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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 always take advantage of this time to welcome special guests to the galleries. I was waiting for a few moments because we are going to have a special guest today who is going to be joining us, as I thought, but I do want to acknowledge her, even though she has not yet joined us, someone who is retiring from the House of Assembly after twenty-one years with the Public Service, Ms Marlene Lambe.

Marlene has been with the House of Assembly since 2006. Those of us in this Assembly would all recognize her as being the Chief Financial Officer for the House, and she has been a key part of this House's reorganization going back to 2006.

You may recall many of us refer to the Green report that came out in 2007 and the subsequent legislation that was introduced in this House, the accountability and transparency legislation, and all of the ensuing rules and regulations that grew from that. All of that was implemented under her watch and with her guidance.

I wanted to take this opportunity today, on behalf of all of you, and I am sure you will all join with me in wishing her the best in her retirement. She finishes up and retires the end of December, but she is leaving on a well-deserved vacation next week. On Tuesday of next week when she leaves here, it will be for all intents and purposes her last official day here and she will enjoy a well-deserved vacation and come back and start her official retirement as of January 1.

On behalf of all of you, I wanted to wish Marlene all the best in her retirement and to thank her for the tremendous work she has done on behalf of all of us here and for the House of Assembly and for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Marlene, to you, congratulations, and thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today we will have members' statements from the Member for the District of Topsail – I understand the member has leave; the Member for the District of St. John's North; the Member for the District of Bonavista South; the Member for the District of Port de Grave; the Member for the District of Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi; and the Member for the District of The Straits – White Bay North.

The hon. the Member for the District of Topsail.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank members opposite for providing leave today.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today in this hon. House to recognize the passing of Riley Mercer – a Conception Bay South teenager, who was diagnosed with a rare form of brain cancer in 2011, and nearly eleven years after his sister, Alex, died from a similar disease.

Over the last two years, Riley had maintained such a positive outlook, even as his cancer worsened and he lost the ability to see and to hear. Many of his friends and family were always so touched by the fact that Riley would never complain, not once throughout his entire journey.

Mr. Speaker, it was easy to see where Riley got his strength and that was directly from his parents, Louise and Bernie. It was the strength and faith of the Mercers that not only inspired their family and friends, but the community and our Province as a whole.

Riley's journey has truly reinforced the willingness in Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to comfort and support one another. While many of us were strangers to Riley, to us Riley's life created a miracle. He was a young boy who brought us together and

taught us the importance of staying positive and spreading hope.

It was just last year in early December, that Riley came here to Confederation Building to flip the switch during our annual Christmas tree lighting at Confederation Building as part of the 2012 Christmas Lights Across Canada celebration.

It seems more than fitting for all members of this hon. House and all residents of our Province to join me in celebrating the life of Riley Mercer, a young teenager who certainly touched the lives of so many, and to offer our condolences to his family and friends.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KIRBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand in this hon. House today to recognize the work of the O'Brien Farm Foundation. The foundation, established just a few years ago, is overseeing the preservation, management, and interpretation of the historic O'Brien Farm on Oxen Pond Road in the District of St. John's North.

Thimble Cottage, the former family farm homestead, still stands at the site of O'Brien's Farm. The cottage was designated a heritage structure in 1992, and the cottage and the farm represent an important part of our Province's Irish and agricultural heritage.

The O'Brien Farm Foundation, in conjunction with the Newfoundland and Labrador Historic Sites Division, has developed a master plan to preserve Thimble Cottage and the O'Brien farm for future generations. I attended the Foundation's annual general meeting on September 18, and was excited to hear about their plans.

The Foundation hopes to provide programming that will enable future generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and visitors to our Province, to learn more about our rich history of Irish settlement and sustainable agricultural practices.

I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating the O'Brien Farm Foundation on their work, and wishing them the very best success as they move forward.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista South.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Honourable colleagues, I rise today to pay tribute to Gerald Strickland of Newman's Cove. Although he is no longer with us, Mr. Strickland deserves to be recognized for his outstanding bravery and courage.

On January 23, 2006, during a vicious windstorm, Gerald noticed smoke coming out from the side of Rex and Janet Abbott's home in Newman's Cove. He quickly drove to the scene and ran inside the burning house. Following the sound of voices and feeling blindly through the smoke, Mr. Strickland bumped into Mr. Abbott and his wheelchair which was stuck in the doorway. He was able to pull Rex, and unknowingly at the time, Rex's wife, holding onto the chair, outside to safety, only seconds before the house was completely destroyed by flames.

Gerald Strickland's swift actions saved the lives of two people that day. Earlier this year, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador bestowed Mr. Strickland with the Province's Bravery Award, which was received by his wife, Sandra.

This act of bravery was also recognized by the Government of Canada in 2007, when Gerald received the country's Medal of Bravery.

Mr. Speaker, hon. colleagues, please join me in honouring such a noble resident of this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Port de Grave.

MR. LITTLEJOHN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today in this House to recognize two young dancers from my district who were recently selected to attend Canada's National Ballet School and the Quinte Ballet School. These two young dancers will join some of the best young dancers from across the country.

Julia Clarke auditioned in October for the National Ballet School of Canada. She will be attending the six-week summer school program this coming June with fifty other students from across the country, with a possibility of being a full-time student dancer in September.

Brittany Vaters travelled to Belleville, Ontario, where she auditioned over the Remembrance Day weekend. She was one of fifteen dancers selected in her age group. She is moving to Belleville in January to attend the school on a full-time basis.

Both dancers are students of Miss Catherine's Dance Studio, where they have trained since they were three. Miss Catherine says "to see that two of my students within the last four weeks have been accepted to these prestigious schools I guess it lets me know we are doing something right."

I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating Brittany and Julia.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand in this hon. House today to congratulate three young people from my district who received the Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award on Saturday, November 30.

Tyler Angel, Daniel Escott, and Abby McCarthy are now two-thirds of the way through the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards program. The Silver Award is the second level of the program, and I wish these three outstanding young citizens all the best as they continue their push towards gold level.

The award was founded by His Royal Highness Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, to encourage personal development and community involvement for young people. Participants establish unique goals, and in the process of reaching them they acquire new skills, learn responsibility, and increase their physical fitness levels.

Tyler, Daniel, and Abby received their Silver Awards from His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Frank Fagan, in a ceremony at the Capital Hotel in St. John's. The commitment and motivation Tyler, Daniel, and Abby have shown, and will continue to show as they complete the program is an inspiration for us all.

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.

I rise today to welcome Habitat for Humanity to my district, The Straits – White Bay North. They made Christmas reach its true meaning of giving on Saturday with homeownership by delivering the keys to four deserving families,

the Gould's, the Mauger's, the Pittman's, and the Elliott-Hedderson families.

Local Lions, especially Jim Haley and Geoff Christiansen worked diligently as project managers on behalf of Habitat, some 1,100 kilometres away, deserve praise. Both were instrumental in mobilizing community groups, businesses, and countless volunteers to make this a reality. Donation of time, supplies, food, and funding was not in short supply.

