involved in wrongdoing can be fatal. It can be fatal to all of us. We have been entrusted by the public to protect their interests. As members, we have to do everything to make sure that this trust is maintained. I think that is the big, overarching theme here, is that we have to ensure that trust is maintained. We have gone through a dark period. We have learned from that. I think everybody has learned from that.

The situation itself, we are talking about disclosure statements. Again, it is just another step that is vital in maintaining the confidence in our system. Obviously, government acted very quickly on this. The fact that the matter was referred to the RNC very quickly shows that it was taken serious and was looked at as serious. I think everybody was satisfied and relieved when the RNC did their due diligence, did the report and came back and the case was closed. We are happy to see that.

We have reviewed this report and we have reviewed the motion made by the Government House Leader. The legislation points to different penalties that can be found or enforced upon a member who is found in breach. In this case, the Commissioner recommended the penalty of a reprimand. We are satisfied with that finding, and with the Government House Leader's motion. We will be supporting that motion.

There is certainly no enjoyment to be found in having to deal with a matter of this nature. Nobody is happy to have to deal with it, but it is necessary if we are to ensure the confidence of the people is still there with us. Any breach has to be treated as serious, which I think this has been.

Any breach, even when by a sole member, affects every single one of us. Therefore, I am

satisfied that this has been treated seriously, that due diligence has been exercised, the matter has been dealt with in a public manner and I am hoping this will satisfy the public and us all. Again, it is something none of us wants to be here for, but we are here and I think it is being dealt with in a satisfactory manner, and it is the only way to deal with it.

Those will conclude my remarks, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS MICHAEL:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

As House Leader, I too represent our caucus and I think it is important to speak to this motion because of its seriousness.

The report by the Commissioner for Legislative Standards gives us an opportunity here today to reflect on our responsibilities under the House of Assembly Act, the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act, and as well, the Members' Code of Conduct which was asked for by Commissioner Greene, as has been mentioned already, and which is referred to in our Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act.

As elected representatives, we are responsible to the people of the Province for our conduct. That is why we have a Commissioner for Legislative Standards. We have to be held accountable for all we do that relates to us in our role as MHAs, and we all know how wide that accountability is. Our experience, if nothing else, teaches us that once we become elected.

Part of that accountability is the individual responsibility. We all have to make sure we understand our duties and responsibilities and the legislation that covers the carrying out of them. We have to make every effort to ensure that we understand fully the acts and the Code of Conduct. The fact that we are here this afternoon and having this discussion I am sure is going to send all of us into making sure that we do have clear understanding.

There is one thing I would like to focus on. The major finding of the Commissioner deals with conflict of interest, which is referenced in our Code of Conduct: “Members will base their conduct on a consideration of the public interest. They are individually responsible for preventing conflicts of interest and will endeavour to prevent them from arising. Members will take all reasonable steps to resolve any such conflict quickly and in a manner which is in the best interests of the public.”

We, each one, shall need to read carefully the Commissioner’s report where he guides us in how to interpret conflict of interest, himself using a broader interpretation than that found in the House of Assembly Act, in order to ensure accountability, transparency, and public trust in the administration of our offices as MHAs. I welcome the Commissioner’s report since it offers us real clarity in this area. Public trust can be lost in many ways, and we have had other examples of public trust being lost in this House. That has been referenced, too, by the Opposition House Leader. The report now gives us a bigger picture in which to assess how that can happen and how we can act with integrity, and that is the important thing.

Mr. Speaker, we will be happy as a caucus to vote to accept this report.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Is the House ready for the question?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Yes.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those in favour, ‘aye’.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against, ‘nay’.

Motion carried.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

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

I apologize to the House of Assembly for my oversight.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I call from the Order Paper, Order 3, third reading of a bill, An Act To Amend The Services Charges Act, Bill 5.

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

**MR. KING:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Conservation, that Bill 5, An Act To Amend The Services Charges Act, be now read a third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that this bill be now read a third time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion that Bill 5 be now read a third time?

All those in favour, ‘aye’.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against, ‘nay’.

Motion carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Services Charges Act. (Bill 5)

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

On motion, a bill, “An Act To Amend The Services Charges Act”, read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 5)

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 5, second reading of a bill, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 4, Bill 12.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member of Advanced Education and Skills.

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am glad to get on my feet today to speak to An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act No. 4, Bill 12. This is a piece that we need to get done –

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded by?

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Oh, I am sorry, Mr. Speaker.

It is seconded by the Minister of Education.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that Bill 12, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 4, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, “An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 4”. (Bill 6)

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I am sorry for forgetting to mention the seconder, but I am on my feet this afternoon to speak to An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration No. 4, Bill 12. This piece of work, Mr. Speaker, seeks the approval to amend the Revenue Administration Act to make some minor technical details and a change relating to the mining tax.

The mining tax, Mr. Speaker, is required once the operator achieves commercial production. In other words, they have significant expenditures and time may very well pass between the decision to move forward with a mine, bringing

the mine into production, and actually achieving commercial production.

So right now, Mr. Speaker, we have to rely on the first mining tax return filed by the operator, which is filed when the commercial production is achieved. Then we get the opportunity to review the expenditures to determine their appropriateness and the deductibility. As well, due to the fact that significant time may have passed, documents certainly may not be available, if at all, so that makes it hard for the people in the Finance department to do a proper evaluation on the commercial operation and what has transpired between the time they first entered into the process to bring that mine to production.

So it is relative to these recent amendments in the Revenue Administration regulations that now require a person that holds a mining lease to file a tax return. This amendment that we propose today is to add a new provision that would make Part I, Part II, Part VII, and Part X of the act apply to a person who has been issued a mining lease, but who is not yet liable to pay tax under the act, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to be clear on that. The person would not be liable to pay tax, but they certainly would be liable to file a return. That way the Finance department can do an evaluation.

To just explain a little bit further, Mr. Speaker, Part I of the act contains the general administration provisions, such as maintaining the books and records, confidentiality, and penalties and offences under the act. Part II of the act is the Inspection and Compliance provisions which provide officials with the necessary legislative authority to inspect a business and/or their books and records. Part VII of the act is specific provisions for the administration of the Mining and Mineral Rights Tax Act. Part X contains the Regulations, Transitional and Commencement provisions.

The reason a new provision is required is because a person who only holds a mining lease is not yet a taxpayer under the act. This

amendment will make that person subject to the provisions of the act as if they were a taxpayer.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, this is really a bit of housekeeping in regard to the act. It would make the process more transparent and clear for the Department of Finance to allow our people to actually evaluate the operation in its entirety from its beginning to the actual time that it goes into commercialization. The reason for that, to be clear on that as well, is this is a long period of time we are talking about from the first start to going to commercialization. Sometimes records get lost; sometimes records are not filed. This way we will collect them all the way along, and it will make it a lot more transparent in that process.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will take my place in the House and listen to all the comments of my hon. colleagues across the House. I will take any questions or anything that they might provide in regard to their speaking. I certainly consider this just a simple amendment to the act to come in-line with the regulations to certainly enable our Finance officials to do their job more effectively and provide a service that they provide to the people of the Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

It is a pleasure to stand today and speak to Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act No. 4. Obviously, given the very meagre size of this bill, it is a housekeeping bill. I hate to use the term that it has not much substance because that is not the case; everything we change has substance to it. However, it is not a large bill and it is more of a housekeeping nature.

My understanding of it is that it has to deal with regulations, and regulations that are being gazetted. When we talk about the mining companies, there is often a very long span of time in between the time they get their leases

and the time they actually go into production. During that period of time, there is no payment and no taxation.

Basically what we are trying to do here is we are trying to amend this so that mining companies will now have to file the tax returns on a yearly basis so that the Province has a better handle on the amount of expenses that have been incurred in relation to that project. That seems like a very sensible amendment, obviously. The good news is, with everything going on, it seems like something we might see more of because we do see a lot of news stories going on these days with mining.

Actually, there was a story in the paper just this week about more exploration going on, on the Burgeo highway, more finds on the Burgeo highway near Stephenville. When you talk about what is going on, there are a lot of districts all over the place – certainly in my own I have seen some work, and it is very exciting, very encouraging.

I do not think this provision is onerous on any company. I think it is necessary. What we need to find out is that when the mining company actually does go into production, what are the expenses being incurred by that company? We need to know what these companies are expending and what it is costing. Again, there could be a huge period of time between the time they get the lease and the time they actually go into production.

Speaking to mining, again, I had an opportunity to speak to different companies over the summer that were out in my district and just getting a handle on the amount of time and the amount of money that goes into the process leading up to production. It is absolutely amazing. You have no idea until you have sat down with them.

This is basically formalizing this approach. It is timely and we need to find out what these expenses are. This needs to be changed in the legislation because the change in regulations was insufficient to mandate the mining companies to file expenses in their tax returns annually. So it needs to be done. If we do not

do this, companies are able to forego that recommendation and obviously we do not want that.

Again, I would love to stand here and continue on about mining because there is a lot of good news in the mining industry. I am very happy to see that and hopefully there will be lots of tax returns coming in that are identifying this. Hopefully our goal is to reduce the amount of time in between mining lease and production because once that production starts the revenues coming in are certainly going to be great for this Province.

I am happy to speak to this amendment. We will be supporting this, obviously. I may have some questions during Committee and look forward to hearing the rest of the comments by members.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

**MS MICHAEL:** (Inaudible) and I am happy to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act No. 4. I thank the department and the minister for the briefing that our staff received on this. We feel quite comfortable with the fact that the change that is being suggested is truly nothing more than strictly housekeeping and it actually makes legal a practice that has been going on for a long time. Making sure that this practice is put in legislation then becomes very important.

The amount of time, that has been pointed out already, but the amount of time that lapses between somebody getting a lease and going through with a decision to mine and then getting the mine into production is a long time; and it is important, I think, to hold companies accountable for the fact that they are using the land. I think that would be the rationale for the fact that they would need to file tax reports, that they are using the land. Whether they have gone into production or not, there is a responsibility for the fact they have been given a lease and a responsibility for the fact that they are using the

land and the resource that belongs to the people of the Province.

It is extremely important that we have legalized this practice that has been going on. The technical amendment allows tax officials the access to mining properties and records from the issuance of the lease. That is really, really important that the companies are being held accountable.

I think it is important, especially with companies coming in from outside of our Province and outside of Canada that we have a legal document that is very, very clear. They do not always come in knowing what our standards are here. They may know it in some ways, but they come in with standards from the country where they are coming from, whether those are environmental standards, labour standards, standards around doing the business. So it is very important that we are clear with them and that we make sure that anything that we want in practice is legal, binding, and in our legislation.

That is why I would ask the government to think about other ways, especially with the growth that is happening in mining in the Province, think about the other ways in which government should also be looking at the companies that are doing the mining and looking at legislation in other ways that we may need to put in place.

We have had experiences here in the Province where mining companies coming in from outside of the country do not seem to understand our labour standards, for example. It would be very important for this government to do something that they promised some years ago, and that was looking at anti-scab legislation. Because we have had proof in this Province that you have companies coming in that think it is quite all right to keep workers out on an eighteen-month picket line, for example.

I do encourage this government to do more than housekeeping when it comes to putting legislation in place dealing with mining companies. Housekeeping is important, having correct legal language in there to cover practices that are going on is important, but I ask the

government to look more closely at the other issues that they have to look at with regard to the influx of mining companies into our Province and make sure that they do a little bit more work than just housekeeping when it comes to looking at legislative change for the people and for the workers, especially in the mining companies in this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills. If he speaks now, he will adjourn debate.

