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*Speaker: Honourable Tom Osborne, MHA*

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

I'd like to welcome to the Speaker's gallery today Mr. Robert Gosse and former Premier Beaton Tulk.

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

**Statements by Members**

**MR. SPEAKER:** For Members' statements today we have the Members for Conception Bay South, St. George's – Humber, St. John's Centre, Baie Verte – Green Bay and Fogo Island – Cape Freels.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

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

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

I rise today to inform my hon. colleagues about an exceptional individual from my district who was named Conception Bay South 2015 Citizen of the Year. Recently, I had the pleasure of attending the Conception Bay South Lions Club 45th anniversary Charter Night where the award was presented to Mr. Robert T. Dawe.

Robert is a former teacher of Queen Elizabeth Regional High school and also served as the English department head from 1971 to 1977. He mentored many students in public speaking and debating in regional, provincial and national levels. He coached students for a provincial heritage award, composed plays, poems and songs for celebrations and official openings.

Robert authored the Prentice Hall publisher's school textbook *Resourcelines* used in Newfoundland and Labrador and across Canada to assist in improving students' reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing skills. He is a member of the Vestry, People's Warden and presently serves as the Eucharistic assistant at St. John the Evangelist Church, Topsail. Robert, along with the committee, helped raise funds to install and dedicate 17 stained-glass church

windows; each window being unique and telling a Biblical story.

I congratulate Robert for his commitment and achievements and ask all hon. Members to join with me in recognizing his contribution to our community and this province.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for St. George's – Humber.

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

I rise today to pay tribute to Patricia Farrell who has been Canada's number one women's dart player for the last two years. Patricia Farrell now has her eyes set on the World Masters tournament in London, England, where she will participate against the best in the world this fall. No woman from Canada has earned the World Masters title before. She is thrilled about the opportunity to represent Canada and to play amongst the best in the world.

Patricia has been playing darts for a long time, and 2016 marks her 30th year at national-level competition. She knows playing against the world's best will be intimidating. In fact, it isn't her first shot at it. She attended the World Masters several times in the past and has placed in the top 16.

This invitation to the World Masters is really exciting for Patricia. This has been a good year for her. She has attended a lot of tournaments and had much practice. So this year will be her best chance to be the best in the world in her field.

I ask all Members to join with me in wishing Patricia Farrell all the best in her quest to be the best women's dart player in the world.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

This weekend saw the annual Atlantic Journalism Awards ceremony in Halifax and as usual, Newfoundland and Labrador newsrooms came away with well-deserved gold and silver awards for all our major media outlets.

I would like to give particular recognition to a journalist who is a long-time resident of St. John's Centre. Barb Sweet won gold in feature writing for print for her intriguingly titled story "Down the maggot hole."

And a well-deserved award it was. The suspenseful story of a man saving himself from what looked certain death enthralled readers from the across the country and sparked interest in the safety issues surrounding abandoned septic tanks.

Barb Sweet is no stranger to recognition for her work. In her more than 20 years at *The Telegram*, she has won many Atlantic Journalism Awards and several national awards, including a National Newspaper Award in 2013 for her series on the ongoing fallout of the Mount Cashel sex abuse scandal.

Her work is compassionate yet hard hitting. She cares a lot and asks tough questions. Her stories have caused investigations, changes to policy and discussion in this House.

Bravo to Barb and to all other local winners at this year's Atlantic Journalism Awards.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Baie Verte – Green Bay.

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

I rise in this hon. House to recap a thrilling championship tournament recently hosted in my district.

The 2A Boys Ball Hockey championship was hosted at Valmont Academy in King's Point between May 5 and May 7. Nine teams participated in this tournament, hailing from

every corner of our province. It was an amazing event from start to finish.

The host team, the Valmont Academy Vikings, came away with the championship after an undefeated record of 5 wins, no losses. The championship came down to the final seconds as the Vikings staved off the Main River Academy Warriors in the all Central West final to a score of 7-6.

The Vikings were victorious and celebrated with a motorcade that ran through town. Coaches Adam Matthews and Stephen Earle credit the win to the hard work and determination of the platers. The team, Brenden Keats, Matthew Burt, Skyler Budgell, Brandon Burt, Douglas Squires, Jordan Janes, Kobe Welshman, Nicholas Warr, Riley Burt, Colten Warford and Kaelan Rideout are to be commended for their fine play and sportsmanship. Great job as always, Valmont Academy!

I ask all my hon. colleagues to join me in congratulating them on their win.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fogo Island – Cape Freels.

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

It is with great sadness that I rise in this hon. House to pay my final respects to a constituent of mine who passed far too soon.

Suzanne Brown of Badger's Quay died on Saturday, April 30, in a car accident at the age of 37. She was a courageous and well-loved young woman who overcame countless medical obstacles that challenged her from birth onwards.

Her family describes her as a young woman who loved local music and puzzles, dollar stores and board games. But, they say, her real love was bingo. Suzanne helped her mom and dad with Beothic Arena bingo over a number of summers. More recently, she was very fond of Monday night bingo in Centreville.

She loved Special Olympics bowling, which took place at the Badger's Quay Lions Club. She

loved her fellow Special Olympians and their families even more. Her community is deeply saddened by her tragic passing.

I ask all Members of this hon. House to join me in celebrating the life of Suzanne Brown.

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

**The Commemoration of the First World War and the Battle of Beaumont-Hamel**

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today for Honour 100 we have the Member for the District of Harbour Main.

**MS. PARSLEY:** I will now read into the record the following 40 names of those who lost their lives in the First World War in the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, the Royal Newfoundland Naval Reserve or the Newfoundland Forestry Corps. This will be followed by a moment of silence.

Lest we forget: William Robert McNiven, Hugh Walter McWhirter, William Mead, Robert Meadus, Dennis F. Mealey, John A. Meaney, Bernard Meehan, Thomas Melee, Frederick Courtney Mellor, Allan Mercer, Chesley Mercer, Jasper Mercer, John B. Mercer, Maxwell James Mercer, Nathan Mercer, Percy Mercer, Robert Mercer, William Mercer, Joseph Mesh, Charles A. Mesh, William Messervey, William Mews, Chesley James Mifflin, Augustus Miles, Heber John Miles, Thomas William Miles, Victor William Miles, Benjamin Miller, Fred Miller, George Miller, George H. Miller, Harold Miller, William Patrick Miller, Joseph Mills, George Mitchelmore, Isaac Mitchelmore, Samuel Mitchelmore, William Molloy, Edward Joseph Monahan, James Raymond Mooney.

(Moment of silence.)

**MR. SPEAKER:** Please be seated.

**Statements by Ministers**

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

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

Mr. Speaker, today, May 10, is Census Day in this province and across the country.

Early in May, households in Newfoundland and Labrador received yellow census packages delivered to their homes. These packages provided residents with the information they need to complete the census online or on paper. Once completed and returned, the data collected from the questionnaires will provide invaluable information to all levels of government for decisions concerning our province and our communities.

Mr. Speaker, the census collects information about every person in our country and the results are important to Canada, as well as Newfoundland and Labrador. Funding formulas for major federal transfer payments to provinces, like the health and social transfers this province receives, are based, in part, on population counts. The federal government uses this information for the allocation of funding, and in turn that allows us to plan for essential programs.

Furthermore, our province uses census information in planning and monitoring programs in such areas as health care, education and social assistance. We also depend on census information when planning roads, waterworks, public transit and police and fire services. Town planners use census data on households and families to plan current and future housing needs and municipal infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, we all recognize that our community is changing and census data helps us understand the demographic, social and economic information we need to address those changes. The importance of the census to our province cannot be overemphasized that's why we urge every resident of Newfoundland and Labrador to participate this May in the 2016 Census.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I'd like to thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. I, too, would like to encourage residents of the province to go online and fill out the Canadian Census. The information provided in the census will be publicly available and will guide important decisions in industry, government and private lives.

The minister in her statement recognized that our community is changing. Indeed, it is. I would also like to point out the minister's own budget predicts and is responsible for job losses here in the province. The decrease in employment will lead to population decline in our province.

Budget 2016 does nothing to encourage our young residents to stay here and start families. The budget does nothing to bring Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who are working elsewhere home.

Our province needs to grow its population in order to succeed in today's world. Instead, this budget, with its increased fees and programming cuts, has cleared the runway for out-migration.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement. Canadians really are glad to see the return of the long-form census which is essential to governments across Canada in their social and economic planning. They are showing they are doing the census fairly well, really early on.

It's too bad this government, when in Opposition, didn't see what they see now and didn't see the need to wait for the latest census before supporting electoral boundary changes. It's unacceptable that they are now closing schools, relying on outdated census figures.

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

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

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to recognize Innovation Week in our province. With the theme being "Accelerating Innovation," Innovation Week brings together start-ups, youth, business and public partners in a creative forum to connect and exchange ideas to contribute to the growth of the provincial economy.

Over five days this week, a total of 16 partner organizations will roll out 17 events to kick-start creative thinking and collaboration in key sectors. Yesterday, I had the pleasure of kicking off Innovation Week along with key innovation stakeholders in our province at the launch event at Common Ground. The complete event schedule is available at [www.innovationweek.ca](http://www.innovationweek.ca).

Innovation has a remarkable influence on our province's social and economic development and there is unlimited potential we have yet to develop. That's why our government is excited to work with various levels of government, industry and our academic partners, to align our efforts in support of a new Provincial Innovation Strategy – all with the goal of making our economy more competitive.

Mr. Speaker, according to statistics from the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Technology Industries (Nati), the province's technology sector alone includes over 170 companies, over 4,000 employees and over \$1.6 billion in annual revenues.

Working with innovation stakeholders, our Innovation Plan will focus on ways in which we can measurably advance firm-level innovation, productivity, and competitiveness and maximize benefits associated with private and public research and technology investments in all sectors of the economy.

Thank you.

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

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

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

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

I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement today. We're pleased to join with government in celebrating Innovation Week in Newfoundland and Labrador.

As the minister said, 170 companies, 4,000 employees, \$1.6 billion in annual revenues in just one sector alone. Newfoundland and Labrador has come a long way in the technology sector. I'm proud to state that much of this growth was because government worked with the sector, partnered with the sector, fostered growth and invested statically over the last number of years. We focused on real economic diversification in a number of key sectors, but we recognize there is more to be done in a number of sectors and I know the minister acknowledges that as well.

At the launch of Innovation Week yesterday, the minister mentioned the red book commitment to develop a new innovation strategy. It's a shame that commitment wasn't really reflected in the recent budget. There are sectors with so much potential and it's critical that we introduce new strategies to simulate innovation.

The new strategy can't simply be about just funding existing programs or moving money around.

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

**MR. KENT:** We need new approaches, Mr. Speaker. Government overall needs to be innovative and government can learn a lot from our province's innovative and passionate entrepreneurs.

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

The Member's time for speaking has expired.

**MR. KENT:** Thank you.

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. We are all excited about innovation and creativity. We are all excited about new opportunity, but good ideas require not only hard work but investment to be developed.

We have heard lots of rhetoric and platitudes from government on innovation and diversification but where are the real concrete commitments to investments in Budget 2016? Bravo to our daring innovators and creative thinkers. I invite the minister to attend Common Front on Thursday evening for more creative thinking.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday here in the House of Assembly the Minister of Justice refused to give an answer right here in the House when he was asked if the proposed pay raise for provincial court judges had been budgeted. Immediately after Question Period when he met with the media, he confirmed the money had been budgeted.

I ask the Premier: Will you decline this additional cost of increases for salaries for our judges and use the budgeted funding to eliminate the closure of libraries?

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

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

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

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

I am certainly happy to speak to this very important matter again. This is the independent report that was done on judicial salaries. That's done every four years. In fact, in this case the tribunal came back and recommended a 14 per cent increase – one that we did budget, as you would, because you cannot prejudge the resolution that will come to this House. However, budgeting any amount doesn't mean that you will be supporting the recommendations or voting for them. That's something that will be done in this House. Cabinet has an opportunity to accept, to alter or to decline the recommendations.

Again, I look forward to having a resolution here in the House prior to June 1, so all Members can have their say on it.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, the minister refused to answer the question yesterday. He walked out to the media and he did confirm that the funding was budgeted.

Now I'll ask, if they won't give an answer on libraries, maybe I'll ask this question: Will you use these funds to offset the new Liberal tax grab known as the Liberal levy?

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I believe the Leader of the Official Opposition is prejudging what may come out of this. As he knows, the fact that we're talking about judicial independence and the fact that this was an

independent tribunal that came up with recommendations here; recommendations which resulted in their asking for a 14 per cent increase.

This resolution will come to the floor of the House of Assembly, and I look forward to the position of the Member opposite, who again, his government's position was to ask for a 5 per cent increase. So I look forward to seeing what he has to say when this matter comes to the floor.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, we put 5 per cent in the budget knowing that the report was coming.

Mr. Speaker, on seniors, the Premier and his government stated during the campaign that they will be there when they are needed by seniors. They'll be there when they need us. He also stated that they don't ask for much except their dignity. So I know they sometimes have difficult making decisions that will benefit the people.

So here's another option for the Premier that I'll offer up: Once you make a decision that will benefit people, will you use the funding to return coverage to seniors who rely on over-the-counter drugs?

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

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

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

The Member opposite doesn't quite understand how this process works, apparently, because he's prejudging the fact that this is a matter that has to come to the floor of the House of Assembly for a debate, it's a resolution. One, in fact, that the Member opposite recommended a 5 per cent increase to judicial salaries, actually, less than one year ago.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** So he's here in the House of Assembly asking to decline it, but just last year he was asking to increase their salaries.

So I ask the member opposite: Which is it?

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Member should sometimes probably check his facts.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the Liberal government has hired, with taxpayers' money, a crisis management company to help manage the mess created by this budget. When it leaked out a little while ago, the Liberals told the House that up to the end of March they've spent so far about \$14,000.

I ask the Premier: Can you provide an update on that amount today, and how much has been spent to date for the services of Cathy Dornan Public Affairs?

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

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

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

I'm not quite sure what the Member opposite is referring to when he talks about crisis management. In fact, since we've taken over for this government it's been nothing but crisis management from the mess that they left to us.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** I will say that obviously as we've discussed in this House –

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

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

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

The fact is as the Members opposite know, we have retained the services of McInnes Cooper that work with us during labour negotiations, a practice that is not uncommon to this province. We look forward to continuing on with that process as we move forward.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Members opposite should be fully aware that you should never do through the back door what you wouldn't do through the front door.

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, we recognize that the Minister of Finance needed help with communications. We recognize they retained the services of a long-time Liberal to assist.

I ask the minister: How much government funding has been spent directly or indirectly to assist with external help on issues management, crisis communications and media training?

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

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

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

As we have discussed in this House when the Member opposite has asked this question in the past, the services of McInnes Cooper have been retained by the Department of Justice to support collective bargaining. In the collective bargaining periods in 2004, and I think back in 2008, the number of government employees and negotiators that were available was considerably higher than it is today.