The Town of St. Anthony, like many areas of the Province, is experiencing an affordable housing crunch. This housing initiative was well received from the federal government and Habitat, with the town offering any assistance they could provide.

The community came together that day with many filling the newly renovated homes and I was humbled to be part of what was hailed as the first "Kitchen party, with many more to come."

I ask all hon. members of the House to commend Habitat for Humanity for all the good work it does in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Janet Story, a visionary and leader who dedicated her life to the nursing profession, preservation of Newfoundland and Labrador's history, and the betterment of our Province.

Ms Story, who passed away at the age of eighty-nine on Tuesday, December 3, made many contributions to health care throughout her life.

She is recognized as one of the founding members of the Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador, helped establish Memorial University's nursing program, and was the Director of Nursing at the General Hospital in St. John's for twenty years.

During her time as a nurse she was instrumental in leading the way to many firsts in the nursing profession in our Province including self-regulation; improving the standards of nursing education; carrying out nurse utilization reviews; ensuring there was an adequate nursing complement through overseas recruitment efforts; and implementing the modern nursing unit workplace.

Having played such a pivotal role in the history of nursing in Newfoundland and Labrador, it is fitting that she also led the way in preserving the history of nursing. Ms Story helped found two nursing archives in the Province, the professional archives and the Lillian Stevenson Archives.

Ms Story received much recognition for the work she did throughout her life and was awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal, Canadian Red Cross Long Service Award, and the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. She was also an honorary member in a number of associations, including the Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador. Her ongoing influence and impact will continue to be felt throughout the many organizations she gave her skills and passion to wholeheartedly.

Mr. Speaker, the provincial government passes on our deepest sympathies to Ms Story's family and friends, and we thank her for her valuable contributions to our Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. Ms Story played a pivotal role in the nursing profession and the delivery of health care in our Province. We talked a bit about trailblazers in the House yesterday and Ms Story was just that. In fact, she became one of the first Newfoundlanders to earn a Bachelor of Nursing degree.

As the Director of Nursing at the General Hospital for twenty years, Ms Story implemented a home care program to reduce the length of hospital stay for patients, which was a critical development in health care.

During her ten years as director, she also helped found the Memorial University's nursing program in 1965. She played a big role in preserving heritage structures as well in this city, including preserving the old military hospital down on Forest Road.

Her leadership in archiving the history of nursing, establishing the nursing program, as well as the self-regulation of nurses earned her an honorary degree from Memorial University, amongst other accolades.

From the Official Opposition, we offer our condolences to the Story family on their loss.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement. Janet Story contributed greatly to modern nursing education and to the practice of nursing in Newfoundland and Labrador. She also did much to advance public recognition of nursing as a profession.

Her contribution to preserving and displaying the history of nursing is also immense and known to many. Not the least of her achievements was the nursing archives and museum, featuring an authentic reconstructed

early twentieth century nursing ward. I think we all would be interested in seeing that today and comparing it to where we are now.

It is good to know that she received her many honours and awards while still here to appreciate them and to know how much she was respected. I would like to express my condolences to her family and friends on their loss.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. the Member for The Straits- White Bay North have leave?

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement. Ms Story was certainly a visionary and deserves much praise, and this statement is quit fitting.

We must continue to advance our nursing profession and encourage the current and retired nurses to continue in her footsteps. I personally extend condolences to Ms Story's family.

Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize today as International Human Rights Day. On December 10, 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and this day marks the adoption of the declaration as the universal standard for defending and promoting human rights.

In recognition of today, we reaffirm that all human beings are born with equal and inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms.

This year's occasion is particularly important as the world lost one of its greatest champions for human rights just this past week with the passing of Nelson Mandela.

It has been twenty years since the position of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was created, so the theme for 2013 is 20 Years: Working For Your Rights. The Office of the High Commissioner is an independent authority that focuses on advocacy, monitoring, and training. Through those activities, the office contributes to legislative and policy reforms to increase accountability for human rights violations and advance human rights around the world.

Though we celebrate the significant progress that has been made by the Office of the High Commissioner and by the world in general in the last two decades, the emphasis is on the future. Many challenges lie ahead in the struggle to enhance the dignity, freedom, and the rights of all people.

Mr. Speaker, the provincial government believes in the fundamental human rights and in the worth and equality of all residents. In 2010, Newfoundland and Labrador took a significant step forward when we introduced a new Human Rights Act, 2010. The act ensures that individuals in this Province are protected from discrimination and harassment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, social origin, religious creed, religion, age, disability, disfigurement, sex, sexual orientation, marital or family status, source of income or political opinion.

In the three years since the Human Rights Act, 2010 was passed, we have continued to do significant work. Just last month, we were very pleased to introduce amendments to the act to explicitly prohibit discrimination and/or harassment based on gender identity and gender expression. There is no place in society for discrimination, and the provincial government will continue to ensure that our human rights legislation sets a progressive course for the protection of the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members in this House to join me in recognizing International Human Rights Day and in acknowledging that each and every resident of Newfoundland and Labrador must be afforded fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of life.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Today is International Human Rights Day and it is presenting an opportunity to celebrate human rights and to advocate for those rights for everyone everywhere.

Nelson Mandela was a true champion for those human rights. In this world our human rights are better because of him and his work. The story is absolutely amazing just to picture twenty-seven years behind bars on Robben Island and the work he did behind bars and upon his return to freedom is simply awe-inspiring. We have watched the feed today from South Africa just to see what is going on. It really is a celebration of an absolutely perfect life really.

Our work is not complete. There is more work to be done, even in our own Province. Many people of this Province have been denied basic human rights. Article 27 recognizes that children under the age of eighteen have a right to an adequate standard of living in terms of their physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social development. The Child and Youth Advocate stated that this did not happen in the case of John. It is important that government strives to ensure all human rights for everyone everywhere, especially in this Province, are met.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. The amendment to the Human Rights Act to include gender identity and gender expression was due to the hard work of many advocates. Rights are not given but are hard won, as is so well-known by the hon. Nelson Mandela. Laws do not always change hearts but they can protect those from the heartless.

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself” – or herself – “and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services...”.

As we close this House today, and today government celebrates the announcement of their Muskrat Falls Project, let us remember the people of Newfoundland and Labrador who do not have a roof over their head, the seniors who are couch surfing or living in fear of homelessness, the people who cannot feed their children and must rely on food banks. These, too, are issues of basic human rights. As the minister stated, each and every resident of Newfoundland and Labrador must be afforded fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of life.

Thank you, 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 of an advance copy of his statement.

As we recognize these human rights of all people, let us also reflect on the life’s work of Nelson Mandela. Mandela once said, “Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. Like Slavery and Apartheid,

poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Sometimes it falls on a generation to be great. YOU can be that great generation.”

I urge the government to take Mandela’s words to heart. Sometimes it falls on a government to be great.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Public sector employees have been promised a \$1,400 signing bonus as part of the latest contract agreements with government. Last month we sat in this House and debated Bill 8, which received Royal Assent on November 14. That is almost a month ago.