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to adjourn debate in regard to the amendments to the Revenue Administration Act, Bill 12. I am happy to see that my colleagues across the House are in concurrence and in support of the proposed bill. It certainly will not be a burden on the companies doing business in our jurisdiction with regard to the mining industry.

As well, it will enable the Finance officials in the department to do their work more effectively, to evaluate the expenditures that takes a company from the period that they are given a lease to the actual time that they go into production. This is all good. Again, I want to thank my colleagues across the House for their comments and their support on the bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the said bill be now read a second time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 4. (Bill 12)

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

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

**MR. KING:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 4", read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole presently, by leave.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, that the House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 12.

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

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

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

### Committee of the Whole

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

We are now considering Bill 12, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 4.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 4". (Bill 12)

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?



The hon. the Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

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

The bill that was put forward is quite simple in nature, but I did have a question for the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills because it talks about when "...issued a mining lease, but who is not liable to pay tax under the Act."

Is there a timeline of which somebody could hold a lease? It may have commercial value and they are just not producing, that could have impact where they could be charged fees?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Under the current legislation, Mr. Chair, there is no time frame. It is hard to predict how much time it would take from the time that a lease is actually issued to the time of production. There are a lot of variables that have to come into play, including financing. These are usually big operations, so that period of time is unpredictable. To put a time frame on it would really hamper the growth in the industry on a go-forward basis.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

**MR. BENNETT:** Yes, Mr. Chair, I will be speaking in support of this bill; my entire caucus, I think, is going to support this bill.

One of the points that have not been mentioned, which I think is probably useful, is that one of the big challenges in government is estimating revenue. Undoubtedly, estimating revenue from oil, from mining, and from all sorts of resource development is a tricky process. If you have a company, such as a mining company, for example, and they spend many years in development, they rack up all sorts of expenses, losses that they have carried forward for three, five, seven, or ten years.

The Finance department is expecting they are going to come ashore with maybe a couple of

hundred million dollars profit one of these days in their first year; meanwhile, they have a couple of hundred dollars worth of losses they are carrying forward, then the Treasury is trying to estimate a certain amount of income based on when they will become profitable without having any real insight into what their losses are.

I think, even though it is a very short bill and it seems like a relatively minor bill, it probably seeks to do more. Maybe the original drafters in the department would like to have some better view, a better idea of what the revenue will be when whatever mining enterprise comes in and becomes profitable.

I think it is a useful bill, even though it is small. It is useful for streamlining anticipated income. To do that you need to know what the losses are. If the companies are filing tax returns, then at least the Province knows what the losses are that are being carried forward. The losses have to be recovered before we get any tax revenue.

That is my only point on this bill. I am happy to support it.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

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

On motion, enacting clause carried.

**CHAIR:** Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

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

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

Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 12.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 12.

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, Mr. Speaker returned to the Chair.

**MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman):** The hon. the Member for the District of Port de Grave.

**MR. LITTLEJOHN:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 12 without amendment.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Chair of Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 12 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

**MR. KING:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

**MR. KING:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** On tomorrow.

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

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

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

This time I call Order 1, Committee of Supply: (a) Resolution and Bill No. 8 Respecting the Granting of Supplementary Supply to Her Majesty.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

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

#### Committee of the Whole

**CHAIR (Littlejohn):** We are considering the resolution, Bill 8, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Additional Expenses Of The Public Service For the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2014 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

A bill, "An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Additional Expenses Of The Public Service For the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2014 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service". (Bill 8)

**CHAIR:** Clause 1.

The hon. the Member for Humber West.

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

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

It is a great opportunity this afternoon to stand and speak to the Address in Reply bill, but before I do I just want to say congratulations to the Forget Me Not Campaign in Corner Brook, that this morning unveiled another memorial to those who laid down the ultimate sacrifice in the First World War and the Second World War and the wars that have been fought since.

In particular, to Dave Higdon and Gudrid Hutchings, as Chair, persons of that particular committee who have been working over the last little while on raising funds. I want to wish them well tonight as they embark upon their second annual gala in Corner Brook and wish them very much success in that this evening.

Mr. Chair, I, like many of my colleagues, have had the opportunity over the last number of months, in particular over the summer, to travel around the Province and chat on doorsteps and at family gatherings and at reunions and barbecues; and, yes, Mr. Chair, probably too many barbecues over the summer.

Mr. Chair, if there is a theme that runs through all conversations, no matter who I had a chance to speak to over the summer, was of great growth over the past ten years, and great and vast opportunities that await this place.

I had the opportunity this past Saturday, while picking up my car at a garage in Corner Brook, to have a conversation with a gentleman who had left Newfoundland nearly forty years ago. With only a few holiday visits, he came back a number of times, but came back a couple of years ago to retire. Without me prompting him, his thoughts, or his dialogue, in the few minutes that I had a chance to speak with him, he talked about and put into context the situation that he found himself in returning to Newfoundland and

how great of a change that has taken place over the last number of years.

He recalled life nearly forty years ago when he left Newfoundland and Labrador, with the lack of growth and the lack of opportunity, the reliance on short-term seasonal employment, Mr. Chair. He recalled crumbling infrastructure, little infrastructure investment, and only little bits of investment in our people.

He said after working away for nearly forty years and returning to this place he returned to a different Province; more importantly, Mr. Chair, he returned to a different people, and he returned to a people who have vast opportunities today and vast opportunities in the next number of years.

Very quickly he felt he was surrounded by a people and a place that believed, a Province that had matured over the last forty years to take its rightful place, plan, develop and implement its own destiny. He articulated to me – because he has only been back for two years – that he said all of that from someone who looked in from the outside, because he had spent so much time away from Newfoundland, his own Province.

Mr. Chair, he said that he could not believe the changes in nearly everything. He talked in a very frank way about politics in this Province and spoke strongly of the good decisions made in Newfoundland and Labrador over the last decade or so. I was interested when he spoke of the need to make tough decisions, ones that will serve the Province well as we move forward. Leadership, Mr. Chair, means the ability to make tough decisions. Not only the ability, but the integrity to actually make them and carry them out.

He did not have all praise for the government, like no one should, but I felt good that he recognized that making decisions based on principles and fact, not on opinion, is the way to go.

Mr. Chair, like this man I spoke to last Saturday, many of us, myself included, had many conversations this past summer and again, there

is no doubt in my mind, there is no doubt in the minds of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, that we as a people and we as a place feel better about where we are and we are geared to move forward in a very positive way.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians feel good about where we are and about the destiny that we have before us.

Our communities are doing better, Mr. Chair, but there is still work to be done and this government is up to the task. That does not mean that everything is perfect and there is not more good work to take place. There is much more work to do in Newfoundland and Labrador, but this government is up to the task to deliver.

To the contrary, Mr. Chair, as a government we recognize the vast changes that we have made for the betterment of people in this Province, but we are equipped to make this place ever better in the next few years.

Mr. Chair, these things do not just appear; they do not just pop up before our eyes. It requires planning, it requires determination, and, yes, decisions that are based on principles. We know the state we can get ourselves into if we make decisions that are not based on principles. All you have to do is go back and look at the history of Newfoundland and Labrador and see what government did and the state that this Province became when they started to make decisions that were not based on principles.

Mr. Chair, this, I believe, is a golden opportunity in this Province in many areas. I just ask the people who are listening at home to reflect on where we were to where we are today and the potential that we have for the next four, five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty years out. We have a golden opportunity in oil, in mining, and in tourism.

Yes, in the fishery, we have a golden opportunity and we have just laid some groundwork for that. In forestry and agrifoods and in research and development – amazing things taking place in Newfoundland and Labrador in research and development, monies

that government has put into research and development has garnered hundreds of millions of dollars from the investments that we have made in research and development.

Opportunities in education, and, yes, in private business.

You only have to travel around the Province, all over the Province, in Labrador, from the Northern Peninsula to the South Coast to the East Coast, to see what opportunities we have in private business and the list goes on. Hebron is an example; it will make a significant contribution to offshore production and its royalties, garnered by the Province including \$14 billion in capital costs.

Work opportunities, as my colleague to my left spoke about a few days ago, in Marystown, Bull Arm, Long Harbour, and recently with the announcement in Argentia and Labrador – and yes, Mr. Chair, in Western Newfoundland and Labrador. Others will sustain and build upon the growth opportunities for this and future generations. The North Amethyst site will produce an estimated 6 million to 8 million extra barrels of oil and, among other projects, will assist in driving the economic engine as we move forward, Mr. Chair.

Just last week we celebrated Mining Week 2013 in the Province, and the excitement associated with the current and future opportunities are numbing in mining. The mining industry has played a significant role in positioning our provincial economy on a strong footing, Mr. Chair.

The industry employs directly 11,500 lucrative paying jobs for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The mines of Newfoundland and Labrador provide the world with many key commodities. The industry in this Province, Mr. Chair, produces more than a dozen mineral compositions that contribute to our economy and our way of life. I will list just a few that we are producing in Newfoundland: iron, nickel, copper, zinc, aggregates, cobalt, gold, and silver.

Last summer, Mr. Chair, I had the opportunity to visit the Port au Port Peninsula where dolomite

is being mined. That is an amazing facility out on the Port au Port Peninsula, run by local Newfoundlanders and Labradorians – a local family from the West Coast, from Corner Brook – who is providing nearly year-round employment to 125-plus people. It is an amazing, amazing facility.

I was told last week that the value of mineral exports alone for this year is estimated to be at \$4.3 billion – \$4.3 billion. Last spring, Mr. Chair, I was glad to go to the press release downstairs in this building, where we talked about the agreement to mine underground in Voisey's Bay that will create hundreds of jobs for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and also generate millions of dollars for the economy of this Province.

Work on the Labrador Trough through Tata Steel represents our first new producing iron ore mine in nearly fifty years in the Province. Alderon's Kami Iron Ore Project is moving toward sanction and will create economic engines and benefits and drive the economic growth in this Province.

Mr. Chair, I could speak on and on about this particular topic, and I might get a chance to speak to it again; but what it means is that we are able to take the economic engine that minerals and offshore oil is generating for the people of the Province and invest in our communities, invest in our schools, invest in hospitals, invest in new clinics, and invest in our highways. That is why it is absolutely, critically important.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

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

It was strange to hear, where we are on Bill 8 about the funding, the \$1,400 for the workers that they are trying to get out, the government workers, it is strange that the Member for Humber West never mentioned them once. I guess after laying off 1,400, I wouldn't blame you for not mentioning the 1,400 who were laid

off, and a lot from your own district and a lot from your own association. When you want to stand up and speak about the bill, we should speak about the workers, what this is for, instead of speaking about the bill – but I would be ashamed, too.

Mr. Chair, I would be ashamed, too, if you were walking in here now and talking about how good the government is after just laying off 1,200 to 1,400 people. A lot from his own district, a lot he knows personally, a lot who are on his own association, but he never had the courage to bring up what we are discussing here today.

We are discussing here today the hard work of the civil servants in this Province. That is what this bill is about. This is not here to tout government. This is not up here to tout government. This is what this is all about, Mr. Chair. This is what it is all about.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. JOYCE:** I heard a Parliamentary Assistant over there saying something but I do not think he ever stood up yet on his feet to talk about the 1,400 people who were laid off, Mr. Chair, and I bet you he will not. He will not stand up and talk about it because he was the one who helped to make the decision to do that.

I say to the Member for Humber West, if you want to get up let's speak about the bill. Let's speak about the people who were laid off. I think the civil servants do a great job. I look down in the Bay of Islands; I look at the people in Transportation and Works. I look at the work they do keeping the roads safe.

This is a good time to recognize – like what happened out in Port aux Basques, the safety concerns these workers have with the unfortunate incident out in Port aux Basques this last weekend. These are the sacrifices the civil servants make for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. When conditions are bad, this is the time – when roads are bad in winter, these

people put their lives on the line on a regular basis.