With the number of collective agreements that are going to be in bargaining this year, it was important that we provide those supports to the



incredibly talented officials that we have inside government. The person that he references, Ms. Dornan, is a contract of McInnes Cooper.

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

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll ask again. We know that this contract has been put in place. We know that part of the contract is to provide services and according to Ms. Dornan's own website, issues management, crisis communications, media training and strategic counsel.

I'll again ask the minister: Directly or indirectly, how much has government spent for external help on issues management, crisis communications and media training?

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

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

**MS. C. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, our focus is on the bargaining process. As part of the bargaining process that is where the service contract has been engaged, with McInnes Cooper. As part of that, they chose who they bring in as a subcontractor.

Certainly we undertake the activity of collective bargaining quite seriously. It is very important for us to make sure that we steward the available money that the province has to spend on services in the most correct way to respect those employees that are working for us and we do so in a way that ensures that we can keep the most people possible working.

I'd ask the Member opposite maybe he can explain why expenses to communications companies doubled in the last year he was in government.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, maybe we'll have to wait for the minister to go and do a scrum before we'll know the answer, again.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard the Premier say that spending almost a million dollars on a study to build a fixed link was what the people of Labrador wanted. However, an email from the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair to the Premier just in December outlined what she felt was the priorities for the people of Labrador; no mention of a fixed link.

I say to the Premier: Why would you spend money now when you haven't delivered on the commitments and requests from your own Members in your own government, or do you just have lots of money to throw around?

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

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

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

It is a pleasure to speak on that fixed link. As you know, of course, the fixed link is an important piece of transportation and communication for us as a government. As the former premier would know that last year they cancelled a ferry contract proposal RFP for over a billion dollars, which would have been 20 years. They cancelled that particular RFP.

So the timing for us right now is very important because I think the Prime Minister of Canada has already alluded to the fact that there will be national funding and there's national transportation works, and there are billions of dollars that's in that particular project. Right now we're looking at a full transportation strategic plan for nation building, and that's part of it, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

We certainly respect the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair advocating on behalf of the people of her district; we expect all MHAs, Members of the House, to do the same. There are concerns outlined by the Member in her email that was long before this devastating budget was brought down by Members opposite.

I know, and we all know, that she's on the record being very concerned about the \$860,000 cut in health care to the people of Labrador.

I ask the Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs: Have you addressed any of the concerns in the email from your MHA?

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

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

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

I think it's very important for us to understand we are looking at Labrador. I know yesterday some of the comments that were coming from there almost would indicate that that's not part of the province. Labrador is very important to us and we really need to have a transportation link, not only for the Labrador portion but also for the province.

What we're basically doing, Mr. Speaker, we're making some money available to look at the possibility and the feasibility of that link for both Labrador and the province, for the betterment of a transportation route for all of us, for the benefit of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to do that.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, for many years we put a lot of focus on the Trans-Labrador Highway, \$600 million.

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** It sounds like what the minister is saying is that their focus has changed. That's what concerns me and I'm sure the people of Labrador will be equally concerned.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier: How much will your Liberal budget choices cost municipalities? What will be the impact on towns in our province?

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

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

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

Once again, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for giving me the opportunity to talk about Municipal Affairs and the amount of money and that the cost ratio hasn't changed, the MOG, and the sustainable plan hasn't changed. It is still what they all asked for.

When we met with the MNL leader, Karen Oldford, she was so pleased. She was so enthused. She thought there would be a lot of changes. Not counting, Mr. Speaker, there were three to four hundred million dollars that is going to be spent in Newfoundland and Labrador in capital works and municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, unlike the previous government who had three years, \$20 million, who took it upon themselves before the election spent –

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** – \$60 million, Mr. Speaker; no care for the next year in Municipal Affairs. Shame on the previous government!

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

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

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

I would ask for order and decorum during Question Period especially.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We are delighted they are keeping the cost ratios in place; cost ratios that we developed. And we're delighted they're keeping the sustainability plan that municipalities much need. But I can tell you the tone from Karen Oldford is very different on her media release from the weekend than what the Member would suggest opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I ask: the Liberal government continues to try and sell this budget as good for municipalities. However, we're hearing something different from our community leaders on the ground. The Town of Conception Bay South has estimated that the changes in this year's budget will result in an additional and unbudgeted cost to them of \$350,000 just to maintain current levels.

So I'll ask the minister: How do you expect municipalities to shoulder this crippling budget?

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, once again, I hear the Leader of the Opposition fear mongering. It's just constant. I just want to bring something up about the municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador. I hear the Member opposite always complaining nothing is good. If municipalities were so bad off, if municipalities had such a hard time, why didn't this Opposition, when they were in government – \$34.9 million they didn't spend, wouldn't even sign the agreement with Ottawa. Now all of a sudden standing up and going to be the big champion of municipal affairs when they had \$34.9 million they wouldn't even use in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** That's what we're dealing with here, Mr. Speaker. We will work with all municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

The Speaker will not tolerate constant interruption during Question Period.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So there's no answer again from the minister opposite, or advice.

So I'll ask him again – under legislation, municipalities are required to submit a balanced budget by the end of December, every year. Now that this government has blindsided them with significant tax increases and downloading of services, municipalities have one of two options. They're either forced to break the law, by running a deficit, which they're not entitled to do under law, or they have to rip the guts out of programs and services in their communities. They're not allowed to increase taxes and revenues.

So I'll ask the minister: What do you suggest municipalities do to fight off this significant increase?

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

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

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

I just find it strange that the Leader of the Opposition asked about debt – who happens to be an expert on debt – leaving this province with a \$2.7 billion debt. He's an expert on debt.

I just want to say – and the Member should know, or he ought to know, which I'm sure he does know, being in Cabinet – if municipalities need more time to balance the budget, they can write the department and ask the department for an extension. That is common.

I say, Mr. Speaker, you hear the Members opposite heckling. They know that, and just because they wouldn't sign the \$34.9 million for municipalities, it bothers them. Just because they wrote letters in the third year of the capital works asking all municipalities to have a letter

in by November 3, knowing there wasn't one penny in the pot, because they spent it all in two years to try to get some of them elected – shameful.

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

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

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

So the answer is for the municipality to write the minister and he'll approve them to have to raise taxes and release services from the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. That is a great answer from the minister, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Liberals will not only close 54 libraries in Newfoundland and Labrador, they also introduced a tax on the purchase of books. We learned in the Finance Estimates this morning that this will also apply to our young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in our post-secondary institutions.

I ask the Minister of Finance: What is the expected revenue on the tax of books that you introduced in your budget?

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

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

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

I thank the Member opposite for his question. In terms of budget 2016-2017, it was filled with many difficult decisions and one of those was an HST on books.

I want to be very clear that when it comes to our public library system, there is no taxation on the purchase of books there. They would be eligible for an exemption as well as in our public school system libraries, as well as the College of the North Atlantic and Memorial University in terms of the library system. They will be exempt.

E-books were always taxed at the HST rate. So there isn't a competitive change to that if people were purchasing books on an electronic basis.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Finance: What's the expected revenue on the tax of books that they introduced in the budget?

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

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

I would like to point out that the revenue that would be raised by a tax on books would be estimated at \$2.1 million.

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

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** At least we got answers.

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Yes, I thank the minister for the answer.

I ask the Minister of Finance: Can she table the analysis done on the cost to administer a junk food tax versus the revenue that would be generated from the tax itself on junk food?

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

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

**MS. C. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, the analysis around the tax changes that were made as part of this budget were certainly fulsome as the Member this morning would have heard had he asked the question in Estimates. He would have

heard the background information as to how all the taxes and the administration costs were assessed.

As I'm sure he is aware from his time in Cabinet, CRA provides a service that we, as a province, can piggyback on, which provides the ability for us to collect taxes; sadly, taxes that we need right now because of a massive deficit left by the former administration, taxes that we can effectively collect efficiently by using CRA as the administrator, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, in a brief by the Canadian Medical Association dated February 15, 2012, the then association president and now Minister of Health stated regarding taxing junk food that he believes such a measure should become part of a health strategy.

I ask the minister today: Does he still feel that such a tax is indeed worthwhile?

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

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I think the principle behind a junk food tax is a very important one for a discussion. I would suggest, however, it needs to be part of a national picture.

I would suggest, at the moment, the last thing we need to do is to create extra bureaucracy to collect a tax for a marginal benefit given the fact – as the minister down the way has pointed out – we have a virtual cost-free mechanism of collecting taxes currently.

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

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

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

Before the budget, the Minister of Finance guaranteed community organizations that their core funding would remain the same for this fiscal year. However, during budget Estimates meetings, we learned the Minister Responsible for the Office of Public Engagement is considering cuts to funding to a number of youth organizations. Mr. Speaker, organizations are left wondering where they stand.

Will the minister commit today to maintaining funding to youth groups who receive funding from the Office of Public Engagement every year?

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Office of Public Engagement.

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

Thank you for the question. Core funding, as the Minister of Finance has said, has been secured for all organizations. There is funding available for project-specific items under the Office of Public Engagement. We have had some reductions in those.

I have assured the Member opposite we will do our best to make sure that funding will be carried on, as best we can, to the projects that are important to some of these youth organizations; however, core funding has remained as it was.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, what the minister is saying is simply not true. If a youth organization receives the same grant from the same department every year, that's core funding. The minister is saying it isn't.

The minister made it clear in Estimates that annual funding to organizations like Boys and Girls Clubs, Allied Youth, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award program, YMCA-YWCA, Girl Guides and local community youth centres was not safe and may be reduced.

Will the minister guarantee today that groups who receive the same grant every year from OPE, won't be cut?

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Office of Public Engagement.

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

Thank you, again, for the question. As was discussed in Estimates, as has been discussed since the budget, core funding for organizations will remain. There is project funding under some of the aspects of OPE, project funding that has been reduced somewhat. We are going to do our very best to work with organizations to ensure the projects that are important to these organizations that receive core funding are maintained, as best possible, within this budget envelope.

We will continue to offer the core funding as per the Minister of Finance has said. Within the Office of Public Engagement there is some core funding in a certain program. In one program there were some reductions for youth organizations for project-specific items. We will continue to maintain that level of funding as we go forward.

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

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

**MR. KENT:** So the minister won't guarantee today that core funding to these organizations won't be cut. I'm not talking about the project funding I say, Mr. Speaker; I'm talking about core funding to these organizations.

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

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

**MR. KENT:** The Finance Minister is saying one thing and the Minister Responsible for the Office of Public Engagement is saying another. I say to the minister: Don't hide behind bureaucratic process. Whether a form has to be filled out annually or not, this is core funding that groups count on every year.

Will the Minister Responsible for the Office of Public Engagement honour the Finance Minister's previous commitment or is this the latest Liberal broken promise?

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Office of Public Engagement.

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

Again, I will say exactly the same thing; the Minister of Finance has clearly indicated that core funding is remaining. Under a particular program, the youth program, we are continuing to have project funding. The project funding for specific projects will be as the projects come forward.

We don't even know what projects are going to come forward this year.

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

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

**MS. COADY:** I think the Member opposite is confused.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

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

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, they're hiding again.

The CEO of MNL stated libraries are a provincial responsibility, not a municipal responsibility. This is just one of many things MNL did not ask for, but was provided in this

budget. Municipalities are really concerned that this is just the beginning.

I ask the minister: How many other services will be downloaded to municipalities or will they have to wait until budget number two?

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

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

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

Once again, there is no municipality in this province told, you have to take a library. What the commitment was, within a year we will work with municipalities. I have spoken to some municipalities. They want to find an option for their libraries. We will help them.

For the Member to stand up and say that this is downloading, he knows the difference. We spoke. He's very certain of what I said. We will work with municipalities to keep these libraries in their towns.

Of the 24, Mr. Speaker, I ask him to name one that I called personally or anybody in the department said you have to take the library. Here's an opportunity, name a municipality that I called and said you had to take a library. Here's your opportunity.

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

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

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

At Memorial University, the *Heart of Darkness* costs \$16, *Microelectronic Circuits* is \$250 and *Supply Chain Logistics Management* is \$304. The Minister of Finance told us in Estimates this morning post-secondary students will have to pay taxes on their textbooks.

I ask the minister to explain to the young people of this province why she is shamelessly laying another burden on their already debt-heavy shoulders.

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, the core of the government's strategy to ensure post-secondary education is affordable and accessible is a low-tuition strategy. Newfoundland and Labrador has the lowest tuition of any jurisdiction in Canada, in fact, by many magnitudes in some respects. In fact, when you look at the other Atlantic provinces we are by far the envy of anywhere, not only here in our own region, but across the entire country.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we have the most envious Student Financial Assistance Program of anywhere in the country. Our grants currently exceed the cost of tuition for low-income and middle-income students by over 30 per cent. The program here is about accessibility and affordability. That's how we achieve it.

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

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

**MS. MICHAEL:** Mr. Speaker, do not tax the students. That's all I have to say.

In Finance Estimates this morning we also learned details of the \$20 million fund government has budgeted to leverage federal infrastructure funding. Government will be focusing on two areas: post-secondary infrastructure and clean waste water initiatives.

I ask the minister: Given the crying need we have for new infrastructure, why did she set aside such a pittance?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, the Member casts a very jaundice eye on a \$20 million fund which appears in very plain sight within our main Estimates and calls \$20 million a mere pittance. The funding is neither sinister nor opaque; it's neither small nor ineffectual. The object of the Member's cynicism is around a program to develop infrastructure, especially in the strategic social sphere.

Mr. Speaker, \$20 million is a significant amount of money. We've actually budgeted that in preparation for the federal government's announcement or in preparation for the full allotment of the federal government's allotment. This is a 20-year program. This is year one of that allocation, and quite frankly, it's going to be very, very effective, and I don't think it should be viewed cynically.

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, the unemployment rate for Newfoundland and Labrador is 15 per cent. On page 5 of her Budget Speech, the minister actually said their austerity measures will contribute to slowing the economy and reduce jobs by an additional 15 per cent by 2021.

I ask the Premier: What does he expect the unemployment rate to be one year from now?

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

**MS. C. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, I think it would be important just to clarify and correct what the Member opposite said.

The unemployment numbers that she's referring to in the economic information that was released as part of the budget referred to what will happen at the end of the large-scale projects. Those would include Vale, they would include the end of the Hebron construction, as well as the forecasted conclusion of the Muskrat Falls construction. Those three projects have had a significant impact on the overall employment in Newfoundland and Labrador, and has been known for many years that when those projects clue up that we will unfortunately see an impact on that particular sector. It's important that we continue to look at ways to diversify, and I'd be happy to answer another question from the Member.

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Great, Mr. Speaker.

In her Budget Speech the minister laid out absolutely no plans for job creation. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador want to work.

I ask the Premier and the minister: Are there concrete plans for job creation, and how many jobs do they plan to create then?