I ask the Premier: These are very valuable employees, why has a month gone by? Will employees receive their \$1,400 signing bonus?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. Employees will receive the cheques. I understand they are going out on December 18.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Muskrat Falls Project was sanctioned last December and the Federal Loan Guarantee was finalized over a year ago.

I ask the Premier: Since this was all finalized a year ago, why are we holding another Muskrat Falls announcement today?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let me begin by thanking the Leader of the Opposition for his question, because I welcome every opportunity to talk about Muskrat Falls and what a wonderful project it is for the people of the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is right. We have had the Loan Guarantee since November, 2012. There are a number of conditions precedent associated with that. Nalcor and Emera have been working towards the finalization and completion of those details, Mr. Speaker.

Financing is also something that we have been very engaged with, Mr. Speaker. We will conclude, as we speak here in this House of Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and I am looking forward to acquainting the people of the Province with those details later today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Most people celebrate paying off a loan, not actually getting a loan. Last December the Premier spent \$16,000 in taxpayers' money for a Muskrat Falls sanction party in the lobby of the Confederation Building. This evening she will be again holding a party in the same lobby.

I ask the Premier: How can you justify spending thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money for a repeat of last year's announcement?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, once again today we see the predominant attitude that has coloured every response from members of the Opposition with regard to the development of this project, small mindedness, Mr. Speaker. Small mindedness will not apply on this side of the House.

This is a landmark development in the history of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, has been attempted for many times in our history and completed for the first time under this Tory government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. BALL: The Premier might throw some comments about being small minded but I am not at all small minded about this project. We will continue to ask questions about this. As a matter of fact, we wish we could ask questions tomorrow, because we understand that the House of Assembly will be closing today.

Here we are again on the eve of a so-called major announcement about Muskrat Falls, many of the details you have known since November 29, and we will not have an opportunity to question government about the contents of the announcement tomorrow.

I ask the Premier: Is this correct? Will you be closing the House today?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is prone to point out on a regular basis that this is Question Period and they get to determine what questions they ask. He just pointed out in his first question that the loan guarantee has been in place since 2012; the conditions precedent has been worked on since that time.

Any pertinent questions, Mr. Speaker, he has had with regard to the financing of Muskrat Falls, he has had ample opportunity to address in this House in the last six weeks.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Well, in all due respect to the Premier, my response was about the announcement that you are going to make today and having the opportunity to ask those questions.

So, Mr. Speaker, Bill 29 threw a blanket over many things in this Province, and now the government is closing the House of Assembly –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. BALL: – and denying the Opposition an opportunity to question government about this announcement.

So I ask the Premier: Will you agree to keep the House of Assembly open so that we can have the opportunity to question government about today's announcement?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition loves to play the victim, but there is an old truism from this House of Assembly. It says that the government of the day opens the House; it is up to the Opposition parties when the House closes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we are through our legislative agenda. We have completed our legislative agenda.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Those are the facts of it, Mr. Speaker. There is only a half million people in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker. We are not going to legislate them to death.

So, the parties opposite have had ample time – it is one of the longest sittings that we have ever had in the fall of the year. We have gladly answered every question they put forward, Mr. Speaker. If there is a want, it is their own, not ours.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, the Premier just needs to look at the piece of legislation around vital statistics which is, ironically, another Bill 29, that is not put on –

Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House, the Minister of Health and Community Services said that she was anxious to table a document to dispute the claim that Saskatchewan is flying isotopes from Ontario. She did not table the document.

I ask the Minister of Health and Community Services: Will you now table the document?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday when I said that in the House I laid the document on the table, it was there for a couple of hours. I will put it back on the table again, Mr. Speaker. That is certainly not an issue, not a problem.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, the Minister of Health and Community Services left the impression yesterday that isotopes are being created at the University of Saskatchewan and are not being flown in from Ontario.

So I ask the minister: Will you now acknowledge that isotopes are in fact being flown in actually by a commercial airline, Air Canada, from Ontario to Saskatchewan?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely astonishing to me that members opposite are more concerned about what is going to happen in Saskatchewan than they are here in Newfoundland and Labrador – absolutely astonishing to me. If he wants answers to the questions around isotopes, then I suggest he listen up because I attempted yesterday to talk about isotopes in this House.

Mr. Speaker, isotopes have a certain lifespan. There is no question about that. Some of them have a lifespan, or what is called a half-life, of less than two hours, 50 per cent usefulness of less than two hours, one hour and nine minutes, to be precise. Others of them have only a five

minute half-life span. That is the situation around isotopes.

Can they be flown from one area to the other? Yes, they can; however, you would need to produce five to ten times what you need.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By 2011, CADTH released this: thirty-one centres, seven provinces, only ten centres with cyclotrons, and that is in five provinces. So, we can all do a little bit of education here, I say to the minister.

The Minister of Health and Community Services of this Province have led the Province to believe it is dangerous to fly isotopes from St. John's to Western Newfoundland. CADTH says you need flexibility –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. BALL: Yes, you said that last week.

You need flexibility and communication.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. BALL: In fact, the University of Saskatchewan is flying isotopes from Ontario several times a week and their cyclotron will not be available until 2016.

I ask the minister: Will you finally admit that if you had the inclination, you could give the people of Western Newfoundland the PET scanner and fly the isotopes from St. John's?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS SULLIVAN: Mr. Speaker, what I find astounding about this, and I think it was confirmed in the line of questioning that happened yesterday and in the particular news release they put out, is that the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador would choose to deny evidence and would choose to ignore evidence from places like the World Health Organization, from the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information, and from the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS SULLIVAN: The Liberal Party would choose to ignore the best advice that is available –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS SULLIVAN: – and instead make a decision that would curry popular favour for them. That is what this is about, Mr. Speaker. Let us make no doubt about what this is.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have identified time and time again why it is that the PET scanner ought to be here in St. John's.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If the courage and the will is there to do it just like is happening in other provinces in Canada, I ask the minister if that was available and could be done here, would you do that for the people of Western Newfoundland?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Mr. Speaker, once again the members opposite want to look at bits and pieces of this in isolation. PET scanners should be offered in areas of the Province where the cancer care program is.

It should be offered in areas of the Province where we can attract the best in terms of professionals. We need radiology oncologists, we need radiology therapists, and we need a large number of support services and so on. That is part of what is needed. We also need to look at utilization rates.

Mr. Speaker, if we are going to operate a PET scanner anywhere in the Province, we need somewhere around 1,000 to 1,200 PET scans for it to be truly fully operationalized. In Western Newfoundland we had 171 occasions –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, freight was offloaded yesterday in Makkovik in garbage bags due to minus twenty degree temperatures, all due to shipping damage.

I ask the minister: When can the residents of Northern Labrador finally expect to see some improvements in freight delivery and infrastructure?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the member opposite asked that question today. Yesterday, while I was attending a function in Happy Valley-Goose Bay –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MCGRATH: – I made a point of setting up meetings with our suppliers for the freight. That was one of the issues that we talked about was the condition of the freight when it is delivered. As part of our replacement strategy, we are working on the delivery and that will be part of the RFP to make sure that those issues are addressed and taken care of.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, a solution that could be offered – this particular shipment has been sitting in the warehouse in Lewisporte since October waiting for delivery to the North Coast of Labrador.

