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Speaker: Honourable Wade Verge, MHA

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Verge): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

I would like to welcome to the public gallery today a group of Grade 4 and 5 students from Twillingate Island Elementary School.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: They are here with their Principal Mr. David Dove; teachers Patti Hicks-Brown, Many Burton, and Bonnie White; as well as parent, Grant White, and their bus driver, Edward Luff.

Welcome all to the House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Just for the record, Mr. Grant White, I remember him as a Grade 5 student up in Roddickton many years ago.

AN HON. MEMBER: Same class?

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, the same class, Minister.

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today we will hear members' statements from the members representing the Districts of Bay of Islands, St. John's East, Baie Verte – Springdale, St. John's South, Burgeo – La Poile, and Bonavista South.

The hon. the Member for the District of Bay of Islands.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to recognize Jennifer Boland of Frenchman's Cove and Mandy Hynes of Benoit's Cove. Both Jennifer and Mandy are in Grade 6 and attend St. Peter's Academy in Benoit's Cove. This year, the girls wanted to do something for the Janeway Telethon and support the children, especially since Mandy spent time at the Janeway when she was younger.

With the support of her family and friends, the girls did a bake sale, a yard sale, collected recyclables and with other donations, they raised over \$1,575 which was presented during the telethon in Corner Brook. They were very pleased and excited to be able to raise money and have committed next year to do the same.

This is not the first fundraiser that Jennifer and Mandy have organized. Last year, they wanted to help raise funds for the local SPCA and through their fundraising efforts, they donated \$319.55.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in extending appreciation to Jennifer and Mandy for their desire and dedication in wanting to help other children who sometimes have to face many challenges in their young lives. Great job, girls.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker, on Sunday past I had the honour of cutting the ribbon for this year's Walk for ALS around Mundy Pond here in St. John's. I asked Mr. O'Connell, a former Mines and Energy employee, to help – he is also living with ALS. We did it together, the 200 participants released balloons in memory of loved ones, and the event, one of ninety held across Canada this year, was launched.

The ALS Society of Newfoundland holds the annual Walk for ALS to help provide equipment, support services, and education for the ALS community and to fund research to find a cure. The cure for this progressive, eventually fatal neuromuscular disorder is a very laudable goal.

The rain held off on Sunday, and the fundraising event went ahead. They had raised \$17,000 by this morning, when we checked, and the money is still coming in.

We learned on Sunday, by the way, that the Ice Bucket Challenge from last year raised \$435,000 in Newfoundland and Labrador alone; 70 per cent of that went to research, with the remainder staying here in the Province to help ALS patients here.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the hon. House to join me in thanking the ALS Society of Newfoundland, the 200 walk participants, and everyone who donated to this great cause. Keep fighting the good fight.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Baie Verte – Springdale.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. POLLARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Beatrice Blanche Clarke was born in Springdale on May 20, 1921 to Blanche and Azariah Butt.

On July 10, 1941 she married her loving husband Lloyd Clarke. Her joys were multiplied when she gave birth to twelve children, five sons and seven daughters.

For the next seventy-three years, Aunt Beatty, as she was affectionately known, gave unwavering love and support to her family. From caring for in-laws, her parents, children, neighbours and friends, she faithfully cooked, cleaned, baked, sewed, knit, visited, prayed, and wept. She rose at the crack of dawn to meet daily challenges.

She loved to laugh, entertain, talk on the phone, shop, and travel. She lived a life of sacrificially giving to others. Whether it was a bottle of soup, a loaf of bread, a pair of mittens or socks, a quilt, or even a few dollars, she exemplified giving.

Her twenty-six grandchildren and thirty-four great-grandchildren were her crowning glory.

In recent years, she loved to sing, read, listen to the gospel on her iPad and on TV. She was dearly loved by her large circle of family and friends who celebrated her home going service on May 6, 2015.

Honourable colleagues, please join me in honouring a woman of faith, Beatrice Blanche Clarke, for her life of serving others.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday I had the pleasure of attending the unveiling of the name of the new Supportive Living Unit at St. Luke's. The new name honours the long commitment of the Late Cannon Babb and Lillian Babb to the St. Luke's organization. Cannon Babb was involved with the opening of St. Luke's and both he and his wife Lillian spent their final days being cared for by the staff of St. Luke's.

The Cannon Randell R. Babb and Mrs Lillian A. Babb Manor is a fitting name indeed.

Yesterday was also a day of celebration for St. Luke's because it was fifty years to the day that St. Luke's officially opened. We celebrated with a beautiful church service as well as the unveiling of the name plaque for the Manor.

I would like to commend the board and management of St. Luke's, as well as the staff of the home, for fifty years of dedicated service. It is always a pleasure to celebrate with the residents.

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 rise today to recognize the Port aux Basques and area 2015 Relay for Life which raised \$49,868.98. I was honoured to be included in this celebration of survival and memorial of loved ones.

The relay included fourteen teams and was the largest relay on the West Coast. Ms Cara Leamon was named Survivor Ambassador and her husband, Colin and their children, Lucas and Leah, were Caregiver Ambassadors.

The twelve-hour event began with team members starting their continuous walk. At 4:00, there was a dinner for survivors and caregivers, where Cara told of her battle with cancer. The dinner was followed by the survivors' victory lap, which ended with the survivors releasing yellow balloons, a symbol of hope.

Later a very touching luminary ceremony took place, where everyone affected in anyway by cancer was called to the floor. The numbers were staggering. This ceremony was followed by an address from Mr. Sam Chaulk, who is living with cancer. His speech was encouraging and uplifting.

Co-chairs Lorna Coffin and Sylvia Savoury and their ten-member organizing team are to be commended for putting together a fantastic event.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to extend congratulations to the 2015 Port aux Basques Relay for Life Committee on another successful relay.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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.

I rise in this hon. House today to recognize all the volunteer fire departments brave, dedicated firefighters and firettes in the District of Bonavista South.

Volunteer fire departments are central to representing the ideals of a community, while also maintaining their safety. They respond to emergency situations and protect people, their properties, and the environment from all types of accidents and emergency situations. The departments work closely with the local communities to raise the level of fire safety in order to help prevent fires and accidents from happening.

Many community services survive because of volunteers who freely give their time and risk their lives. I thank those of you who do this. Your contributions enrich our communities, make us more resilient, and help define the character of our great Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The fire departments in the district are as follows: Lethbridge and area Fire Department, Summerville-Princeton-Southern Bay Fire Department, King's Cove and area Fire Department, Five Coves Fire Department, Trinity Bay North Fire Department, and the Bonavista Fire Department.

Mr. Speaker, members of the House, please join me in recognizing the valued volunteer fire departments in the District of Bonavista South.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Before we do statements by ministers, I also want to welcome to the public gallery today two staff members from the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, the Executive Director Mr. Don Ash and Communications Officer Ms Lesley-Ann Browne.

Welcome to the House of Assembly.

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!

MR. KENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to recognize National Brain Injury Awareness Month in Newfoundland and Labrador and across Canada.

With June being National Brain Injury Awareness Month, it provides an opportunity to stress the importance of learning more about the

impact of brain injuries. Each year, thousands of Canadians incur a traumatic brain injury and the majority are young adults.

We are committed to ensuring safe and healthy communities in Newfoundland and Labrador and as part of this we have made injury prevention a key component of our Provincial Wellness Plan. Our government provides annual funding of approximately \$22,700 to the provincial chapter of the Brain Injury Association and nearly \$20,000 to the Newfoundland and Labrador Injury Prevention Coalition.

Through the Provincial Wellness Plan, we have partnered with other government departments, regional health authorities, regional wellness coalitions, and community groups to promote safety and prevent injuries through public awareness campaigns. These campaigns have been implemented in partnership with Service Newfoundland and Labrador and focus on areas such as safe use of booster seats and most recently, bicycle helmet legislation.

Bike helmets are now mandatory on all public roadways in our Province. Statistics show that a properly fitted bicycle helmet can decrease the risk of serious head injury by as much as 85 per cent. This amendment has strengthened our legislation, protecting individuals, children, and families throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

I call on all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to join me in recognizing National Brain Injury Awareness Month and encourage everyone to be mindful of safety every day to avoid injuries.

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 his statement. I am pleased to join my colleagues in the Official Opposition and in the House of Assembly to recognize National Brain Injury Awareness Month.

Brain injury happens in an instant and can change one's life forever. The effects can be devastating and special care is required for those living with a brain injury. Advances in medical technology and research can help mitigate the effects; however, prevention is crucial.

National Brain Injury Awareness Month is an opportunity to get educated on the facts around brain injury and what you can do to prevent such an injury. We asked questions in this House for over a year on implementing bicycle helmet legislation and the minister continued to provide excuses as to why we did not need the legislation. So I am very pleased to see that the bicycle helmet legislation was finally put into effect, as bike helmets are a significant measure in preventing brain injury – so, better late than never.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. I am glad to know that money does go to the Brain Injury Association and the Injury Prevention Coalition, because they are so important for raising awareness and advising government where more preventative measures are needed. I, myself, buy the Brain Injury Association's calendars.

They worked hard to get bicycle helmet legislation in this Province, and I hope there are fewer head injuries as a result. However, experts tell us that ride-on toys, like foot-propelled scooters, are responsible for a steep increase in toy injuries and they are asking governments to legislate helmet use in this area as well. Government also needs to listen to emergency and safety professionals who want strong enforcement of ATV safety.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House to recognize all Aboriginal people across Newfoundland and Labrador as we celebrate National Aboriginal Day this Sunday, June 21.

I am a proud Inuk of Labrador and I am honoured to be working with a government that believes in diversity, inclusion, and advocacy as we move towards reconciliation. We are fortunate to have many Aboriginal governments and organizations in this Province including the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band, the Miawpukek First Nation, NunatuKavut Community Council, the Innu Nation, and the Nunatsiavut Government.

Mr. Speaker, this year National Aboriginal Day is especially poignant following the release of the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This has been an especially emotional couple of weeks as we have heard numerous courageous survivors relate their heart-breaking stories of their experiences in the residential schools system. In this Province, we have done much work towards reconciliation, but we still have much more to do.

Some of the steps we have taken include negotiating and settling land claims, publishing our Aboriginal consultation policy, advancing a land claim and self-government implementation policy and Aboriginal Human Resource Strategy, as well as undertaking a review of the K-12 curriculum for Aboriginal content and delivery. Through these and other initiatives implemented since 2004, we have been establishing and strengthening our relationships with Aboriginal communities and people. We have a strong foundation from which we hope to foster an even stronger relationship with the Aboriginal people of this Province in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to take time this weekend to participate in activities being held throughout the Province and learn about Aboriginal traditions, languages, and values. I will be celebrating by raising the Mi'kmaq flag in Corner Brook and attending celebration events in Sheshatshiu, as well as the Labrador Friendship Centre in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

Aboriginal people have a special connection to the land. Having a chance to experience this way of life should not be missed by anyone so please enjoy the celebrations and take in the tastes, the sounds, and the beautiful woven tapestry of traditions and practices that are all a part of our Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Mr. Speaker, we too would share in government's recognition of National Aboriginal Day this Sunday.

It is encouraging to see the government include NunatuKavut Community Council as one of the Aboriginal groups in the Province. Now they should consider following up those words with some meaningful actions to help NunatuKavut in their quest for true recognition.

I want to personally congratulate the Nunatsiavut Government on the progress they have made since the formation of self-government. We need to continue collaboration with the Innu Nation, Qalipu, and Miawpukek First Nation to foster, enhance, and build a stronger relationship.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of recommendations in the TRC Calls to Action that this government, as well as other provincial and territorial governments need to address with the federal government to ensure true reconciliation is achieved with all Aboriginal groups affected by this terrible chapter in our history.

There is another holiday on Monday commemorating Christopher Columbus's discovery of North America. Guess what, Mr. Speaker? We were already here.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I too thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. I also look forward to celebrating National Aboriginal Day by attending the activities at the St. John's Native Friendship Centre at their Water Street location here in St. John's on Sunday. It is always a wonderful experience and I encourage anyone who is in the city to come along.

I too want to use this opportunity to remind the government that there are still outstanding land claims in this Province which must be resolved. Government must ensure it is doing whatever it can to ensure a favourable resolution of these claims. Celebrating the day is great, but the Aboriginal people of the Province need action.

I also ask again this government if they will unequivocally support the ninety-four interrelated recommendations of the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and work with the federal and Aboriginal governments to ensure all recommendations are put in place.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In February, government signed a deal with Vale allowing them to ship an additional 94,000 tons of nickel concentrate out of the Province over the next five years. Vale agreed to pay \$200 million in compensation and another \$30 million in a community investment fund. There were no details released about the fund and we have heard nothing from government since.

I ask the Premier: It has been four months, when will you let the people of the Province know how this \$30 million will be spent?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is correct, that when the agreement was made to allow to export further concentrate, a part of the agreement – there was a \$30 million fund that was going to be paid by Vale that could be used within the Province. There has been no decision on the fund. It is secured, there is no issue with that.

We continue to have discussions. We wanted to get through the Budget process, Mr. Speaker, but the \$30 million fund is there, and there has been no decision as to where it is going to be spent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, often we hear the Premier, we hear the minister talk about the importance of prospecting and the important role they play; our prospectors and the important role they play in future mining developments. Groups like the Newfoundland and Labrador Prospectors Association have requested money from this fund in a pre-Budget submission. Now it has been four months, as I said, there have been no details on this.