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

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

I'd again like to correct the Member opposite. In the budget we were very clear that there are \$570 million worth of infrastructure that's going to happen in this province. Some would say that's going to create the equivalent of 1,000 jobs every year for four years.

Mr. Speaker, I don't take that very lightly. This budget has a total spending envelope of \$8.4 billion, and we are very proud of the fact that we are investing in infrastructure that not only will provide critical services to the people of the province but will also provide employment opportunities.

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

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

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I am standing on a point of order.

During Question Period, the Member for Mount Pearl North quite clearly called out that the Minister of Natural Resources was misleading and not telling the truth. Now I understand we can have differences of opinion but such language is clearly unparliamentary, pursuant to Standing Order 49. So I would ask that the Member retract this comment and apologize.

Thank you.

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

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



I did say across the House to the hon. Member that the information she presented today was misleading. I did not say that –

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North, are you going to address the point of order?

**MR. KENT:** Yes. To the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe my comment was unparliamentary.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I would ask the hon. Member for Mount Pearl North to withdraw his comment, please.

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, I didn't make the comment that was unparliamentary.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I understand if you need to take some time to review this matter but our position clearly stands that the Member made a comment. He should own up to it and retract the comment because it was clearly unparliamentary pursuant to Standing Order 49.

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

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding – and maybe as the hon. Member said, to review it – if the gentleman made a comment in regard to the statement that was being made and the information being provided, not directly to the hon. Member.

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

The Speaker will review the comments made by the hon. the Member for Mount Pearl and report back to the House by tomorrow.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

### Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees

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

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Mr. Speaker, the Government Services Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report they have passed without amendment the Estimates of the Department of Finance, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, Public Service Commission, the Human Resource Secretariat, the Women's Policy Office, the Government Purchasing Agency, the Department of Service Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Department of Transportation and Works.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further presentations of reports by standing and select committees?

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

### Notices of Motion

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders and according to the Order Paper, I give notice that this House do not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. today, Tuesday, May 10.

I further give notice pursuant to the Order Paper that this House do not adjourn at 10 o'clock tonight, Tuesday, May 10.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### Petitions

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

WHEREAS government has once again cut the libraries budget, forcing the closure of 54 libraries; and

WHEREAS libraries are often the backbone of their communities, especially for those with little access to government services where they offer learning opportunities and computer access; and

WHEREAS libraries and librarians are critical in efforts to improve the province's literacy levels which are among the lowest in Canada; and

WHEREAS already strapped municipalities are not in a position to take over the operation and cost of libraries;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to keep these libraries open and work on a long-term plan to strengthen the library system.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I'm very pleased today, Mr. Speaker, to stand and to speak on behalf of the residents, some of them in my own district, all of them from various parts of St. John's; residents who care about what's happening to rural Newfoundland unlike the government, apparently, because they are killing rural Newfoundland by the closing of the 54 libraries and other important and essential services in communities in rural Newfoundland.

I don't know if Members of the government had their radios on this morning, but they would have heard the voices of over 100 people gathered in Fogo last night protesting, begging and pleading that government not close their library. I think it was the mayor that I may have heard saying, the way he put it was: Of all of them, we have the strongest case. I'm sure the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island would probably even agree with the Mayor of

Fogo. As bad as it is for Bell Island, it's even worse for Fogo.

It's impossible to imagine what the government is thinking and for the people in the communities – yesterday morning people from Bell Island were in the news. Today, it's the people from Fogo. The people from Greenspond have been in the news. All over the province these people are absolutely, totally confused. They cannot understand why government is attacking them through the closure of libraries which are essential to their communities.

What's really interesting, Mr. Speaker, is the way in which people all over the province, whether they're affected personally or not, are speaking out. And we are getting petitions in our office from all over the Island and Labrador concerned about what is going on. People are concerned about the literacy issue as the petition talks about. They are concerned about the lack of this community centre in their communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll be happy to speak to this again.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

(Disturbance in the gallery.)

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

Visitors to the gallery are welcome to observe the proceedings of the House, but they are not to –

(Disturbance in the gallery.)

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

Visitors to the gallery are permitted to observe the proceedings of the House but are not to demonstrate or to participate in the proceedings on the floor.

I ask visitors to the gallery to be respectful of the proceedings in the House of Assembly.

(Disturbance in the gallery.)

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

I would ask the visitors in the gallery who are disrupting the proceedings to leave.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

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

It's an honour for me to rise in this House today and present yet another petition from the very concerned residents of Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

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

WHEREAS the people of Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune need to have access to adequate health care; and

WHEREAS the local clinics in rural areas are the main source of medical assistance for our people; and

WHEREAS the government has reduced funding and closed the Hermitage clinics and downgraded services such as dialysis and visitation to remote communities;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to reinstate the services to the health care in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to rise in this House every day until we see a reversal of this decision that is devastating rural Newfoundland and Labrador, and, in particular, the Coast of Bays region.

The clinic in Hermitage serves well over 600 people in the immediate area of Hermitage-Sandyville-Seal Cove, as well as an additional several hundred from Gaultois and McCallum, Mr. Speaker, who can only access Hermitage via ferry. The additional drive now to Hermitage, with no taxi service in place, creates a serious issue not just for the residents of the islands, but

for residents of Hermitage themselves, many of whom are seniors.

We're also worried about the downloading of services to Harbour Breton where we're going to see the loss of two nurses with the closure of the dialysis unit. People will be forced to leave their homes after 20 years lobbying for dialysis, finally achieving it, and then to have it ripped away so quickly. People now, they do not have the option, these patients, of home dialysis. They will have to uproot and move to St. John's, Mr. Speaker, and in no way, shape or form is that helping rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

Again, I ponder – they were mandated by the Liberal government to make \$430,000 of cuts at Central Health. With the closure of the dialysis, the closure of the clinics and reduction of visitation to the islands, I think the Coast of Bays region is taking a disproportionate share of that cut from Central Health, and I truly believe there are other expenditures within the board that can be looked at before front-line services are cut, Mr. Speaker. People's lives are at stake. Seniors, who have taken hit after hit after hit in this budget are getting hit yet again, perhaps in the most vulnerable area where health care is, Mr. Speaker.

This can mean the difference between life or death in some cases, I have no doubt, because of the geography of the area, the treacherous roads of the area and the dangerous weather conditions we have at times – be it fog in the summer or blizzards in the winter. The train is not safe at the best of times, Mr. Speaker, and so we will continue to raise our voices until we see this decision reversed.

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS a Deficit Reduction Levy is an extremely regressive surtax placing a higher tax burden on low- and middle-income tax payers; and

WHEREAS surtaxes are typically levied on the highest income earners only, as currently demonstrated in other provinces, as well as Australia, Norway and other countries; and

WHEREAS government states in the 2016 provincial budget that the personal income tax schedule needs to be revised and promises to do so;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to ensure that the Deficit Reduction Levy be eliminated and any replacement measure be based on progressive taxation principles and that an independent review of the Newfoundland and Labrador provincial income tax system begin immediately to make it fairer to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to stand in the House today to speak on behalf of the thousands of people who have actually signed this petition. The petition continues to circulate throughout the province. People are wanting this government to listen to them. Although government keeps saying that we have listened, although the Minister of Finance has said that she has listened to hundreds of people, there were thousands of people outside this House on Saturday, Mr. Speaker. There have been thousands of people across the province who have demonstrated in smaller locations across the province. There are going to be more coming up.

The people of the province know this levy is a regressive tax. The MHAs in this House know this levy is a regressive tax and that it's not just the levy in and of itself, although that is one that is really burning in the craw of people. They know how unfair it is and how incredibly unexpected it was.

When this government talks about how much time and how much money they spent going around the province to consult with people, it's disingenuous. I would love this Minister of Finance to show us where people suggested this is what they should do. I am sure no one suggested that this levy is exactly what this government should do.

We know we need a thorough review of our taxation system. It needs to be progressive. We need reform. Everybody in this House knows that. We know that people are willing to pay taxes if the taxes are fair, are progressive and that they can clearly see how their money is being spent.

This government is talking about transparency. I believe they want to be transparent and accountable, but we also know that budgets are based on decisions. This levy decision is probably one of the worst decisions that have been made in this House in a long time, except for Bill 29 and perhaps Muskrat Falls.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

(Disturbance in the gallery.)

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

This is the second time the Speaker has had to rise. Visitors are more than welcome in our galleries to observe the proceedings of the House of Assembly, but they are not to participate in any sort of demonstration or to participate in anything that's happening in the House, not to show approval nor disapproval.

I would ask our visitors in the gallery to respect the traditions of the House of Assembly. You're welcome here to observe.

The hon. the Member for the District of Terra Nova.

**MR. HOLLOWAY:** 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 we, the undersigned residents of St. Brendan's, wish to protest the increase to passenger and vehicle fares on the St. Brendan's to Burnside ferry service; and

WHEREAS it is our highway to the main land; and

WHEREAS it unfairly taxes our transportation costs for all our living expenses; and

WHEREAS we also feel the income levy tax on people will cause unnecessary hardship;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to reverse the decision to increase ferry rates; and

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to reconsider the levy placed on low- and middle-income families.

Mr. Speaker, as an MHA for the districts in this province, it is our role to bring forward the concerns of constituents including petitions.

I recall a Member of the Opposition in this House yesterday talked about when they were presented with petitions they would say no, they wouldn't bring those petitions forward. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, our government has been committed to openness and being transparent. Certainly, I'm able to table this petition that was given to me just one week ago while I was on St. Brendan's meeting with the people at a public meeting.

One of the things that you must do when you bring forward a petition is to understand the issues surrounding a petition. Mr. Speaker, this petition speaks to the increased cost to passengers who are travelling from St. Brendan's island to Burnside. It's an 18 kilometre run. It provides 27 round trips per year in the summer and 20 trips per week in the winter.

The ferry has been in operation since 1966. The provincial government took over the responsibility in 1979, but over the last 10 years, Mr. Speaker, the cost to run this ferry service has been \$17.8 million. There was a capital investment within the last five years of \$28.5 million for the *Grace Sparkes*.

It is estimated that it will cost \$3 million this year to operate this service. The ferry itself generates about \$75,000 in revenue and the current fare is \$3.03 per adult one way. That equates to a 98 per cent subsidization of the annual operating cost.

The role of government, Mr. Speaker, is to assist the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador where the cost to provide the service can be financially prohibitive. The role of a Member is to, and my role is to work with –

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

**MR. HOLLOWAY:** – the Department of Transportation to advocate for these issues.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

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

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

WHEREAS the seniors of our province deserve the greatest level of respect and care; and

WHEREAS the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has a responsibility to act in the best interest of our seniors; and

WHEREAS the government has decided to shut down Masonic Park Nursing Home and reduce long-term care beds in this region;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to reverse its decision and not bring undue hardship

upon the residents of Masonic Park and find alternative measures that will allow them to continue to stay at the place they call home.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, it's one thing to bring a petition to the House of Assembly on behalf of your constituents, it's another thing to stand and be counted when it really matters. I can assure you that in light of how devastating this budget will be for many families in my district I will be voting against the budget.

I've raised these concerns time and time again and I will continue to do so.

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

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

**MR. KENT:** When it comes time to take a stand and vote against this budget because of issues like this, I will be prepared to do so, unlike Members opposite.

The issues at Masonic Park have been exaggerated and misrepresented. The fundamental issue here is that we have a shortage of long-term care beds in this region. It's impacting health care for all of us. We have people tying up acute care hospital beds at a cost of tens of thousands of dollars a month that shouldn't be there. They should be in long-term care beds.

We need to address this. It's resulting in cancelled surgeries. It means people are lying on stretchers in hallways. It means that people are sitting in emergency rooms for longer.

Through this budget the Liberal Government is reducing the number of long-term care beds in the region. That's a fact. Another fact is that the facility at Masonic Park, the long-term care facility, is in good shape. I would argue it's in better shape than some of the other long-term care homes in the region.

For the minister to suggest that the place is in a state of disrepair, it's not true. He also said that all residents will be able to move to the Veterans Pavilion down at the Miller Centre, also not true.

There aren't enough beds to accommodate all of them if they choose to go there.

The minister said he is not cutting or reducing beds in this region, also not true. We have great needs in every region of this province when it comes to long-term care. Despite the financial challenges the province faces, this is not a time to be reducing the number of long-term care beds. I will continue to take a stand and oppose this on behalf of the constituents that I represent and constituents across the province as well.

Thank you.

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

**MS. ROGERS:** 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 humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS government has once again cut the libraries budget, forcing the closure of 54 libraries; and

WHEREAS libraries are often the backbone of their communities, especially for those with little access to government services where they are offering learning opportunities and computer access; and

WHEREAS libraries and librarians are critical in their efforts to improve the province's literacy levels which are among the lowest in Canada; and

WHEREAS already strapped municipalities are not in a position to take over the operation and cost of libraries;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to keep these libraries open and work on a long-term plan to strengthen the library system.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will pray.

Mr. Speaker, once again, these petitions are coming in from all over the province and it's very interesting. One of our most celebrated writers, Kevin Major – as I've mentioned in the House here before and I'm sure many of the folks here in this House and at home have heard – the day he heard these libraries were being closed, he wrote and said, "Today I have been humiliated by my government." That's a pretty strong statement from someone who loves Newfoundland and Labrador so much, as we all do in this House.

It's an odd thing, Mr. Speaker, the closure of libraries. When does that happen? We kind of see that in times of war. We see that in absolute times of desolation and destitution – but the closure of libraries. One must ask, when we look at this budget, when we see such incredible cuts to services, the imposition of regressive and unfair taxes, the lack of a plan to really stimulate the economy, the lack of a plan for real diversification, I mean commitment of money and resources to real diversification – the only question I can ask is to what end? What is the end goal here besides cutting, cutting, cutting? How is this government going to pull us out of this?

We know the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are not foolish. Everybody knows we're in a tough situation. Everybody knows the bottom has fallen out of oil for a while. We all know that. Everyone's willing to roll up their sleeves, but what government is doing is no plan to pull us out of this. The plan is only to squeeze the life out of the province, and we're seeing that. People are feeling that. Then we have to wait for six more months for another hit.

I can only ask, to what end, Mr. Speaker – to what end? What is this government actually planning for? Except this line-by-line cutting, cutting, with no vision, no plan to revitalize the province, to harness the energy of the people of the province to really pull us out of this hole and to go forward. That's what governments are supposed to do.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I call Orders of the Day.

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

Before the hon. the Government House Leader calls Orders of the Day, the Member for Mount Pearl North, in presenting his petition just a few moments ago, had used language that, in the opinion of the Speaker, is unparliamentary. It is unparliamentary to say that what another Member in the House has said is untrue.

I would ask the Member to withdraw his comments.

**MR. KENT:** I withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

### Orders of the Day

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

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

I call from the Order Paper, Order 6, second reading of Bill 12.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Is it moved and seconded that Bill 12, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act, be now read a second time.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act." (Bill 12)

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

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

I rise in this hon. House today to debate amending sections of the *Highway Traffic Act*. The *Highway Traffic Act* regulates drivers and the use of motor vehicles on highways, and is updated on a regular basis to ensure our roads are safe for the people of the province.