There are a lot of people on the highways, Mr. Chair. They are the ones we are supporting this \$1,400 bonus for; yet, the Member for Humber West never mentioned them. He never mentioned them. If he wants to me to start naming off some people who were upset and laid off in his own district, I have no problem doing it. Some people were just hired on by him and going ahead, I can do it.

This is not about government. This is not about touting government and what they are doing. If you really want to talk, we can get into a debate about the pros and cons of wasting money, but this is about the workers in the Province. This is about recognizing their service. This is about recognizing the duty they have to each and every citizen.

I look at the nurses; nurses are another prime example. I can go through a number of them. Look at the teachers who teach our kids in the Province. I know the Member for Humber West was a teacher and a principal, also. He knows the service they give to the people. He knows that outside the parents, probably the number one influence they are going to have are the teachers they are going to have growing up.

That is the kind of people we are here to recognize today. These are the type of people – I look at the people who work in the hospital on a daily basis. When we are sick we expect those services to be there for us. We expect it.

The people working in the government system should be recognized. This is what this bill is about. This is why the government said we are trying to get it out before Christmas so people could have this bonus. I understand that. I understand, but we cannot lose sight that there were 1,200 to 1,400 laid off. We cannot lose sight that you get up here and tout all the government platitudes, some correct, some incorrect, Mr. Chair. Some correct, no doubt, there is absolutely no doubt.

I will be the first to say that I can name a lot of good things that government has done, absolutely. I have done it on many occasions. I will do it on a regular basis. If there is something that is good for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, the people of Corner Brook and the people of the Bay of Islands, I will be the first one to recognize it. I have done it on a regular basis.

Again, Mr. Chair, we have to try to focus on what this bill is for, the tremendous service that the workers of Newfoundland and Labrador, the public servants give to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I think it was the Government House Leader who brought it up about how many of those government workers give their time, like others, to the fire departments, to the recreation committees, to coaching. It is done on a regular basis. They are people in the cities; they are people in our communities. They are the ones who serve on town councils to ensure that our town councils are operating properly.

This is what we are here for today discussing this bill. This is the real reason why we are here discussing this bill. If we want to get into a debate on government, we can do that. I am sure we can go to and from, back and forth, but let's try to focus this bill on the workers. That is where it should be. That is what the bill was brought in for. That is what we need to do. Very seldom do we get the opportunity to focus.

Transportation and Works is one example. I think they do a tremendous job for the resources they have. I am not disputing if they have enough or not, that is another – but the work that they do.

I look at the nurses, and look at the services they do. I look at the people in Service NL, who supply their services to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. All of these people are dedicated employees of Newfoundland and Labrador to make our lives better. They are there to make our lives better.

Look at the people in our system, anywhere in our system, Mr. Chair. You can go to forestry,

people who work in the forestry. They are there to try to help create jobs in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. There are a lot of people who give a lot more time and energy than they get paid for. A lot of it is because of commitment, commitment to their town, commitment to their job, commitment to the people, and commitment to their fellow citizens.

We are not going to hold this bill up, not one bit, Mr. Chair. We understand what the government is planning to do here with the bonuses for 1,400 people, but I would be remiss if I did not bring up the 1,400 people who were laid off. This is where I am talking about proper planning, that we have to plan for the future. We cannot have one minister who, at the time was the Minister of Finance, out saying we are flush with cash and two months later go layoff 1,200 or 1,400 people. That is not good planning. That is not planning for the future of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. That only adds insult.

When one minister is out in Corner Brook talking about the hospital, saying we are flush with cash, we have all kinds of cash, and lay people off, it is a slap in the face to the workers of Newfoundland and Labrador. It just shows the lack of respect that is shown to the workers here.

Mr. Chair, I look at the positive here. I look at the workers who are still working. I just urge the government, before there are any more layoffs or any more cutbacks, start your planning now. Start your planning now so that when it comes time, if you do have a budgetary crunch, you can ease it in.

A lot of these people who were laid off – a lot of them – were the younger people who were just hired. They were just hired on, because I remember the ads for the young ones: come home, we want you. They are the ones, three, four, five, or six years just hired in the system. A lot of them are the ones who were hired on. When they come home, they bring their families home, they start a family and they build a house. What is going to happen now? They have to sell their house, take it, and move on.

I urge the government, that if there are going to be any more layoffs in government, make sure there is a plan in place. Do not have a minister out with all kinds of cash who is going to build a hospital in Corner Brook, it is not a big deal, we have lots of money, and two months later layoff 1,200 or 1,400 people, Mr. Chair. That is what the insult is to the public service.

What happened here with this bill today, Mr. Chair? I think it is time to recognize the civil service, recognize the people who work in the system, and ensure that not only are they compensated well, but also because we show our respect to them. I know government feels the same way, the respect for the people in the civil service, because they do an admirable job for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. On many occasions, Mr. Chair, they put their lives on the line so we can get back and forth to work every day.

When we go in the hospital, when we see all the people working in the hospital, and when you look at the people in all the various departments around, they make our lives easier. They help a lot of people out. They are common people like us in this House of Assembly.

I can assure you that the Opposition will not be holding up this bill. We want to recognize the civil service and the job that they do in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

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

It is certainly a pleasure for me to stand here in this House and say a few words. Mr. Chair, I had intended on also speaking about some of the great things that are happening here in Newfoundland and Labrador. There certainly are many things. There are many things happening in my district, there are many things happening in the department which I now reside,

and there are a lot of things happening in this Province as a whole.

Mr. Chair, when I listened to the member opposite trying to dress down my colleague here and preach to us about how to deal with our public service, to suggest somehow that we do not care about our public service, I just cannot let that go unanswered. So I am going to have a few words about that.

Mr. Chair, a lot of people may not realize this but I have been involved with a lot of things over my lifetime. One of the things I was involved with back in the 1980s is I was a public servant myself for a number of years. Not only was I public servant, but the group here, which is represented by NAPE 7104, the largest local that we have here in NAPE. I was president of that local. I was involved in many issues involving employees who worked in this building and who worked in this local throughout this area.

One thing I can certainly recall that I was very much involved with and disgusted with at the time, when I believe the member opposite was part of government – and he can correct me if that is incorrect, but I believe he was. I can remember, Mr. Chair, being outside this building and I can remember holding a sign. I can remember many, many people holding a sign and wearing buttons.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** What was on the button?

**MR. LANE:** What was on the button? I think it said: Clyde lied. Now, that is what the button said, Mr. Chair.

Why would people do that, Mr. Chair? Let us remind everybody why that happened. It happened because the Liberal government at the time negotiated a collective agreement with their employees, with the people who the member opposite is now referring to. What did they do after the negotiation? They went back into the Legislature and they rolled it all back. That is what they did, Mr. Chair. Now that is what the Liberal Government thought about our public

service. They negotiated and then they came into the Legislature and they rolled it all back.

Now, Mr. Chair, I can also remember another symbol of the Liberal Government at the time came later. We had the Clyde lied button and we had the Clyde lied signs. I can remember at another point in time going down the street and seeing some cars coming out of the hospitals, also public servants. They were coming out of St. Clare's and they were coming out of the Health Sciences. Friends and colleagues of mine told me they were coming out of the Western Memorial Hospital. They were coming out of the Gander hospital. They all had these licence plates on them that were in common. Do you know what those licence plates said? They said: Mr. Tobin, nurses will not forget. They did not forget. That is why they are over there and we are over here because nurses did not forget.

Now, Mr. Chair, I think it is pretty hypocritical to sit across here on this side of the House and listen to somebody stand up and talk about how we do not have any concern for our public servants when all they have to do is look back at their own history, which this member was part of. They should look in the mirror. That is what they should do. They should look in the mirror. They delivered nothing for the public servants – nothing.

Now, Mr. Chair, when we also talk about public servants I want to talk about a public servant that is in the department where I now reside. I am not going to use any names, but I can tell you this is a deputy minister in our department, a long-standing public servant who has worked hard, put his life, his blood, his sweat, and his tears into this Province for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. His colleague over here from St. Barbe was only here in the House yesterday or the day before dressing him down. Of course, we already know how the Member for St. Barbe deals with public servants, especially on the telephone or on the answering machine. He has already proven that as well.

Mr. Chair, when you have to sit back here and listen to this kind of stuff it is pretty hard to take. I think it is important the people realize the



hypocrisy that is coming from that side of the House.

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

**MR. LANE:** Now, Mr. Chair, in saying all that, this bill is Interim Supply and it is about making sure that the collective agreement, which we have bargained in good faith, unlike the other side, we intend to live up to our commitment. We need to make sure that those people get what they are due. We would like to get it done as soon as possible so they can get the money in their hands that was negotiated in good faith on behalf of this government with their union. Yes, that is absolutely what this is all about.

As far as the reference that was made, Mr. Chair, to the positions that were lost, there is nobody who wants to see anybody lose their job, but we have a responsibility to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We have a responsibility to ensure that the services that are provided to them are provided in the most effective and the most efficient means possible because it is their money – it is their money. It is the people's money that is being spent, and it has to be spent properly. It has to be spent wisely, and that is what we are going to do. We are going to make sure that we spend the people's money properly.

Again, I go back to, which I have done many times in this House, the ordinary taxpayer because that it is what it is all about. That is what it is all about for me, I can assure you that. The people in my district, by and large, who I consider the ordinary Joe and the ordinary taxpayer, they are the people who are getting up out of bed every day, they are getting themselves to work, they are getting their kids to daycare, they have a mortgage to pay, they have car payments to pay, and they can only afford to pay so much taxes. Thankfully, unlike the Third Party, who would want to raise their taxes, as we all know, we are trying to keep their taxes at a reasonable, sustainable level as well.

So, with the money that we have, we have to make sure that the services we offer get the best bang for that taxpayer dollar. That is what this

government is all about. That is what we have always stood for. That is what we will continue to stand for.

Now, with that said, I do have a couple of minutes left, Mr. Chair, and I do want to mention a couple of things in my district. We did have an announcement earlier in the week. The Premier was in the City of Mount Pearl, along with my colleagues, Minister Kent and Minister Davis. We had a tremendous announcement there as it relates to a new gymnastics facility for the City of Mount Pearl.

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

**MR. LANE:** A \$1 million investment, 70/30, \$700,000 invested in this much-needed infrastructure and, Mr. Chair, that is only one example of the many things that have gone into the City of Mount Pearl. We have a new multiplex that is being constructed, a brand new swimming pool, indoor walking track – another beautiful facility. There is lots of money being invested in roads and infrastructure as well.

This is not just happening in Mount Pearl, Mr. Chair. This is happening all over the Province. We are seeing it all over the Province. Why can we do that? Why do we have the ability to make these investments? We have the ability to make these investments because this government has negotiated great contracts. We have negotiated with oil companies. We are investing in research and development. We are diversifying our economy. We are investing in things like aquaculture. That is bringing much-needed revenue into the Province to be able to provide this.

In addition to this, Mr. Chair, we are paying off our debt, the responsible thing to do. We are paying down that debt, which is freeing up more dollars that we can then invest into these much-needed services.

In the minute or so I have left, I have a number of them, but in terms of the Department of Innovation, Business and Rural Development, as I said, where I am currently residing, we have so many initiatives. I just wanted to reference that.

I always knew that we were doing great things in that department in terms of enhancing business, in terms of attracting new business, and in terms of innovation. I always knew it was happening, but I never realized until I got into the department and the number of briefings we have had over the last couple of weeks just how many great things are actually happening here in Newfoundland and Labrador and all the investments we are making.