I ask the minister: What is the deadline for this process that you just talked about? Is there a committee in place, and if so, who is actually on the committee?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I gladly echo the importance of our prospectors in this Province. I

have met with the prospectors, a very important group in future exploration, future opportunities in the mining industry in this Province. We do have funding that we help support the prospectors group in the Province.

With respect to the \$30 million, it is within government and it will be a Cabinet decision as to what happens with the \$30 million. There is no time frame on it, but I can assure the member opposite that it is an important part of an agreement. It will be important investments that we can make in communities in the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, the minister just mentioned that we talked about how little details are. Now he tells us that, well, indeed the details are already in place, because this is going to be a Cabinet decision, I just heard from the minister. So, if the minister is determined that this is a going to be a Cabinet decision – \$30 million in the Community Investment Fund – there must be criteria around how this fund would be spent.

So I ask the minister: Will he table the criteria for this investment fund?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I know the Leader of the Opposition has never been in government, but he should understand that important decisions, important for the Province, are made through the Cabinet process. This is no different.

As for the details, we have worked with the company, Vale, an outstanding company that is making significant investment in the Province. They have certain criteria around one-time funding. This is not operational money. It is one-time funding. One of the areas, for example, they have invested in already is in

health care. That is very important for the people of the Province, Mr. Speaker.

Those are the kinds of considerations we will take when we eventually make the decision that will be supported by Cabinet, but it will also be supported by Vale as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I remind the minister, no, I have not been in government. I do know there are processes in place. All we need to do it ask the Minister of Transportation about that and what he left out of the consultants when he hired those without going to Treasury Board for being able to do that.

Mr. Speaker, without proper processes and accountability, this \$30 million could be used as a slush fund for a general election. Who will make the final decision? Is there a committee in place to make the determination on how this \$30 million will be spent?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I knew if we waited long enough, we would get to the bottom of this. They are afraid of what is happening – what we are doing. We are doing good things in the Province, Mr. Speaker. They continue to stand here and challenge, question, and criticize. The concern is that we are going to be able to do something good for communities.

We are five months to an election. I can assure the people of the Province we are not going to stop governing. We are not going to stop doing good things for the people of the Province. We are firmly committed.

I can reassure the member opposite, when we make a decision on the \$30 million; we will make sure he has all the details, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister did not have to wait long. As a matter of fact, if you go back through the news releases, the day this was announced, it was the exact comment that I made back then, I say to the minister.

Mr. Speaker, the Agnes Cowan Hostel at the Health Sciences Centre, which houses cancer patients and families of children receiving care at the Janeway, is reported to be in deplorable condition. We have mouse traps, droppings, horribly stained carpet, rusty shower stalls, paint that is peeling, and a dysfunctional plumbing system.

The hostel actually provides, as many members here would know, a crucial service at an affordable rate for people who come from all parts of the Province to receive health care.

I ask the minister: Why is this facility in such a deplorable condition?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to health care infrastructure in this Province, we have lots of challenges. For just 500,000 people, we have fifteen hospitals, twenty-three community health centres, 119 community clinics, and twenty-three long-term care facilities. The good news, Mr. Speaker, is that since 2004, we have invested \$1.4 billion in health care infrastructure in Newfoundland and Labrador, and we are going to continue that work.

If there are specific issues at any one of our facilities, we do work closely with our regional health authorities to identify and address those

needs. In fact, there will be more money for maintenance and more money for equipment spent in the coming months, and there will be announcements this summer related to some of those investments, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In this Budget 2015 we have heard the Minister of Finance, the Premier, and of course the Minister of Health and Community Services often say that it is about finding balance and making difficult choices, I would say. One choice that you were able to do was find money for an ad campaign. You could find money for renovations in the Premier's Office.

This hostel is nearly at capacity every night. It is in deplorable condition. We have heard from people all across this Province. The staff indeed works very hard, and clearly, that is not the issue.

I ask the Premier: Why do you think it is acceptable for this hostel to be a home for cancer patients in a hostel where mice are running rampant and there is not even – a simple shower is difficult to find?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, let me be clear, the conditions that the Leader of the Opposition is describing, they are not acceptable. They are not acceptable to me and I am sure they are not acceptable to anybody in this Province.

We will follow up with Eastern Health about those issues at the Agnes Cowan Hostel. There are deficiencies and Eastern Health is working on those deficiencies. I will be holding Eastern Health accountable to ensure that those issues are addressed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace.

MR. SLADE: Mr. Speaker, three proud fish harvesters lost their lives yesterday. They were trying to make a living on the waters in Newfoundland and Labrador. They were fishing in a twenty-three-foot boat because DFO regulations kept them from using a bigger vessel. One of the men had a much larger boat tied up to the wharf.

I ask the minister: Have you addressed this issue with your federal counterpart? Have you even tried to get this policy changed?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers go out to the families, friends, and the communities of those harvesters who lost their lives yesterday. We as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians extend our deepest sympathy to all the families and communities directly involved.

It is a federal government regulation, Mr. Speaker. We have had numerous conversations. I know the FFAW, harvesters, our officials in our department, any opportunity we get we voice our concerns with regard to size of ships, licences, and how our harvesters in the Province fish our fisheries off our coast. Again, our deepest sympathies to the families involved, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace.

MR. SLADE: Mr. Speaker, members of this caucus, along with the harvesters from the Northern Peninsula, asked for a meeting to discuss vessel size with the provincial Minister of Fisheries last October. The minister ignored the request. Mr. Speaker, families in our Province are grieving today for these lost lives. Harvesters should be allowed to use the size of vessel they need to keep them safe.

I ask the minister: Will you insist DFO reconsider this policy on vessel size, and will you fight for that change at DFO?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: Mr. Speaker, again, our sympathies go out to the families of the men who lost their lives.

Any opportunity we get as a government where there is an opportunity to change regulations that will make it safer for harvesters on the ocean in Newfoundland and Labrador, we will take every opportunity. Every meeting, every opportunity that I would have with my federal counterpart, we will address those issues and raise the concerns of harvesters in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace.

MR. SLADE: Mr. Speaker, actions speak louder than words. Harvesters of our Province are not working in the calm waters off the BC coast or the inland waters of the Great Lakes. Fishing is a dangerous profession, and our fish harvesters work in the most dangerous of waters.

I ask the minister: Will you establish a committee primarily made up of fish harvesters to go to Ottawa, if necessary, to make the case that regulations regarding vessel size must be changed?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: Mr. Speaker, the fishery in the Province is a very complex industry. We all know about the dangers of harvesting on the ocean and are all too aware down through the years and down through the centuries of the many lives lost on the ocean.

Anything that we can do, whether it be meeting with the harvesters, working in consultation with the FFAW, working with the harvesters,

working with industry, if we can make it better for the harvesters of the ocean of Newfoundland and Labrador and voice those concerns with Ottawa, we will indeed do that, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, the Mayor of Wabush is expressing his disappointment that the Minister of Environment and Conservation is not responding to their concerns regarding extremely dusty conditions on the dormant Wabush tailing site. We also understand that they were meeting with the Premier today in Labrador West on the very issue.

I ask the minister: Why are you ignoring calls from the residents of Labrador West regarding action on this important health and safety concern?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we certainly are not ignoring anything that is going on there. We are in touch with Cliffs. They are aware of their responsibilities. Even though they are in bankruptcy protection they still have responsibilities from an environmental point of view to look after the land and, of course, to look after the health and safety of the people in Lab West.

A contract has just been let through Cliffs Resources to revegetate the tailings area, Mr. Speaker, so they are moving forward on that. That contractor will be on site within the coming days.

Mr. Speaker, we are working very closely with Natural Resources. We are working very closely with the proponent up there, Cliffs. We are going to make sure that situation is rectified as soon as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, it does not answer my question on why he has not responded to the mayor.

Our leader has asked questions in this House regarding the Wabush Mines closure plan which is intended to address the Wabush tailings dusty conditions. We understand that the closure of the plant is delayed because of the environmental assessment process.

I ask the minister: Why are you not expediting the environmental assessment process so this health hazard can be addressed and residents do not have to walk around town wearing masks?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, the environmental assessment regulations are in place. Cliffs are very aware of what the regulations are. They have not filed yet. We are in contact with the company. We have asked them to file. If they do not do so in short order, we will be taking other measures.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, in the Justice budget Estimates on May 13, I asked a number of questions of the minister and his staff regarding positions being eliminated, the cost of outside counsel, including Jerome Kennedy, and the amount of overtime being paid. I have since made two further requests for this basic information, but I still have not received it.

I ask the minister: After three requests and over a month later, why hasn't your department provided this information regarding how taxpayers' money was spent?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I said to my hon. colleague about two days ago in an email when he wrote me, I acknowledged that I had the letter, I acknowledged information was being compiled, and I told him then that he would have it within a couple of days. I went through part of the request this morning. I will finish reviewing it over the next day or so and sign off on it, and he will have the information.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, the world continues to confront climate change with G7 leaders committing to a low-carbon strategy, and now the Pope is calling for real action. Government's 2011 plan committed to giving sector-by-sector greenhouse gas reduction targets.

It is four years later, so I ask the minister: Why is industry still waiting to learn about their specific targets with only five years to meet a 2020 deadline?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, industry is very aware of where we are with regard to setting greenhouse targets for emissions for their operations in this Province. We have had four, going on five rounds of consultations now with large industry. They know exactly where we are as a government. They know exactly where we are going. We are getting very close to the final decisions in terms of where we are going to be and setting those targets. Mr. Speaker, a lot of good work has been done over the last number of years.

We have a small shop in climate change and energy efficiency. They are doing a tremendous amount of work. They are very smart and very intelligent, and they are engaged in making sure that what needs to be done is getting done. So, we are very close to making that announcement, and I am looking forward to that day.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Five years away, and still no target set.

Mr. Speaker, this government seems to be counting on its own poor economic track record to reduce greenhouse gases. Large scale industry accounts for almost 50 per cent of the Province's total emissions, and the people in industry want to know what their sector reduction targets are.

I ask the minister: When will government show a greenhouse gas reduction strategy that ensures industrial development is both good for the economy and is in line with greenhouse gas commitments?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our track record actually is very good when you look at the numbers. We had a reduction target to return greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2010. We came within 0.5 per cent of meeting that level. So that was a remarkable achievement, considering the real GDP expanded by 67 per cent over the same period.

The most recent report, Mr. Speaker –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. CRUMMELL: – from the federal government shows the Province's greenhouse

gas emissions in 2013 were 8.8 megatons, which represents the lowest estimate for the Province since 1996.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are doing good work out there. Education and awareness is working. The people of the Province understand what it is to make sure that they conserve energy. We are reducing greenhouse gases in this Province as I speak.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. J. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, in March 2014, Child, Youth and Family Services awarded \$36 million in contracts over three years for staffed residential placements to ensure greater stability and improved programming for children and youth with complex needs. Since then, in one six-month period, government has awarded ten untendered contracts to these same organizations for a total of \$1.5 million for emergency placements.

I ask the minister: If the new delivery model was meant to provide greater stability, why did he spend \$1.5 million in just six months for emergency housing for children and youth in care?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S. COLLINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will remind the hon. member, that the case which we are talking about obviously was borne out of the AG report. That is how we arrived at that decision, but ensuring the safety and protection of children is our utmost concern. We understand how important continuity is. When we have to extend contracts, sometimes we have to go outside to make sure we are able to continue that service and care for that child, or for that youth.

With regard to emergency placements, they are exactly that; they are emergency placements. We do not have time to sometimes go through the process we would normally go through if it were a non-emergency. When we are presented with emergency cases at 3:00 in the morning, we have to action quickly. That is exactly where these types of placements come from.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. J. BENNETT: Actually, Mr. Speaker, I was referring to the list of untendered contracts that are distributed here regularly.

Mr. Speaker, we have been told that days after renewing a contract for a two-bed staffed, residential placement in the minister's district, government cancelled the contract and the home is slated to close June 30.

I ask the minister: Can he confirm this contract was cancelled, and if so, did government incur any cost in cancelling the contract?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S. COLLINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will say that no additional costs were incurred. If the member was familiar with the contracts that are up online, he can go view, he would see that we have the right to cancel such contracts if the need no longer exists.

So, his first question is talking about spending money and how we are accountable for that. The next question he is saying we should keep something open if we do not have any children or youth to be present in that home. Obviously, that is not the case. That is not what we are prepared to do. We have to be fluid. We have to be able to move. When an emergency exists we have to address it. If there is not a need, we have to address that as well, and that is exactly what we did.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. J. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, the minister said a review indicated that beds were not needed. Now in spite of spending \$36 million over three years and \$1.5 million for ten contracts last year, we are also advised that CYFS is using hotel rooms to accommodate children in care in Central Newfoundland and Labrador.

I ask the minister: Can he confirm using hotel space for children and youth in care in Central Newfoundland, and is this included in the ten untendered contracts?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S. COLLINS: Mr. Speaker, the strategy that the member has spoken about is the old Liberal strategy about putting children and youth in hotels for long periods of time. You do not have to look that many years ago when there were up to seventy children and youth staying in hotel rooms, and sometimes for an extended period of time. That is not what we are prepared to do. What did we do? We changed it.

I can unequivocally say we do not put children and youth up in hotels; however, we go back to the emergency placement, if a need was needed that night, if a child or youth had to be provided with staff to go into a hotel, it would be for the very shortest of time. Not for an extended period of time, as was done under the former Administration.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. J. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, I suggest the minister check with people in his department who are trying to hire people to look after

children in care in hotels in Gander. That is our information.