I ask the minister: Why is this temperature-sensitive freight sitting in a warehouse in Lewisporte since October and not shipped until the last trip of the season?

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

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have guidelines and deadlines put in place for the delivery of freight to the North Coast. As it comes in, it is shipped in priority sequence. If there is freight there that is sensitive, it is taken care of either in the

terminals or sent on. Especially when it is sensitive freight, we get that up there first.

It is amazing the member across the House forgets to mention, although there was a November 15 deadline, this government went out of their way and is actually putting on an extra run to get the extra freight the member across the House tried to get shipped to the North Coast and it was this government that accommodated him.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, on August 21 following the release of the Deloitte report on school busing, the minister stated that an advisory committee would be put in place to review the recommendations.

I ask the minister: Has this committee been struck, who is on it, and is it independent of his department?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, the report came out in August. I cannot say exactly what the status of that is right now, but I will get it and update the member on it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, the Deloitte report also states that 71 per cent of other jurisdictions in Canada have or plan to install video cameras on district school buses. In our Province, fewer than 4 per cent have such cameras.

Given that bullying and violence occur on school buses, when can the parents and students

of our Province expect our Province to catch up with other jurisdictions?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, there were several recommendations that came out of the report and one of the recommendations was that we take a look at a pilot around video cameras. We have in fact moved with that and there are a number of buses that have that equipment on them. As we follow through on that pilot, that will direct us where we go in the future from that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, customers across the Province, including my district, are being forced to pay a legislated recycling fee on the purchase of electronic products like TVs. In many regions no such recycling capacity exists.

I ask the minister: Why are people being forced to pay a \$42 fee on the purchase of a TV in regions where there is no ability to recycle the electronics?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, with the electronic recycling program there are a number of sites around the Province where people can bring their electronics to be recycled. In addition to that, similar to the paint collection that we have as well in other areas, including the area that would include the hon. member's district, the recycling will be picked up on an annual basis. People will have the opportunity, as they would with other hazardous household materials. There

would be a depot where they could drop off on an annual basis. The sites for those will be including all of the communities in coastal Labrador and many drop-offs in Southern Labrador, as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS DEMPSTER: It will not be stored in Crow Head because we have been waiting ten years for a new sanitary landfill site there.

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious this recycling fee was imposed without all of the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador having access to a recycling facility in their region, yet everyone is expected to pay the recycling fee. I hope it is not for the tea party later this evening.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS DEMPSTER: I ask the minister: Will you defer the fee on electronics in regions where residents do not have access to an electronic recycling fee until we do?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: As I explained, Mr. Speaker, all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador will have access to a place to drop off their electronics. In some places it is set up on a permanent basis and in other places it will happen annually, but annually it will be available in all areas of Newfoundland and Labrador, including the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, while the Premier is wasting thousands of dollars to make a feel-good announcement that she has already made several times before, some people are struggling to make ends meet. They are being gouged by payday lenders who are charging an enormous interest rate on their borrowing. Those loans drive people further into poverty. Christmas is here putting an increased pressure on people to spend.

I ask the minister responsible for poverty reduction: Will you regulate the payday loan industry in this Province to protect the poor from getting poorer?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government has legislation and regulations around payday loans. In fact, section 347 of the Criminal Code of Canada states it is a criminal offence to charge more than 60 per cent interest per year. This would amount to a maximum charge of \$2.30 for a fourteen-day loan for \$100. The federal government has taken a lead in this and we will follow that lead.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: That is not true, Mr. Speaker. This is a federal-provincial jurisdiction. The minister knows that. This Province has the ability to regulate payday loans. The minister also knows that.

Mr. Speaker, a local payday lender has advertised their annual interest rate at 778 per cent.

I ask the minister: Why is this the only Province in all of Canada who has not regulated payday loans?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, if there are any loan companies out there that are in violation of federal regulations and legislation, you should certainly go to the police and report that.

Mr. Speaker, other provinces do have some regulations around this, but what happens with the federal regulations is exactly what we need in this Province. The rates they offer in other provinces are very comparable with what the federal government regulates right now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, I will ask the minister a very direct question: Why is it that this Province is the only Province in Canada who has not seen fit to protect those who borrow from payday loans?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, we are comfortable with the federal regulations. If you do look at other provinces, for instance, the lowest rate offered for fourteen-day loans is \$17 for \$100 borrowed. If you consider this in comparison with the \$2.30 per \$100 as allowed under the Criminal Code of Canada, at \$17 per \$100 borrowed, individuals could face financial hardship and debt, which we understand. What they are doing in other provinces is not even comparable with what the federal government has regulated and has legislated.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, the South Coast of our Province is home to a spectacular marine environment including bluefin and killer whales, along with leatherback turtles. The federal government has offered to pay 100 per cent for a feasibility study to look at the possibility of establishing a marine conservation area, but this government rejected the idea.

I ask the minister: Why will you not allow the federal government to complete a feasibility study that will not cost our province a nickel?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government would like to do the feasibility study. The provincial government under the Department of Environment and Conservation feels at this time the study should not proceed as we continue to look at economic development activity for that area. In saying that, the feasibility study may happen down the road, but certainly not at this time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Government likes to talk about the potential for natural resource development on the South Coast, but they have yet to provide any community with any sort of details.

I ask the minister: If you are going to use resource development as an excuse for not doing

a free feasibility study, when will you provide details to the communities in that area?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, this government is concerned with the economic development happening in the Province today and in the future. It is important that we use the natural resources that we have to benefit the people of this Province.

The feasibility study may proceed, as I said, down the road; but at this time, until we thoroughly look at any economic development opportunities that may be available for the South Coast of Newfoundland, we are not comfortable with proceeding with the feasibility study.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bay of Islands, for a quick question, please.

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, recreational grants of \$15,000 are supposed to be given to each district, as in the Budget Estimates.

I ask the minister: When will you fulfill that commitment and give the \$15,000 to all districts in the Province of Newfoundland of Labrador?

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

MR. FRENCH: Mr. Speaker, it gives me an opportunity to talk about recreation in this Province. When that hon. gentleman sat on this side of the House, recreation capital in this Province was \$228,000 to spread throughout this Province. Today, Mr. Speaker, that pot stands at \$1.3 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Mr. Speaker, last April in Estimates, the Minister of Health and Community Services said that a paid family caregiver program was close to being finalized with \$6.1 million allotted for the 2013 Budget, and \$8.2 million for 2014. Now it will not even be off the ground until next March.

So I ask the minister: Why is the program so far behind schedule?

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 happy to have an opportunity to talk about paid family care in the House of Assembly, because this is a program that the people of the Province have asked for and we are happy to deliver. This is a program, though, that had no jurisdiction in the country being able to offer us any advice at all in terms of how we would do it.

MR. JOYCE: (Inaudible).