The proposed amendments will allow law enforcement officials to bring a charge against a registered owner of a vehicle that is observed

illegally passing a school bus or speeding in a school zone or a construction zone. These amendments will enhance enforcement measures to ensure offenders are ticketed. This in turn will promote the safety of children, protect people working in the road construction industry and deter illegal driving activities throughout our province.

A key part of our government's five-point plan is to support safe and sustainable communities. Putting the proposed amendments in place will help advance that plan. For those who are charged with illegally passing a school bus, the proposed amendments also include increased fines. Fines for passing a school bus that is stopped with its red lights flashing will be increased to a minimum of \$500 with a maximum of \$1,200. Previous fines were in the range of \$100 to \$400.

Those illegally speeding in school zones or construction zones will continue to face fines that range from \$100 to \$1,500. Mr. Speaker, this is double the regular speeding fines. Having significant fines like these in place speaks to the seriousness of driving dangerously in those specific areas.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to each situation these proposed amendments are attempting to address.

With respect to the illegal passing of school buses, our proposed amendments support work taking place across the departments. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is currently piloting the use of external cameras on school buses to record and identify vehicles passing a school bus, including the plate number of the vehicle.

Right now there are 10 board-owned school buses and one privately contracted bus that are equipped with camera systems. These buses are in use throughout the province. Our proposed amendments will support the pilot project and potentially assist with getting more convictions against those passing school buses illegally.

With respect to speeding in school zones, the fines for these kinds of infractions were increased in 2010 to double the amount of a regular speeding fine. This focused the public's

attention on the importance of observing speed limits around schools. Mr. Speaker, our government hopes that the amendments we are proposing will once again remind motorists of their responsibilities when driving in areas that have reduced speed limits.

School zones present a number of higher-than-normal traffic risk. Children may not always recognize the risk that car traffic imposes. In particular, young children may be more prone to straying in the road while playing. As well, motorists travelling through these zones must always appreciate that they are in a busy area.

School zones involve high levels of pedestrian activity, crosswalks and vehicle congestion whether school buses and/or parents are dropping off or picking up children at the school. Drivers must show extra caution in these areas, but we know that this does not always happen. It is our hope that our proposed amendments will bring greater attention to this issue and enhance enforcement so that speeding is reduced in these areas.

With respect to reducing speeds in construction zones, a great deal of work continues in this area. Mr. Speaker, these areas present higher-than-normal risks for construction workers who are working near our roadways while traffic is passing.

The Department of Transportation and Works and Service NL has undertaken a safety initiative to bring together stakeholders from government, industry and safety organizations with an interest in construction zone safety. This initiative is focused on balancing the safety needs of the travelling public with those working to maintain provincial roads and highways.

The three pillars of safety have been identified: engineering which refers to safe work practices, enforcement and education. Service NL, in consultation with the Department of Transportation and Works and the Department of Justice and Public Safety, was tasked with identifying penalties and other regulatory means to help deter poor driving within and near construction sites.

Charging the registered owner with an offence that is committed in a construction zone will



further this work as a measure that should support the three pillars I mentioned previously.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, the benefits we hope realized from these proposed amendments are: preventing illegal driving practices, raising awareness and protecting vulnerable people in higher-than-normal risk areas.

Mr. Speaker, currently the *Highway Traffic Act* only charges the driver with moving violations. As there is often difficulty in catching a driver who ignores the flashing red lights of a school bus or speeds through school or construction zones, some violators have gone unpunished. This is a serious safety concern, Mr. Speaker.

In order to address this issue we are seeking approval to amend the act in a way that will open the door for increased enforcement efforts. Charging a registered owner for a moving violation is a departure from the current highway traffic legislation but will serve to better protect the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Other jurisdictions including British Columbia, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island all have provisions in place for charging the registered owner of a vehicle with various moving offenses involving that vehicle to better protect the people of their provinces.

Further action must be taken here in our province as well. Mr. Speaker, the safety of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians is a top priority of our government. We continue strengthening penalties and increasing school bus safety and these amendments will do just that. The proposed amendments are proactive steps that are designed to increase highway safety, especially for our vulnerable road users such as children and construction workers.

Road safety is everybody's responsibility, Mr. Speaker. This amendment will make vulnerable pedestrians safe through stronger enforcement measures.

Mr. Speaker, at the press conference today we had the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, the Construction Safety Association, we had the RCMP and we had the school board all supporting this legislation. I know the Member

opposite, the Member for Cape St. Francis, was also at it and I look forward to his support because I know all Members in this House are concerned about safety in construction zones and school zones.

I welcome everybody to have a few words on this. I welcome any comments on this here because we know, as legislators, that our job is to protect the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We see it on a regular basis, speeding through construction zones. We see some people ignoring the red lights and we have to try to deter it. We also have to educate people. We have to find a way to inform people that if you break the law, put people's lives and safety at risk in a construction zone or school zone, you will be caught, you will be fined and you will be penalized for that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the comments in the House of Assembly. I look forward to comments from Members on this side, because this is not an issue in the House for either one of us parties, this is a common issue for all of us in Newfoundland and Labrador, and I welcome all comments from all Members in the House of Assembly. I welcome their support to change this legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, indeed, it is a pleasure to get up here this afternoon and talk about this bill. I had the pleasure this morning to go to the news conference and it was great to see, as the minister just mentioned, most of the stakeholders that are involved were there, whether it was construction. It was nice to see the school board representatives, so education was represented, Service NL, and then to see both of our law enforcement groups, the RCMP and the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary also there.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is a no-doubter – we will definitely be supporting it because anytime when it comes to children's safety and people's safety that go to work every day this is an

important bill and people do realize that these are serious incidents.

I can remember – I'm not sure how many years ago, but there was an accident down in Torbay and it was related to somebody going around a bus while the bus was stopped and somebody lost their life. So when we have young children that are on buses in the daytime and moms and dads and family members, you just hope that those children get home safely, and it's so important.

This is legislation that needs to be brought in and it's great to see this legislation. It's going to be interesting how it's going to work in the courts and stuff like that and to see – but again, as the minister already stated, that it's been done in a lot of provinces right across Canada, so I'm sure it will work.

The thing I want to emphasize today is as we look at this bill that we're bringing in, it's the registered driver who's responsible. The registered driver of a vehicle who owns that vehicle may not be the person who's driving it, but that person should be the person that should be responsible for their vehicle.

Now, there are some stipulations in the act where it shows that if the vehicle was reported stolen or even if the vehicle is registered to, say, a rental company or something like that, that obviously those things will be looked at. If the vehicle is registered to you, then you're the one that's responsible for the person who is driving. No matter whether you can pick up who's driving or whatever. So that's important to know. That's it; you should be responsible for your vehicle.

I look at the fines that are getting increased here and, again, I support it 100 per cent because when you look at fines that are going up from \$100 to \$400, what they presently are today, to \$500 to \$1,200. Now it's a deterrent for anyone when they know they have to pay a fine of that much, but in some cases, I guess, they really don't care and a fine doesn't mean anything to them.

Hopefully, this will be a deterrent that people will look at and say – I don't know how many points or whatever, minister. That's a question I

want to ask you later on about anyway. We'll be looking at the point system and what that's going to do. The courts have a right to look at it. They'll be the ones that will decide how much the fine is.

Mr. Speaker, I just look at different zones. I look at school buses. I know in my area, and it's a problem in a lot of areas where there are a couple of lanes. Where you have four lanes and the bus is stopping on four lanes. A lot of times people don't stop because they think they're on a highway and they don't need to stop, but they do need to stop. Once that red flag goes out, you have to stop. You cannot pass a bus, no matter where you are.

The Minister of Education gets up and he talks about how expensive it is to run buses today. There were a lot of changes brought in over the years for safety, flashing lights and different reflectors and everything else, to bring the buses standards up to where they should be today so people can make sure they're as safe as possible, people can see them and everything else. I know a couple of speakers will get up and talk about that a little later now. It's important that once our children get on a bus that they're safe. It's so important.

I'm going to talk a little bit about school zones. I know in school zones, one thing I'd like to see – the Minister of Transportation could probably address it if he gets up and speaks on this. I know municipalities do it but we don't do it on provincial roads. In municipalities they put up speed bumps.

Down in Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove they have two speed bumps before the school. I know it slows down the traffic because people are not going to fly over it. Even in other areas in my district where it's not a provincial road, they do have speed bumps. I really do suggest to the minister, where there's a concern, perhaps there's something we can look at. Putting speed bumps there, that's another deterrent to slow it down.

While you can have all the signage and flashing lights and crosswalks, people still speed through school zones because they're in the middle of the area. So I really believe that would help, but

this today is a good thing because it's another deterrent.

When it comes to construction zones, Mr. Speaker, you look at construction zones today and I look at the highways and stuff like that. People are travelling 100 kilometres an hour and all of a sudden they come upon a construction zone. If you look today, there are not a lot of people who are slowing down. We have workers who are out there.

I know there have been accidents over the last number of years where people did lose their lives in construction zones. It's not only on the highway, it could be in the communities. People have to be aware that the reason these culverts are up, these pylons are up, and the reason why there is signage up is because there are people working. It's so important that we make sure people realize that this is a very serious thing. People are out there, they're taking their lives in their own hands.

Again, there are some things we talked about in the bill. In the briefing we had the Department of Education talked about they're going to try to bring in some programs. They're going to try to educate young drivers on the changes to the legislation. They're going to do it through social media and they're going to do it through press releases.

The Eastern School District, the school board district, also said they are going to try to educate the younger people who are getting their driver's licence to ensure that they understand the rules in places like school zones and what the rules are when you do come upon a school bus. That is very important. Again, we need to make sure that anyone who is out there that is not doing this properly, just passing by a school bus, that they will get fined because it's too late when someone gets hurt.

The other question I have for the minister while we talked about cameras on the buses, that there is also a cost to the operator for this. I know this year – actually, there was a pilot project that he just mentioned where there were 16 charges laid and five convictions so far this year. So any conviction is – it's a good thing.

I know the operators are looking at the expenses when it comes to this budget with extra costs on insurance and cost on gas and everything else. This is a safety issue for having these cameras on buses. So I'm wondering if government is planning on helping them pay for the cost of the cameras because there is no cost that's too much for the safety of our children.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's a good move. I think anytime we help with safety in our province and help with safety to our children and our workers, this is a great bill and we'll be supporting it.

Thank you.

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

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

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

It's a great pleasure to rise in this hon. House today to continue debate on amending sections of the Highway Traffic Act and we certainly welcome the comments from my colleague across the way, the Member for Cape St. Francis. It's great to see he's in full support of that. I didn't have any doubt that he would.

My colleague, the Minister of Service NL, has already spoken to many of the specifics of the proposed amendments, so I'll begin my remarks by speaking about the importance of bringing the province's *Highway Traffic Act* in line with other jurisdictions in Canada.

Madam Speaker, traffic laws can vary significantly around the world and throughout Canada. As noted previously by the Minister of Service NL, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island have all established ways to charge the registered owner of a vehicle that is seen committing different kinds of traffic violations. This was done to better protect the people of their provinces.

Many of these provinces adopted stronger legislation or stronger enforcement activities in response to tragedies. The Province of Manitoba made amendments to its legislation after a 21-year-old was struck and killed while working on

a provincial highway in 2010. In the fall of 2012, people in Saskatchewan were shocked to learn an 18-year-old flag person was warning drivers to slow down in a construction zone was killed by a passing SUV. This too led to legislative changes.

In our own province, we have lost road workers in incidents that have taken place in recent years and now we are taking action to help prevent such incidents in the future.

The Minister of Service NL also noted the pilot program involving the use of video cameras on buses to record vehicles illegally passing those buses. The minister also noted how the proposed amendments would support the pilot project and potentially increase convictions against offenders.

Madam Speaker, it is important to note that this kind of pilot project has been pursued in other jurisdictions as well. For example, in the fall of 2013, a Northern Alberta school division adopted similar technology on its buses and recorded 15 instances of illegal driving. With respect to our own province's pilot project, we anticipate adding cameras will also support a higher conviction rate. This is a valuable project which deserves to be supported by legislation, Madam Speaker.

Promoting safe and sustainable communities is a key part of our government's five-point plan for achieving a stronger tomorrow. In order to do that, it is important that our laws reflect the best practices being used across Canada.

The *Highway Traffic Act* is updated regularly to ensure best practices are used. The proposed amendments are valuable, practical and defensible. In practice, police would lay charges on the basis of a witness giving a statement about a vehicle illegally passing a stopped school bus. We have heard from parents and school bus drivers that failure to stop for a school bus is too common an offence. I'm sure everybody in this House, on both sides of the House, has seen this happen in their lifetime. They see people passing school buses that have their lights flashing. It puts our children at great, great risk. The proposed amendments open the door for increased use of technology, and make it possible for law enforcement to positively

identify a vehicle and bring a charge without having to pursue the vehicle to identify the driver.

In order to address potential court challenges in cases where the driver has not been identified and the registered owner is charged with a moving violation, the proposed legislation permits two defences: one, that the registered owner was not the owner at the time of the offence, as would be the case with car rental companies; and two, that the vehicle was driven without the registered owner's express or implied permission.

Madam Speaker, there will be no term of imprisonment for a conviction or for a default of payment of the fine for a conviction against the registered owner. As well, if during an investigation the registered owner identifies the driver of the vehicle to the police before a charge is laid, the decision to lay a charge against the driver would be up to the police.

The decision as to whether to proceed with a charge would be with the Crown prosecutor's office. Regardless, the registered owner cannot be convicted of the offence if the driver is convicted of the same offence. Clearly, Madam Speaker, we are discussing legislative amendments that have been carefully considered and are based on work that has already taken place in other provinces.

The amendments open the door to pursue stronger enforcement while simultaneously leaving protections in place so that parties can defend themselves should the charge be brought against them. We have discussed these amendments across government departments and with representatives from law enforcement. Many of them are in attendance today. The amendments reflect the input and expertise of all those consulted.

We now ask Members opposite to support these amendments and join with us in efforts to make the province's roads safer, especially for school children and construction workers in vulnerable situations. Working together we can make the province's *Highway Traffic Act* even stronger and reduce the chance of tragic incidents in the future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**MADAM SPEAKER (Dempster):** The hon. the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise to speak to this bill today. It's always a pleasure to speak to a bill that involves safety, especially the safety of our children and our students, who we know travel throughout the province in sometimes very long bus rides and sometimes over rough terrain, especially in the wintertime.

We know that through changes that are coming as well in the Department of Education, we can expect students to be on buses earlier in the morning and later in the evening, meaning during dark times as well. Anything we can do to increase the safety of our students we would support.