The minister says the service is not needed in his hometown, yet CYFS has spent \$1.5 million on emergency placements for kids in care and is using hotels in Central Newfoundland for lack of beds. These untendered contracts and use of hotel rooms clearly say otherwise.

I ask the minister: How can you justify closing a home for children and youth in his hometown when, clearly, he is unable to keep up with the demand for these services without using untendered contracts and hotel stays?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S. COLLINS: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate the member tries to make this about my hometown. I can assure him if there was a need in my hometown, particularly, as the MHA who represents that district, I would make sure it was met.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S. COLLINS: However, we have a responsibility in the department.

I would again plead with the member to please come down to my office on Elizabeth Avenue. I would love to be able to fill him in on the details with regard to the levels of services. We have four levels of service as it pertains to children and youth. Different level children need different level homes, and that is exactly what it is.

If there was a child from the area that needed that particular level of service, that home was there for that child to go into. However, if we do not have that child or youth to go into that home for that level of service, we would not fill it, Mr. Speaker. Why would we pay for a service we do not particularly need? We have to adjust based on the needs of the children, and that is exactly what we do day to day.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. J. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, if the minister is going to renew a contract in his hometown and then only a few months later cancel that same contract, it speaks of poor planning and the need may have existed. It certainly did exist and probably still does exist.

Mr. Speaker, the government's own housing and homelessness study spoke to the extra cost of emergency responses to housing.

I ask the minister: Wouldn't more effective planning result in greater stability for staff and families, not to mention lower cost for taxpayers?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S. COLLINS: Mr. Speaker, I will go back and I will echo the sentiment of the member's first question. He is talking about emergency placements. You cannot plan for an emergency placement. When you are talking about a child or youth in a vulnerable situation that comes up at 3:00 a.m. in the morning, you cannot foresee that happening.

A situation could be happening right now as we sit here in this House. We cannot plan for that. We have to adjust to it and that is exactly what we have done, while keeping children and youth out of hotel rooms and putting them in a home environment.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I am not sure the Minister of Health and Community Services understood my question yesterday. Last year he said pharmacists would

soon be allowed to vaccinate any member of the public free of charge.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS MICHAEL: Now he has told them he does not foresee any expansion of the flu vaccination program this year.

I ask the minister: Why isn't he expanding the program by allowing pharmacists to vaccinate anyone for free when it has proven to be so effective elsewhere?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: I am enjoying this policy shift by the NDP. They were against any private involvement in health care not that long ago. Earlier this week the Member for St. John's East was advocating for private ambulance service, and today the Acting Leader of the NDP is advocating for private pharmacy. That is progress, Mr. Speaker, I guess.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: I will explain to the hon. member once again that there is absolutely no change in the Province's flu vaccine program for this year, 2015-2016. We expanded the program last year. We expanded the scope of practice of pharmacists. Pharmacists with training can provide flu shots in their pharmacies, which is real progress, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Last year, the minister said he wanted vaccination rates to increase by making flu shots

more widely available and he will not expand this year.

Why is cost cutting now a higher priority than protecting people from the flu?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, I want to see our vaccination programs expand. We are pleased to say in Newfoundland and Labrador we have among the highest vaccination rates anywhere in Canada because our program is working.

To expand that program last year, we first of all expanded the scope of practice of pharmacists to allow them to administer vaccinations. In addition to that, we went further, Mr. Speaker. We provided people within the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program with the ability to go into pharmacies, if the pharmacy has the proper training and so on. Those folks who avail of the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program can receive the flu vaccine free of charge from a pharmacist who is qualified. In addition to that, we are maintaining our public clinics, and many family doctors deliver the vaccine as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker, sources tell me that we will be visited in the coming weeks by a delegation representing the Turkish government.

I ask the minister: Is the placement of a Caribou Memorial on the site of where Newfoundlanders and Labradorians made the supreme sacrifice going to be on that agenda?

Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have been very clear here in the House with the member on any number of occasions about the circumstance we find ourselves in with respect to the caribou, but I can assure the member that every opportunity we get whether it is my responsibility as the Minister of Culture, or whether it is my colleague the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, or whether it is the Premier, any chance we get to engage with those officials, that will be on our agenda for discussion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker, other countries such as Australia and New Zealand have memorial sites to their sacrifices in Gallipoli; they are absolutely beautiful sites.

Why is it we can have nothing larger than a plaque to remember our fallen in Gallipoli?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, the member knows full well our commitment to remembering fallen soldiers from Newfoundland and Labrador. It is our government that has made a significant investment this year and for the coming years to remember those who fought on our behalf and who paid the supreme sacrifice.

I say to the member opposite, he also knows full well that any intentions we might have of a monument or a display or any such event in another country is totally at the discretion of that other country to determine what they will allow us to do and not to do. We have been very clear in this House as to what we have been permitted to do.

We are very proud of the investments we have made and we are very proud of – for example, in a week's time or so we are taking the largest delegation ever of students and legionnaires and

former soldiers into Beaumont-Hamel for a seven-day period, Mr. Speaker, because we respect what they have done for our country and for our Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker, has the government had contact with its federal counterparts at Veteran's Affairs on this issue, with the federal government? I would like to know if there is any progress on that issue on their part.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, on this particular issue, again, I will be very clear with the member opposite. We are not using an intermediary. We are not looking for somebody else to step in between us and the Turkish government. We are dealing directly with Turkish officials ourselves.

Furthermore, it is not only myself or the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, but the Premier himself has taken the lead on that particular file because we believe in it and we want to make it happen. To be very clear, Mr. Speaker, we can only do what we are permitted to do by the Turkish government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to give notice under Standing Order 11, I shall move that the House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 23, 2015.

I further give notice under Standing Order 11, I shall move that the House not adjourn at 10:00 p.m. on – excuse me, I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. I confused the dates – the House not adjourn at 10:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 23, 2015.

I further give notice under Standing Order 11, I shall move that the House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 25, 2015, and further that the House not adjourn at 10:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 25, 2015.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Trinity – Bay de Verde.

MR. CROCKER: 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 humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS residents of the District of Trinity – Bay de Verde are not satisfied with the current recreational food fishery system; and

WHEREAS the short season length results in unsafe fishing practice; and

WHEREAS the recreational ground fishery catch limit is not equal to other Atlantic Provinces;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to lobby the Government of Canada to ensure Newfoundland and Labrador has a recreational cod fishery equal to that of the other Atlantic Provinces.

As in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure this afternoon to enter that petition on behalf of my constituents in the District of Trinity – Bay de Verde. It is an ongoing issue that we hear about every summer.

Before Question Period this afternoon, I had the opportunity to speak to the Minister of Fisheries about this issue. He does assure me that he brings this up regularly with his counterpart in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, for too long we have allowed this issue to go on. I just looked at the Department of Fisheries website yesterday and got some information and looked at the other Maritime provinces when it comes to the recreational cod fishery. We look at Nova Scotia, and we have a fishery that runs from April 15 until October 4. We look at Prince Edward Island and we have a fishery that runs from April 15 to October 4, and the same in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, it is time the federal government recognized this and the importance of the recreational cod fishery to rural Newfoundland, both as a food fishery and an economic engine. With respect to the rebounding cod stocks, it is also important that we do recognize the fact that as cod stocks rebound, inshore fishers with the adjacency and with the licences, should be the first ones we look at with respect to the rebounding stocks.

I do encourage the minister to continue to talk to Ottawa about this ongoing issue throughout the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

WHEREAS all workers deserve protection from danger and harm; and

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

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

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I am quite happy to stand today and to present this petition on behalf of people – it looks like mainly from the St. John's area, but also some from the Burin Peninsula. I am becoming more concerned myself lately. We seem to have holdups on the rise again. There

seemed to be a period here in the St. John's area in particular where things seemed to quiet down, but all of a sudden we are getting a lot of holdups happening again. Every week now we are getting more than one.

What is also standing out is that almost all the time now they are armed – I mean, they are armed with different things, but all the time they were armed. I remember two years ago you may have holdups, but you hardly heard about armed holdups – and that is what is starting to happen more, it is on the increase, so all the more reason for us to have legislation in place.

I know a lot of employers are trying their best. I know a lot of employers do have things in place, safety measures in place; but, at the same time, there may be some small businesses, for example, who cannot afford to put the things in place. If we had legislation, I think we would then have support and resources to help small business if they had to put up a barrier, or if they had to have a second employee on at night, and not just have one employee.

So, for the good of the safety of workers in this Province, I encourage the government to pay attention to this petition.

Thank you.

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 most communities in the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair do not have cellphone coverage; and –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS DEMPSTER: WHEREAS residents of coastal Labrador require cell coverage to ensure their safety and communications abilities; and

WHEREAS the opening of the Trans-Labrador Highway has increased their dependency on mobile communication –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS DEMPSTER: WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call up on the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to work with the appropriate agencies to provide cellphone coverage along the Trans-Labrador Highway and to communities in coastal Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, that is a petition that I have presented a number of times. It is a difficult petition. It is not an easy one. It could be very expensive to put cell coverage throughout the whole region, I understand that, but we are talking about a stretch of road around West St. Modeste-Pinware, about 700 kilometres, up to Goose Bay. It is the main artery that stretches right through Labrador. It experiences some of the most desolate weather, adverse conditions that you can have in the entire Province.

We have had situations where people have been stranded overnight and perhaps more. We have had cases where there have been fatalities and serious accidents on the road and they have had to wait for hours and hours and hours, Mr. Speaker.

I would encourage the provincial government to work with the federal government, to work with the private sector, to at least let the people know what the plan is in that region, what the plan is on a go-forward basis, if there are certain sections of the area where they plan on putting cellphone towers.

We are coming into tourist season. The tourists who are travelling need certain sections where they can have cellphone contact. It can save lives. Surely, in this technological age, as we advance, it is becoming affordable to do these things.

I believe we should even be having conversations on things like Wi-Fi repeaters and things like that on towers if we cannot afford to

put cellphone coverage through all of the remote areas.

I look forward to some further dialogue with the minister on that, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

MR. MURPHY: 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 humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS in 2011 the provincial government announced it would lift the 8 per cent provincial portion of the HST on residential heat and light by introducing the Residential Energy Rebate; and

WHEREAS heat is a necessity of life and a health concern, particularly for seniors; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has projected oil prices to increase in the next five years;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to stop taxing home energy and to reverse its decision to abolish the Residential Energy Rebate.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I was quite pleased to receive these petitions. I would like to thank the people of Badger, as well as the people of Makkovik, as some people would call it, or Maquuvik, in some cases – from Labrador who are gravely concerned with the simple fact that they are going to be paying taxes on heat again. After a ten, twelve-year fight, it was finally removed by the government in Budget 2012 and now placed back on there again. Of course, we are going to have seniors in jeopardy. We are going to have another cost to people on lower incomes. We are going to have to be dealing with higher

costs, household costs as a result of tax going back on heat again, a necessity of life.

Mr. Speaker, some people would find it offensive to find when they woke up the next day that their food would be taxed. Well, now we are going to be back to a scenario where we are going to have high energy costs. We have not seen the price of heating oil back off any over the summer, and I think everybody knows that I look at that. I think everybody knows as well, that the price of electricity has not come down any great deal in the last little while. I think it came down 6 per cent in March. That is not a lot.

We do know that the cost for electricity is going to be going up as well. Mr. Speaker, this is a necessity, and government reneged on its plan to keep this Residential Energy Rebate back in consumers' pockets. They changed their mind on it. They are also changing their mind on the HST as well. So, Mr. Speaker, I will leave this, it is a grave concern for the people of this Province.

Again, I will thank the people of Badger and Makkovik for allowing me to express their views on this, and I ask government to reconsider. The Residential Energy Rebate is an important income. It is an important way of keeping disposable income in the economy, and most importantly, Mr. Speaker, particularly for the people in Labrador. We know what the cost of heat is in Labrador. I think the people of Labrador would be greatly concerned about this.

I continue to stand on my feet and speak to these petitions and speak to this cause, and hopefully one of these days, Mr. Speaker, government is going to reconsider their position and reinstate the Residential Energy Rebate.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At this time I would like to call from the Order Paper, Order 2, third reading of a bill, An Act To Amend The Services Charges Act, Bill 8.

So moved by me, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the said bill be now read a third time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 8 be now read a third time.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Services Charges Act. (Bill 8)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Services Charges Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 8)

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to now call from the Order Paper, Order 7, second reading of a bill, An Act To Amend The Teachers' Pensions Act, Bill 15.

So moved by me, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the said bill be now read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 15 be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Teachers' Pensions Act." (Bill 15)

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

MR. WISEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is a real pleasure today, as I stand in this House, to introduce in second reading Bill 15. It is an extension, Mr. Speaker, of the work that this government started a number of years ago in working with all of our public sector unions to make sure that all of our public sector pension plans were put on a path to sustainability.

One of the things that we are really challenged with, and had been challenged with for a number of years, is the unfunded liability associated with our pension plans. Over the last, I guess, ten or twelve years we have had the opportunity to put large sums of money into the pension plan to deal with the unfunded liability, but that was a patchwork kind of an approach.

It did provide some relief, absolutely, and it did address some of the outstanding unfunded liability, but fundamentally it did not deal with the structural issue. When you start talking about having your pension plans only 60-odd per cent funded, that is a serious and precarious position for a government to be in. It is a serious and precarious position for employees of government to be in and those who are pensioners.