Mr. Chair, they are in many parts of our economy. One of the things we are focusing on is the ocean tech. It makes a lot of sense when you think about it. We are a Province, we are out in the middle of the North Atlantic, and we have been dependent on the ocean forever, whether it is from the fishery or now in offshore oil and gas. Obviously, we are a great fit for that. We are making tremendous investments there. Unfortunately, I do not have enough time to talk about them all, but I am sure my colleague, the minister, when she has an opportunity, she is going to be able to talk about all the great investments we are making in that area as well as other areas throughout the Province.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity. I look forward to speaking again.

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

**CHAIR:** Just before I recognize the hon. member, I want to remind members that we are speaking to Bill 8, the Supplementary Supply bill, just to make sure that we are all on the same page.

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

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

I will certainly try to stay as relevant as I can to this bill, which is a money bill. I could not help but notice today the member talk about making decisions about how government spends the finite resources that it collects and how we can do that to best benefit the Province.

Oftentimes, I do not think it is very obvious to the general public exactly how government investments, strategic investments, can have a significant rate of return; it can return funds to government that it can then use to have better collective agreements with public servants, build more roads, repair them more often, keep our infrastructure up to date and so on and so forth.

I was surprised that no one has, at this point in debate or in Question Period or in any other way, acknowledged that this week there was significant activity around the issue of child care in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Jimmy Pratt Foundation has been taking the lead on the discussion of child care and where we are going to go in the future with child care in Newfoundland and Labrador.

They released a discussion paper a couple of days ago, which I am fairly certain the minister is aware of. It has a lot of good ideas. They had a full-day workshop yesterday down at the Johnson Geo Centre here in St. John's to discuss some ideas and facilitate discussion on the issue of child care. They brought in, I believe, the former Lieutenant Governor of the Province of New Brunswick, Dr. Margaret Norrie McCain, who gave a guest lecture at Memorial University of Newfoundland the other night on the issue of child care. So there has certainly been a lot of discussion of that.

The Member for St. Barbe today asked a question in Question Period about the issue of all-day kindergarten, and I think it is important for us to continue to discuss that. I know actually for a fact, and I am not sure how many members on the government side are aware of this, but government certainly was prepared earlier this year, and certainly last year, to introduce an all-day kindergarten program in the Province or at least it had put a whole lot of resources – I see the Minister of Education over there nodding his head. I do to know if he is nodding his head at me or nodding his head at somebody else.

I know the Minister of Education's office had done a significant amount of research in this area and in some ways was ready to move

forward. We found ourselves in the unfortunate fiscal situation that we are in now and we were in last year where government was laying off public servants and cutting back on programs in a variety of areas rather than adding new ones.

I wanted to say that it is so important to understand why those early years are important and why kindergarten itself is more or less a marker. By the time kids get to the end of kindergarten, when they get to that age, 85 per cent of brain development has already happened – in most cases, I say to the Member for Terra Nova district. In most cases, 85 per cent brain development has already occurred.

There are a lot of advantages of having an all-day kindergarten program. There are a lot of advantages for parents. The research has shown that parents build stronger connections and relationships with the school, teachers, administrative staff, and other staff in the school community. They have more confidence in the nature of the education program that is being delivered to their children. They also have more opportunities then to take an active role in the education that is being provided to their children.

We have talked about this before, that there are also economic benefits that accrue if child care expenses are reduced. There was a gentleman who contacted me earlier this summer who said we cannot have all-day kindergarten, full-day kindergarten, only to reduce child care costs. I believe that is the case because you have to be able to see the variety of benefits that accrue from having this particular kind of educational program.

Child care is expensive. I know that there are subsidies available. Many people do not qualify for them. For many people it is not sufficient because of their wage, salary, annual income, the number of the children they have, and the makeup and nature of their family unit. For many people it is not sufficient. Certainly research has shown in the Province of Quebec that with more accessible child care and programs like all-day kindergarten, more women have an opportunity to work. More women are

working and contributing to government coffers through taxation. While I would not stand up here and advocate more personal income taxation, more people working means more revenue for the Province to subsidize programs like all-day kindergarten.

I am the father of a fairly young child. I get up in the morning and I drop my son off at child care. I spend a significant amount of time – those of you who have had young children, I know some members over there now have young children as well, and have young children on the way, you know how much time it takes to get a little one ready in the morning, to get to child care and have to get sort of unready.

When you add kindergarten to that in its half-day format, you have a lot of boots getting on and boots coming off, and jackets going on and jackets going off, and back to the car. You have to leave work. If you are working full-time, if both mom and dad are working full-time, it is really not practical. It is a real disruption to the work life balance.

There are all sorts of benefits to an all-day kindergarten program. I think that is why the Minister of Education was looking seriously at this last year. We have to consider that again this year. Government is in its pre-Budget planning process now.

I say to all the members across the way, you know you have excellent schools in your districts, you know that. We can phase this in on a pilot project-based process. We can start with two handfuls of schools. Go to the Minister of Education in this pre-Budget planning process and tell the Minister of Education that you want the schools in your district, the excellent schools, with excellent teachers and excellent staff, and excellent students in your districts; you want to be the first districts in Newfoundland and Labrador to have an all-day kindergarten program. Go to the Minister of Education, I say, and tell him that.

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

**MR. KIRBY:** You will all lobby him. I am lobbying him.

Tell the Minister of Education another thing for me, too. I am certainly available at any point in time to sit down and discuss at length with the minister the issues around all-day kindergarten, whether there are impracticalities and how we can get beyond them. This is something that is affordable. It has a rate of return that is about \$2 or \$2.50 or \$3 for every dollar we invest. So tell the Minister of Education, I say, and let's go moving forward with this in September, 2014.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

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, Mr. Speaker returned to the Chair.

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

The hon. the Member for the District of Port de Grave.

**MR. LITTLEJOHN:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred, have directed me to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Chair of Committees has reported that the Committee has directed him to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

When shall the Committee sit again?

**MR. KING:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. KING:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to give notice that under Standing Order 11, I shall move that the House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 12, 2013, and further I give notice under Standing Order 11, I shall move that this House not adjourn at 10:00 p.m., Tuesday, November 12, 2013.

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

**MR. KING:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, at this point in time I would like to call from the Order Paper, Order 6, second reading of a bill, An Act To Amend The Proceedings Against The Crown Act. (Bill 19)

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Innovation, Business and Rural Development, that Bill 19, An Act To Amend The Proceedings Against The Crown Act be now read a second time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 19, An Act To Amend The Proceedings Against The Crown Act be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Proceedings Against The Crown Act". (Bill 19)

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Innovation, Business and Rural Development.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the Agreement on Internal Trade was signed in 1995, and this is an intergovernmental agreement between all provinces and Territories, with the exception of Nunavut, and it is also with the federal government, of course. An amendment is required for the Proceedings Against the Crown Act in order to meet Newfoundland and Labrador's Agreement on Internal Trade obligations with respect to the fourteenth protocol of amendment to the AIT.

Changes are made to the text contained in the AIT through a formal protocol of amendment process. Each Agreement on Internal Trade party must formally sign the protocol of amendment in order for the contained changes to be officially incorporated into the AIT text. There have been thirteen protocols of amendment since 1995, with this one being the fourteenth.

In 2012, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador agreed along with all other provinces and Territories to have monetary penalties applied to person-to-government AIT disputes. As part of adding monetary penalties to the AIT, it was necessary then for each jurisdiction to make provisions to ensure the payment of monetary penalties and dispute panel costs, Mr. Speaker.

For Newfoundland and Labrador, this required an amendment to the Proceedings Against the Crown Act. The act must now be amended to clarify that the AIT Secretariat has a legal remedy so they have the ability to access our domestic courts to collect the payment, if necessary. In order to meet this obligation for person-to-government disputes, a minor amendment will be made to the act to remove the AIT articles referenced from 2011 and replace them with more generic language requiring repayment of an AIT monetary penalty and costs.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed changes to the person-to-government process mirror the improvements made back in 2009 when we

brought in the government-to-government dispute resolution process. These improvements include the imposition of monetary penalty provisions for AIT parties who continue to maintain measures that were found by a compliance panel to be offside with the parties' AIT obligations. As part of these changes, all AIT parties need to make changes to their legislation to ensure that once a monetary penalty is imposed, there is a legal mechanism in place to ensure the payment.

If an action of the provincial government is determined to be in non-compliance and the provincial government failed to make a damages payment following a panel ruling, the successful AIT parties or the AIT Secretariat would have the ability to access our domestic courts to collect that payment through the amendment we are referencing here today.

The maximum penalty Newfoundland and Labrador could face is up to \$250,000. If they do face that penalty, any of those damages, the reward would not go to the individual behind the challenge but rather it goes into a fund administered by the AIT Secretariat through an Internal Trade Advancement Fund. The purpose of this is that the monies could be used to promote internal trade in Canada and focus on advancing internal trade in Canada through research and promotional activities and so on.

As I said, it is basically a housekeeping piece of legislation to amend the current act. I would be happy to answer any questions or any concerns or comments to the positive that Opposition may have.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Burgeo – La Poile.

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

I am glad to have members on my side. I want to speak to Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Proceedings Against the Crown Act. I have had an opportunity – there are plenty of pieces of legislation that we look at in this House and

some of them are things we have dealt with on a personal basis or deal with on a daily basis, we are aware of and deal with. Unfortunately, this is not one that I was completely familiar with prior to the briefing that was given and prior to it being put on the docket here to look at.

I did take the opportunity to do some research and to look into this. As the minister states, this is primarily a housekeeping motion. One thing we thought about at first was this related to CETA because it is obviously on everybody's minds. It is a big topic in this Province and, in fact, this country right now. We have been told that no, this has nothing to do with CETA. This is primarily an interprovincial agreement with everybody on board, except for Nunavut that are the only non-signatory to this.

I do not really want to belabour this piece. From what I can gather there are just some section numbers that have been removed. It is housekeeping in nature like that. This legislation was discussed in May 2011, and there were changes made at that time for what was called the tenth protocol and now we are on the fourteenth protocol. This continues and it will probably continue to be amended and changed over the years. There is an evolution that continues, an evolution process.

There are a lot of different parts to this but we are talking about the ability to access dispute resolution when you talk about the mechanism that is involved, penalty money, no individual damages to be paid. I am not going to repeat – the minister gave a good overview of this talking about the origin of this being in 1995 when you talk about the AIT and what the guiding principles are.

There is a lot of information to take in with this piece of legislation as a whole but when you actually talk about the amendment per se, it is fairly minor from what I can see. I may have some questions during the Committee stage, but those will be my comments at this juncture.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John's East.

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

When this bill came up before me, sometimes I guess you have to read the fine print in order to understand it and I had to get some help with this one.

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** Something occurred to me, Mr. Speaker, when I was reading this piece of legislation and I could not quite get what it was. I had a researcher look into it for me and it came a little bit evidently clearer when I was looking through it.

I know that they are saying that it is only an arbitrary change here, but there are a couple of questions here as regards to the fines that were levied when it came to this particular piece of legislation and the whole question about the Internal Trade Advancement Fund. Nobody seems to know who it is. There is a big question here as regards to transparency when it comes to that fund and the fines that are levied.

I guess I can ask the question to the minister, or put the point out to the minister about this. Even though it appears that there seems to be nothing to it, the first feeling that I had, Mr. Speaker, when I read this piece of legislation is: Who cares? Because if somebody wanted to challenge what was in the initial agreement and they had to go out and pursue a legal means, to pursue a wrongdoing that was done or a government did not follow its obligation, there was no obligation for government or anybody else to pay the person, I guess, reward damages or injuries in this case to the particular person who was pursuing the government for the wrongdoing – if I am making any sense.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** No.