This bill is to change primarily one section of the *Highway Traffic Act* under section 210, which deals with liability, enforcement and fines associated with it. Under section 210, the legislation currently says now the owner of a motor vehicle shall not incur a penalty for movement or operation of a vehicle if it's in someone else's possession without their consent. The new legislation, or what's proposed here, is a slight change to that which I will discuss later, maybe, when we get to Committee stage.

It's really interesting, especially to hear from the Member for Labrador West. I appreciate his comments. Yes, any time we do safety it's good thing. At least twice during his comments, he made reference to national standards and bringing in line with the rest of Canada. We support looking at other jurisdictions to see what other jurisdictions do.

It's an interesting comment he makes because we know in busing – the Minister of Education has been on his feet here in the House during budget discussion talking about how the cost of buses have gone up, and the cost of busing contracts have gone up because of action we took as a government. He blamed us for that.

What he is talking about is what's known as a D250 standard of school buses. This is about safety and related to the bill, I say to the Speaker. D250 CSA standard is a national standard. When the Member opposite said, bring it in line with the rest of Canada, we agree with that.

D250 standard is exactly what we did. D250 is not new. It goes back to 1971. It was renewed in '75, '79 and '85. 2012 was the ninth edition of the D250 standard. The purpose of those standards – it's a CSA standard – is to ensure that buses are the safest as possible for students who have to ride on them and use them for going back to school.

The D250 deals with certain things like bumpers, batteries, exhaust systems, horns to make sure a horn functions properly and is loud enough and so on, steering gear and linkages, even the turning radius of a bus it goes into, frame structure, tires and rims and reflective material. We notice these days, Madam Speaker, that buses today have more reflectors on them than they did before. They have escape hatches that they never had in years gone by, standard fire extinguishers and first aid kits, certain markings and interior lighting. The pedestrian-student safety arm – I think they call it – the crossing arm that goes out in front of a bus is part of the D250 standards.

What we did as a government, Madam Speaker, is we moved with the rest of the country, similar to what the Member for Labrador West said, bringing in line the rest of the country in increasing the standard of safety for the students. We recognize when you add safety and those levels of safety, there is an additional cost.

It's not much different than when vehicles first started being installed with seatbelts. There was an additional cost for that. When you changed bumpers – absorption of bumpers and crumple zones and crashing in vehicles, there's a cost that comes with that. When the evolution of airbags came, and the advancement of airbags, we know there's a cost for that too. We know, Madam Speaker, that there is a cost of safety. The chance in this legislation as well – as the Member opposite referenced, there was a pilot project for cameras. There's a cost to that too,

but we also know there is the possibility and the likelihood of increased safety.

When the motoring public, people travelling on a regular basis who disregard school buses – it happens far too often, there's no two ways about it. It happens far too often. I know police officers quite often struggle with the ability in having enough evidence to charge the person responsible. Under current legislation you just can't go and say: Well, here's the plate number and I've issued a ticket because the bus driver said that plate number passed through a bus that was stopped with its arm extended, its lights flashing or through a construction zone.

You have to have evidence to support that because witnesses – as we know through history, in cases throughout the country at all levels – sometimes are wrong. Not intentionally wrong, they don't mean to be wrong. They are mistaken and quite often known as an honest but mistaken belief. That happens. We know that relying 100 per cent solely on witness testimony is dangerous to do. In the courts they'll always look for other indicators, look at what other witnesses have to say or look for other evidence.

That's why cameras are very important, especially when you can photograph a licence plate number. If a bus driver is driving a bus and has to memorize a licence plate number, or a car speeds through a construction zone and a worker memorizes a licence plate number, that's much less reliable than actually having a visual image, a video or camera photograph or still of the particular licence plate number; the same with the person driving because there are technologies that allow for an image of the driver to be captured as well.

As the Member for Labrador West said, these are some of the things that happen across the country, that are happening in other places and should be brought into line. While the Minister of Education has chastised us for bringing these new D250 standards forward on buses, I have no regret in doing so knowing that, yes, while the cost is higher – and we realize and understand that the tough fiscal circumstances that exist for the government today; however, the government if they don't believe that was the right thing to do, they always have the choice to lower that

safety standard. I hope they don't do that and I don't think they will.

But when the minister criticized previous government, which they always like to talk about, for going along with the rest of the country and I would even say and my recollection is even back to 2007 standard, prior to 2012 coming out, we were one of the last provinces in Canada to move towards it. If I remember from briefings from officials back in 2011 when we talked about this, when I first learned about it, was that Ontario gave a week's notice or a month's notice – it was a really short period of time for the busing industry – for any new buses you buy and bring in, had to meet that new standard effective immediately.

We were several years after trying to implement and move into this new standard. At one point in time bus operators could take the buses and do modifications themselves to meet the standard. The new standard, as I recollect, doesn't allow for that and buses have to be manufactured. The D250 CSA standard is essentially a manufacturing standard for safety.

Madam Speaker, when the Members opposite, when government brings forward a bill that is about safety, it's about safety of workers, construction workers, it's about safety of school children and operation of school children, it's a good thing to do. I know in my time in government as a minister I dealt first-hand with a terrible fatality on the West Coast of a construction worker who tragically lost his life while engaged in his duties for government, for the Department of Transportation, and no one ever wants to see that ever happen. I didn't want to see it happen then; we never want to see it happen in the future.

If there is something that can be done to better protect workers, then I believe it's a valuable investment, it's a wise investment and it is certainly worth our time to come here to the House of Assembly to debate it and discuss it and also for government to go through the work and bring that legislation forward.

There has been talk in the past that charging a person for a hazardous moving violation, as they're referred to by the courts, when you can't prove who the person was driving, there are

people in the law community who have expressed concern in the past that it would be a dangerous precedent to set. I would expect that if the legislation is enforced and utilized from time to time that, at some point in time, there may very well be a challenge to the legislation. I'm sure Members opposite have done their work; they have looked at other jurisdictions to see what challenges have been raised when you charge somebody for an offence when you can't identify the person who actually did the offence.

I am sure maybe the minister when he closes debate can refer to that this afternoon. There have been challenges in other jurisdictions in the past. Maybe the courts have now said that it's allowable and okay and it's accepted by the courts – a new precedent had been set on it. I'd be delighted to hear if that is the case.

As my colleague mentioned earlier, we like safety legislation. We like requiring people to operate themselves, operate vehicles in a safer manner. We like it when we're trying to cause people to be respectful on highways.

Remember when we brought in the Move Over law a couple of years back, which was about a very similar type of circumstance, about creating safety when utility workers, highway maintenance workers, police or emergency, firefighters, emergency medical people, it could be forest firefighters, any other emergency service that could be on the highway. It requires the motorists to slow down and move over.

I think people may have forgotten about it in recent years. Maybe it's time to remind them again of the existence of that piece of legislation, especially with summertime coming and a much higher frequency of having workers and first responders on our highways. Maybe it's time for the government to remind people again of the Move Over law and the requirement to slow down and yield the right-of-way to people on the highway, and to take a motion so that you can move away and give them a safe working space.

Madam Speaker, we'll be supporting this piece of legislation. I certainly expect my colleagues on this side of the House will be supporting it. We look forward to having further discussion in Committee.

Thank you.

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

**MADAM SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Burin – Grand Bank.

**MS. HALEY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I rise in this hon. House to continue debate on amending sections of the *Highway Traffic Act*. My colleagues have already spoken to specifics of the proposed amendments and to developments in other jurisdictions. I will now speak to the significance of collaboration and the importance of making progressive updates to the *Highway Traffic Act*.

Madam Speaker, the province's *Highway Traffic Act* was updated in 2014 to clarify the rules of the road related to roundabouts. The act was also updated that year to make the use of bicycle helmets mandatory on all provincial roads. Further amendments were made in 2014 to require motorists to move over when approaching emergency vehicles.

Madam Speaker, every Member in this hon. House has likely seen school buses bringing children to and from schools in their districts. Every Member has likely seen men and women carry out vital roadwork in construction zones where speed must be reduced to protect these vulnerable workers.

We are talking about positive changes that will bring our legislation in line with laws in other provinces for multi-use of best practices and prevent tragedies like those that have occurred in the past.

At present, Madam Speaker, the fines charged in this province for the offence are lower than many other jurisdictions. With the proposed amendments, fines for illegally passing a school bus will increase so that they range between \$500 and \$1,200. Previous fines were in the \$100 to \$400 range.

Madam Speaker, promoting safety is a high priority for our government, and I am sure that all Members share the priority we place on mitigating danger and minimizing risks. As my

hon. colleagues have mentioned in their previous remarks on this bill, there are special efforts underway to curtail poor driving practices and make sure everyone honours their responsibility to drive safely.

We now have a great opportunity to support all of this good work by continuing to make important updates and amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act*. Working together we can improve our legislation to ensure the safety and well-being of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians now and into the future. I hope to see the co-operation of all Members opposite as we undertake these amendments, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the merits of this bill.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I'm very happy to stand today and to speak to Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act, and I would like to commend the minister and his department for bringing forth this bill. It's a very important bill, because this can be a life-saving bill. Hopefully it's not so much about punitive measures, but more so about precautionary measures and preventative measures.

The bill, as we know, contains two types of changes to the *Highway Traffic Act*. The first one is changing the rules of the road, and that's Part V of the act. That allows the registered owner of the vehicle to be held responsible for three specific moving violations.

The second change is raising the minimum and maximum fines for passing a school bus and for school zone speeding. It's so important. So many of us work in a much more fast-paced environment than we did years ago.

We know there are more cars; there are more vehicles on the road than years ago. There are more people driving faster than there were years

ago (a) because many of our roads are in good condition so it allows for that. Also, so many of us are rushing. We're rushing, rushing all the time.

Many families have, perhaps, two-income earners and people are rushing back and forth to take kids to school or to go to work or to pick up kids from school or to take kids to soccer. It's really tough so people are rushing and rushing and rushing.

I can remember in '70s when we saw the great introduction of more and more personal computers and we thought, ah, we are going to have more of a paperless society and we will have more leisure. We were promised we were moving towards a four-day workweek. It didn't happen.

Now, with the introduction of more and more technology, we have more paper. Not only that, the boundaries between work and home life have completely blurred because we can be reached all the time through social media mechanisms.

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

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order, please!

I ask Members to take their side conversations outside or keep the noise level down a bit.

Thank you.

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

So many of us are rushing, rushing and rushing. These kinds of measures, I believe, are really important. Again, they can be lifesaving.

The second change is raising the maximum fees for passing a school bus and for school zone speeding. Officials confirm both, but only one fee schedule for school bus passing showed up in the copy of the bill we received.

The three specific moving violations we are looking at today, that we are looking at as a change in this act to amend the *Highway Traffic Act*, are speeding in a construction zone which I'm sure many people – perhaps even many people here in this House – have done. I think through the work that folks working on our



highways, through the work the police have done, through increased signage, we are becoming more and more aware of it.

I tell you, I'm deterred when I know – I halt when I know – I slow down because I can be somewhat heavy on the pedal there.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Shame.

**MS. ROGERS:** I know. I am ashamed. I am.

But I am so grateful – I have to tell you –

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

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**MS. ROGERS:** – I am so grateful for the signs on our highways that remind us. I'm sure I'm not alone in this House. I'm sure I'm not alone in this province. I tell you I have learned. I am so grateful for the signage, for the cautions and for the warnings that are put out to us to make sure we don't drive in an irresponsible manner. Again, so many of us are really rushing around trying to accomplish much.

The speeding in a school zone, how is important is that. We all know, particularly in unexpected places, kids can pop out on the road. I'm sure all of us have had children in our community or children in our lives who have been hit on the road, sometimes with really drastic consequences.

I think the speeding in a school zone is really, really important. I'm glad to see this change here. I would like to see a school zone, the hours – and I spoke to this in the House about two years ago when we were looking at speeding zones in school zones. I would like to see that those rules are in place 24 hours a day (a) because it keeps reminding us; and (b) because children are at school after hours. Sometimes it's just up until 6 o'clock. Sometimes it's on weekends. Sometimes if there's a play going on or a basketball game, we have our kids at the schools until 10 o'clock at night.

I think to extend those hours to 24 hours, seven days a week is not going to really hamper our lives, but it might save a life. I think I would like to see that policy enacted.

The third moving violation is passing a school bus stopped with red lights flashing. When I was a young girl my Cousin Debbie, six years old, was killed by a driver. When the school bus was stopped, the red flag was out. She walked in front of the school bus to cross the road and she was hit by a car. She was killed at six years old.

Our family knows that devastation. Not only did we lose Debbie – and every time I see a school bus stopped with the red flag out, I think of Debbie. Thank God for those red flags. Thank God that we have those to remind us. Every time I see one of those school buses I think of her, but I also think of Uncle Tom and Aunt Bette who never fully recovered from that accident. They never fully recovered.

I'm so happy we are looking at more measures to slow us down, more measures to make us more cautious. Not that I'm happy about the punishments, although I think that they become a deterrent, but the responsibility to take the caution to everyone. I'm so very happy for a number of reasons to stand in this House today to support this bill.

Currently, in section 210 of the act holds the owner of the vehicle responsible for traffic violations except in the cases of moving violations. Only the actual driver can be charged except in cases of moving violations. Sometimes the driver can be held responsible but sometimes the driver is not caught or sometimes it's really hard to identify the driver. So that becomes a whole grey area.

What this is doing is enabling our enforcement officers to hold responsible the owner of the vehicle. Sometimes the owner of the vehicle is not the driver. So then I believe we have a pretty fair justice system that can then deal with the ramifications of that.

What the changes in this bill allow for will allow the owner to be charged for these three moving violations when the identity of the car can be determined. More often than not, the identity of the car can be determined, but often the driver can't, if something is moving quickly.

I remember once driving near a daycare area and there wasn't a sign that said I should slow down. I was preoccupied and I was rushing to go to a

meeting because I'm always rushing. A parent waved me down and said to me: Do you know you're near a child care centre? I thought, you know what, yah. I was so happy that parent slowed me down.

This is another way to slow us down. That's not a bad thing. That's a good thing. It's a responsible thing. The elements in this bill, the suggested changes in this bill, are about lifesaving measures, are about making our community safer, not only for kids, but for all of us.

Where I live, and in my District of St. John's Centre, there are so many children who walk to Holy Cross Junior High, who walk to Bishop Abraham Elementary school, who walk to St. Teresa's School. As our schools gets bigger, as this government closes more of our schools and then the traffic gets more congested because there are more kids packed into schools and the population is denser, then we see more children spilling out onto the street or more children walking to school.

For instance, in my District of St. John's Centre, oftentimes in the winter the sidewalks are filled with snow or there are snowbanks and these kids are walking on the street. It's very interesting, in my district, particularly on Penneywell Road, when the snow is piled up, when there's snow on the sidewalks, what happens is there's also parking on both sides of the street. There are more cars in this area now than there were even 10 years ago. The traffic is dense. The foot traffic of the children walking to school is dense, and they're walking on the road.