MS SULLIVAN: So, the answer to the question that the Member for Bay of Islands did not ask about, but seems to want to ask about now, is that we did allocate \$6.1 million for that particular program, we had some challenges in putting it together, but the good news about the programs is that it is moving forward. We are really happy to have made the announcement, and it will annualize at \$8.2 million, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister just repeated something that she said yesterday when she talked about the complexity of developing a paid family caregiver program was highlighted by the fact that no other province had one. It is probably because provinces with mature, publicly run home care programs have less need for such a program, and have revealed problems with this model.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: What barriers and drawbacks did she learn about this model from other jurisdictions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Mr. Speaker, we undertook some rigorous consultation processes within the Department of Health and Community Services. I know when I was across the country speaking to my counterparts we had many conversations around how such a program could be put together, and then rolled out and implemented in the Province.

Mr. Speaker, the most important thing about this particular program is that we assure the quality of care the clients of Newfoundland and Labrador deserve. That was our primary focus right throughout the whole process. It was to ensure we were client centric in our approach to doing this.

Mr. Speaker, apart from that, we need to balance off the responsibility of families to look after families in an unpaid sense with their responsibility to actually provide care when they absolutely could not do it any other way.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The program as outlined by the minister yesterday excludes spouses and common-law partners because of the expectation that their natural caregiving roles will continue.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: What is the expectation of the amount of time spouses and common-law partners must put in on unpaid caregiving for their loved ones?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if we look at the whole culture of Newfoundland and Labrador, then we know that families in this Province have always wanted to look after their loved ones. There has always been a natural caregiving tendency of everybody in this Province, and that certainly exists for spouses one to the other. It is not our intent to monetize that value.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

We have many spouses and common-law partners who are going around exhausted because of giving that care. The minister says training will be provided to appropriate staff of the regional health authorities –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS MICHAEL: – to oversee their Home Support Program.

I ask the minister: How are these already overloaded professionals going to find the time to monitor new paid family caregiver homes when they are already stretched to the limit?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let me respond to her preamble first of all about tired spouses in this Province. What she has obviously forgotten is that there is a Home Support Program in this Province. Six thousand people are availing of that particular Home Support Program in this Province and are receiving some very, very good care.

Mr. Speaker, to the second part of her question with regard to staffing, through the Budget process we have allocated an additional eighteen FTEs, or full-time equivalents, to be able to work with the current 300 staff who work in Long-term Care and Community Support Services Division.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The EPRA was set up by the electronics industry as a non-profit organization designed to pass all recycling costs of their products on to the backs of consumers.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Why has the government allowed consumers to shoulder all the costs when recycling costs should be shared with the industry?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, this Province is serious about waste management. A number of initiatives have happened over the previous years, whether it is our new sites where we bring the waste, it is tire recycling, or it is the hazardous household material such as paints. Now, Mr. Speaker, we have a program for recycling of the electronics.

As I had said the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador now have a program; they can drop off their electronics. If the depot is not available in their place year-round they have an opportunity to do it on an annual basis, Mr. Speaker.

When we look at the recycling of materials, whether it is the collection, the storage, the transportation, and the recycling, Mr. Speaker, there is a cost to that. The cost has been passed on to the consumer.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Here we have a situation where the electronics industry has been put in charge of the electronics recycling problem. We are after putting the fox in charge of the henhouse here.

I ask the minister: How could government determine that this program is going to work?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, we could have asked the industry to take responsibility of the

recycling and hide it in their prices. This government chose to make sure that the cost was transparent to the consumers of Newfoundland and Labrador so that they could see the cost.

We could have just simply asked the industry to take the cost, hide it into the price of their electronics so that the consumer would never know what was happening. We did not think that was appropriate for the consumers of this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, during Question Period the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador clearly read from a document when he answered the question from the Member for St. John's South. I would ask that he please table that document and hopefully do so before the document leaves the House.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador, could he table the document that he was reading from earlier in Question Period?

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

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 the lack of services and supports in the school system is a serious obstacle to learning for children and youth with autism spectrum disorder; and

WHEREAS long wait-lists for paediatric assessment and diagnostic services are preventing many children with autism spectrum disorder from receiving needed early diagnosis; and

WHEREAS the Intensive Applied Behavioural Analysis Program is currently not available for children after Grade 3; and

WHEREAS Applied Behavioural Analysis has been shown to be effective for many individuals beyond Grade 3; and

WHEREAS there is a lack of supports and services for children and youth with autism spectrum disorder after they age out of the Intensive Applied Behavioural Analysis Program; and

WHEREAS it is unacceptable to expect parents in Newfoundland and Labrador to pay thousands of dollars out of their own pockets to cover the cost of privately delivered Applied Behavioural Analysis after Grade 3.

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to extend eligibility for the Intensive Applied Behavioural Analysis Program beyond Grade 3 in consultation with parents, advocates, educators, health care providers, and experts in the autism community.

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, of course, the Christmas season is quickly coming upon us and I have been out at a number of functions in my district in recent days. It is really interesting and surprising and concerning to come into contact with so many children who are somewhere on the autism spectrum disorder, according to the diagnosis, that they have actually been lucky enough to get because we know there is a long wait-list for paediatric assessments and so on. That has been quite shocking.

When I talk to parents of those kids, one of the things they say is we have ABA now but we know we are not going to be able to have it after Grade 3. People are very concerned about the possibility of not having that service after Grade 3. Like I have said in the past, we have come a fair distance I believe with this program but we really ought to consider taking it further, because as the petition reads, ABA is effective throughout the lifespan.

I will tell you one more story. I had a constituent whose daughter collected about 900 signatures on this petition. She e-mailed me and said: Have you presented this in the House of Assembly yet? I said, yes, I have done it several times. You can go here and you can see it. She said, well, I do not know why it has not been on the news. That is the way parents feel.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the hon. member his time is up.

MR. KIRBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

WHEREAS residents of the Southwest Coast must travel the Trans-Canada Highway between Channel-Port aux Basques and Corner Brook for

work, medical, educational, and social reasons;
and

WHEREAS Marine Atlantic ferries dock at Channel-Port aux Basques at various hours on a daily basis resulting in extremely high volume of commercial and residential travellers using this section of the Trans-Canada Highway; and

WHEREAS the world-renowned Wreckhouse area is situated along this section of the TCH; and

WHEREAS the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador initiated a twenty-four hour snow clearing pilot project in 2008 that excluded the section of the Trans-Canada Highway from Channel-Port aux Basques to Stephenville.

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to include the section of the Trans-Canada Highway from Channel-Port aux Basques to Stephenville in the twenty-four hour snow clearing project.

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have entered this petition a number of times which indicates the interest obviously from constituents all over my district, as well as the district adjacent when it comes to St. George's – Stephenville, or Stephenville – St. George's. People in the Codroy Valley have to travel this roadway as well.

I have had calls since I have started entering this, calls from long-haul truck drivers, truck drivers who have to go back and forth across the Province, getting on and off the ferry. We are not getting the service that is necessary and required. We are asking that the application of logic and common sense be applied here to make sure that we get this treatment.