**MR. MURPHY:** Probably no.

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** What I am trying to say is that if somebody wanted to take government to court because government was not pursuing its obligation, for example, on a labour agreement, they would not be able to get any kind of damages for it because these damages would be going towards some sort of a fund, if you will.

That is the whole question that I have around this particular fund. A lot of other people are questioning the fund at the same time. In particular, when this agreement went before the Senate Standing Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce, the Jobs and Growth Act in 2012, the Certified General Accountants Association of Canada came out and said, if I can quote from the document – and I will gladly table the document if you want to see it.

The person speaking said this: “There are two points I would like to make about these changes. The first point is with respect to the fact that we understand that despite these changes, individuals would not access penalties imposed on governments but rather those funds would be deposited in something called the Internal Trade Advancement Fund. This came as a bit of a surprise to us and others. It hadn’t been discussed publicly and we still don’t have any detail about it – that won’t be available until the 14<sup>th</sup> protocol of amendment is published...” – and the fourteenth protocol being the person-to-government dispute resolution committee.

As I said, “that won’t be available until the 14<sup>th</sup> protocol of amendment is published, and that won’t be until it has been ratified by all signatories to the AIT, a process that could take upwards of 18 months. While we understand the Fund is created to further objectives related to internal trade we don’t have an answer to the question of why would individuals not be compensated for injuries created by barriers.”

Now that is coming from an accounting firm and that is what they are saying. The second point that they are saying is with respect to the process

that led to these changes. “It is our view the process of amending the AIT lacks transparency and stakeholder engagement, and the establishment of the Internal Trade Advancement Fund is a good example of that.”

I think we need to hear a little bit more about this fund, number one, how this fund is regulated, number two, and why injuries are not paid to the people who are laying the complaints against the various governments because government is not standing up to its objectives.

Mr. Speaker, that is all I have to say about it, but I would like to get a little bit more clarity at the same time from government as regards to, number one, what the internal fund is, and perhaps the minister can give us an explanation about that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Proceedings Against the Crown Act.

The minister had provided a good overview of some of the things that the act entails. I took some time to go to the federal AIT Implementation Act of 1996. It talked about the purpose of this bill as an interprovincial-intergovernmental piece of legislation that looks at the reduction or elimination of barriers for free movement of persons, goods, services and investments so that we can have a more open, efficient and a more competitive Canada, basically, for business and sustainable development.

When we look at this act - I went to the Library of Parliament and looked at the legislative summary for the bill, and it talked about how it covers ten key areas of: procurement, investment, labour mobility, consumer-related measures and standards, agricultural and food goods, alcoholic beverages, natural resource processing, communications, transportation and

environmental protection. So it certainly is very comprehensive into all the sectors of the economy of which Internal Trade could encompass.

Even though the bill is looking at creating compliance across all the signatories, it does certainly set a situation up for dispute mechanisms, which has already been passed; a process of which a government, person, or company has a means to collect if there has been some non-compliance to the act. It also could end up putting the taxpayer, potentially – I think, maybe I am not clear – on the hook for some of those costs as well. In chapter 17, there is a dispute-resolution process that is set up in this.

I just want some clarity from the minister on this particular one because I believe what she said was the maximum fine that could be paid in a tariff or a levy for Newfoundland and Labrador was \$250,000, but in the actual legislative document for the bill on the AIT, it states, for those provinces and Territories "...with a population that ranges between 250,000 and 750,000 individuals, the maximum penalty is \$750,000...".

If I do not get the opportunity to get an answer here for that clarification, then I will ask it in committee. I do think this piece certainly will warrant further questions as we move forward, but necessary if it is interprovincial to bring it in tune with what is happening as well from the federal level.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will take my chair.

Thank you.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure for me to stand once again, this time to speak on Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Proceedings Against the Crown Act.

This is pretty straightforward legislation. I do not want to repeat everything that has been said, but basically the intent here is we want to have an opportunity to ensure we have a system here in this country in which we can have fair trade. We can have a clear path of goods and services and so on throughout this Province that we can trade; that companies can compete fairly on fair playing fields, whether that be through awarding of tenders, whether that be through contracts in different provinces and so on, offering different services, providing goods and so on throughout the country.

The whole intent of this piece of legislation, as has been referenced, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure there is a penalty clause, basically, inserted to deal with a situation if one of the provinces were not in compliance with that particular piece of legislation. As has been referenced, the fine can go anywhere from \$250,000 up to \$750,000. I believe different provinces have different maximums, depending on the size of the Province, is the rationale behind that.

It is good for business, Mr. Speaker. We are very confident here in Newfoundland and Labrador that we have a very professional workforce, we have professional companies; companies which are innovative, companies which are creative, companies that can compete against any other provider of goods and services in this country. We believe that if we have this fair playing field across the country, we can compete quite well.

What we are trying to put in place here is part of a larger agreement across the country and to make an amendment so that if by chance a province was not operating within the spirit of the rules laid down, in disagreement, then there would be a mechanism whereby a company could appeal that. They could appeal it to a panel. The panel is made up of a pool of people which are agreed to by all the provinces and Territories, which the exception of Nunavut, who is not part of this.

The panel of people, I think you can submit up to five panellists, if you will; five people into that pool from each province. Then if there was



a dispute, a panel would be chosen from that group to hear that dispute. If a company should decide they wish to challenge a particular province, then the panel would hear that and they could make a ruling, potentially, in favour of that company. If that should happen, then the Province would have a financial penalty which they would have to pay for being in breach.

In addition to the financial penalty, I would note, that if a province is found to be in contravention and they do not agree to change the practice – by the way, Mr. Speaker, if a province is found to be in breach, they have a year to amend their practices so that they will now be in compliance. They have a year to do it.

If after that year the province decides they are not going to amend that unfair practice or what is deemed as being an unfair practice, then they can be fined. In addition to being fined or penalized, then that province also gives up the right. Until they correct that practice, they give up the right to be able to have for them or any company within their province, to appeal something that another province is doing wrong, or potentially doing wrong.

There are two levels of penalty here. One is financial. The other one is now you have taken away the ability for your own province to appeal something in another province. You have taken away the ability for a company within your province to appeal something that has happened in another province.

Obviously, in that case, based on those two penalties, it would be in the best interest of the province to amend their practice, whether that be their practice in terms of awarding of tenders, practice in terms of allowing workers and companies from other provinces to come in and do work and bid on work and so on. By making that amendment, you are obviously going to have a deterrent from that happening.

We are quite fine with that, because all we want here in Newfoundland and Labrador, we have always said, all we need is a level playing field. If a level playing field should exist for all companies and individuals across the country

then we are confident that the companies within Newfoundland and Labrador will do quite well throughout the Province. That really is what this is all about, Mr. Speaker.

I will now take my seat.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John's North.

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

It is certainly a privilege for me to again stand and speak to Bill 19, this Act to Amend the Proceedings Against the Crown Act.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, once we saw this bill, our research department had a look at this – or should I say my research department had a look at this. In terms of the Agreement on Internal Trade, the Member for Mount Pearl South makes a very good point with respect to this whole idea that we want a level playing field across the Canadian provinces when it comes to trade.

My colleague, the Member for The Straits – White Bay North, went through the eleven sectors that were impacted by this agreement and continue to be governed to some extent or regulated in terms of trade by this agreement. I wanted to draw your attention to one particular area because I believe this is an area where we are going to be headed for dispute, if not tomorrow, if not next week, if not next month, eventually.

One of the sectors that this agreement governs is alcoholic beverages. I see some people perking up over there. It basically prohibits discriminatory practices in areas such as product listing, pricing, distribution, and merchandising, and I think that is particularly important. There have been laws changed federally and across the provinces with respect to the sale of wine products.

I know that in Newfoundland and Labrador our climate rather prohibits the flowing terraces of vineyards that you will see in Southern France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and so on, but we do have

a wine industry in Newfoundland and Labrador. For a long time it was just Newman's Port; Rodriguez has taken a lot of leadership in that. I know the Member for The Isles of Notre Dame has wine production and distribution in his district as do others. While like I said our climate really prohibits us perhaps with going to the same level as other countries or provinces have, we are not the Niagara region, but we do produce a quality product here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

This agreement is really about fairness not only to business for trade, but also fairness to consumers. In Newfoundland and Labrador, we are amongst the lowest rated in Canada right now when it comes to openness, regulatory openness, if you will, with respect to the listing and distribution of wines from other provinces. That does not really engender a lot of goodwill with the other provinces in Canada when we are being obstructionist when it comes to the distribution of their products.

I am not just making this up. As I said, my research department had a look into this. Earlier this year there was an article in *The Globe and Mail* that basically said that in Newfoundland and Labrador our jurisdiction has explicit laws that overrule the recent federal regulation or federal law – the amendment on direct-to-consumer wine sales across provincial lines –

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

I want to remind members that we are talking about an amendment to an existing piece of legislation, so the amendment is very specific. The legislation that is being amended is also very specific around bringing an action against the Crown. The content of the internal trade agreement is not the subject of either the amendment or the bill being amended.

So I have provided some latitude, as you make a reference to the trade agreement that is in question here, but I would ask you to please bring it back to the subject of the bill before us, and in broad way, I will provide some latitude to deal with the bill that is being amended, but not

to explore the benefits and the value and the content of the internal trade agreement.

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

I appreciate you giving me the latitude to provide government with the heads-up on what I believe is going to be an emerging issue with us with respect to, basically, the prohibition of importation, but I will leave it that. I believe that is a really important aspect of this. Because whether we have this amendment or not, I believe this is going to be an emerging issue for us and I think we should look at whether or not the regulatory controls that this government wants to have is really consistent with the way that the Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation chooses to operate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Innovation, Business and Rural Development, should she speak now, will close debate.

The hon. the Minister of Innovation, Business and Rural Development.

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

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate all members' comments on the amendment to the Proceedings Against the Crown Act. As you had just mentioned it is a minor amendment, it is the fourteenth protocol, in terms of penalties for persons to government, and just a way to collect those penalties, should they need to be collected.

So, on that note, if anybody has any specific questions we can get to that in Committee stage.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion that the said bill be now read a second time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Proceedings Against The Crown Act. (Bill 19)

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

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

**MR. KING:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Proceedings Against The Crown Act", read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole presently, by leave. (Bill 19)

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Innovation, Business and Rural Development, that we do now move into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 19, An Act To Amend The Proceedings Against The Crown Act.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that the bill now be referred to a Committee of the Whole and that I do now leave the Chair.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

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

**Committee of the Whole**

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

I just remind members that the bill is narrow in scope. I ask that when members are speaking to the bill, they take into account that it is narrow in scope. The Chair will provide a little latitude, but the bill is very specific.

We are now considering Bill 19, An Act To Amend The Proceedings Against The Crown Act.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Proceedings Against The Crown Act". (Bill 19)

**CLERK:** Clause 1

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

The hon. the Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to speak in Committee and ask a question on the monetary penalties that could be imposed on Newfoundland and Labrador.

The minister, in the opening statement, had said that the maximum penalty would be \$250,000. In the legislative summary for the bill, which was amended in 2011, it says that those with populations between 250,000 –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Those provinces with 250,000 to 750,000, the maximum penalty would be \$750,000. Has this figure changed?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Innovation, Business and Rural Development.

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

We negotiated \$250,000 for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and this is in line with other provinces similar to our size, so it is \$250,000. That remains the same.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

**CLERK:** 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 Proceedings Against The Crown Act.

**CHAIR:** Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

**CHAIR:** Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

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

**MR. KING:** Thank you.

Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 19, An Act To Amend The Proceedings Against The Crown Act.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise and report the bill carried without amendment.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman):** The hon. the Member for the District of Port de Grave.