This kind of legislation is so important because things have changed. More cars on the road, more people in a hurry, more people scrambling, more children also being bused to school now because some of the schools have closed. So I think this legislation is very timely. Again, because of what's happening in our community. Whether it be denser populations in our schools than the kids are out on the streets, there are more kids out around the streets than in schools, or whether we have more kids being bused to schools because their schools have been closed and so they're being bused to schools by school buses.

In the last year or so, the English School District has a pilot project that placed 10 cameras on its buses. They were able to take a photo of the vehicle and the plate number. I guess that's how the police also can identify offending vehicles and eventually offending drivers. I am sure that for any of us who have been caught speeding and have been ticketed or lost demerit points, it really makes you think twice.

Since the pilot project started there have been 16 charges and five convictions. Officials were not sure how many changes there were before the pilot project started because records are only kept for 18 months, but this sounds like progress. Again, it's not only about punishment, it's about prevention.

The bus driver cannot usually identify the driver of the car which needs to be done for moving violations but now with this, currently for speeding to catch the driver the police have to use radar with two cars. Now they will only need a camera. They will determine if charges are laid in cases where a bus driver or someone says the car was speeding or passing a bus and they provide a licence number. It may not be enough evidence, but it may be. So, this is great. The cameras will solve this.

With these amendments, the bus driver can report the licence number to the police with proof from the camera and the police will decide whether or not to lay a charge. People will try to use the defence that the car was being driven without their consent. So it will be up to the police to determine if the proof provided by the owner is sufficient. Then I imagine it goes further in our justice system. So this is great.

Penalties, most fines are minimum or maximum – and I like this approach. This is an approach that is being used in our courts, in a number of specialty courts. If you accept responsibility, you get a minimum fine. If you say: yes, officer, that was me; yes, I agree, I was going too fast; or I passed a school bus, yes. Well, your fine may be more on the minimum side. If you go to court and contest and lose, the judge can impose a higher fine. In some cases, the police may request a higher fine.

I think this is a good thing, but that will happen only if you lose. So it's not a deterrent to

actually go to court if you feel that you are innocent. I believe one taking responsibility for their actions is the best that you can do. I hope that in fact the proposed changes in this legislation will encourage people to not speed during school zones. Again, I would like to see that 24-7, because our schools are used by children outside of the regular school hours, and it's a good thing. It reinforces that this is a zone where reduced speed is necessary. It wouldn't take away from us; it wouldn't cost us any money. I think it would be a good thing to do. It's almost like training us.

Also, the whole issue of passing a school bus – we know how important that is, and we know how quickly little ones can dart out because that's what little ones do. They get off and they've been pent up in school all day. God knows how long they've been on the bus, because some of our kids are going to be bused for a long time with some of the school closures. So once they get off that bus, particularly if the weather's nice, they're going to dart. They're going to dart across the road.

**MR. KENT:** Doubling up bus routes, too.

**MS. ROGERS:** Yes, and all of that. So we're going to see more congestion, more school buses, more kids scrambling, more kids pouring out of their schools. So this is really important.

Then, the whole area of construction; if there is more highway construction and repair – and boy, we sure need it in some parts of our province.

I've been to Labrador a few times and have seen the construction on the roads and how desperately it was needed in different parts of Labrador. To see those folks out – and in the summertime when it's so dry and there's so much dust and speeding cars kicking up that dust and kicking up the gravel, when we have workers out there working on the road and improving the road conditions. It's so very important that this is also protecting the people who are fixing our roads, who are improving our transportation system in the province.

I'm very happy again to be able to stand and support this bill, as is my colleague here for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi. We will both be

supporting this. I would like to thank the minister and his staff for the excellent briefing they gave. This is a good thing. We can celebrate this kind of work.

I think each time I see a school bus now with that red flag sticking out, I won't think just of my Cousin Debbie who was hit by a car and killed. I also will think about the great work that was done here today because I think it is great work.

I also remind all the people who may be watching at home to spread the good news about this, how important it is. I'm happy there will be a bit of an education and a rollout of public information around these changes because that's a good thing as well. I do believe that this will improve the situation on our roads for our workers, for our children and for parents who can feel a little more comfortable about the safety of their children.

I would ask the minister to consider the possibility of extending that reduction time for school zones to 24-7. It won't hurt us. It costs us no money. We will always know that a school zone – because if there's a school recital or if someone is playing basketball that we just slow down during school zones. Why not do 24-7? We'd get used to it. We'd always know when you're coming up to that school zone you slow down. I think that would be a good thing.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm happy to have the chance to speak to this bill. Again, I think it's timely because of what's happening with the busing of children in our province and the fact that we are condensing more and more kids into schools by the closures of our schools, that it will be denser, that there will be more children around, and hopefully we'll have more road construction happening and we need to keep our workers safe.

Thank you very much.

**MR. SPEAKER (Lane):** The Speaker recognizes the hon. the Member for the District of Baie Verte – Green Bay.

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

It is certainly an honour and a privilege for me to stand here in the House today to speak to Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act. I'd certainly like to thank the minister who asked me to speak to the amendment today. I appreciate him giving me the opportunity to do so.

Before I do that, I'd like to commend the Members opposite and the Members on this side who spoke to the amendment who are clearly supporting the initiatives of this amendment. Again, this comes back to my personal involvement. Like my good friend, the former premier and MHA for Topsail – Paradise, we shared many times in a patrol car as we spent some time in the RNC.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Did you go through the tunnel?

**MR. WARR:** We haven't gone through the tunnel yet, but we may.

This is of a personal nature to me as well, given some experience that I have had. I guess the summary of this, Mr. Speaker, the legislative amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act* are aimed at reducing traffic infractions around school buses and in school and construction zones. We, as a provincial government, are bringing forward legislative amendments to help prevent the illegal passing of school buses and prevent speeding infractions in school and/or construction zones.

Specifically, the amendments allow a charge to be brought against the registered owners of a vehicle identified as breaking these laws, even if the driver cannot be clearly identified. This practice is consistent with other jurisdictions across Canada and is certainly aimed at preventing injuries and deaths associated with these dangerous offences.

Just a note on the fines for passing a school bus that is stopped with its red lights flashing, it will be increased to a minimum of \$500 with a \$1,200 maximum. In the past, previous fines were \$100 to \$400. In doing that, Mr. Speaker, in increasing those fines to a \$1,200 maximum, hopefully, is a deterrent to persons who continually break that law governed by the *Highway Traffic Act*.

We all hear every day in the news talking about drivers who drive with no insurance, drive with no licence, no registration and are saddled with tens of thousands of dollars of fines levied against him by the courts, with no care or any concern for the well-being of the travelling public.

I'd like to see this taken a little further, Mr. Speaker, like someone who's actually driving a vehicle while under the influence. There are deterrents put in place by the courts. If these people are continually drinking and driving, well their licence is suspended. Obviously, in that case, they're receiving possible jail time.

I'd like to see persons who are charged under the *Highway Traffic Act* for numerous offences of passing school buses that these people be given the stiff arm of the law. Obviously, we need to take control of what happens on our highways and protect not only the youth, but the travelling and walking public as well.

I had the opportunity during my lunch break today to actually call a couple of my friends at the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary just to ask for some stats with regard to what's happening with their strategic enforcement, especially here on the Northeast Avalon where you have a greater population.

Mr. Speaker, it was alarming for me to hear today that in the last six speeding through school zones and driver inattention and driver distractions on cellphones, in school zones over the last six weeks here on the Northeast Avalon, the RNC have issued 300 summary offence tickets. That is an alarming figure from where I sit. I don't know the percentages of those persons who are ticketed compared to those persons who are actually breaking the law and getting off with it, but 300 tickets, I would say to this hon. House that's an alarming figure.

Mr. Speaker, the change in the fines from \$500 to a \$1,200 maximum is certainly not about revenue. These changes are about the safety of our children who walk through these school zones day in and day out.

I was glad to hear today from members of the RNC that there are start-up meetings now as we get into our busy construction zone. There are

start-up meetings with Occupational Health and Safety and the construction associations whereby they'll sit down with the RNC to come up with a strategic plan about the enforcement through school zones and through construction zones.

While I'm talking about construction zones, Mr. Speaker, I want to bring up something that we – I travel back to my District of beautiful Baie Verte – Green Bay every Thursday night. How many times have we been driving on the Trans-Canada Highway when we come by a construction zone and the signs are still up? You're slowing from a hundred – and most of us who are driving a hundred are actually probably at 110 or 115, just trying to sneak under the radar.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Oh, you of all people.

**MR. WARR:** No, no, I never said me. I said we, and I don't include me in we.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, how many times have we gone through construction zones when there's nobody there? So we're slowing down. Especially in Terra Nova Park where there are no passing lanes, we're slowing down to construction. I might add we just went through a brush cutting through the federal government, through the federal initiatives – a brush cutting area in Terra Nova Park. There were probably three or four different opportunities to slow from 90 in the park to 50 and nobody adhered.

You're driving at night or you're driving on a weekend and there are no construction workers there. It's frustrating. It's frustrating for the general public and it's frustrating for me as a driver, Mr. Speaker. Lots of times if you go through the first one, you go through the second one and all of a sudden there's a third one, you're sailing on through and there are actually people in that.

I put the onus, Mr. Speaker, on the construction companies. I did check that. The onus is on the construction companies to make sure if there's no construction taking place that these signs are taken down or blanketed over to allow the information to the general public, or the travelling public, that there is no construction going on today.

I will remind Members that even if there's no construction on the highways or the byways, you're still responsible to the signs. If you're caught – there's no construction, but you're still caught speeding through those slow up periods, slow up areas – you're still responsible as a driver to pay attention to the signs. We must make sure that we certainly pay attention.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go back. I go back to my time in school which wasn't that long ago. I think it might have been the local Lions Club of Springdale, where I grew up, that provided a service of crossing guards. Again, I don't know if it was just safety – they either lost interest in it or didn't have enough volunteers or it was the safety of these people – but when I crossed the road going to my school as a young boy we had crossing guards. Unlike today, there may be some schools here in St. John's and area that still use crossing guards, but out in my area we don't. I guess the people are taken up with their busy days and are just not able to provide the time.

I look again at how well our buses are equipped today for safety. With swinging arms, the stop signs and the extra lights the buses are equipped with today, there's no reason, Mr. Speaker. The only reason is driver inattention and there's no excuse for that.

Items that affect driver attention today and things that we need to pay attention to, Mr. Speaker, are cellphone use, being the number one culprit of driver inattention. We all lead busy lives. We're always eating on the run. In most households there's a father and mother, husband and wife who are working in the households. Everybody is leading a busy life and everybody finds themselves running out of time and speeding to get to work, or to get to the place that they are going to that day.

I want to talk about weather, Mr. Speaker, especially sun. I had an opportunity actually – and it was in Terra Nova Park, as I was coming east one morning early and had forgotten my sunglasses. I had the visor lowered. I had the visor lowered so much because the sun wasn't high, it was still coming up. The visor certainly permitted me from a longer distance of vision. Before I knew it, I was on top of a gentleman with a stop sign. The only reason I slowed down

is because I was really blinded by the sun. I saw him at the last minute. I can tell you that I got the shakes when I think of what could have happened. The gentleman was smart enough to get out of way and I certainly got out of my vehicle and apologized to him profusely for my mistake.

Like the Member opposite, I had an experience, Mr. Speaker. It was either 1990 or 1991. I want to go back to weather, about black ice, snow and slush in the wintertime. I witnessed an accident in my hometown whereby a bus had stopped and children were crossing the streets. I guess the driver didn't feel the highways or roads that day were as slippery as what they were. He applied his brakes and slid into a young child on the road. That child suffered multiple breaks and was laid up for – actually, she was a real good friend of my oldest daughter. She received some injuries that laid her up for a couple of months, Mr. Speaker. I remember sitting with her until the ambulance came. I remember what went through my mind that day. We all put ourselves in this position and we all are so overprotective of our children.

Mr. Speaker, when the ambulance took her, the only thing left on the highway that day, besides a gentleman who was absolutely in shock, was the young girl's schoolbag. I picked up the schoolbag and I brought it home with me. I remember wondering what to do with the schoolbag. So I held on to the schoolbag, it was never asked for, and when that girl graduated Grade 12, I went down and told the story and presented her with her schoolbag when she graduated high school.

Mr. Speaker, it was an emotional moment for me, and again, I put myself in that position every day and certainly would never want to see a repeat of it. It was certainly an emotional time.

I look at parts of the district that I represent and we have a community in Sheppardville, again, on the Trans-Canada Highway near the Baie Verte Junction. This community had been asking for, and I would certainly ask the Minister of TW if he would keep it his mind – they are a community that are closely associated to the Trans-Canada Highway, and they are very concerned about children who use part of the highway to get to a recreation facility that

actually in the summertime that's their swimming hole that's across that highway. They're looking for a reduction in the speed zone in that particular area, I say to the minister. I certainly would be more than happy to sit down and have that discussion with you.

I want to talk about the schools, Mr. Speaker. I look at Copper Ridge Academy in Baie Verte. I look at Valmont Academy in King's Point. I look at Indian River Primary in Springdale. I look at Dorset Collegiate in Triton. These schools are associated or directly perpendicular to the highways. Especially Dorset Collegiate on the road from Pilley's Island to Triton, it's on the main highway. We just need to be paying more attention to what we do as drivers.

I applaud students today who are taking Young Drivers of Canada courses. Mr. Speaker, I don't think anybody today should be allowed to get a licence without a driver education program. When we were all 16 and 17 years old, young bucks and couldn't wait to get our licence, as soon as we got our licence we all forgot about the rules of the road. It was all about the new kid on the block with the car. We threw the traffic laws out the window. So I encourage young people to make sure they do some sort of driver education because I think it's key to actually what we're doing here today.

Mr. Speaker, that would be my comments to Bill 12. I certainly appreciate the opportunity to stand here. Before I sit down today – and I know it's not part of the bill – I'd like to take the opportunity to note that this is National Nurses Week. As a husband of a retired RN, I certainly wish all the registered nurses and any nurses associated with health care a happy nurses' week. They're certainly important people in the lives we lead today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Speaker recognizes the hon. the Member for the District of Conception Bay South.

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

It's a pleasure to rise, as well, to speak on Bill 12. I've heard a lot of Members on both sides make some valid points. We support this bill, obviously, but I wanted the opportunity to get up and pass along my opinion or my few comments on it.

As has been stated this afternoon, we know what the bill entails. Passing a school bus – you draw into question why we need to tighten up regulations on passing school buses, just the basic fact of when you say that, our current laws need to be tightened to stop people from passing school buses. I guess it is sad but realistic comment in today's society, Mr. Speaker.

Some parts of the bill that my colleagues and the Members opposite have mentioned as well, not being able to identify the driver, the owner of the vehicle if it can be proven that that was the registered owner to be charged, I guess that is, in one way, form or another, if you're the registered owner of the vehicle you'll know who was driving. It should be a self-correcting exercise.