Mr. Speaker, everybody was in a spot. Government, employees, and pensioners were in a position where their pension plans were in jeopardy. The Province's fiscal security was being challenged as a result of the mounting unfunded liability and the potential of future liabilities of the government as we were continuing to attract people to the public service. Many of these people obviously were retiring at the end of their careers and we needed to deal with it in a serious way.

We undertook a process to sit down with all of our public sector unions. To their credit, Mr. Speaker – and I am delighted today that we have members from the NLTA joining us here in the House. I want to take this opportunity to thank them for the leadership they have shown in trying to work with government to address this very significant issue.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WISEMAN: What I am about to introduce here today in Bill 15 would not be possible if we had not had a good working relationship with

our public sector unions. In this instance here, the NLTA, if we had not had an ability to have people around that table who were understanding of the critical nature of the issue at hand, understanding of the need to work collaboratively for a solution, and the need to recognize that this was everybody's responsibility and there had to be some give and take and a clear understanding of what the end game was. The end game is about having a pension plan that is sustainable well into the future. This is a great moment, I say, Mr. Speaker, not just for the teachers of Newfoundland and Labrador and the retired teachers of Newfoundland and Labrador, but for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, because it is in our mutual benefit.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WISEMAN: So what we are about to introduce here now is a reflection of what has been negotiated between the Province and the NLTA. We have signed off on an agreement that this would be embedded in the legislation. So what we are going to be introducing here today is Bill 15 – and through Bill 15 we are making some amendments, some changes to the Teachers' Pension Plan, and we need to introduce this bill today to make sure that – because some of the changes in the contribution rates come into effect in September. We wanted to make sure that we have a legislative framework in place to make the provision for those increased contributions to occur. There is another amendment that will be made at a future date that will result in some changes, when we are position to put together what I will describe in a moment as a joint trusteeship.

We were not ready to do that, there is still a piece of work to be done with ourselves as a government, and with the NLTA, but we wanted to get this in place during this session of the House. Get it done in this session of the House so it will be positioned for September 1.

So I just wanted to provide some overview of what is embedded in this – and one of the things I commented a moment ago about how important it was to have a working relationship with the NLTA that allowed us to negotiate such an agreement, and the NLTA leadership did a wonderful job in making sure that their

membership understood exactly what is contained in these reforms and these changes, and the benefits of having these changes made. In fact, what I understand, they ended up with what was, as I understand, to be one of the highest turnouts for voting for an issue presented to the membership, but also, one of the highest rates of approval in a voting process within the NLTA. So, I think that speaks volumes to everybody's appreciation and understanding of the value of these changes, and in fact these changes being just exactly what we need, both from the membership and from the Province itself.

So what we will end up – I will run through some of the things that are in this bill, Mr. Speaker, to provide an overview. Many of them are self-explanatory. So once I have been able to give an overview of what is contained in them, I do not think there will be any need for me to spend a full hour trying to speak to them.

Fundamentally – and I am just going to go through point by point – the Province, through the use of a promissory note, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador will be providing a promissory note to the value of \$1.8 billion to the Teachers' Pension Plan and over the next thirty years that will be repaid. We will make a contribution of \$135 million annually towards that promissory note over a period of thirty years, and the first payment on that promissory note will be in August of 2016.

What we are targeting here is we want to ensure that we end up with a 100 per cent fully funded pension plan. One of the other provisions that will make sure that happens is there will be an increase in the contribution rate of 2 per cent. So effective September 1, 2015, the people who are part of this pension plan, the members who are in this pension plan will have an increased contribution of 2 per cent. Now, that 2 per cent will be matched by the employer. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, as the employer here, will match that 2 per cent contribution to the plan.

There are also some changes in future benefits. As of September 1, 2015, service benefits will be based on a best average eight years instead of the current five years. People who are currently teaching under the previous arrangement would

have had their pension calculated based on their best average five years. That has been changing, and for service after September 1, 2015 that changes to the best average eight. That change will be effective September 1.

One of the other things that will change, Mr. Speaker, is sometimes a teacher, particularly near the end of their career, may decide they want to leave a little bit early and move on to some other vocation or do something different in their lives and they defer receipt of their pension until they reach a later age. Under the old arrangement, that pension could be triggered at age sixty; but now, as a result of the change, they will wait until they reach age sixty-two instead of that sixty. After August 31, 2016, anyone with less than twenty-four-and-a-half years of service will need to be sixty-two years of age instead of the current sixty to start receiving their pension benefits.

Mr. Speaker, fundamentally, as I said a moment ago, this is one of a series of two changes that are going to be occurring to the Teacher's Pensions Act; one we are making here today – and I just laid out the changes that this Bill 15 deals with. As I said a second ago as well, there are two other aspects of this program that we need to bring in at some future date. That deals with the joint sponsorship arrangement. We need to work through that continuing with the NLTA.

What this joint sponsorship will do – and when the bill gets introduced at a later date as well, and that needs to be done next year. When that bill gets introduced I will elaborate on it a little further, but for now, just to give members some sense of what that really means. Right now today, the pension plan is any liabilities associated with or loss associated with the plan, it is the responsibility of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador that could, I suppose in theory, unilaterally impose legislation that might, if necessary – to have to impose some very draconian changes on a pension plan, should it find itself in a desperate position.

What this does here now, because of the nature of the relationship we built with the NLTA around what the future should look like, is it is a joint benefit. The employer benefits from

having a pension plan like the one we have. It is a Defined Benefit Pension Plan, which by the way, and I did not mention this earlier, the defined benefit provisions in the pension plan are being preserved. That was one of the fundamental principles as we approach this. We said there are a number of things we want to try to do in this exercise. One of them was to maintain the Defined Benefit Pension Plan the public sector employees have in the Province. So this preserves that.

What this does, though, in the future, as we move forward, with a joint trusteeship – and this will be a corporate entity that will be established that will take the management of the fund out of the hands of government. It will put it with this trustee. It is a joint trustee. The NLTA will make appointments to the board. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador will make appointments to the board. That legal entity will have the sole responsibility for the management of that pension plan.

They will make sure that actuarial evaluations are done of the plan periodically. They will make decisions around what future contributions should be, if the plan needs to be adjusted. It will make any future plans with respect to the plan – any future changes or decisions with respect to the plan will be made by this joint body representing the NLTA and the membership as well as the government. When we get into those changes in the future, Mr. Speaker, we will provide a broader overview.

When we start thinking about the Teachers' Pension Plan, there are over 6,000 people who are members of that plan, who are making contributions to that plan. There are close to 9,000 people who are retirees. As a result of the exercise we have just gone through, there are close to 15,000 people, both active members and retirees, who now can have some peace of mind. Their pension plan has been put on a path to ensure it is sustainable in the long term. It has put in place a structure and a mechanism to ensure that we become fully funded.

We have put in place a structure and a governance model that ensures that over time the plan will be well managed in everybody's best interest. Should there be need to make any changes, all those individuals who will be

impacted, the teachers themselves and the government as the employer, will be in a position to work together again in making any adjustments that might be necessary in the mutual best interest of both the people of the Province, through the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the teachers of the Province, through the NLTA.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments are technical in nature in some respects. They are very precise. There are several of them. I think we have had a lot of good public discussion around our pension plans over the years. We provided a briefing. My officials have provided a briefing to the members of the Opposition with respect to the bill. I am certain that as we get into the debate there may be some questions that may arise, and I will be only too glad to answer them for them.

I think I have provided a synopsis of what is in the bill. The bill itself is clearly written and explicitly lays out what we are planning to do here and what this will mean.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my comments upon introduction and look forward to the continued comments by the Opposition and my opportunity to answer any questions they may have.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Cross): The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters.

MS C. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I wanted to say a thank you to the minister's staff that he referenced who did provide us with the opportunity – a number of our caucus members and a number of our researchers – to be briefed on the bill that we are going to debate this afternoon. I would also like to take a moment to thank the President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, Mr. Jim Dinn, who was very generous in getting back to me with regard to some questions I had, very quickly. So I wanted to say thank you to him as well.

Certainly, as we discussed last year when the important changes were made to the public sector employees' pension program, this step

that government wants to make with the teachers' pension, the amendments to the Teachers' Pension Act, certainly are important to make. I do not think anybody in this House of Assembly would argue the fact that when we have valuable employees, whether they work in the public sector or they work in our school systems providing essential educational services to our young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, that those individuals are entitled to the full and fair benefits packages that they are entitled to. I certainly have a tremendous amount of respect for the public sector employees, in addition to the teachers, who not only reside in my district but reside in the districts of all of us in this House, and I look forward to participating in this debate this afternoon.

The minister has mentioned some of these points already, and I hope you will indulge me here, Mr. Speaker. The reason we are having this discussion is that the changes to the pension plan, the Teachers' Pension Plan, have been triggered by a significant growth in the unfunded liability. From 2014-2015 there is an estimated 74 per cent of the plans total net debt has an unfunded liability. The fund status of the plan in 2014 was funded at 59 per cent.

The plan had about \$3 billion in market value assets and \$5.1 billion in projected liabilities; therefore, funding excess of negative \$2.1 billion. This represents, as I said earlier, the unfunded liability. As many people in the Province know, those of you who are listening at home and certainly those educators who are watching this debate with interest, would know that there were a number of special payments that government made over many years due to the unfunded liability.

Between 1997 and 2003, special payments were made totalling about \$800 million. Then between 2003 and 2013, my understanding is that special payments totalling about \$3.7 billion were made to the Teachers' Pension fund.

Based on the August 2012 actuary variations, the projected unfunded liability for the plan was, as the minister said, expected to continue to increase. There are a number of reasons for this, but at this stage, quite frankly as we debate this, the reasons why we are at this particular point

are irrelevant. Our teachers have an expectation that their benefits are going to be paid, just like our public sector employees do. I think that as an employer, government has a responsibility to make sure that we respect those contracts and respect those individuals who work and provide a great service as part of the public service.

The changes, as the minister said, government is committing to a \$1.8 billion promissory note over the next thirty years, and part of that requires the setting up of a joint sponsorship and trust agreement by the government and the NLTA. The minister referenced the second piece of legislation that will need to come to this House at some point before the middle of next year, is my understanding. That piece of legislation is around the establishment of the joint sponsorship and trust arrangement.

As the Opposition in the briefing, we asked questions about if there were any risks associated with that piece of legislation not being brought in as part of this sitting of the House. We have been assured by the government officials and the minister as well today that the second part of this legislation that needs to happen will in no way impact those retirees or those teachers who are waiting for this change to be implemented, and who have already been informed and communicated to by the unions.

We wanted to make sure, as we were briefed, that there was nothing in the political world of maybe – many of us do not know if the House will have a sitting in the fall or not. We wanted to make sure those questions were asked. So I am glad the minister addressed that. We understand that certainly that second piece of legislation will be coming at an appropriate time which allows for that joint sponsorship trust arrangement to be set up and meet the legal requirements, which we are pleased to hear.

To reach the 100 per cent funded target, members' contribution rates, as was discussed here earlier today, will increase by 2 per cent. That 2 per cent will be matched by government. There will also be changes to the pension calculation formula. The pension calculation formula will be using the best eight years' salary instead of five. There will be a suspension of pension indexing, and deferred pensions will

also be impacted as part of this legislation. Deferred pensions; for those teachers who have terminated with less than twenty-four-and-a-half years will have to wait until age sixty-two to qualify for the pension.

The agreement, particularly around the promissory note and risk mitigation – the new agreement, as I said earlier, requires that government provide a promissory note. That note is to reduce the risk of volatility associated with the plan. This represents a share of the plan. The rules are – and the minister I am sure can clarify. My understanding is that promissory note is not to be used, or leveraged, or invested. This reduces the risk of the total asset mix so that in fact the plan has some stability and some protection from the volatility of the market.

This will aid in lowering the return assumption or the discount rate of the plan from 6.75 per cent to 6.6 per cent. As I mentioned, the promissory note will be valued at just over \$1.8 billion, amortized over thirty years; \$1.7 billion will be used to cover 100 per cent of the current unfunded liability for retired teachers; and my understanding is that 50 per cent of the current unfunded liability for active teachers and then \$125 million will be used to minimize future risk.

The NLTA, from what I understand, and government agreed upon an acceptable risk of \$180 million for risk mitigation. Therefore, the teachers will be responsible for paying \$368 million in benefit liability reductions, and that is designed to cover the current unfunded liability for the active teachers, as well as \$53 million to mitigate future risk.

These changes, from what we have been told by both government as well as the NLTA, will provide an 84 per cent probability of being fully funded. My understanding, from the information we have received in the past, is that target is the same target as the public sector pension plan.

The other changes that have been communicated to teachers as well – and I am sure members of the House on both sides will certainly hear this as we head back to our communities and see our teachers over the summer period. To assist with

achieving the 100 per cent funded target, members' contributions will increase by 2 per cent, and that will be moving from 9.35 per cent of salary to 11.35 per cent of salary. That 2 per cent premium, as I mentioned earlier, will be matched by the provincial government.

Pension payments, as I mentioned earlier, will see some changes. Under this new program, no one will get less than they would have gotten up to the plan change, and all service before September 1, 2015 will be subject to the old plan. The teachers' pension will then be the sum of their pre-reformed pension before September 1, 2015 and their post-reform pension under the new plan.

Another major source of the steady increase of the unfunded liability is the significant increases in income that occurred later in a teacher's career, and due to certificate upgrades or administrative positions.

Currently, pensions are paid based on the best five years of average earning, and this is going to be changed to the best eight years of average earnings. Once the plan is amended, the Teacher's Pension Plan will be calculated based on frozen best five-year earnings on past service until the best eight-year average earnings is greater.