**MR. LITTLEJOHN:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 19 without amendment.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Chair of Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 19 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

**MR. KING:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

**MR. KING:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

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

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

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

At this time I call from the Order Paper, Order 1, Committee of Supply, Bill No. 8 Respecting the Granting of Supplementary Supply to Her Majesty.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved that I do now leave the Chair as we debate Supplementary Supply.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

#### **Committee of the Whole on Supply**

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

We are back into the Supply Bill in the Committee of the Whole considering Bill 8, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Additional Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2014 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

A bill, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Additional Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2014 And For Other Purposes Relating to the Public Service. (Bill 8)

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

The hon. the Minister of Education.

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

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

I take my Blackberry away from the microphone before I start speaking, Mr. Chair. It gives me pleasure to rise and speak for just a few minutes on this particular bill, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums of Money. Of course, all of us know that these monies are necessary for the operations of government to see that the work of government gets carried out and that the work of the people gets done because of this bill being approved.

Mr. Chair, one of the things that certainly is evident in this, having collective agreements that have been reached, acknowledging our public service, and having it seen that for our public service there will be \$1,400 come their way. In passing this through, we will see that it gets out there before Christmas.

Mr. Chair, I am going into my eleventh year in government. As I sit here in this House and I see the work that goes on this particular House, the importance that this House plays in the Province in passing legislation through is very important work. Then if I look at all the people who work in our public service and the work that goes on behind the scenes from day to day, I think it is only fitting that our public service gets rewarded and equally that they get acknowledged.

In the various departments, Mr. Chair, that I have been in, and I have been in Environment, Tourism, Fisheries, and now in Education, I have to say that I have worked with some very, very loyal people. Of course, we work very closely with our deputy ministers. I am always totally amazed at the work that our deputy ministers carry out, the hours that they punch in, the commitment that they give, and I think more importantly the intellect and the knowledge that these people have. If there is anyone in this Province that needs recognition it is the deputy ministers and the assistant deputy ministers. Now, I know I do not think they are getting this, but I certainly want to recognize them.

If we look at our public servants, I look at those who work on the ground in my district and then look at the ones who work within my department, I cannot speak highly enough of them. They have to be not only on their game, but they have to be in tune day in, day out and knowledge of their particular divisions. I do not know yet if I have called on any of them and have not gotten the information that I want. They very much dig down into the details, provide ministers with the information that they need to be able to speak to things in this particular House. When I look at the public servants who I depend on in just preparing to come into this House, I see the work they do day in, day out and I also see the efforts that they put into it and the pride they take in their jobs.

I would encourage people to do this every now and then. Drive around the parking lot around the Confederation Building some evenings around 9:00 o'clock and 10:00 o'clock. You do not see the parking lots always being empty. It is not only security cars of the security staff that are out there. There are people who arrive here at 6:00 o'clock in the morning. There are people who come in to work early and there are people who stay well after the eight-hour days that some people would say they attend to.

They are here because they take pride in their work. They want to see that their job is carried out diligently and they also want to make sure that they are serving the public of this Province. We can look at every one of them. I look in my department, from people who on a pretty regular basis will put out transcripts for students, who will regularly have meetings with constituents, whatever the people arriving into the apartment are wanting addressed, and they do so very, very professionally.

I think it is probably the same in every province that those people who work in the public service recognize what their role is, but I think here in our own Province our public service are second to none. They are as good as anyone in this country, and I would hold them up against any other jurisdiction in this country.

We, as Members of the House of Assembly, we who represent our constituents, we too have to look to the people in the bureaucracy to assist us.

So, while I am standing here and being acknowledged as the Minister of Education, being the Member for Burin – Placentia West, I see regularly what constituents call upon the public service to do. Whether that be someone who arrives at Motor Vehicle Registration to get their licence, or if somebody arrives at my department looking for a particular certificate. That is what these people do day in and day out. Many of them will find themselves transferring from different departments, applying for different divisions, but their commitment to their role is certainly to be commended.

Mr. Chair, I suppose we have to acknowledge the work that has gone on, and for those unions that have entered into and have accepted the collective bargaining that happened and have reached a particular agreement. Someone mentioned here just yesterday, I believe it was, I came into the government in 2003 when we had the public service strike, and any of us who were involved in it at that particular point will remember it quite distinctly.

It was certainly something new to me, having come from the teaching profession and had been on the other side of the fence, now found myself in quite a different situation. Having to come into the building and being challenged where we stood as a government, not only by people you worked with in your department, but by some people, and family and friends who worked in the public service, who now, I found myself on a different side of the fence than I normally would have found myself. Thankfully, we got through that.

We certainly did recognize them substantially with a 21 per cent increase in the next round of negotiations, but it was a time when we had to make some financial commitment on behalf of the Province. While it was a difficult time, it was something that had to be done and we recognized them in the next round.

On this bill, Bill 8, An Act for Granting to Her Majesty Certain Sums of Money, that is one of the things that will happen once this gets approved.

Mr. Chair, with that I conclude.

Thank you very much.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

I am happy to stand in my place once again and speak to Bill 8, this Supply bill. It is an opportunity with the passage of this supply that we are able to fund our public employees, these unionized employees who work so hard for us.

Our job as an Opposition, we obviously respect these employees. We respect them. One of the ways we respect them and honour them is by asking questions on their behalf. I was hoping to stay to this, but I heard commentary from some of the members across there earlier in the day. They could not just get up and talk about the good work that was going on. They had to take shots and continue on with the same line of: well, this is what we had to take over. This is all the good stuff we have done.

I figure this is a good opportunity to not only – we have been here and said from the start how much we respect our public employees. During the tumultuous times that came with Budget 2013, we got lots of calls from them as well – lots of calls from them. What we did was we listened to their concerns. We met with them, we talked to them, and we came in and asked questions. We asked questions in the House. In fact, I even asked questions today in the House related to this, stemming directly from that. One was about the Sheriff's review.

One of the big areas that suffered massive cuts in the Budget was the Department of Justice. It is no surprise. Everybody has seen it now. We have seen the effects of it. It was a tumultuous time for everybody involved in that system, right from the top to the bottom. You had a lot of

commentary from people; in fact, a lot of commentary from people who usually refrain from that. I even heard commentary from judges; judges speaking to the effects of those cuts that came.

So, if we want to talk about these employees, we can talk about the calls we received from Crown Attorneys, the calls we received from Legal Aid solicitors, the calls we received from probation officers, the calls we received from wildlife officers. All of these positions were cut in many areas. We can talk about this and we can talk about how fiscally responsible we are, but it did not seem like that back in March when we were laying off and basically shutting out thousands of people and jobs, and the indirect benefits that come with that.

I want to just go to the side for a second. One of the things – and this is a serious concern. I received a notice in the last couple of days about the salmon in the La Poile River on the South Coast. DFO was talking about making this a threatened species. That is obviously a very big concern to that area, to the entire South Coast.

One of the things they talked about is the protection of that species. One of the ways that we protect it is by having officers. There is not an officer to be found on the Southwest Coast. They are all gone. If you want someone now, they are in Stephenville. The term we heard was poacher's paradise, because all the officers are gone. I just want to talk about that. We have a direct impact now.

We have these job losses. Some of these jobs were not tied into the explosion that came in the 2000s. We know the public service ballooned up and then the government had to pare it down. Some of these jobs are people – one gentleman I talked to had been there twenty years doing his wildlife enforcement job, working for the Province, a good employee. He is gone. Those are the people, you were getting these phone calls at night, and they did not know what they were going to do.

Talking about the probation system; it was not that long ago – and it is before the current

minister, I will give him that credit. It was before him that there was a report done on probation services in the Province and talked about some of the concerns. We have cut probation services. We have to look at a lot of the questions.

I referenced the questions by my friend, the Member for Torngat, over the last couple of days about justice services in Labrador. It is obviously a very serious situation. I know the minister recognizes that. It has been recognized by Ms Linda Ross, who took the time to write a letter to *The Telegram* talking about judges in Labrador have to give this some serious consideration.

This is coming from a person of high esteem, somebody who has been recognized for their work on behalf of women and people in vulnerable positions. This person took the time to write a letter and talk about the justice system up in Labrador. Someone who usually comes to the defence of government and their decisions, immediately, but for them to pick up a pen, put it to paper, and talk about what is going on up in Labrador shows that we have issues. Now I could go on and talk about the fact that we can barely get a nurse up in Labrador, but that is probably a topic for another day.

I am going to go back to the justice system. We go back to the sheriff's officers. We had a lot of tumult with that last time and a review was promised. That was one of the things that came out. We made the decisions and there were a lot of issues came out, so there were two reviews promised: Legal Aid and the Sheriff's review.

Now, I will say on the record that the Legal Aid review, I understand, is forthcoming and the Legal Aid review will get here, and I understand it has been delayed, but I also understand the reasoning why the Legal Aid review is a bit delayed. Again, the gentleman who is doing that file is highly regarded and I look forward to that. I look forward to the findings. In fact, I did take the time to speak to him and give him my opinions on that, not only as the critic but as someone who has dealt with solicitors in Legal

Aid and dealt with clients, constituents, and people who use the Legal Aid system.

I can tell you it is just troubling when you have people who are trying to get access to this system and have to go through the red tape and the hurdles. In fact, I had people trying to get a hold of the Legal Aid system, and people in my area have to go through Stephenville. They were waiting months – months – to get their files heard. Single mothers with children, abusive situations, leaving their homes, trying to get a lawyer, sends the file in, help them do that, and the file sits there on the desk because there are not enough people. That is as simple as I can put it.

I look forward to the Legal Aid review, but we talk about the Sheriff's review which is delayed. Now, I am not sure why that is delayed. I am not sure, but it was supposed to be here three months after retention. That would have been September. October, November, and we still do not have a timeline on it. We still do not know.

I understand where the minister comes from when he says we are not going to rush it because we want to get the best report, but why do we put timelines on anything? Why do we? Is the delay from the reviewer or from the department? Where is the cause of the delay? We need to make sure that, like any report that we do or any project, we need to have a firm timeline on what are the deliverables? When are we going to get that? We need that because we have to make these decisions very soon. That is just another part of that system.

You look at when it comes to the lawyers, both Crown lawyers and Legal Aid. We have lost some Crown attorneys. You have a lot of them who have high caseloads and Legal Aid lawyers with high caseloads. These lawyers do a fabulous job. I have actually talked to constituents and clients who talk about Legal Aid. Their issue is not with the lawyer because when they deal with the lawyer, the lawyer does good work, but when these lawyers have these huge caseloads.



During their travels it is one thing to read the file, you have to read the file, and you have boxes and boxes, these boxes full that you bring into the court; but if you take a lawyer from Stephenville, they have to get up in the morning, they have to drive an hour and a half to two hours over the highway to Port aux Basques, and they have to go into a courthouse where there is barely an office to get into.

Actually, I can remember back when I was still practicing, I wrote a letter to the then Minister of Justice because we were trying to get printouts done on a fax machine. I wrote the Minister of Justice just as a solicitor in that area and I said: We need to have a photocopier. This was not in the 80s and this was not in the 90s; this was in 2007ish and I was told it was a luxury – it was a luxury. The former minister, who is now the Minister of Finance, I think, said: You just cannot have it.

We will not talk about the fact that anybody who needs to access that court that is in a wheelchair cannot get in there. We have to go elsewhere to have their appearances. Again, when I cannot, and not just me, when the lawyers, the judge, and the sheriffs – I still have thirty seconds, Mr. Chair, so I am going to get my time in.