Everybody has a story. I can talk about stories, drives I have taken at 12:00 o'clock at night, driving across that highway because I had to go to Corner Brook for a medical appointment, an appointment that was delayed, but driving out with my wife and family –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. A. PARSONS: - driving out across that highway in blinding snowstorms. Again, we do not have that snow clearing. We should have it on trunk roads in this Province because that is a priority.

The gateway to this Province, rubber tire traffic coming off that ferry, maybe never having been to this Province before, let's hope they get on the road during the day, because if they come off at night they are not going to get twenty-four hour snow clearing that they have in a number of other places in this Province. We are just asking here to be treated the same.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you very much, 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 strikes and lockouts are rare, and on average 97 per cent of collective agreements are negotiated without work disruption; and

WHEREAS anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978, in British Columbia since 1993, and successive governments in those provinces have never repealed those laws; and

WHEREAS anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

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

evident by the use of temporary replacement workers currently by Labatt's and in past years by both Ocean Choice International and Vale in Voisey's Bay;

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

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

It has been a number of times now, Mr. Speaker
—

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind everybody the elf is looking.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It has been a number of times now that I have stood with a petition from petitioners on this issue. Once again today, I have quite a number of petitioners here from both within the St. John's area, as well as outside of the Avalon Peninsula.

These people who have signed this petition and have asked me to present it are concerned about the ongoing problem we have of extended strikes because of not having legislation in place to discourage the use of replacement workers by companies that are able to keep their businesses going while strikers are out on a picket line. The current strikers in our city are now out there over eight months, Mr. Speaker.

I want to use the opportunity just to remind the House, remind the minister of some of the history. We know that British Columbia and Quebec both have this legislation. I think it is really important to point out how significant that is because in actual fact, BC and Quebec together represent 37 per cent of the Canadian population. More than one-third of the Canadian population live in those two provinces; therefore, those two provinces really do give protection to a large number of workers in this

country. The question is, why would we not do the same?

In those two provinces, the legislation has been in place for quite a long period of time. I encourage the government here, Mr. Speaker, to revisit their thoughts on replacement legislation.

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 the 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. Anthony Bight 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 services;

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, if we continue going down this route, the lack of rural broadband is going to continue to create further divide among all Canadians and all Newfoundlanders and

Labradorians. For my own district, being represented primarily a fishing district, with the federal government changing rules, making applications go online, and removing its counter access for service, it is telling these fishers and these people they have to go online and some of them only have the slow dial-up services. To be able to get in and try to fill out an application on this unreliable slower service is completely unacceptable. You could get booted out; there are all kinds of things that can happen when you have slower Internet services.

This has created a real problem. If Newfoundland and Labrador really wants to succeed, it needs to advance into a knowledge-based economy. That is where the Canadian economy would be very successful.

Young people will be left behind. Young people will not be prepared for jobs if we are going to continue down this path where we are going to leave rural communities without access to broadband Internet service. It is really creating a social divide in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is completely unacceptable.

We need a real, true provincial strategy when it comes to providing broadband instead of just relying on the private sector. We can have these initiatives, but until we ensure all of our communities have access to broadband Internet – if we look at the average Canadian downloads close to thirty gigabytes a month and the upload is about five gigabytes a month, the cost via satellite service would be hundreds of dollars a month. It is simply unaffordable, Mr. Speaker. It is simply out of the question. This is something that the government must do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise again today on a petition on Route 450 on the North Shore of the Bay of Islands. I read the petition yesterday, and I will read it again.

WHEREAS we are concerned over the deplorable conditions of the pavement at Hughes Brook hill, Route 440; and

WHEREAS many residents of the Towns of Hughes Brook, Irishtown, Summerside, Meadows, Gillams, McIver's, and Cox's Cove travel this road on a daily basis; and

WHEREAS after repeated requests for repairs to the pavement, the road continues to deteriorate; and

WHEREAS the ruts in the pavement are creating a safety hazard; and

WHEREAS we feel that the condition of this road presents an accident waiting to happen;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to give serious consideration to making repairs to this road.

Mr. Speaker, this is a road I brought to the government's attention on numerous occasions, Route 450. I had a meeting with and discussions with the minister of some safety concerns in Route 450: a guide rail, stuff that was because of a flood, and a major break in the road down by Coppermine Brook. I have to say the minister acted very responsibly. He acted very promptly and now that part has been levelled off and has been paved for the winter. The guide rails have been put up. The portions of the pavement that were washed out during the floods have been done. I just wanted to acknowledge the minister; for safety concerns, that work was done.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned to the minister I was going to present these petitions on Route 440 so we could have it on the radar for next season. It is a dangerous piece of road. These petitions do work. Meeting with the minister, discussing with the minister, and explaining the gravity of the situation does work.

On behalf of the residents, I want to present this petition to ensure the government is aware of it,

that the concerns of the people are being heard, that the concerns are real, and that it is a safety concern. I look forward, Mr. Speaker, when it is time after the Budget when there is discussion about the amount of money and what the parties are out in the Western region. I look forward to sitting down with the minister to discuss this. I can assure you Route 440 over on Hughes Brook hill will be a priority for me in the area because of the safety concerns. It is not a luxury, but safety concerns.

Once again I thank the minister for the work that was done on Route 450. I look forward to sitting down and having a conversation about Route 440, explaining the gravity of the situation and the seriousness. Hopefully we can come to some conclusion to provide a safe road for the people of the North Shore of the Bay of Islands.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS DEMPSTER: 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 humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS seniors have to travel outside of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair to attend appointments with specialists; and

WHEREAS seniors are waiting long periods of time to get reimbursed for their expenses through the Medical Transportation Assistance Program; and

WHEREAS the Medical Transportation Assistance Program does not cover all incurred expenses, for example, ground transportation less than 2,500 kilometres per year;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to improve the

Medical Transportation Assistance Program so that all expenses are covered and reimbursed in a more timely manner.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, in my district there are no doctors, there are community clinics. There are doctors in Forteau health care and that is it. Any time people have to travel for any kind of specialty service, they are travelling outside the region, many of whom are seniors who live on a fixed income.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS DEMPSTER: It is a wonderful thing that we have this medical transportation program that was brought in by a Liberal government back in 1998, but we certainly do need a lot of enhancements. One of the most frustrating things for me, Mr. Speaker, is that many of the things we are asking for that would improve this program would actually be cost saving to the program.

What I mean by that is you get sixteen cents if you fly and you can only be covered after 2,500 kilometres. Now, people are encouraged to fly, which is \$800, but they can drive and get reimbursed only \$300 or \$400. Many are not doing that. For example, if you have to travel once a year for a cancer follow-up appointment in here, you will never get anything from this transportation program.

Mr. Speaker, if you stay in private accommodations you do not get reimbursed, but if you stay in a hotel they will reimburse the cost. Here is another way you can save. People would rather stay and be in a supportive environment with family and friends when they are dealing with heavy medical situations.

I urge the government to go back and revisit the shortcomings in this program, Mr. Speaker. Make it possible for your first kilometres to be reimbursed. We need a better rate than the

sixteen cents a kilometre. Also, we need to consider private accommodations. People would use fewer hotels, people would fly less often, and it would be huge cost savings.