Future service after the amendment of the plan, that is the post-reform pension, will be calculated based on the best eight-year average earnings. To avoid receiving lesser benefits, current teachers may choose to work longer to get the same pension as they would under the old plan.

Mr. Speaker, one of the items as well that this piece of legislation addresses that we discussed in the briefing sessions were the suspension of indexing. Under the current plan, the indexing program adjusted pension benefits annually based on inflation. The formula was 60 per cent of the annual change of the CPI to a max benefit increase of 1.2 per cent. Indexing of pension benefits is suspended to future service, effective September 1.

This will have no impact at all – for those of you watching at home, I want to make sure that you hear me clearly. This will have no impact at all

on current retirees. I am sure the minister will be able to confirm that when he stands up that the suspension of indexing will have no impact on current retirees.

The deferred pension refers to a teacher who has at least five years, but less than twenty-four-and-a-half years who terminates their employment or is terminated for a reason, except disability, on or after September 2016. They will receive a deferred pension at the age of sixty-two.

I guess the last item that should be of interest of those people watching at home – it certainly was of interest to those of us in the caucus who participated in the briefing – were questions that we had around the retirement age. To be clear, this bill – my understanding – does not change the age of retirement for teachers; thirty years in and out, age fifty-five and twenty-five years; age sixty with less than twenty-five years.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to just again thank the minister's staff for the time they spent with us. It was certainly a very important piece of legislation. They were very willing to answer questions, as they always are. Again, I want to recognize and thank the President of the NLTA who was very willing to have discussions with us and provide us some information so we could be more prepared for this debate this afternoon.

I will certainly advise the House that we will be supporting this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I am pleased to stand and speak to this bill this afternoon. Being a retired teacher, I had a special interest in knowing what went on with the negotiations. Before saying anything, I do not very often stand and congratulate the government on something that it has done. Every now and again, every now and again –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS MICHAEL: – but today they have to be congratulated, first of all, for standing behind the Defined Benefits Pension Plan, and for realizing that that had to be kept in place. They had tremendous leadership as a government in that.

The former Premier Marshall was totally committed to that, and they continued with it even after he was no longer Premier. He started that discussion with me when he was Minister of Finance, and I knew he was solid in that commitment. They have to be congratulated that they stood behind that and that they were open in their negotiations with the public service sector, and today especially with the NLTA. I congratulate the NLTA, all the public service sector unions, and the government for what has happened in this Province, because we have done something here that has not happened elsewhere in the country.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS MICHAEL: We should be proud of it.

It does show – and the government knows I have to make one political statement at least – that we really are a people in this Province who believe in social democracy; I really believe that. That is why I hope that message is going to start moving more and more in our Province. Because we really do believe in fairness, and we really do believe in taking care of people. So the struggle to make sure that the liability issue was dealt with, the struggle to make sure that retirees in our public service sector, our nurses, our teachers, those who work in government offices, that all of them had secure futures, and secure retirement futures was really excellent.

The struggle for the teachers' union, of course, and the government, in terms of negotiations, began back in December 2012. You stayed with it while the government was negotiating with the public service sector unions, the teachers' association had their own parallel discussions going on – but the principles remained the same. I think that is what is really important. If you read the public service sector union acts, all of them, and you read the Teachers' Pensions Act, the principles remain the same in the negotiations, and all the principles were all upheld. I am not going to go through the details of the bill, and the details of the changes to the

pension plan. The minister did that, and my colleague from Virginia Waters also did that, so I do not think that I need to do it.

There are some things that I want to point out in this whole spirit of recognizing we have something special here. I think we need to recognize that. I think that is what the people of the Province need to recognize.

The one thing we have coming out of all of these negotiations is the agreement with regard to joint trusteeship. This is extremely significant. It has been agreed to with all of the public service sector now, including teachers. Having a joint trusteeship where a separate body, a third party – there is going to be a corporation set up separately on its own.

That joint body is the one that will be the ongoing group to ensure that the pension plan that has been put in place and that the ongoing protection of the pension plans will happen. This is extremely significant. The joint trusteeship will include government and representatives from the unions in that corporation. What that does, the joint trusteeship for the teachers, for example, will mean that the teachers, through their representative as a trustee, will have a direct say in the governance and administration of the plan. It will significantly reduce provincial debt and have a positive effect on the economy.

In putting together this plan, it is quite obvious when you read it and when you listen to the briefing from government and listen to the presentations from the Teachers' Union – and I too want to recognize and say thank you both to the government department and also to the President of the NLTA for taking time to make sure that we had all the information that we need.

It is obvious from talking to them the amount of work that went into putting this plan in place and the experts who had to be used to put the plan in place. This was not something that can be done lightly. It is something that required quite a bit of time, quite a bit of work, and quite a bit of negotiations. Like I said, a really extremely important piece is having this joint trusteeship, having this third party. An independent corporation will make sure that the pension plan

continues, as I said, and that it will be protected and will be there both for the good of our retirees, as well as for the good of the Province and the good of our economy.

I think it is also important to point out that both sides really did give – there was give and take on both sides. Government had to agree to a substantial contribution and, on their part, teachers agreed to pay increased premiums and reduce future pension benefits to ensure the long-term sustainability of the plan. I think that give and take on both sides showed that intent to be responsible, to take care of people, and to do it responsibly, and that is not easy. It is not easy to be involved in that give and take, and anybody who has been part of any negotiations understands that. I applaud once again the government and the Teachers' Union and the other public service sector unions for their commitment to making that happen.

I do not think, Mr. Speaker, I am going to take any more time. I have made the main points that I wanted to make. I really do feel proud that we now have a pension plan that is sustainable and a pension plan that still is based on defined benefits, and I hope that we will be a shining example to the rest of this country about what can happen with regard to that.

Thank you so much.

MR. SPEAKER: If the minister speaks, he closes debate.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WISEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the two members opposite for their comments. I will not take long to wrap up, but I do want to, though, echo the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi – her comments around how we all should be proud as legislators and as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and public sector unions for having recognized the significance of the issue before us, the impact that it would have pensioners, the impact that it would have on current plan members, and

impact it would have on the financial position of the provincial government.

This is something that we all should be very proud of having been a part of it. Coming to grips with an issue that has been haunting the people of this Province and the unions and the employees of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, haunting them for many, many years, it is something that is truly a historic moment. Not only looking at pension reform in this Province but a historic moment in one time when all members of this House, members of the public sector unions, the unions that represent them themselves, all having a one single vision, and that is sustainability of our pension plans and the financial security and protection of the employees of government and the current pensioners of government. I just wanted to echo that comment, and I thank you for making them.

Mr. Speaker, this now concludes the debate at second reading and we will go into Committee. Then this act, when voted upon by the House, will come into force and we will start that process of putting this one to bed following the other plan that we did last year. The uniformed services will be the next one, and we have the MHAs' pension and the Provincial Court judges' pension, so those three are left.

Work is being done on those three as we speak. We will continue to work with the unions involved with the uniformed services one. That will be aggressively on our agenda going into the summer. Hopefully by the fall session, we will be able to bring in legislation akin to this to deal with that last group. Then we will be concluded when we do the pensions of the MHAs and the Provincial Court judges.

AN HON. MEMBER: What?

MR. WISEMAN: Yes, I say to the hon. members, we will have a fall session I assume. We have a session every fall.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WISEMAN: We will have a session in the fall and we will conclude the next one.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Teachers' Pensions Act. (Bill 15)

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

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

MR. KING: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Teachers' Pensions Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 15)

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At this time I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the House do resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 15, An Act To Amend The Teachers' Pensions Act.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Littlejohn): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 15, An Act To Amend The Teachers' Pensions Act.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Teachers' Pensions Act." (Bill 15)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters.

MS C. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

During the debate on second reading I asked a couple of questions. I did not get a chance to hear the minister's response, so I will ask those now.

I know he referenced in his comments around the joint sponsorship trust arrangement. I am wondering if he could just clarify the timeline of how he anticipates that legislation coming into the House and when he expects that trusteeship to be established.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WISEMAN: Mr. Chair, there is a piece of work that will continue between the government and the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association to work through the sponsorship agreement. I suspect we will have that by the next session of the House.

We need to have it in place by, no later than the summer of next year in terms of our ability to – the outside time of that would be between now and next summer. So I would be optimistic that

we would be able to do this in the next session of the House.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters.

MS C. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Also, when I was reviewing the information, there was some discussion around the suspension of indexing. So from what I understand, under the current plan, indexing program adjust the pensions' benefits annually based on inflation. The formula was 60 per cent of the annual change in the consumer price index to a maximum benefits increase of 1.2 per cent.

My understanding is the indexing change is effective September 1, but I think I said in my comments – and I saw some of the members on the opposite side of the House nodding aggressively. I am guessing they have been through some of the same briefings we had – nodding aggressively that there was no impact on current retirees. I would just like to give the minister the opportunity to answer that question for me, please.

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

MR. WISEMAN: That is true, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. J. BENNETT: Mr. Chair, my questions revolve around the performance of the pension plan. Who is the pension manager? What are the class of assets, equities, debt investments? What are they are? If the minister could advise, is it possible to obtain the actual performance and the list of pension assets over the last decade or so?

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

MR. WISEMAN: Let me answer the question about the availability of the information you are looking for, I can get that for you. I do not have it in front of me to share with you now, but that is available. That can be available for you.

Just so the member is in appreciation of how much information has been profiled in the last little while. Obviously, to reach such an agreement and to determine the dollar value of the promissory note, for example, to determine the amount of changes and the value we needed to attach to those changes was a result of a tremendous amount of work done by our actuarials, people who looked at the value of the plan and what the future forecast would have been. That information is current, so we would be only too glad to share that with you.

You raised an interesting question, and the fact that you raised it speaks to the clarity we need to provide for how the plan gets managed. One of the significant things that is happening here, the establishment of this joint trusteeship, that is a critical nuance to what is happening here and what is happening with the other plans. We now have in place – because up until this happens the provincial government, and more precisely me, as the minister, was the trustee of the plan.

Now we will have a circumstance where we will have the NLTA, in this case here, appoint some people, experts to a corporation. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador will appoint an equal number of people. These will now become the trustee. There will be a piece of legislation that gives them the legal authority. The management of the pension plan will be taken out of the hands of government all together. We will be an entity that appoints people to a new corporation, but that new entity will have the sole responsibility for managing the plan and will determine who they want to bring in as advisors to provide some investment advice.

Basically, from here on in, when this process is concluded, this new entity will have sole responsibility for all of the management of this plan and the decisions around investments; who they use to do their investments for them, the mix that they will need to have to make sure the plan hits its targets and will reach out, no doubt, to provide and reach out to get the most expert advice that is available to them to ensure the plan remains sustainable and it hits its financial targets.

So, to your question, we will provide the information for you. With respect to who

manages and who does what, that trustee from here on in will have that role and responsibility.

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

MR. J. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I understand the performance of the Canada Pension Plan investment has been quite stellar for a number of years now, that may be to some people's surprise, but the Canada Pension Plan performs really well. There are other major pension plans in the country: the OMERS, the Ontario municipal employees, the Ontario secondary school teachers' pension plan.

Is there any consideration, since ours is relatively smaller compared to theirs, to arrange some sort of a management agreement to have some sort of pooled funds so that we could benefit from whatever strategic investments these other major pension plans are making?

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

MR. WISEMAN: That is a really interesting question. It is not necessarily the subject of the bill, but I will answer it anyway.

Go back to my answer, though, about who manages the fund. Because we have about \$8 billion in assets in our provincial pension plans. If you compare that – you referenced the Canada Pension Plan, and there are many other plans, but that is probably the biggest in Canada. As a result of the size of their pool, they get an opportunity to make investments in areas where because of the size of their offering, they are able to tap into better investment returns. They get lower fees, lower administrative costs. So they are able to provide a better rate of return because of the size of their pool.

Small plans, and small pools, do not have the opportunity to make the kind of strategic investments because of the size, the dollar amounts, and the asset mix that they have to maintain. They do not have the ability to be able to tap into those kind of investment opportunities that larger funds would.

So, it is a very valid question, because it has a lot of merit and requires some exploration. That

question is a very valid question, and one that the new trustee needs to ask themselves. One of the decisions that has been made, about to be made in the near term, I suspect – we did a piece of legislation here earlier where we dealt with the Public Sector Pension Plan. That group now is starting to come together. The orientation, the education sessions are being held for the trustees as we speak.

Some of the early decisions they have to make is about, how are we going to manage this plan? We have been appointed by the unions, we have been appointed by the government. We have this responsibility to the plan itself, now how do we actually carry out our duties? Who is going to manage this fund? Should we reach out to another fund? Can we actually get some value from being a part of a bigger fund? Can we reduce some of our administrative costs? Can we get better return for our pensioners? All these are very legitimate questions but one that the trustee, that group needs to ask themselves.

To your point, I think there is a lot of merit in exploring that, a lot of value. It is not government's role to dictate that happens. Now what we have done here is we have actually approached the management of the plan in the future through this joint trusteeship.

They are very valid questions, and I would assume that this new entity that is being created will look at those kinds of questions and ask themselves the same questions that you have just asked. A prudent trustee would naturally ask the very same questions that you have asked. No doubt with good advice, they will come to a conclusion in the best interest of the plan members.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those opposed?

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 12 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 12 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those opposed?

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 12 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those opposed?

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Teachers' Pensions Act.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those opposed?

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those opposed?

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you.

It is the first time I had applause to rise in Committee.