A lot of times you hear tell or people will say they'll report this vehicle passing, or they'll see a vehicle pass a school bus with the lights flashing. Very seldom there is any follow-up or anything really comes out of it because, again, it happens in a split second. There are kids, there are people around and no one ever really is held accountable.

I've witnessed it myself. I also said if you could get close enough to get the licence plate, but I have seen it in a distance and it's pretty scary. I'd said it is a sad statement to have to make.

I notice that cameras, we discussed cameras, but in general I commend the minister and the department for bringing this bill forward. Anywhere you can tighten up the regulations to prevent such things like this happening, we all need to embrace it and support it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make some personal comments actually more than anything. That was my main reason. Increasing the fines is always a deterrent, but it doesn't prevent it unfortunately, and that's the reality we live in. But it's a good step forward, and I do support this bill.

I always say it's too late when an accident happens. You hear stories on the news, a young person, school children, accidental deaths or something. And some of these can be avoided, especially in this case. As Members opposite and my colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, Member for Topsail – Paradise, mentioned – and if I'm not mistaken he was the Minister of Transportation and Works when we lost a staff person on a construction site. That is pretty sobering. And we've lost others.

Mr. Speaker, I guess the reason I wanted to get up here today – and it is very personal. A long time ago I was working – and I know it is not school bus related, but it comes down to our driving. Accidents happen, unfortunately, but sometimes they can be avoided.

I was working with a construction company. We were finishing up one evening and it was this guy, he was flagging traffic. The signs weren't appropriate. I was a young worker; I didn't understand the rules of the day. Traffic was going in all directions and this man was trying his best to keep everything flowing. I actually went up to him; I had to pass him his paycheque. As I handed him his paycheque and I turned around his helmet landed by my feet. When I turned back he was literally under the dump truck.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, it was very personal. I knew this man quite well. I knew his family. I'm still in touch with his family. It took me years to get over it. I had recurring nightmares. You talk about – as my colleague brings up – the PTSD stuff of our first responders. I wasn't a first responder but it had a serious impact on me.

Any time I see, when the minister is bringing in legislation like this, tightening up the rules, I commend him. If the rules would have been tighter on that given day, that tragedy wouldn't have happened and it wouldn't have been a lifelong experience to this day that I – there don't be a day go by it doesn't flash to me because it was quite traumatic. So, again, I commend the minister for that.

Pertinent to the bill and this new regulation, back in the day, before we had the flashing stop signs on the buses, which have worked great, I had – again it was unfortunate, but it was a

schoolmate of mine. We were in junior high school. The bus just stopped on Route 60 which is a very busy highway, it's a provincial road. Also in my district I have the Foxtrap Access Road, and presently the Legion Road as well that connect to the CBS Bypass.

This happened on Route 60. This young girl was getting off at the stop after my stop. The lights were on, she jumped out of the bus, she darted across the front of the bus and that ended in tragedy. When I saw this bill – and I know it's a good bill – I wanted to speak on it because some of those stories kind of goes on. It's a long time back and people move on with their lives, but you always – it don't be a time I don't see a school bus or I don't see a road sign that I don't think of those instances.

Our staff person for Transportation and Works there, a couple of years back when that happened, it just brings it all back. We had another one on the Outer Ring Road, it was unfortunate. Any time we can save a life, increase the chances of saving someone's life or protecting people, we should never do too much. You can never overdo that. I think that's something we all should be mindful of everyday of our lives.

There is one thing in closing. Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to take up much more time. As the minister was presenting the bill – and I don't know, this is a hard one I guess and maybe it's education on some of the operators of the buses. In my district, it's pretty hectic in the evening. I don't know, I have five, maybe, schools. I should know offhand. I have about six schools in my district. From 3 to 4 o'clock in the evening it's a pretty hectic time for the traffic of school buses.

If you come along a four-lane highway, which Route 60 is, a bus will stop and you have traffic flowing along. I've noticed this, and hopefully – I don't think anything has happened yet but they'll stop and whip the door open. The sign comes out and the traffic – there is that little interval. Now I don't know if that's an educational thing, but on one hand I can't believe we have to tighten up the regulations to get people to stop at a school bus but on the flipside, is there a little bit of responsibility on the driver of the buses sometimes to give that

little hesitation, a little pre-warning that the sign is coming out. Because children, as we all know, are innocent. They are free spirits. They are out of school and they can't wait to get out.

I had two little girls. They're grown into young women now, but they were the same way. They would dart off the bus or they would dart across the road. When they see that, they instantly take that false sense of security.

Buses stopping, especially on our busy roads – I know my hon. colleague from Baie Verte – Green Bay mentioned he has school bus stops on the Trans-Canada which I mean – again, that's steps it up even a level higher. So that draws some concern. I know we can't police everything but I know in the bill there is some reference that the school district will provide some education. So I think that's good.

That's basically where I stand. Mr. Speaker, we do support this legislation. Like I said, on a personal note I felt that I – it's unfortunate we need it, but I'm glad they're bringing it in. On a personal note, I just wanted to tell my own personal story about it and commend the government for bringing in this legislation.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

I certainly find it a pleasure to stand this afternoon and speak on behalf of Bill 12. I don't intend to take the full amount of time to speak on this bill because my hon. colleague from St. John's Centre, Conception Bay South and Baie Verte – Green Bay have so eloquently talked about situations in their lives that certainly has had a profound effect upon them as individuals. Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that safety has to be number one for all of us.

I will just relate, Mr. Speaker, I count it a real privilege to be appointed to Cabinet by the Premier. My first day in office and my very first briefing I received, I made it abundantly clear to



my staff and to my department that safety was going to be priority number one.

I think it's very important for us to make sure that, as an employer, every one of our employees who leave to go to work in the morning should be expected to come back to their families safely every day. I think that's important for us to make sure that we have the protective legislation in place to make sure this happens. I think it's important for us as an employer – and we are a large employer. We have a lot of people in this province working for us. So I think it's important for us to make sure that we enact the proper legislation to protect our employees. I think this particular legislation does indeed improve the working conditions.

One of the other things I made clear to my staff when I took over the responsibility as Minister of Transportation and Works was that every piece of correspondence that would come from my office will have a safety tag line attached. So anybody in the province who will receive a letter from me will see at the bottom of that a tag line with a safety item there, because I think safety for us is very, very important. I think we have to make sure every measure is taken for us to be able to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I spent 28 years working with young people. I think young people, the youth, are our most important resource. I know being involved in Allied Youth and Boy Scouts over the years, and, of course, in the classroom, I know how energetic young people are.

Sometimes when our young people leave in the mornings, when they get on the bus and when they get home from school in the afternoon, they are all so excited because they want to go and tell their moms and dads and guardians of all the great things that happened during the day in school. So a lot of times safety is not always number one in their minds. I think, Mr. Speaker, it's incumbent on us, as a government, to make sure we do have protective measures in place.

I think the former premier talked about some of the safety issues with the school buses to make sure we do have the proper equipment that will make sure that safety and safety standards are adhered to, and that we follow them. I think that's a very important move. I commend the

Members opposite for making sure we do have safety as an important aspect of the buses, and, of course, all the vehicles we have.

Mr. Speaker, we just go a little further in this legislation to make sure we put the proper measures in place so that if we have people who are not following the rules and regulations that are set, that there will be appropriate penalties in place that will deter and, hopefully, make people think twice about when they actually get into not following the regulations that we have.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly support this bill because of the fact that I do think it does improve safety measures. Again, I know historically people have argued that because there's a penalty in place it probably doesn't stop it. Maybe it doesn't totally stop people from breaking the law and the regulations that are sent out there but, I think, if in fact, there are appropriate penalties put in place that people will think twice.

I think one of the areas we have really made a big improvement in is when we look at construction zones. We know the fines are tripled and doubled and so on and so forth. I think that's important. I think now people are really getting the message on that. I think if we are actually following through on the legislation we have and following through on the regulations we have there, people who actually break that law, if they are penalized to the full extent of the law, I think the message will get out. I think we will be in a better position to make sure that safety is number one for all of us.

So, Mr. Speaker, I commend the minister in putting this legislation in place because, I think, safety for him is very important. I think he is really taking all this into consideration. He is very passionate about what he's doing. I think this is a very important piece of legislation for us today to make sure we're sending the message to the people that we are not going to be tolerating these types of offences, if they happen. We may, in some way, make sure people are fully understanding that.

Mr. Speaker, the fines, I think for us are very important because I think we've all heard horror stories of people who are actually passing busses when lights are flashing. Mr. Speaker, that to me

is really not acceptable. I really can't fully understand the impact. I know the Member for St. John's Centre talked about the impact it had on a family who would really have to go through the loss of a child that really could have been prevented. I think, Mr. Speaker, it is so important for us all to understand that.

There are consequences. If we actually do something and it's not correct and not right, there are consequences. I think this piece of legislation we have before us today really puts in place the consequences. If, in fact, people are going to be out continually not following the regulations, then these consequences, hopefully, will be a deterrent so we will have better legislation in place that we will prevent these accidents from happening.

Mr. Speaker, again, it was my pleasure to stand today to support this bill because I think it is important for all of us. Certainly, I want to thank the Members opposite for their support as well in making sure this legislation is in place.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** If the hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs speaks now he will end the debate.

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

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

I'll just have a few closing remarks. I'll have a few statements on the D250 standard after also.

I just want to thank all Members for participating today: the Member for Cape St. Francis, the Member for Labrador West, the Member for Topsail – Paradise, the Member for Burin – Grand Bank, the Member for St. John's Centre, the Member for Baie Verte – Green Bay with his very passionate speech and personal meaning to that. It was very emotional. The Member for Conception Bay South also for your very emotional and passionate speech on that and also the Minister of Transportation and Works who is heavily involved with this with a lot of road construction and safety for his

workers throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Thank you for your contribution.

Mr. Speaker, before I get into it, it was raised earlier about the D250. I want to elaborate on this because we'll have plenty of time to speak about this.

The Leader of the Opposition gave the impression that the Minister of Education – in some statements he made here in Question Period – was trying to scrap the D250 standards. That is absolutely, categorically, not true. Absolutely not true. I don't want to elaborate, but I have to correct the record.

As the Leader of the Opposition, the Member was saying that the D250 standard – what was changed in 2012 was never the D250 standard. What your government changed was allowing retrofit; that's what changed. The D250 standard was in since, I think, 1980, 1981. There was never ever any assumption by the Minister of Education that the D250 standard would be eliminated. Just for clarification.

What it was I think back in 2012-2013 in consultation – I even have a copy of the email, why it was first initiated. It was that they would bring buses in and they would bring it up to a D250 standard. That standard was never lowered – never ever lowered.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the same officials that the Leader of the Opposition had when he was the minister of Service NL: Was there ever pinpointed an accident because of retrofitting? The answer was no. I asked the school board, in Treasury Board I believe it was: Was there ever an accident because of D250 standards in 30-something years? The answer was no.

I'm sure the hon. Opposition Leader meant to clarify that we weren't trying to eliminate D250 standards; we were just speaking about when the Minister of Education brought in retrofitting. That was the issue. There is no one in this House wants to lower the standards for D250, Canadian standards for bus safety – no one. I'm sure no one does and no one will. But the question was: How did we get to the D250 standards?

Mr. Speaker, that is the question that was raised, so I just wanted to clarify that. I'm willing to

have a discussion with anybody in the House because we are getting a review done on that now for everybody. Safety is all of our concerns.

Mr. Speaker –

**MR. KENT:** A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Speaker recognizes the hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North on a point of order. I would ask which –

**MR. KENT:** Standing Order 49, Mr. Speaker.

I wanted to allow the minister to finish his point before I raised this point of order. Earlier today the Speaker made a ruling during petitions that it is unparliamentary to say that a Member says something that's not true. The hon. minister just clearly stated that the Leader of the Opposition said something that wasn't true. It was ruled unparliamentary earlier today, and I would ask you to once again make a ruling, Mr. Speaker

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

**MR. JOYCE:** I withdraw, and I'll just say it's factually incorrect. It doesn't bother me because the facts are – and I understand the pettiness that's happening here in this House. I had no intention of saying that someone is intentionally misleading. I even said at the end of my statement that I'm sure that the Leader of the Opposition would not want to leave that impression, would like to clarify – I even said that at the end of my statement.

So I guess if you want to be petty over the safety of school buses, I have no problem with it, but you should realize what you're doing here. This is the safety of our children across the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I'll get back to the bill itself. I thank everybody for supporting the bill. It is a part that we're bringing in for the protection of our children and our workers across the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I welcome some questions during the Committee stage. I know there were some concerns raised about the cameras on the bus and the

jurisdiction, if it would stand up to a challenge. I'm willing to answer any of those questions.

Mr. Speaker, this is something that a lot of groups advocated to be brought in the House of Assembly, put forward for the safety of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I'm very proud our government brought this in. I'm very proud that all Members opposite and the Third Party also support this. We, as parliamentarians, I always said, are here to improve the safety and the lives of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and this is another prime example of we can work together.

I thank the critic, the Member for Cape St. Francis, for his remarks and his discussion on it earlier as we were bringing it in. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to having this bill passed in the 60 days. I'm looking forward to having this in law so that we can go ahead and protect the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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 Highway Traffic Act. (Bill 12)

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

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

**MS. COADY:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act," read a second time,

ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 12)

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

**MS. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, that the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 12.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**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 (Dempster):** Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 12, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act." (Bill 12)

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

The hon. the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I shouldn't have too many questions today and I'm sure that the minister is going to be able to help us out with this. But this is going to change the *Highway Traffic Act* to allow an owner of a motor vehicle to be charged with an offence

when the driver of the motor vehicle has not been identified, or when the driver of the vehicle is unknown.

I stand to be corrected; I believe other legislation – I believe in Ontario under the Traffic Safety Act it explicitly explains that the owner of a vehicle can't be charged in a case where a driver is identified and charged.

I just ask the minister: Is there anything to prevent the police from charging an owner and if they identify a driver, charging the driver as well and charging both? I don't see anything in the legislation that would prevent both from being charged.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

**MR. JOYCE:** I thank the Member for his question.

In the legislation is that if a vehicle is identified, and once the owner of the vehicle is identified that he or she is the owner, if they can identify yes, so and so was driving the vehicle then the driver of the vehicle will be charged only, not the driver and the vehicle. If the driver can't be identified, it will be the vehicle that will be charged.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you.

So if I understand the minister correctly, and I just ask for clarification, you're saying that the owner of the vehicle then will be required to identify the driver. In failing to do so, then the owner is charged. Is that what you said?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

**MR. JOYCE:** Yes. If I'm driving your car, for example, and I pass a school bus – if the vehicle can be identified and the police come to your house and say your car passed a red light flashing on the school bus and you say, it wasn't me who was driving, it was the Member for Humber – Bay of Islands who was driving and I say, yes, it was me, I would be charged. Not the owner of the vehicle.