Also, Mr. Speaker, people cannot continue to wait four to six months to be reimbursed when they use this program. It is wrong. People are sending claims in January and being reimbursed in June. I urge the government and the Minister of Health to look at this program and the many ways improvements can be made for the betterment of the people in the Province who rely on this service.

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

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, a petition.

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

WHEREAS there is no cellphone service in the Town of Trout River, which is an enclave community in Gros Morne National Park; and

WHEREAS visitors to Gros Morne National Park, more than 100,000 annually, expect to communicate by cellphone when they visit the park; and

WHEREAS cellphone service has become a very important aspect of everyday living for residents; and

WHEREAS cellphone service is an essential safety tool for visitors and residents; and

WHEREAS cellphone service is essential for business development;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to partner with the private sector to extend cellphone coverage throughout Gros Morne National Park and the enclave community of Trout River.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting thing about petitions. Even though this is a petition seeking that the government will assist and partner with the private sector and come up with a solution for cellphone service, it is signed by people other than people from Trout River, in addition to people from Trout River. I see on this particular petition there are a couple of people from Twillingate. There are people from Moreton's Harbour. There is somebody from Port Anson.

Mr. Speaker, there are people who, without a doubt, were visiting Trout River over the course of the last little while, and in addition to people from Trout River who signed the petition, they could see the importance of having cellphone service in Trout River and up through Trout River Gulch.

The strength of a petition is the request of many for a benefit, sometimes, for a few. Even though Trout River has only between 600 and 700 people, many people are aware that Trout River has no cellphone service. Many are aware that a great number of the park enclave communities have no cellphone service and Gros Morne National Park receives more than 100,000 visitors annually, so all of these are aware.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that due to technology, the Opposition Office now has the facility to post of the petitions on Web site. Anybody can have a look at any and all petitions presented. Anybody Provinces-wide can have a look and see the petitions that are being presented to this government.

This is not a plea for something extravagant. It is not a plea for something expensive. It is not a plea for something frivolous. It is a plea for something which is (a) very useful; (b) important and not expensive; and (c) it is the request for many people for a service that most people take for granted today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS ROGERS: 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 the Family Violence Intervention Court provided a comprehensive approach to domestic violence in a court setting that fully understood and dealt with the complex issues of domestic violence; and

WHEREAS domestic violence continues to be one of the most serious issues facing our Province today, and the cost of the impact of domestic violence is great both economically and in human suffering; and

WHEREAS the Family Violence Intervention Court was welcomed and endorsed by all aspects of the justice system including the police, the courts, prosecutors, defence counsel, Child, Youth and Family Services, as well as victims, offenders, community agencies and women's groups; and

WHEREAS the recidivism rate for offenders going through the court was 10 per cent compared to 40 per cent for those who did not; and

WHEREAS the budget for the court was only 0.2 per cent of the entire budget of the Department of Justice;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to reinstate the Family Violence Intervention Court.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise again today just before the House closes to talk about this issue. As one can surmise the reason that the court was

closed – the Minister of Justice himself indicated it was not because the court was not doing a good job. One can only assume that the reason the court was closed was simply for monetary and budgetary considerations.

Mr. Speaker, I would implore for the Minister of Justice as he prepares – he is probably now in a re-budgeting phase right now – that budget that he take into account the incredible work that the Family Violence Intervention Court did. The Minister of Finance told us that we are in a golden age. A golden age should reflect programs that are innovative, that are creative, and that enable people of the Province to live fully and security and to the best of their ability.

I implore on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador – we have hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of signatures. This petition keeps rolling in. I implore the Minister of Justice and I implore the Minister of Finance, as they prepare their budget, to reconsider the Family Violence Intervention Court.

This court also saved the Province money. It saved the Province money because it was more efficient, court time was much less per case than going through the regular court system. Police want it, the women's community wants it, and the Crown wants it –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the member her time has expired.

Thank you.

MS ROGERS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I implore them to reconsider.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS ROGERS: Thank you.

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 2, third reading of a bill.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that An Act To Amend The Schools Act, 1997, Bill 28, be now read a third time.

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

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion that Bill 28 be 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 Schools Act, 1997. (Bill 28)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Schools Act, 1997", read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 28)

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I understand we are waiting for the arrival of the Lieutenant Governor. If it pleases the House, perhaps we take a short pause until he arrives.

MR. SPEAKER: I understand as well that he has arrived. The House will take a brief recess while he is escorted.

This House stands recessed.

Recess

MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman): Order, please!

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Mr. Speaker, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has arrived.

MR. SPEAKER: Admit His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise.

[His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor takes the Chair]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: It is the wish of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor that all present please be seated.

MR. SPEAKER: Your Honour, it is my agreeable duty on behalf of Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, Her Faithful Commons in Newfoundland and Labrador, to present to Your Honour a bill for the appropriation of Supply granted in the present session.

CLERK: 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 No. 2". (Bill 9)

HIS HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR (Frank F. Fagan CM, ONL, MBA): In Her Majesty's Name, I thank Her Loyal Subjects, I accept their benevolence, and I assent to this bill.

MR. SPEAKER: May it please Your Honour, the General Assembly of the Province has at its present session passed certain bills, to which, in the name and on behalf of the General

Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

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

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act". (Bill 6)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Pharmaceutical Services Act". (Bill 10)

A bill, "An Act To Remove Anomalies And Errors In The Statute Law". (Bill 11)

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

A bill, "An To Amend The Highway Traffic Act No. 2". (Bill 13)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Judicature Act". (Bill 14)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Commissioners For Oaths Act". (Bill 15)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Labour Standards Act". (Bill 17)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Proceedings Against The Crown Act". (Bill 19)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Insurance Adjusters, Agents And Brokers Act". (Bill 21)

A bill, "An Act Respecting Food Safety In Food Premises". (Bill 22)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Law Society Act, 1999". (Bill 23)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957". (Bill 24)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Human Rights Act, 2010". (Bill 25)

A bill, "An Act To Repeal The Health Care Association Act". (Bill 26)

A bill, "An Act Respecting Adoptions". (Bill 27)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Schools Act, 1997". (Bill 28)

HIS HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT

GOVERNOR: In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these bills.

If I may, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a Merry Christmas, and the best of the festive season. Thank you for your commitment and your contribution to this wonderful Province of ours, on behalf of the people of this Province, and to wish you all the best of health and happiness and good fortune in the New Year.

Thank you for having us here today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

[His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor leaves the Chamber. Mr. Speaker returns to the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

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

It gives me real pleasure this afternoon to stand on behalf of our caucus and to wish well to everybody in the House of Assembly. It is always a pleasure at this time of year because we know we are going to be getting a break over the holidays, although for all of us – not many of us, for all of us who are in the midst of attending events in our districts and I think we are all happy to be able to attend those events.