AN HON. MEMBER: We thought you were going to close her down.

MR. KING: We are not closing.

Thank you.

Mr. Chair, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the Committee do now rise and report Bill 15, An Act To Amend The Teachers' Pensions Act, without amendment.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 15 without amendment.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those opposed, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

MR. SPEAKER (Cross): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Port de Grave and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

MR. LITTLEJOHN: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 15 without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have

directed him to report Bill 15 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

MR. KING: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, before I move on, this is a very important topic for many people here in the House and for the benefit of those who may be tuned in by TV or livestream, I just want to make it known to people that this concludes the debate at this stage of the Teachers' Pension Act and we will resume with debate on third reading on Tuesday when we come back next week. Just in case there is anybody who is around that might be holding on thinking that we are going to debate it further, this concludes first, second, and committee stages, and the third reading will be happening on Tuesday.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I move, second by the Minister of Finance, we move into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 9, An Act To Amend The Legal Aid Act.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that I do leave the Chair for the House to resolve into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 9.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Littlejohn): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 9, An Act To Amend The Legal Aid Act, and we are resuming debate.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Legal Aid Act." (Bill 9)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Clause 1.

Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 19 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 19 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 19 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Legal Aid Act.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

At this time, I moved, seconded by the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services, that the Committee rise and report Bill 9, An Act To Amend The Legal Aid Act, without amendment.

CHAIR: It is moved that the Committee do rise and report Bill 9 without amendment.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

MR. SPEAKER (Cross): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Port de Grave and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

MR. LITTLEJOHN: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 9 without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee has considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 9 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

MR. KING: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the said bill be read the third time?

MR. KING: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted. Bill ordered read a third time presently, by leave.

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I moved, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that Bill 9, An Act To Amend The Legal Aid Act, be now read the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 9, the Legal Aid Act, be now read the third time.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Legal Aid Act. (Bill 9)

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

On motion, a bill, “An Act To Amend The Legal Aid Act,” read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 9)

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At this time, I move, seconded by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, that the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 14, An To Amend The Regional Services Board Act, 2012.

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

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Littlejohn): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 14, An Act To Amend The Regional Service Boards Act.

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Regional Service Boards Act, 2012.” (Bill 14)

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

CLERK: Clause 1.

MR. CRUMMELL: Good enough, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Clause 1.

The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, I need to bring forward a minor amendment to the overall amendment. The amendment would correct a section reference that was inadvertently omitted in the bill.

What I am going to move, seconded by the Member for Terra Nova, is that section 1, clause 1 of the bill is amended by deleting the word “section” in the proposed subparagraph 2(e)(i) and replacing it with the reference “section 5.”

CHAIR: The amendment reads: clause 1 of the bill is amended by deleting the word “section” in the proposed subparagraph 2(e)(i) and replacing it with the reference “section 5.”

MR. CRUMMELL: That is correct.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The amendment is in order.

All those in favour of the amendment, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those opposed, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, amendment carried.

CHAIR: Now we need to vote on the clause as amended.

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those opposed, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, clause 1, as amended, carried.

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is a pleasure to have an opportunity to speak once again to Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Regional Service Boards Act. Mr. Chair, I think in general we do not have issues with the bill, but there are a couple of points there that I would like some clarification and a couple of points to make as well.

Mr. Chair, the first question is in section 1(2), it says paragraph 2(h) of the act is repealed and the following substituted: (h) “municipal authority” means (i) the City of Corner Brook, (ii) the City of Mount Pearl, (iii) the City of St. John’s.”

I know this is an amendment, so we do not have the actual piece of legislation here. I am just wondering why those three municipalities are singled out? I wonder if the minister could answer that question.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Chair, I know what you are referring to, but I do not quite have that answer for you at this moment. If you have other questions, by the time you get down through it I will have an answer for you on that one specifically.

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the minister for that.

Mr. Chair, the next point I wanted to make is, and it kind of relates to section 2. It is not a question, it is just a point I wanted to reiterate. It is the fact that we have an elected board now, and the chairperson, the vice-chairperson will also be elected by the regional services board. I do applaud that move. I think that is a positive thing, as opposed to having these board

members simply appointed by the minister to have an elected board. Also, to have the chair and vice-chair to be elected by the board itself, as opposed to appointments, I think is a positive thing.

Mr. Chair, the next point I had, or question, really, I suppose, relates to section 7 on page 5 of the bill. Section 7 says, “The minister may, by regulation, divide a region into wards, establish and change the number and boundaries of those wards, and” determine the number of members to be appointed or elected for each ward.

My understanding there, and the minister can clarify, is that for the purposes of appointing the regional service board, there would be – so we take a region, and that region would be divided up into, well they are calling them wards here, which would have a number of municipalities within that particular ward. I guess if there was only one municipality in the ward, they would simply put a name forward and that would be it.

If there was more than one municipality in that ward that put names forward, it is talking about there would have to be an election amongst those two councillors or three, or whatever it was for that position. I understand that to be the case based on what is covered in the legislation; however, the part I have the question and maybe the concern about, and I know this is the issue that came up even in the Northeast Avalon with the current waste management board, is the fact that it says: the number of members to be appointed or elected for each ward is determined by the minister.

In other words, the minister is going to divide up an area into wards and he or she is going to determine how many board members that ward gets, but it does not say here how that determination is made. Is it made by population, for example? Because I know we have heard concerns in the past whereby there might have been an area that may have not represented, for example, half the population, yet they got half the number of board members and so on.

I am just wondering in making that determination, what formula does the minister use to determine how many people are selected within a ward?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Chair, it is based on geography. It is based on population. What we would do is the minister would make a decision as to how many board members there would be. Once the board is selected, the board then could, if they wanted to make changes, recommend to the minister those changes. The minister will have that prerogative then to make adjustments to the numbers on the board, as to the makeup of that board. So that is how that would occur. Again, the autonomy would be with the board. The board would advise the minister. The minister would then make revisions and would comply, I would suggest, with the recommendations coming from the board.

By the way, Mr. Chair, the other question, is that all the municipalities actually – the previous question, for the member opposite. All the municipalities are actually listed if you turn over the page, and local service districts, municipalities and reserves as well. It was not just the three municipalities that you had referenced. If you turn the page, they are all referenced.

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

MR. LANE: Okay, I am just looking here. A local service district committee or council – okay, under the Municipalities Act. Thank you for the clarification.

Mr. Chair, the concern that I have – and I will just say for the record I appreciate the answer the minister did give. The concern is that the minister gets to determine the number of persons appointed to a particular ward. I know the minister says, well, the board could recommend, for example, to the minister what they feel like it should be, or it could be changed, or what have you. I know we have had situations in the past where there were certainly members of a board who did have issue, but at the end of the day nothing did get changed.

I think there should be some consideration there. As opposed to the minister just simply deciding, I think there should be some formula based on

geography and population and an established formula as opposed to just on the whim.

I do not mean that in a negative term from the minister, whoever that minister should be, but I think there should be some kind of an established criteria to determine how many seats a particular municipality or a particular ward of a regional service board would have in terms of fairness, and to make sure that everybody receives adequate representation, and that there is no imbalance in terms of numbers of board members or people in a ward representing particular parts of the district. I just point out for the record that I do have some concern there.

Mr. Chair, the next point I wanted to raise – and this falls under section 8, which is term. So that would be the term of the persons who would serve on these regional services boards. Under subsection (5) it talks about – well actually if you look at subsection (1) to (4) it talks about the election of the board and so on. That includes representation from local service districts and so on, and talks about band councils – good point – have someone elected, and so on.

Then it talks about – and basically the term of office is to coincide with the municipal elections. So basically if a council – and we know we have municipal elections the same day across the Province. So if somebody is elected to a municipal council, that council is formed, then they put names forward to represent that council, or to represent that ward – and that could be one person or two people, or however many are in the ward, to be elected to this board. Then the legislation goes on to say, basically, that once the council term is up – so once the four years is up – then we start that process anew, in terms of electing new people.

It also says, under subsection (5), “Notwithstanding subsections (1) to (4), a member shall continue to be a member until he or she is reappointed, re-elected or replaced.” My issue is that there is no timeline associated to that. So, in other words, what that means, as it is written, is that if somebody was elected to this particular board, the four years is up, now there is a municipal election and that person decides not to run again, or they are no longer elected, or for that matter maybe now there is some new people, perhaps that person was elected under

the last four-year term and maybe now there are some new people elected in other communities within that ward that were interested in serving, so now there is more interest and people wanting to be on the board, but there is no timeline.

So in other words, I am a councillor, I am elected to this particular regional service board, I am there for four years, I run for re-election, I get re-elected, I am still on the regional service board until I am replaced – but what about if it takes six months or a year, or however long it takes before we get around to having these elections, these re-elections, re-appointments and so on, then we have that gap there whereby somebody is continuing to serve on a board when there are other people duly elected wanting to serve on the board, and there could be a delay.

We have seen this with other boards and committees that the government has in various departments, not just this one, where there have been issues around people being appointed or elected, and terms of office where people were not replaced in a timely fashion and sometimes boards even being inactive because they did not have quorums and so on.

So I do raise the concern with the minister. I will sit down and let him respond to it, but I would have liked to have seen something there to say within thirty days or within ninety days, or whatever it might be, of the municipal election that people would be – in other words, put a timeline on it that this re-election or reappointment has to occur, not leave it open ended.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Chair, this has not been an issue in the past. After councils are elected, they are anxious to make their appointments to the regional service boards. So right after the municipal elections, boards have been established in a very timely manner. It has never been an issue.

Our department will be monitoring, or Municipal Affairs will be monitoring it like they always will, and they will address it if the need arises. If we see a circumstance where people

are not being appointed in a timely manner, we would intervene to let them know that the time is up. It is time to get on with it.

We do not want to be prescriptive in this situation. We want the autonomy out there right on the ground with these boards. We do not see it being necessary, based on our experience.

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I had the opportunity to speak to it in second reading because the minister raised the NorPen Regional Services Board, which is in my particular district, that manages waste services and also the fire services in thirteen communities.

Under section 6(3) it listed, “For the purposes of subsections (1) and (2), only the following persons from the region may be appointed or elected to the board: (a) a councillor; (b) a person serving on a local service district committee; and (c) a member of a band council constituted under the Indian Act (Canada).”

So, just for clarification for me on this particular bill – because the NorPen Regional Services Board covers basically fifty-three communities on the Great Northern Peninsula, and in the district that I represent there are thirty-five of those communities. Fourteen of them are unincorporated. They are not local service districts and they are not municipalities and they represent a large portion of the population.

There are people currently serving on the NorPen Regional Services Board that would not be serving as a town councillor or a member of a local service district. So is this legislation preventing members of the community to run for an election to seek and serve on a regional services board? Because right now the regional service board is functioning with a number of members in various wards and serving well; but if the legislation is limiting to just members of local service districts and councillors, then there may be a struggle in terms of getting appropriate representation on the NorPen Regional Service Board. Also, it will limit the number of

members from various communities throughout the particular district on the Great Northern Peninsula that is served under that region – not only for my particular region, but others in Bonavista and the Burin Peninsula and other areas where there would be regional service boards that would and do exist.

If the minister could just clarify the position on that because I think that is something that is really important on the minds of people and in communities in Newfoundland and Labrador on that particular matter. I will give the minister an opportunity to clarify if – because I certainly believe in elected officials serving on these regional service boards or others who would run in elected capacity for particular positions, as we have seen in the past for school boards and other areas where they serve as a trustee in that type of leadership capacity.

I do think that there are members who are in unincorporated communities, or who would be in towns or local service districts who would not be in an elected capacity. So if the minister could clarify that for me, if those members would be free to run for an election position in a ward or a sub-region of a regional service board then that would be quite helpful.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Chair, the requirements have not changed under this new legislation. It will remain the same. You need to be an elected member from one of the authorities that we just referred to.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for The Straits – White Bay North, on a follow-up?

MR. MITCHELMORE: Yes.

For the record then a member who is not an elected official of a municipality, or on a local service district, or a member of the band council cannot serve in a capacity in a regional service board.

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, the next point I just wanted to raise here is under section 33.1(2), annual report. It says, “The board shall publish the annual report and its audited financial statements in a manner that they may be accessed by a member of the public.”

While we certainly would agree that the public should have access, the first point is that when we say it may be accessed, I am just wondering about the language there. It shall be or it shall happen – well, actually I guess essentially, we shall publish, so that is fine.

The main point I wanted to make: Will copies of these annual reports go to all the municipalities? It is one thing to say that they will be published in a way that it may be accessed, so I am assuming that means online. We have regions and small towns within rural Newfoundland that may not even have – I do not even know if they would have the Internet or have the ability to even look some of these things up.

I personally would like to see it quite clearly stated that in addition to that, it shall be provided to all municipalities, local service districts, and band councils on an annual basis. In other words, it would be published and sent out to all those municipalities. They would have access to it as opposed to simply saying oh, it is on a website; try to find it if you can and if you have the ability. I do not know if the minister wants to respond to that.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Chair, the legislation is clear. It has to be available to the public. The format that would be made available, I cannot speak to that directly right now. I am assuming it would be online. It would be published as well in hard copy.

It would be made available to the public. You are talking about audited financial statements and the annual reports so that would be available for all to see.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South, on a follow-up.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I realize that. I just want to say to the minister I realize that, but municipalities are the key stakeholder in all this. It is municipal tax dollars that are feeding into this system. Whether it be waste management, or whether it be any other regional services, they all have to pay for it.