What I would say is that there are still a lot of issues. The people doing the work are doing good jobs. Let us give them the resources and give them the ability to do the job to the best of their ability. We know they can do it. We see it every day. We thank them for their service.

I appreciate your time, Mr. Chair.

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

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

It is certainly a pleasure to be able to follow behind my distinguished colleague there from Burgeo – La Poile and have a few words to say, and perhaps even throw a little more accurate information out there than the member across the way used the last time around.

I want to make a couple of comments. We are actually speaking to a bill, a Supplementary Supply bill that recognizes a negotiated bonus of \$1,400 for our public servants. It is an important bill. It recognizes, I think, a series of negotiations that government is certainly very proud to conclude. The sense I get from members opposite is that there will be support for achieving this bill and moving it forward in a timely fashion, and I certainly appreciate that.

We have a lot of good things happening in the civil service. I had the pleasure of joining my colleague, the MHA for Gander, on Monday to officially launch the new combined forces unit between the RCMP and the RNC, a unit that will see a significant investment from our government of \$1 million this particular Budget year, along with other resources that are currently in the system. The focus, Mr. Chair, is on fighting organized crime, drugs in our communities, and child exploitation.

As I said to reporters yesterday, those are important issues that we have to address. It is not a case of being an alarmist; it is not a case that there are more problems now than there used to be. It is a case that we are trying to be proactive. We work very closely with the policing agencies in the Province and we see this is as a very positive step.

It is going to be an organization with tentacles all over the Province because while the unit will be based here in St. John's on the Avalon, members will be stationed throughout the Province. They will also, Mr. Chair, be calling upon the intelligence and the investigative work of officers all throughout the Province, as I said yesterday, whether you are down in Grand Bank in that detachment, Marystown, up in St. Anthony, or Port aux Basques. All of the information is going to be fed in as part of helping this task force do their work and develop a plan for the Province. I have every confidence that their efforts are going to make a big difference for the people of the Province and help keep our communities safe.

I also want to touch on a piece of work, an announcement I made earlier today, Mr. Chair,

because again it is a piece of work developed in consultation with our public servants who do great work for us. I put out a press release about an hour and a half or so ago announcing that we are going to be making amendments to the Human Rights Act in the Province. Specifically, we are providing for gender identity and gender expression to be specifically laid out in the Human Rights Act.

We have had this debate on the floor of the House here on any number of occasions. In particular, my colleague from St. John's Centre has been a strong advocate for this particular bill and raised the question at every opportunity, and I thank her for doing that. I have also heard from many other people who have wanted us to look at revising the bill, and I am very pleased to do that.

As I said earlier in a scrum, the bill we brought in was brought in 2010, I believe, and like any bill, any piece of legislation that comes before this House, you have to take time to implement what is in the bill, you take time to reflect upon the strengths and the weaknesses that exist, and you look for opportunities to make improvements. We have taken some time to that. We have listened to people, like my colleague across the way, and we listened to other jurisdictions, looked at what they have been doing, and the changes they are making.

As I have said before, I have every confidence that we have never discriminated based on the absence of this language in the Human Rights Act, but today I believe is a positive step forward in more clearly delineating for people who may be affected by this, clearly delineating that it now is very clearly a human rights issue, should a case arise. I look forward to implementing that in the House here, probably within a couple of weeks, and I am certain a number of my colleagues, again, including the Member for St. John's Centre, will have lots of good to say, I suspect, about this bill and what it will do. I tie that into this particular discussion because obviously it is our officials who work with us to help get this good piece of work done.

Mr. Chair, I also want to respond a little to my colleague across the way from Burgeo – La Poile who talked a bit about the reviews that we announced. I want to say, I want to make a proclamation here, that all is not as bad sometimes, as my colleague makes the justice system out to be. We have a lot of great employees doing a lot of great work, whether that is policing services, trying to keep our communities safe and catching the bad guys, or whether it is our Crown attorneys and our Legal Aid who provide strong representation to clients in court, or whether it is the court services and the correctional services. There are a lot of good things happening.

I also want to say, for the record, I do recognize some of the challenges that we face; but, contrary to what was said, there has not been a decline in Crown attorneys, in particular, for example. We actually have more Crown attorneys in the system now than we did last year. We actually added an extra position in Labrador. I say that with reference to my colleague from Labrador who spoke a little earlier today on that issue.

The two reviews that were referenced, the Sheriff's Office and Legal Aid, they will be completed, I suspect, very soon. The Legal Aid review, of course, we had to change the individual who was initially going to do the review. It was changed and there was a delay there. I understand from the Sheriff's Office review that there was a delay because of a little more travel involved than the individual had anticipated, but I am told that should be imminent.

I am going to adopt the practice now, based on the advice of my colleague a few minutes ago, I am not going to give timelines any more for any work that I do. He has just asked me not to do that. He said: It is pointless; you never stick to them. So, that way, if I do not give you timelines you will never be mad at me for not meeting them, because there is nothing to meet. So, the deal is we will not use timelines here. I will say, as the Minister of Finance said once, stay tuned. Stay tuned, and we will have that report for you.

The last piece, in my last three or four minutes, I want to touch on the CETA deal, Mr. Chair, because we had a great team of civil servants who worked with the Premier and others to negotiate what I think is just a tremendous deal for Newfoundland and Labrador – the CETA deal, combined with the \$400 million investment in the fishery. I think it offers just so many opportunities for the future, and so many opportunities for rural Newfoundland and Labrador, in particular.

I was quite interested, actually, one of the NDP MPs was on Open Line last week and I was quite curious and amazed at the question posed from the individual who said: What benefits will there be for rural Newfoundland and Labrador? I am thinking: Well, where does the fishery exist, if it is not rural Newfoundland and Labrador? I just thought it was little bit of a statement off the wall, if you will.

What puzzles me the most is, back to my days when I was the Fisheries Minister, the Liberal Party and the critic who represents the Liberal Party, continuously asked for change in the fishery, yet every time we moved forward with change, there was opposition to it. I think back, for example, to an effort by OCI in St. Lawrence to add a sea cucumber licence to their plant as a way of creating more jobs in the plant and extending the life of the plant by making it a true multi-species plant. The biggest opponent to that deal was the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador. Their spokesperson at the time, and continues to be, is the gentleman who wants to be Premier.

I also think about – and this was raised today when I had some colleagues from Fortune here in the gallery. There was a restructuring deal for the plant in Fortune to move from a seasonal operation doing a variety of things into the yellowtail and cod fish.

By the way, today as we speak the plant is about to open. There will be anywhere from sixty to eighty good jobs there for members in the community. The biggest opponent was the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador that stood strongly against it, Mr. Chair. Two

initiatives to try and change what is happening in the fishery in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Liberal Party, through their critic, the man who wants to be Premier of this Province, Mr. Bennett, stood against it.

The latest is the CETA deal and the removing of tariffs and opening up of new markets, Mr. Chair, for the Province. What does the Liberal Party say? I think I was the one who called him Captain Kipper at one point in time. His idea of transforming the fishery was we are going to bring kipper factories into Newfoundland and Labrador and that is going to be the be-all and end-all of the fishery.

I am afraid that is not exactly where government's view of the fishery is. I suspect not even everybody in the Liberal Party would subscribe to that particular view. I am not going to ask them to speak about it today. If they want to get up in a few moments when I finish my fifty-seven seconds – I invite the Member for St. Barbe to get on his feet and challenge me if he does not like what I am saying here today. He is more than welcome to stand up and I will be down in just a second.

Mr. Chair, what takes the cake – and the people of the Province need to know this. I have to look at my paper because it was marked down and I just cannot believe it unless I read it. If the Liberal Party forms the government and if Mr. Bennett – excuse me, I apologize. If the Member for St. Barbe becomes Premier of this Province, he said the first thing he is going to do is take the CETA deal and he is going to tear it up, just like that. He is going to tear up the CETA deal, Mr. Chair.

I say to you tearing up the CETA deal and tearing up the \$400 million is about equivalent to saying we care no more about rural Newfoundland and Labrador, we are going to cut it off at the overpass, and off you go to Nova Scotia somewhere. That is what it means if you are going to squash the CETA deal and squash the \$400 million. That, my friends, do not wash on this side of the House. We do not support that whatsoever.

Thank you.

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

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

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

In the couple of minutes that we have left today I just wanted to stand up and speak to this bill, too. Some of the other hon. members get up and espouse the positives of the government bargain that they have come forward with, with the other bargaining units. Us, as a party here, we also support this particular piece of legislation and support the unions in their agreement.

Mr. Chair, I just wanted to get up and just tell government that while they say that everything is great – sometimes that happens to be the fact – it is not all the time. It is not everywhere in this Province that things are great. In particular, we can speak about some of the issues that we deal with on a daily basis, some of the phone calls that we get, some of the things that we hear, the news that we hear, and some of the issues that we are addressing on a personal basis, a one-on-one basis with some of our own constituents.

I think that while some of the members have gotten up there, that is an important point to remember: All is not good with everybody. The Christmas season is coming and, at the same time, it is a time to remember those who are a little bit less fortunate than ourselves. One of the cases that I have been dealing with now for a long time happened to do with somebody who, because they were on such a low income, ended up getting tied into the fact that they had to pay back some of the benefits that they had before.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. MURPHY:** This person was caught in a real situation where their income was really low because of medial reasons, something in the

order, if memory serves me correct, just a little bit less than \$8,000 and they were asked to be paying back \$26 in the run of a month. There is something wrong with the system when the government system itself does not show that little bit of compassion.

That is what I am pointing at. Sometimes I think that governance needs compassion. Yes, it may be a simple case where you have somebody who might have backed themselves into a corner or something but when it comes to the repayment, for example, when government goes to look to get that money back, \$26 a month against a \$7,500 a year income makes it pretty hard when you are also living in an apartment that is costing you \$800 or \$900 in the run of a month and you have to go look for further subsidies.

I know that government has to do things one way but, at the same time, they are also missing a little bit of compassion sometimes. Again, I do not say that there is a member here in the House who has not dealt with a case like that.

At the same time, Mr. Chair, there are other things that government can do to help address some of the problems. I will talk about one particular problem that PSAC made everybody in this Province well aware of last year, and that was the whole problem around policing. They talked about the simple fact that we were losing upwards of fifty-six RCMP positions within the Province. When you are talking about the lack of policing services, for example, in rural Newfoundland, there were other areas then where government, because there are not enough policing services in rural Newfoundland, has to step in. If that means putting more money into the justice system, then it has to happen.

In this particular case, we saw cuts to the justice system. The Family Violence Intervention Court, for example, was a complete victim of this and it was only 0.02 per cent of the Budget, I believe it was. I think it was \$500,000 to keep the Family Violence Intervention Court on the go. So we saw that cut. Why? Because it was only twenty-six families or something I think that were affected by it.

What is the cost now because down the road there is not going to be any intervention? Is it going to be \$60,000 a year, like it is to put somebody in an old age home, for example? It is a lot more to incarcerate somebody than it is to keep this court on the go for the number of people it served. Government sometimes has to have compassion about it and it has to think these things through before they make that move. It was in that particular case that I think government acted rashly.

Let's talk about where government could have made investments to avoid problems. That is not to say it just is government that was dealing with the problem because the problem goes a long ways back to previous Administrations. It goes back to the Liberals and the Conservatives. Let's talk about the lack of ferries, for example, and we have one in dry dock right now. I cannot wait to hear what the reports on the hull are going to be reporting back for that when it comes to plate thickness and that sort of thing. I cannot wait to see the reports.