Starting earlier in the season and getting out before two or three days before Christmas I think is good for all of the members of the House of Assembly so that we can be present both to our constituents, as well as our families too, not just the constituents, because for those of the MHAs who come from outside of St. John's, I do think about all of you all the time. I

really mean that, because it is easy for me. I am literally a two-minute drive away from my house. Some of you are like eight, nine hours drive away. It is good that you can get back to your constituents and to your families in a timely fashion.

We have had a good session. I think six weeks is a bit of a record for my time in the House. We have not sat this long before in the fall, and I welcome being in the House of Assembly. I welcome being able to bring the issues of people to the government and to ask questions.

I thank the ministers for answering the questions, whether I liked the answers or not. Whether you gave me what I wanted, you did answer the questions in the style you answer them in. The important thing is we all know why we are here; we are here to be accountable to the people of the Province. I thank everybody in this room for all of us understanding that of each other.

I wish everybody a really wonderful Christmas, if Christmas is what you celebrate. I wish everybody a good holiday. I hope you will have a wonderful time with your families as well as with your constituents.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to take the opportunity to wish everyone in this House a Merry Christmas, and particularly the Premier, her Cabinet, and all of the MHAs on the government side right now. I want to thank you for your co-operation over the last few weeks and the questions we have asked.

I know there are times when we ask questions and we have a little back and forth. It does not seem like we will be wishing a Merry Christmas to each other, but that is the true spirit and that is the way. On behalf of all of our caucus, we

really appreciate the work as members of government, but also your staff for the work they have done over the last few weeks in helping us as we prepared for this session of the House of Assembly.

I also want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the work you have done in keeping us all in our seats and in place from time to time, to your deputies, and to the Deputy Chair of the Committees.

Also, to the Third Party, thank you for your co-operation and for what you have brought to this session of the House of Assembly.

The independent members we have seated here behind us, thank you very much for the input you have had and the co-operation you have had, especially in some of the comments you have made around some of the Ministerial Statements. I will say they have been very thoughtful and insightful.

Also, there is a group of people who follow us on a day-to-day basis and often we get messages. Of course, we often as members rely on Hansard and the members of the Web cast who watch us. I find it really interesting when we get back in our districts and when we travel around the Province just how many people actually do tune in and watch what happens in this House of Assembly. I think, especially around Christmastime when everybody's schedule is so busy, it is important we remember all of the people who are doing this work in the background in helping us do what we do on a day-to-day basis.

Our Sergeant-at-Arms, our Commissionaires outside, and of course our Table Officers who are just very busy; these are the Christmas elves we have in our session right now and we do whatever we can. We really thank you for your co-operation.

Of course, to the Pages, what can we say, especially the new Pages we have had with us this year? Thank you very much for keeping those water glasses full and keeping those smiles there. It seems to me almost every day we meet

in the corridor when we get ready for the parade on a daily basis you guys are always there energized and ready to go with each session of the House of Assembly.

One group I cannot forget, because there are many times when I come in here on a weekend or a Sunday, is the security who is out there. Of course, they are here taking care of this building twenty-four hours a day. I really want to mention them and the great work they do.

Now, I will mention my own group here. Thank you very much for the co-operation, and to our staff who is upstairs, helping us on a day-to-day basis prepare for our jobs. They certainly go out of their way in supporting me.

I am looking forward, and this is Christmas time so I will have the opportunity, to getting back home in my own District of Humber Valley and just some messages I had today. I am really looking forward to that.

I will finish up in thanking and wishing everyone a Merry Christmas. I look forward to seeing each and every one of you in the new year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to add my good wishes to those of the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Third Party in wishing everyone a happy holiday season. It is a wonderful time of the year, one that brings great opportunities for fellowship, for family, and for peace and harmony. It also provides a great opportunity for us to reflect on where we are in terms of our personal lives, where we are in the work we do, and particularly the work we do for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in this House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, all of us – all of us, on both sides of the House - come here with the same

intention, to represent the interests of the people of this Province in the very best way we know how, guided by an ideology, though different from one another, results in the same goal. For a government in a democracy to be truly effective, government has to have its feet held to the fire. Questions need to be asked, and we thank members of the Opposition for doing just that.

Things get tangly from time to time, Mr. Speaker, and tempers flare. We are passionate about what we do, and because we are passionate about what we do it is often reflected in the proceedings of this House. That does not infer any disrespect for anyone in this House and the job they have taken upon themselves on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

It is a wonderful time to be involved in governance in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is always a rare privilege to take your place in this House, Mr. Speaker. In that spirit I want to wish everyone here the happiest of holidays.

I am looking forward – I get to spend every day with my constituents. I live in the heart of my district and work in the heart of my district. One of the things I am looking for – as I prepared to go to another public function last night, one of my six-year-old grandsons said to me: Please, Mimi, do not go back to work, stay and play hide and seek with us. I am looking forward to at least one day, Mr. Speaker, when I get to do that with my grandchildren in the next couple of weeks.

Mr. Speaker, to you and to the staff of the House of Assembly, thank you for all you do. We wish you a very Merry Christmas.

To our public service whose work is seldom acknowledged and even more seldom honoured, the fine work that goes on in this Province is due in large part to them. These people work on our behalf in the darkness often, behind the scenes, because they are, too, passionate about this place and it is part of their legacy to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Today, I would like to acknowledge their work, thank them, tell

them how grateful we all are and wish them a happy, happy holiday, Mr. Speaker.

Merry Christmas and a happy new year. The work of government goes on regardless of whether or not the House is open. I am looking forward to seeing you all again in this place in the spring.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

I want to take this opportunity on behalf of the staff of the House of Assembly to wish each and every one of you as members of the House and to your families to have a very Merry Christmas. I look forward to working with you in a prosperous new year.

On behalf of the Deputy Speaker and the Deputy Chair of Committees, I want to thank you for your patience, your tolerance, and for being so easy to preside over. I say that as the last part of the session of the year. It has been an enjoyable session. I really do want to thank you for your co-operation.

I do want to, on behalf of you as members of this Assembly, take this opportunity to extend a very special thank you and best wishes to the wonderful people who make this a reality. We get to be televised each day of the proceedings of the House.

The people who make this happen are the people who are in Hansard, the people who are in the Broadcast Centre, the people in Corporate Services, our Pages, the Commissionaires, our Sergeant-at-Arms, and our Table Officers. All of those people play a great role in making sure that the proceedings of this House and the work of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador run smoothly. On your behalf, I want to thank them and pass on our best wishes.

A special greeting this year to – I acknowledged at the beginning of the session – Marlene Lambe who is retiring. This will be her last Christmas

celebration with us. To you, Marlene, have a very special Christmas this year as you embark on a new stage of your life into your retirement.

Once again, have a wonderful Christmas. I look forward to seeing all of you back in the new year. Next year we will have another member who will be joining us who is getting sworn in tomorrow. He will be joining us and taking his place in the next session of the House.

To each and every one of you and your families have a wonderful Christmas.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At this time, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Conservation, that the House do now adjourn and when we do so adjourn the House stands adjourned at the call of the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that this House do now adjourn.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Motion carried.

The House stand adjourned until the call of the Chair.

On motion, the House adjourned to the call of the Chair.