Not everybody has a board member because we know that people get elected by wards. There could be twenty municipalities, in theory, in one ward with only one representative. They are not on the board. A lot of them may have challenges around even having Internet service or whatever to be able to access it. My point is for the sake of once a year, given the fact that they are paying for it, why not just provide them with a copy? That is clearly not there and it lends itself to simply saying oh yes, we posted it online somewhere and then that is the end of it. That was my point there.

Mr. Chair, the next point I wanted to raise – and there is no reference to it in these amendments and I am not sure if it is in the actual act itself, but I will ask the minister. There is nothing here about staff. Like most of these boards, I would assume – because I know that the Regional Waste Management, for example, here on the Northeast Avalon and I would assume that the other ones as well they do have staff. I think a director's position is what it is called and they have other staff and so on.

In terms of the staff, the directors of these boards and so on – and I think I have heard my colleague for Bay of Islands reference one particular waste management facility and a particular person; I am not sure what that person's position is and so on, but he references all the time. Under this legislation now does government just simply appoint the paid staff to these boards or is this going to be totally autonomous and the board itself will decide who the paid director of these entities and any other staff are – they would be the ones who would do the hiring of those persons, not government simply appointing people. I wonder if the minister could answer that question.

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I go back I guess to the board membership and I wonder if the regional service boards, like NorPen, were consulted in the process. There are a number of members who serve currently on the NorPen Regional Service Board who are working in that capacity who are not elected at a municipal council or serving on a local service district, but they could be residents of municipalities – like in the Town of St. Anthony, for example, even the Chair on the NorPen Service Board is not an elected official – but clause 6 is stating that somebody would have to be an elected councillor or a person serving on a local service district or a member of a band council.

As I pointed out previously, you may have people in the communities, in municipalities, who want to serve on a regional service board that deals with matters of waste management, that deals with fire services, that deals in regional collaboration, but would not have that capacity to do so if they did not get elected to a council. Other people will not have that opportunity because of other regressive policies within the Department of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs when it comes to looking at the freeze that is around communities becoming municipalities or being able to form local service districts that exist.

As I mentioned, there are fourteen unincorporated communities within the particular district that I represent. It has been very difficult even getting Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs to look at coming in and doing a presentation to look at regionalization of communities and seeing movement on that.

What this legislation is stating is that people who live in those fourteen communities really have no opportunity to serve on a board and have their voices heard when it comes to how their regional services are being provided in terms of waste management and in terms of fire services. They cannot sit in a capacity and be that active voice.

That is somewhat problematic for me as a member of the Legislature representing these

people and seeing how well and how functioning the current NorPen Regional Services Board is, and how it has been touted on the other side by government that it is a successful model. The minister raised it when he opened debate here.

I would just like clarification as to if they consulted on this change, knowing that a number of the members who currently sit on that board will basically have to be ejected from the board because they do not fit the criteria of board membership at this present time. That does not prove well for succession planning. It is basically sending a functioning regional service board like NorPen waste services into chaos. That may be the goal or intent of this particular piece of legislation.

I would say what really needs to happen is there should be an amendment or accommodation for others who are not councillors or members sitting on a local service district, or part of a band council, or an opportunity where vacancies exist where they can be filled in that capacity. If that is not the case, I certainly will not be supporting the particular bill that is put forward, Bill 14.

I think that a number of other rural communities and places throughout the Province would see that as somewhat problematic. They would like to be able to be a part of a process. Government is being way too restrictive in terms of how a regional body should be working. It should be collaborative. It should be regional.

I certainly agree, when it comes to municipal representation on the board, as the piece is there. I also think there should be some accommodation in situations and circumstances as to looking at the NorPen model and how it currently is working and is functional. Basically, you would see a number of those members have to vacate their seats on the service board because of this particular amendment to the act, the Regional Service Boards Act, 2012 amendment.

I am standing firmly for my constituents and the people who have elected me to do so. I would like some clarification if they were even consulted in the process.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Chair, the whole idea of these amendments is to have elected officials serve on this board. Right now, there is nobody from an unincorporated community who is sitting on boards as far as I know.

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to go back to where I was the last time I spoke. I asked the minister for some clarification and an answer. He did not stand, so he either does not know the answer or he does not want to say the answer. I am not sure which.

I will say for the record if nothing else – so it is in Hansard on the record – there is a concern there that has been raised by some people, and a concern that I share, quite frankly, as it relates to the appointment of staff as well. So it is great that we are going to be having elected officials on the board. I know Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador are in favour of this.

CHAIR: I am going to ask the hon. member to move on. I think you have made your point in previous statements hon. member.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, I do want to say when staff are appointed and staff are hired, they should be reporting to the board and they should be appointed or hired by the board, not simply being political appointments or otherwise to these positions. The lack of an answer on that question tells me that is the way – I can only assume that is the way it is. If the minister changes his mind and he wants to answer my question this time, that is great.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Chair, the staff are hired by the board now and they will be in the future.

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: I am just going back to point out a particular piece. The current NorPen board of directors has a number of members who are members of municipalities or local service districts, but they are not elected councillors and they are not actively serving on local service districts.

Will the minister confirm that with the passage of this legislation those –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. MITCHELMORE: –board of director members at the NorPen Regional Services Board will no longer be compliant and thus be ejected from the board of NorPen?

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

MR. LANE: Yes, Mr. Chair, the next question I have pertains to just the scope of the board and is just for clarification. Primarily, right now this is dealing with waste management, but obviously these boards, under this particular legislation, can be expanded to include other municipal services as well.

So everything that ties to this would potentially tie into all of the other municipal services. If you had regions and wards and they wanted to expand into things like economic development, or animal control or so on, that would all fall under these particular boards in this legislation. Would that be the intent, Mr. Minister?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Chair, the legislation is very clear in what authority the regional service boards will have. You are talking about services being provided to regions. Outside of that purview, there will be responsibilities for municipalities to do the types of things he is talking about. The regional service boards right now will be very definitive, according to what we see here.

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The final question I had, or the point I wanted to raise is I am assuming the funding for this particular board, this is all going to obviously be part of when the municipalities pay their tipping fees or whatever – if it is going to be waste management, it is municipal tax dollars. There was also money that came from the gas tax.

We have a federal gas tax transfer which comes to the Province. It was meant to go to municipalities, but it cannot go directly so it has to flow through the Province. I know there was a percentage of that gas tax money that originally went to the provincial government for waste management. I am just wondering, will those monies continue to flow through to the Province to service these things or is the money from gas tax now just going into general revenue?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Chair, this is not in the legislation that we are debating here today, so that is a question that you can ask on your feet in the House of Assembly in the next sitting.

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

MR. LANE: Thank you.

I thank the minister for his non-answers, just like Question Period.

Mr. Chair, with that said, I am certainly agreeable to this legislation overall. I know that Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador support this in principle and we will support it. I just will say for the record that, as Opposition members, we have a responsibility to ask these questions and it is nice when you actually get answers. I appreciate the minister answering some of the questions at least, and with that I will sit down.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1, as amended, carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those opposed?

Carried.

On motion, clause 1, as amended, carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 8 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 8 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those opposed?

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 8 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those opposed?

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Regional Service Boards Act, 2012.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill with amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the bill with amendment, carried.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move, seconded by the Minister Responsible for Service Newfoundland and Labrador, that the Committee rise and report on Bill 14, An Act To Amend The Regional Service Boards Act, 2012, with the noted amendment.

CHAIR: It is moved that the Committee rise and report Bill 14 with amendment.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

MR. SPEAKER (Cross): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Port de Grave and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

MR. LITTLEJOHN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 14 with amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports the Committee have

considered the matters to them referred and have carried Bill 14 with amendment.

When shall the report be received?

MR. KING: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

MR. SPEAKER: When shall the said bill be read a third time?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I moved, seconded by the Minister of Environment, that the amendments be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded the amendment be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK: First reading of the amendment.

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, I moved, seconded by the Minister of Environment, that the said amendments be now read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the amendment be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK: Second reading of the amendment.

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment that Bill 14, An Act To Amend The Regional Service Boards Act, 2012, as amended, be read a third time.

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

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion the bill be read a third time?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, amendments read a first and second time. Bill ordered read a third time presently, by leave.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Regional Service Boards Act, 2012. (Bill 14)

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 Regional Service Boards Act, 2012", read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 14)

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At this time I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board that the House do resolve itself once again back into

Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 12, An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000 No. 2.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Littlejohn): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 12, An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act No. 2.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000 No. 2." (Bill 12)

CHAIR: Clause 1.

Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 5 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 5 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 5 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000 No. 2.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that the Committee do rise and report Bill 12, An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act No. 2.

CHAIR: It is moved that the Committee rise and report Bill 12 without amendment.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

MR. SPEAKER (Cross): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Port de Grave and the Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

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

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

When shall the report be received?

MR. KING: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted..

MR. SPEAKER: When shall the bill be read the third time?

MR. KING: Right now.

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

MR. KING: Sorry, I was engaged in a conversation with my colleague from Mount Pearl across the way.

Mr. Speaker, right now I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that Bill 12, An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act No. 2, be now read a third time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that this bill be now read the third time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion that Bill 12, An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act No. 2, be read the third time?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000 No. 2. (Bill 12)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000 No. 2," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 12)

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, I move, seconded by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, the House do now resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 13, An Act To Amend The House of Assembly Act.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 13.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Littlejohn): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 13, An Act To Amend The House of Assembly Act.

A bill, “An Act To Amend The House of Assembly Act.” (Bill 13)

CHAIR: Clause 1.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is certainly a pleasure to have an opportunity to speak once again to Bill 13. Mr. Chair, this obviously ties in now to the new electoral districts, boundaries, should this pass in the House of Assembly, and I assume it will.

Mr. Chair, I guess there are four main points in this, for the benefit of those who may be watching. We are talking the boundary change, the forty-eight seats down to forty. We are talking name changes for some of the districts, not all, but some of them for sure, and the election date change, and then the new by-election rule.

I want to, first of all, Mr. Chair, just make the points again for the record and for all the viewers out there from Mount Pearl South and Southlands, who I know are glued to the TV here, that in terms of my particular district, which is currently the District of Mount Pearl South, the proposal is that it would be renamed to Mount Pearl – Southlands. So on the name change piece, I certainly have no issue. I have received no commentary from any of my constituents or from constituents from Southlands who seem to have any issue with it. I am certainly supportive of that.

It makes sense, because Southlands is very much connected to Mount Pearl. We know it was once actually a part of Mount Pearl and it got removed. We will not get into that issue, but it was once part of Mount Pearl’s municipal boundaries, but it is definitely a community of interest.

In terms of the whole concept of communities of interest, people in Southlands are very connected with Mount Pearl. Many of them are former Mount Pearl residents who moved to Southlands, primarily because they perhaps wanted to upgrade their homes or buy new homes and the land was not available in Mount Pearl to do so. So the next best thing was Southlands. It was right next door. There are a lot of former Mount Pearl residents there, and people who grew up in Mount Pearl and so on.

Even the people who are not, all the children living in Southlands would be zoned for Mount Pearl. They would be zoned for St. Peters Primary, Newtown Elementary, St. Peter’s Junior High, and O’Donel High. So they would all be primarily going to school in Mount Pearl. Some of them would be going to Mount Pearl Senior High for French immersion. Actually, there is a busing issue associated with French immersion, which I hope to be working on for them on their behalf, actually, but that is not what we are here to talk about right now.

There is no doubt that the community of interest piece is there. Obviously, they would play sports in Mount Pearl primarily; therefore, their parents are involved volunteering, and they shop there. So they are very much connected to Mount Pearl.

The name Mount Pearl – Southlands, I have no issue with it. I have heard no issue raised about it. I would 100 per cent supportive of it, and honoured to represent those people.

Mr. Chair, the other couple of changes, they actually cleaned up the borderline of my district along Ruth Avenue, down around First Street, Second Street, a portion of Roosevelt, a portion of Sunrise, Teasdale Street and so on. The border between Mount Pearl South and Mount Pearl North was generally Ruth Avenue, but down towards the end Mount Pearl North did come into Roosevelt Avenue. So you kind of

had this little section of the neighbourhood that was kind of disjointed from a provincial representation point of view.

There were a few houses on one street in Mount Pearl North and then the others in Mount Pearl South. On one side of the street one district, on the other side the other district. There were some streets with four or five houses in one district and the remainder of the street in another district. I certainly made a presentation to the Commission requesting that be adjusted. It just made sense, and the Commission did that. That was a positive thing.

On the other side of it though – which is something I did not ask for which was done, I guess it was done primarily as a numbers exercise to try to even out the two districts – is that they did remove Lindbergh Crescent and the streets off it. Scammell Crescent and the streets off it got removed from my district and put over into Mount Pearl North. That is disappointing. I have represented those people now for the last three to three-and-a-half years and worked on issues for a number of people living on those streets and built relationships. It is always disappointing when you see that. You build those relationships and now to see it change, it is disappointing.

We have to move on, and we knew there would be changes. Certainly the changes I experienced are very minor compared to the changes experienced by a number of my colleagues on both sides of the House and colleagues in all three political parties. There is no doubt, from that perspective I fared very well. So I do not have a lot of the issues they have. I am thankful for that.

I look forward on moving forward in the new District of Mount Pearl – Southlands. Until then, my district will remain as is until the election and I will serve those people to the best of my ability. Even the ones who are being removed, I will serve them to the best of my ability between now and then. I also put it out there to the people who will be part of the new district that I am certainly available to them as well. I look forward to serving them in the future.