The minister said he is going to try his best to make available those reports. The first one, I will tell the minister, that I am going to be looking for is the one on the *Captain Earl Winsor* when it comes to the Fogo run, if that boat is going to be allowed to hit the water again in the condition that it is, or if it is going to be allowed to sail with exemptions on it.

Not a lot of people know what exemptions are, but I will compare it to a car, Mr. Chair. It is like letting a car hit the road with a warning from a mechanic, for example, that the side actually was about to drop out of your car, but you are allowed to drive it on the highway until you can go ahead and afford to get it fixed. That is exactly what it is like. It is like a transmission going in your car. It is like having a mechanic's warning that something is going to be happening.

Still, at the same time, the Auditor General back in 2000 – I think it was back in 2000 – was actually putting out the warnings about the state of the ferry system back then. Who was governing then? Who refuses to deal with the

problem? At the same time as that, while we are seeing refusal to deal with the problem and the minister comes out and he is hopefully going to be making a positive announcement about the Fogo boat, number one, to hear if there is going to be a replacement of that vessel being done.

We know, for example, in June of last year there was a company out of Denmark that announced it had the contract for doing the boat designs for government, for the South Coast boats, along with the replacement for the Fogo boat. That, hopefully, is going to be addressed in the near future, but it has been left that long, Mr. Chair, that is the state we have come to. According to the Transport Canada report on the incident with the *Beaumont Hamel* in May of last year, it had upwards of eight power failures.

**MR. LANE:** Where is the money coming from?

**MR. MURPHY:** The Member for Mount Pearl South, Mr. Chair, is saying where is the money coming from? At the same time, here we are a prosperous Province, coming out from his speech just a little bit earlier, where he said there was money galore floating in the Province but still, at the same time, we do not have the money to replace boats.

I say to you, Mr. Chair –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. MURPHY:** I say to you, Mr. Chair, you cannot have it both ways. You cannot have a fleet that is getting ready to sink under you and putting people in danger, if you will.

The Minister of Transportation thinks he knows how much it is going to cost to replace that fleet. It is up to himself, but I can point him right now to \$80 million in savings when the Minister of Service NL stood up in the earlier part of the week and said because of the strategy they have undertaken when it comes to tendering, they can take that \$80 million if they wanted to and put it towards boats. Hopefully, they will do that. It is obvious government is looking for some sort of

savings somewhere because they have had a loss in revenue.

Mr. Chair, we come into this House, at the same time, I just want to say they have a good tax base out there now. They have a good source of revenue in oil. They are hoping that Muskrat Falls is going to be everything it is to pay it off. That is yet to be proven as regards to being able to undertake further programs in the future.

Mr. Chair, I say to the people across the floor, they have the experts over there in budgeting. They have had long enough to address some of the safety concerns of our own employees, the same employees they keep making the praises of, but at the same time, there are other things they can do out of necessity and out of compassion. That when your equipment gets old, you replace it; that if you need equipment you have to buy it, and when the time comes things have to be done in order to keep your employees safe.

Mr. Chair, I will finish up my remarks by saying that. I just wanted to say to the people across the House, in conclusion of my remarks; we come into this House three, four or five days a week –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. MURPHY:** - and we debate legislation. I know that today is Thursday, and we are not going to be in a House session until Tuesday again. Monday being Remembrance Day, I just want to leave the members of the House with a Remembrance Day greeting, and to the constituents we all deal with too, at the same time. We want to wish you all a happy Remembrance Day and a peaceful Remembrance Day.

I will leave you with a paragraph of a poem by A. E. Housman, *A Shropshire Lad*. *On the idle hill of summer*, the second paragraph reads,

“Far and near and low and louder,  
On the roads of earth go by,

Dear to friends and food for powder,  
Soldiers marching, all to die.”

They did not die for no reason at all, and I just wanted to say a peaceful Remembrance Day to everybody out there too at the same time.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services.

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

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

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate this afternoon. I kind of feel like a racehorse in a stall here this afternoon, because I have heard so much rhetoric coming from the other side there, I said, I do not know how much longer I can sit here quietly and listen to some of it. I just have to address some of the comments from the Member for St. John’s East just a few moments ago.

It is really unfortunate, Mr. Chair, what he has done here this afternoon, or what he appears to have tried to accomplish this afternoon. He made a comparison of an exemption from Transport Canada, that is the federal regulator of transportation in Canada – this is no longer my department, but I conferred with my colleague, the Minister of Transportation and Works, on this before I spoke to this, this afternoon, but I feel it is important to address what the member said. He compared regulations in what Transport Canada will allow a public ferry service to do, an exemption, to a car with a side axle about to fall off.

Now, I would suggest, Mr. Chair, that if a mechanic allowed a vehicle to leave a garage with a side axle about to fall off, that would be a very dangerous, a very foolish thing to do that could put people’s lives and safety at risk. He made that comparison to our ferry service, Mr. Chair, and I think he should apologize to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, because

our ferry service is operated by hardworking employees of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MR. DAVIS:** They operate under a system that is highly regulated by Transport Canada. I can assure you, Mr. Chair –

**MR. A. PARSONS:** (Inaudible).

**MR. DAVIS:** I am going to get to you in a minute now, I say to the Opposition House Leader. I am getting to you guys now in a moment.

I would say to him over here, it is really unfortunate what he has done, because it is highly regulated. It is operated with a safety-first environment. I know many captains who operate our vessels in the provincial ferry fleet. I know many officials and had an opportunity to meet with many officials in Transport Canada who, when ferries are operated, have to ensure safety first. I would say making a comparison to a side axle about to fall off a car has nothing to do with safety. I think it is really unfortunate what he has tried to express and explain this afternoon.

There is an aging fleet in the ferry service in Newfoundland and Labrador; there is no doubt about it. There are millions and millions of dollars being spent this year right now in plans for replacement for ferries in Newfoundland and Labrador. I can assure you, Mr. Chair, that my colleague the Minister of Transportation and Works and his staff are very dedicated. The capable and talented staff at Transportation and Works are working very hard on the progress of ferries in Newfoundland and Labrador. I congratulate all of them and I thank them for providing a safe service to the people of the Province, sometimes in very difficult circumstances with weather that we sometimes face, especially during the winter months. They provide a safe service and a good service to the people of the Province, unlike what the Member for St. John's East would like people to think.

Mr. Chair, I also heard earlier this afternoon some comments from members of the Opposition. I heard comments about how we treat employees in the Province. I know that my colleague the Member for Mount Pearl South responded earlier to some of them, but I have to echo some of his comments.

I remember saying in the House in previous sittings, I was a career public servant in Newfoundland and Labrador. I was twenty-five years a police officer working for the Province in the greater Northeast Avalon area. I also spent some years on the West Coast. I am very pleased and proud of the service I provided to people in Western Newfoundland as well, in the Corner Brook area.

I spent time as well as a union leader, as a member of the association, and member of the association executive. I remember as well, Mr. Chair, back in the day when there was some really tough stuff going on. I know the Liberal members opposite, who were in government at the time, will say we had no money and that is all we could do because we had no money. That is a good point they make. They had no money.

When I was a police officer for many years I used equipment that was antiquated and I used equipment that in some provinces was prohibited from use. I remember driving police cars with 300,000 and 400,000 kilometres on them because we never had the funding to buy a new car or put enough new cars in the fleet to operate. These are patrol cars and police cars that were operated under very difficult circumstances, heavy-use vehicles, and high mileage.

Also, you needed to depend on these vehicles to get you to a location in the case of an emergency. Sometimes it was tough. I know lot of times during the day or wee hours of the morning, we had to call the tow truck to take a patrol car and drag it back to the police station to get it patched up so we could put it on the road again.

The Liberals used to always say: Well, we do not have any money. That is why they signed

contracts with public servants and very shortly after came here in the House of Assembly and legislated them away. That is why they did not invest in new equipment or buildings. Look at the schools we had, schools with terrible conditions in them, with mould, leaky windows, wind blowing through them, and water flowing in them; and public buildings with the same kind of thing happening.

Then this year, Mr. Chair, we had a circumstance, as a government, that we had to face. We had to face a circumstance where we had challenges with our cash flows, with our fiscal ability to continue to make investments. Under the leadership of our Premier we had some really difficult decisions to make.

We could have ran the debt up further; we could have ran it up again. We wrestled it down from \$12 billion down to about \$8 billion, tough things to do over the last number of years, very tough, challenging things to do. While there are big demands to invest further in our infrastructure, big demands to invest in our people, our public servants in the Province, big demands to invest in new, better, and more programs, there was also the requirement for us to try and wrestle that debt down from where it is. If you are paying money out on the debt, if you have that big debt hanging over your head, you cannot pay for programs, services, buildings, and other infrastructure; you cannot pay for both. You can do one or the other. We managed to wrestle that down while investing in new programs.

This year we ran into a problem and we saw it coming. We had tough decisions to make. So we made the decision that one of the things that we had to do was to review programs that we had as a government. What programs were still in place that were not as effective or as meaningful to the people that we serve as they were years ago, or is there a better way to do that program? Are there ways to take that program and mesh programs together? Are there ways to create efficiencies? That is what we had to do.

I can tell you, I had very close friends and people I know who were affected by the reductions that we had in our Budget this year, but we had to make those decisions so that in the future police officers were not running around with police cars with 300,000 kilometres on them, so that our schools did not have leaky roofs, bad windows, and that kind of thing again in the future. We had to make those very tough decisions, I say, Mr. Chair. We had to try and keep out debt down. We could not let the debt run out of control again, but we were up front.

Under our Premier, we have made significant advances this year with our public servants, signing contracts with most of our major public unions; and I am going to tell you, we get great service from our public servants.

We made other great investments as well but if it was not for her and her efforts and very carefully – I am going to tell you, we had some good discussions about this stuff. She told all of us, as Cabinet ministers in charge of departments: We are not having it. We have to make those tough decisions. We could have made popular decisions, roll it out and everybody be happy, and people over there will be saying we are running the debt out of control again. We cannot win with those folks over there, but our Premier was not going to have that and that is where we are today.

Mr. Chair, I only have a minute left and I want to talk about my new department for a few minutes – well, for a minute because that is all I have. I was pleased when provided the opportunity to become the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services. I was delighted to have that opportunity. I have say that since I have come down here – I should back up and say during my policing career, I had an opportunity to work with child protection workers and social workers and many different circumstances and I am going to tell you, Mr. Chair, it is tough work that they do. It is tough work and important work that they do day in and day out.

I have learned in the last few weeks that there are some really good things going on in Child,



Youth and Family Services. I am looking forward to the opportunities in the coming weeks to talk about some new opportunities, some new legislation, talk about the good work that they are doing, because they are highly qualified, professional, well-trained, well-focused staff, front-line staff, supportive staff, and supervision staff in Child, Youth and Family Services. As a Province and as a people, we should be pleased and delighted to have them working for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

**MR. KING:** Mr. Chair, given the time of the day, I move that we rise the Committee and that the House do adjourn, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

**CHAIR:** Honourable Government House Leader, we have to rise the Committee first, before we can adjourn.

**MR. KING:** Surely, I will gladly rise the Committee.

I move that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again, seconded by the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise, report progress, and that we ask permission to sit again.

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, Mr. Speaker returned to the Chair.

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

The hon. the Member for the District of Port de Grave.

**MR. LITTLEJOHN:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Committee of Supply reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed the Chair to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

When shall the Committee sit again?

**MR. KING:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, report received and adopted. Committee ordered to sit again on tomorrow.

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

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

Given the hour of the day, I move, seconded by the Member for Burgeo – La Poile, that the House do now adjourn.

**MR. SPEAKER:** This House now stands adjourned until 1:30 o'clock on Tuesday.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, at 1:30 p.m.