Mr. Chair, while that is kind of how this plays out in my district, I just want to say that in general there were some concerns with other districts, as I alluded to. I am not going to get into all the dynamics of their individual districts and issues, but I will say that if we were to do this properly – and I believe the Commission did a great job based on the timelines that they were given to get the work done, that they were pretty extensive.

Now, people may not necessarily agree with where the lines were drawn, and I understand that. Everyone may not be in favour of where those lines were drawn. Maybe if it was done – if you go could back, we had suggested at the time of putting in a range as opposed to a set number. Perhaps if they had been given a range, maybe they would have determined that number should be forty-one or forty-two or whatever and it would have addressed any concerns we have heard.

At the end of the day, we all agreed to forty. We put in our amendments. It at least improved what was there. We knew it was going to be passed by government anyway; they were intent on doing it. So we did make some amendments for Labrador, for increasing the number of seats, and the election piece. It is what it is now. The people will decide, ultimately, who will represent them in the forty seats.

If we had more time – I think if the Commission had more time, to my mind, it would have been a lot better if it was not as rushed. If we had actually done it during the legislated time, which really would be a year from now, and give the committee all the time it needed to have done their work, including consultation. I know they consulted around the Province, but, really, if you were going to truly do it and give representation to everybody, an opportunity to everybody, you would put out the invitation to have a consultation in every one of those forty-eight districts.

Now if you put it there and nobody contacted you and there was nobody who wanted to make a presentation in person, well you simply cancel it and move on, but at least give the opportunity in all those regions for people to make a presentation.

There were a lot of districts in Newfoundland and Labrador where people did not have that opportunity to make that presentation. Now whether they availed of it or not would be a different story, but they could have been given the opportunity had the time been allotted. The time was not allotted because it was sort of being pushed through and let's get it done ASAP. I think a lot of people would argue, if there was any issue, that was certainly one of them, the timelines.

That being said, Mr. Chair, I just want to talk briefly as to how we got in this situation to begin with, and a couple of the other main points here and that is the election date. How did we get in this situation with this particular bill in terms of the timelines? The reality of it is, as I already alluded to, there was already legislation in place. There was legislation in place that said we would go through this process next year, but the government decided, no, we want to push it through now. We opened up a special session of the House of Assembly, something which was pretty much unheard of, to bring this in and to push it through. Why would you want to do that?

Now the argument the government makes is we want to save the \$2 million, or whatever it is, a year. Mr. Chair, I do not think it has anything to do with that. I think that it was all about politics. It was all about the fact that from the perspective of the Official Opposition we were chugging along in terms of the by-elections. We were getting candidates in place in all the districts, all the nominations. Somebody sat down and said: how can we – and I think the Minister of Transportation basically alluded to it when he spoke – how can we sort of put the kibosh to this? How can we slow everything down? That is what this was all about.

It is interesting because it was this government, under Premier Williams, who brought in the legislation about the fixed-date election. Now it is the same government that is going to change the fixed-date election. They are not changing it on a permanent basis. They are just changing it for this election. That is the most interesting part of all. After they break their own legislation this time, from thereon in it reverts to the new legislation. It was obviously done for political purposes, political expediency. For

that, I would have an issue and I think most people would.

Of course the other issue around the by-election rule – I do not think we have a problem with the by-election rule in terms of six months before a provincial election. That makes sense. People do not want to have to go through all these by-elections and the cost associated to the by-elections six months before a general election. I do not think anybody wants to see that.

We do not have an issue with that, but we are very suspect of the timing. Particularly given we know there are a number of people over there who want to move on. Whether it be to run federally or for other reasons, they want to move on. It is interesting. The timing is what is interesting and the timing is what is suspect. The concept itself of the six months makes sense. It is not an issue. The concept is what we have the issue with.

Mr. Chair, we knew the legislation was coming. We voted for the forty seats and I think that is what the majority of people wanted. They wanted to see a seat reduction. What that number was, who knows, but the majority of people, I think, wanted to see a seat reduction. Anyone I spoke to in my area wanted to see seat reduction. I had only one email from one person about the whole issue, actually, and that was, I hope you are going to vote in favour of seat reduction.

So that is not an issue for me, the forty-eight to forty. I do not have an issue where the lines are drawn in my area. I know there are others who do, and have concerns. I do have concerns about the time, how it was rammed through. I do have concerns about the amount of consultation that was done –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. LANE: – and I do have concern about the reason why it was done, the motivation for which it was done. Those are the things I have concerns about.

Now, the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune over there, she has not stopped flapping

her gums ever since I stood up. If she has something to say, I would love for her to stand up and tell the people, to talk about the legislation, if she wants to. It seems like whenever I am up speaking here, it is like she cannot stop talking until it comes to her turn. When it is her turn, then she does not want to talk about the legislation, which is interesting.

Anyway, Mr. Chair, I just wanted to get it on the record that I am supportive of this. I will be voting for it. I have given the reasons why. I have talked about how it impacts my district. I am totally good with all that, but I do have concerns about how this was done and why it was done. Those are the concerns that I just wanted to put on the record.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clause 2.

CHAIR: Shall clause 2 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 2 carried.

CLERK: Clause 3.

CHAIR: Shall clause 3 carry?

The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am happy to have the opportunity to stand up and speak to this particular bill again, the House of Assembly Act, Bill 13. Clause 3, as many know, is the description of the different districts. Again, we all know how this process unfolded. I have had my opportunity to speak to second reading.

One of the things is that since April, when the forty new districts came and then there was the two-month period and then we had the final report come, there were some changes in the district names that many members in this House, and people in the public have had an opportunity to look at those names. In many cases there are issues, we will say, with the district names.

So I do have an amendment that I would like to move to clause 3, which will be seconded by the Member for St. John's South.

It reads, clause 3 of the bill is amended by deleting the words – and this would be subsection (a) "Gros Morne" and substituting the words "Humber – Gros Morne;" (b) "Portugal Cove – Bell Island" and substituting the words "Conception Bay East – Bell Island;" (c) would say "St. George's – Grand Lake" and substituting the words "St. George's – Humber;" and (d) "Trinity – Bay de Verde" and substituting the words "Carbonear – Trinity – Bay de Verde."

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Does the member have a copy of the amendment?

The House will recess to see if the amendment is in order.

Recess

CHAIR: Order, please!

We have reviewed the amendment and it is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Are you speaking to the amendment?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

Again, I am happy to hear the amendment was accepted. I can say on behalf of a number of members who have spoken about it and they have been taking the opportunity to speak to constituents and speak to communities – again everybody has had an opportunity to speak to this bill if they wanted that opportunity.

Certainly, we have members who have expressed on the record their view about this, but whether you like or not, one thing is that these districts will go forward for a number of years until this is reviewed again.

In some cases when you look at the District of Gros Morne, which we are asking to be changed to Humber – Gros Morne, the Humber River plays a big role in that district and does historically. In fact, it plays a role in a number of districts, as you will see. Also when it comes to St. George's – Humber, the Humber River is a big part of Western Newfoundland we will say, so that is the impetus behind that and that has come from a number of people.

When you talk about the community of Carbonear, again Carbonear I believe has been in a district name since 1855. It is the largest community in that district. That was something that was heard loud and clear from people.

Conception Bay East – Bell Island I think is also the same. I do not know the history of that district as well, but people had an opportunity to speak to that. We have put that forward and I am happy to have a chance to amend those particular districts.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Shall the amendment carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, amendment carried.

CHAIR: Shall clause 3, as amended, carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 3, as amended, carried.

CLERK: Clause 4.

CHAIR: Shall clause 4 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 4 carried.

CLERK: Clause 5.

CHAIR: Shall clause 5 carry?

The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you.

Mr. Chair, we have another clause. I will not belabour the point, but it is very similar to the first one in that we are talking about district names.

We are moving an amendment. It would say clause 5 of the bill is amended by deleting the following district titles: (a) "Gros Morne" and substituting the title "Humber – Gros Morne," (b) "Portugal Cove – Bell Island" and substituting the title "Conception Bay East – Bell Island," (c) "St. George's – Grand Lake" and substituting the title "St. George's – Humber," and (d) "Trinity – Bay de Verde" and substituting the title "Carbonear – Trinity – Bay de Verde."

Subsection 2, clause 5 of the bill is amended by deleting the words: (a) “District of Gros Morne” and substituting the words “District of Humber – Gros Morne,” (b) “District of Portugal Cove – Bell Island” and substituting the words “District of Conception Bay East – Bell Island,” (c) “District of St. George’s – Grand Lake” and substituting the words “District of St. George’s – Humber,” and (d) “District of Trinity – Bay de Verde” and substituting the words “District of Carbonear – Trinity – Bay de Verde.”

Mr. Chair, that amendment is moved by me and seconded by the Member for St. John’s South.

CHAIR: Okay, in the previous recess we had considered a similar amendment as this. I find that this amendment as well would be in order. Are there any speakers to the amendment?

All those in favour of the amendment?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, amendment carried.

CHAIR: Shall clause 5, as amended, carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, clause 5, as amended, carried.

CLERK: Clause 6.

CHAIR: Shall clause 6 carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, clause 6 carried.

CLERK: Clause 7.

CHAIR: Shall clause 7 carry?

The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

Our third and final amendment, again, along the same lines. There is a little tiny change. The amendment that we are moving would say clause 7 of the bill is amended by deleting the words: (a) “Gros Morne” wherever they occur and substituting the words “Humber – Gros Morne;” (b) “Portugal Cove – Bell Island” wherever they occur and substituting the words “Conception Bay East – Bell Island;” (c) “St. George’s – Grand Lake” wherever they occur and substituting the words “St. George’s – Humber;” and (d) “Trinity – Bay de Verde” wherever they occur and substituting the words, “Carbonear – Trinity – Bay de Verde.”

That is the amendment again, by myself, and seconded by the Member for St. John’s South.

CHAIR: Shall the amendment carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, amendment carried.

CHAIR: Shall clause 7, as amended, carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, clause 7, as amended, carried.

CLERK: Clause 8.

CHAIR: Shall clause 8 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 8 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The House Of Assembly Act.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill with amendments?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the bill with amendments, carried.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

At this time, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board that the Committee do rise and report Bill 13, An Act To Amend The House Of Assembly Act, as amended.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 13 as amended.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

MR. SPEAKER (Littlejohn): The hon. the Member for Bonavista North and Deputy Chair of Committees.

MR. CROSS: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have carried Bill 13 with amendments.

MR. SPEAKER: The Deputy Chair of Committees has reported that the Committee of the Whole have carried Bill 13 with amendments.

Shall they pass?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: Carried.

When shall the report be received?

AN HON. MEMBER: Division.

MR. SPEAKER: Division?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Division has been called.

Summon the members.

Division

MR. SPEAKER: Are the Whips ready?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: No.

Okay.

All those in favour of the motion, please rise.

CLERK: Mr. King, Mr. Dalley, Mr. Crummell, Mr. Sandy Collins, Mr. Felix Collins, Mr. Wiseman, Mr. Jackman, Mr. Granter, Mr. Cross, Ms Perry, Mr. Brazil, Mr. Russell, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Dinn, Mr. Cornect, Mr. Kevin Parsons, Mr. Little, Mr. Pollard, Mr. Peach, Mr. Ball, Mr. Andrew Parsons, Mr. Osborne, Mr. Jim Bennett, Ms Cathy Bennett, Mr. Mitchelmore, Ms Dempster, Mr. Lane, Mr. Hillier.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against the motion, please rise.

CLERK: Mr. Flynn, Mr. Crocker, Ms Michael, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Slade.

Mr. Speaker, the ayes: twenty-eight; the nays: five.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At this time, I move that the amendments to the motion be now read the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the amendments be now read for the first time.

Is the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: Carried.

CLERK: First reading of the amendments.

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At this time, I move that the amendments to the motion be now read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the amendments be now read the second time.

Is the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: Carried.

CLERK: Second reading of the amendments.

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that Bill 13, An Act To Amend The House Of Assembly Act, be now read the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it moved and seconded that the said bill be now read the third time.

Is the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion that Bill 13 be read the third time?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: Carried.

On motion, amendments read a first and second time. Bill ordered read a third time presently, by leave.

AN HON. MEMBER: Division.

MR. SPEAKER: Division has been called.

Summon the members.

Division

MR. SPEAKER: Are the Whips ready?

Are we ready for the vote?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour, please rise.

CLERK: Mr. King, Mr. Dalley, Mr. Crummell, Mr. Sandy Collins, Mr. Felix Collins, Mr. Wiseman, Mr. Jackman, Mr. Granter, Mr. Cross, Ms Perry, Mr. Russell, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Dinn, Mr. Cornect, Mr. Kevin Parsons, Mr. Little, Mr. Pollard, Mr. Peach, Mr. Ball, Mr. Andrew Parsons, Mr. Osborne, Mr. Jim Bennett, Ms Cathy Bennett, Mr. Mitchelmore, Ms Dempster, Mr. Lane, Mr. Hillier.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please rise.

CLERK: Mr. Slade, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Crocker, Ms Michael, Mr. Murphy.

Mr. Speaker, the ayes: twenty-seven; the nays: five.

MR. SPEAKER: The ayes have it. The motion is passed.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The House of Assembly Act. (Bill 13)

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 House Of Assembly Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 13)

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At this time I move, seconded by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, that the House do now adjourn.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion that the House do now adjourn.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

This House is now adjourned until Tuesday – Monday being a provincial holiday, we reconvene on Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.

Have a good long weekend, everyone.

Thank you.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, at 1:30 p.m.