That is in the legislation, that the person, if they can be identified, will be charged. If not, in the case that you can't identify who the driver was, the owner of the vehicle is the person that will be charged.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I know there's a section that says if a person fails to identify who's driving their vehicle, the person can actually be charged. I think the circumstances are if the vehicle is involved in a motor vehicle collision, then the owner has to identify who was driving at the time. I believe that's what the section says, but I'm not sure if it goes beyond that.

I don't know it offhand. I don't know if the minister does or not. The *Highway Traffic Act* is a pretty extensive piece of legislation. I certainly wouldn't expect him or anyone to know all sections in it. So has that changed where the driver has to identify the person who is driving the vehicle? Is there a change in legislation on that?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

**MR. JOYCE:** No, it's not a change that the owner has to identify who is driving the vehicle. The change in the legislation is that the vehicle will be charged. Once the vehicle is charged, if the owner, through an investigation, says, no, it was not me who was driving; here's who was driving the vehicle and it can be proven, and this person says, yes, I was driving the vehicle, then that person – but the onus is on the owner of the vehicle to say or prove who was driving the car because the owner will be charged.

If it can be proven that it was somebody else who was driving, through testimony or someone stepping forward saying, no, it was me, I was driving dad's car. I was driving mom's car. I was driving my wife's car or my wife was driving my car – that's how it would happen now. In the absence of identifying a driver, the owner of the vehicle will be charged.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** I apologize, Madam Chair. The minister just said you'd charge the vehicle. I'm sure he meant the owner of the vehicle. In order for someone to testify, a charge has to be laid. In order for a charge to be laid, there have to be grounds to support the charge.

I'm just a little bit confused by what the minister is saying – if someone gives testimony. You can't give testimony unless there is actually a matter before the courts or a charge has been laid. I don't know. I don't know if the minister can clear – it looks like he's eager to get up. Maybe I'll just let him answer that because I'm just a little bit confused by what he's provided.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

**MR. JOYCE:** As you would know from being an RNC officer, the change is that, before, you could only ticket a driver. What the legislation is changing now is that if someone is speeding past a school bus with its red lights on, arms out, no one can recognize the driver – say, for example, one of these buses has a camera; they can identify the licence plates – then that would be reported to the police. The police then would do an investigation and they would charge the vehicle. Whoever is the owner of the vehicle will be the person who is charged with passing the school bus.

I say the vehicle, but when I say the vehicle I mean the owner of the vehicle will be charged. Whatever licence plates are on that vehicle, that is the owner, the onus is on him or her. Even if there is no onus, if they can't show that they weren't driving, the owner will be charged.

If someone else steps forward and says, no, I was driving mom's car, dad's car, my husband's car, my wife's car, my neighbour's car, then the police have the option of charging that person who has admitted or found to be driving the vehicle itself. In the absence of that, the owner of the vehicle – and this is what the change is – is the person who would be charged with the offense.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I appreciate that. Thank you, Minister, for that.

There was another layer just added on there. It's the first time I heard it. So are you saying a bus has to have a camera to identify the licence plate?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

**MR. JOYCE:** What I said is if they have a camera. There could be other ways. If you have four or five witnesses who see the driver, who see a vehicle passing or going through – you, as an investigator, know that if you take four or five witnesses, that's fine, but you don't have to have a camera. I just used that for an example, if there was a camera. You don't have to have a camera.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Minister, it is a great piece of legislation. I'm interested in knowing about the pilot project that you had which was on the go last year. There were 16 charges laid but only five convictions. That's with the school bus. All these buses had cameras on them?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

**MR. JOYCE:** I'm not sure. That was a pilot project with the school board, so I don't know if every one of those buses had cameras on them. I can get the information for you, but I don't have that information of all of them having cameras on them.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**MR. K. PARSONS:** According to the information that I had, it was ten buses that were owned by the school board and one other contractor outside that had buses. This was part of the pilot project. I was very interested to know that there were 16 charges laid, but only five convictions. I think the project was part of these 11 buses that were done. Again, I was just wondering why the low rate of convictions compared to the charges that were laid?

I'll just ask you a two-part question here now too. As you know, sometimes it's very difficult to lay charges and it's a very serious offence, passing by a school bus. We should be very vigilant of what we're doing. Are there any plans to make this part of school buses down the road, to have cameras on their buses?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

**MR. JOYCE:** Just part of the pilot project was to have cameras on them, but at the time they couldn't lay charges on the vehicle itself. That may be the discrepancy because now this is why the changing of the legislation. I will get back to the answer as to why only six charges. The vehicle couldn't be charged until this legislation was in place; it could be just the driver. So that may be part of it.

The second thing is Service NL is not enforcing any cameras on any buses. That is a decision by the Department of Education and the school board. So it is not a requirement under this legislation to have cameras on the bus.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Just another final question, Minister, and it's more or less an inquiry. I'm just wondering – as you know, the speed, it's easy enough to see a vehicle going past a bus because you've got a camera picture of the licence plate. When it comes to speeds, say, in school zones and in construction zones in other provinces, how effective is this when you go to court? Unless you have some kind of radar detection or something like that, I can see that as being a problem down the road. I was just wondering the benefits of what will happen there.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

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

On the school buses the idea of the cameras is someone passing the bus. In the construction zones there may be – and this would be a policing issue – radar set up at the construction zone. The cameras are for passing the bus, not for speeding. In a construction zone, again, the police do it through radar. They have photo

radar detection. However, that is a policing issue that I know Chief Janes addressed today.

The speeding is for the zones. The cameras on the bus are for people passing the buses; it's not for the speeding. My understanding is it would be very difficult to detect the speed but it will detect passing.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Am I right in thinking as well that if the owner of a vehicle is charged versus a person who is actually identified by – if the owner was or was not the driver, it's immaterial to my question, but if a person is charged under this legislation as the owner, would they only be subjected to the fine, or the fine and the demerit points?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

**MR. JOYCE:** If they cannot identify the owner for certain, it would be just a fine and no demerit points. But if they can identify the driver of the vehicle, the driver will lose demerit points. If they can't identify the driver, only the vehicle, the owner of the vehicle will get the fine but they will not lose any demerit points.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Minister.

Do you have any consideration or thought – I just ask this again, I was just thinking about it. I know there are lots of circumstances where people are driving a motor vehicle and they are allowed to have 12 demerit points before a licence is suspended. They might be at 10 or 11, knowing that demerit points for passing a school bus, I think, is six demerit points. Maybe lots of people have seven or eight points gone.

They pass a school bus. They think they may get caught but they would make an effort to elude detection just so they not be identified as the driver and end up with the fine. Was there any thought or consideration to that, or is it a

concern for you that it may cause people to try and escape being apprehended so that – they'll still pay the fine, be held responsible as the owner, but they would escape the demerit points?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

**MR. JOYCE:** That's a great question and a great consideration. What we did was we took the other jurisdictions around Canada that were tested and held up, and that's what we followed.

That is a great point to make. It was raised, but because of other jurisdictions, we're following other jurisdictions. We decided you can do the vehicle. Unless you can identify the owner, it would be hard to pursue it in court with the demerit points.

It is a great issue, and I'm sure it's something I'll be considering and asking officials to look at because it is another deterrent that we can put in there. I agree with what the Member said, that if someone has 10 points gone and they know they're going to get charged, why not just keep going and speed away. It is a good point.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** I appreciate it, Minister, because I know the last thing you want to do is create kind of a greater danger or worry for safety of children or workers. If a person speeds through and says I'm not going to stop, or they might be in a position where police sometimes take a little bit of time to get turned around or get in a position to be able to pursue or catch them, you wouldn't want someone to create a bigger danger by doing that.

You mentioned other jurisdictions. My recollection back, because I remember looking at this back when I was Minister of Service NL several years ago. One of the problems that existed at the time with us going forward with this was there were outstanding challenges in courts and that legislation in other provinces was being tested where they said we can't charge someone with a moving violation, which is consciously, wrongfully taking action or being in care and control of a motor vehicle. There were challenges to that in court.

So I think from your comment, maybe you could just comment on it for me, that some of those challenges have been completed by courts. I stand to be corrected. Maybe it even was being raised to the Supreme Court of Canada to say on the legality of charging the owner. By the way you're trying to get up there, maybe you have some information on that you can share with us too.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

**MR. JOYCE:** Thank you very much.

You're correct, that some of them were challenged. That is why we brought the legislation as other jurisdictions. To my understanding, and I stand to be corrected, but it has not been challenged in the Supreme Court yet. It hasn't, no. That's from my understanding. It hasn't been challenged. It may be, and then if it does we'll have to change it, but right now we're following other jurisdictions that went through this and are having some success with it.

I will commit to the Leader of the Opposition that I will get more information on the demerit points and the rationale. I know we're following other jurisdictions and other jurisdictions came back and said no, the merit points would be more difficult. I will check that out because anything we can do – I have no problem looking into that point of it to ensure that people who don't speed away are losing four to six, eight or 10 points and causing a safety concern. That is a point that I will commit to and bring back to the House.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

My last point is, and I believe it is in Saskatchewan where the Safety Traffic Act – I think they call it in Saskatchewan – actually specifies a clause where it prevents that double jeopardy. A double jeopardy is where a person gets charged twice for the same crime type of thing, but a double jeopardy where an owner and someone else who may have been driving, that they both get charged. I don't see in the act here where it specifically outlines that both will not be charged.

It is just something you can consider and talk to your officials about maybe. Is there some type of way to prevent that from happening? Because some police officers might come across a circumstance where: Well, I think I have enough evidence to charge the driver, but the section says I can charge owner. I'm not satisfied yet it's the owner. So I'm going to charge the owner, and three hours later they find out they have enough evidence to charge the driver. Now they end up with charges proceeding on both. I'm just wondering if there's legislation or something there to prevent that from happening. If not, you can comment if you like, but I would appreciate if you do, but thanks.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

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

Yes, in the legislation it is that if the police identify a vehicle and then someone comes forward to say, I was driving the vehicle. It is in the legislation that they can withdraw the charges from – it is only one person, the driver. They can't, in the absence of the driver it will be the vehicle. That is in the legislation that it is only one person – one charge for the offence, and they can withdraw the charge from the vehicle if the driver of the vehicle is identified. So, it is in the legislation.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** I know I said I wasn't going to get up again, but I just made a note on the comment for the minister from second reading when he closed debate on the D250 standard, my recollection was that in 2007 the D250 standard allowed for modifications by garages, but the newer 2012 standard ended that allowance for aftermarket or post-production modifications to it.

My comment was that government has a right to determine what standard they want to follow. The newest standard is 2012. Many jurisdictions follow that 2012 standard. Of course, you could always go back to the 2007 standard, but my understanding is the reason why CSA changed the standard from allowing modifications to occur and inspection to make sure it meets the D250 standard, versus in 2012 when they said it



has to be manufactured to the D250 standard was that the modifications weren't meeting all the specifications that CSA laid out.

Now we know CSA is very technical and they lay out a very high standard and so on. My recollection was at the time information from officials were that we had adopted the D250 standard, and therefore the updates and everything went with that. So we had to follow the standard of the day.

Anyway, Minister, maybe you and I can have a chat offline about that, and I'd be more than happy to talk about it further with you.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I would just ask the minister, is there any consideration at all about looking at extending the hours for school zones to 24-7? I am often in Conception Bay North and the main road, it's only two lanes, goes right through the school zone, and it would make sense to me to just – because children are at schools for extracurricular activities, why not?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

**MR. JOYCE:** Thank you, and I thank the Member for St. John's Centre for the question.

To be honest, it was never raised. This is the first time it was raised. In all of our discussions in the House, it's the first time it was raised. It's something I haven't looked at, something that hasn't been brought to my attention, but it's something I will at least ask the officials to say, can we get a report done. I will have to consult with you on it, and I will consult with the department.

In some cases, it does make sense and other cases, where schools are away from any area where there's driving, a lot of kids are being bused.

The most I can say is I'll look into it and ask for some information on it. I'll hand you over all the information I can get on it, if it's going to

provide a safer environment for the school kids and if it's practical.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

**MS. MICHAEL:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I'm really glad to hear the minister say he will explore it because I have a memory, and I don't know if it was in this jurisdiction or in Ontario, but a very strong memory of school zones being 24-7. It would be great if you were to get a search done on that one.

I thought it was in this province, actually, at one point, because I remember reading the rule and even questioning and being told it's 24-7. I think it was an enforcement officer that I asked about it. I think it was in this province but I could be wrong.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

**MR. JOYCE:** Thank you again.

Of course, this is a question that came up today. I thank the Members for their questions. From my understanding, though, if a sign is posted that you're in a school zone, it is 24-7. If a sign is posted that the kilometres is down – that's my understanding.

I'll look into it and I'll get back because, from my understanding, if it's a posted sign – for example, if you have a sign posted that it's 50 kilometres, in the nighttime it doesn't go up to 80. If a school zone is 30 –

**MS. COADY:** Unless there are time zones listed.

**MR. JOYCE:** Unless there are time zones.

That's something that was raised. I'll get a report and I'll get back to you on it. We'll have the proper information and have a proper discussion here in the House of Assembly.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

**MS. MICHAEL:** Not to keep it going, but just to give more information.

Here in the city right now – I can only speak for the city because I'm so used to it – all the places where they have the signs up showing the school zone, they're ending at 4 or 5 in the afternoon and they're not on, on the weekends. They're only on during a period of the day showing you that it's a school zone. That's why I think there has been a change around the timing.

Thank you, Minister, for looking further into it.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

**MR. JOYCE:** Thank you.

Once again, the school zones, most in St. John's are 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Some others don't have it posted, so you'll see the discrepancy in it.

As I committed, I will get a report done and I'll report back. I will pass on the information. If this is going to improve safety, I'm all for it and if there's something we can do, it is practical sense and it makes sense I'll definitely look at it. I have no problem whatsoever.

So I don't think there are any more questions. I would like to thank everybody for their questions, and I thank everybody for the debate. As I said before, this is a House of Assembly act that is going to help all of our children, and help the workers in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I thank all Members for their participation and I thank all Members in the House also for responses in their speeches, and also the very thoughtful questions, Madam Chair.

Anything that I committed to get back to people on the few questions – I know the Leader of the Opposition and I know the Third Party did – I will definitely ensure that I get back to you with the information.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIR:** Seeing no further speakers to Bill 12, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act, we will now call the motion.

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 and 3.

**CHAIR:** Shall clauses 2 and 3 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 3 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 Highway Traffic Act.

**CHAIR:** Shall the long 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 Bill 12 carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** I move, Madam Chair, that the Committee rise and report Bill 12.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 12 carried 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 (Osborne):** The hon. the Deputy Speaker.

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

The Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have asked me to report Bill 12, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act, carried without amendment.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters referred to them and have directed her to report Bill 12, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act, carried without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

When shall the said bill be read a third time?

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, what I'd like to do here is actually move from the Order Paper, Motion 16, pursuant to Standing Order 11, that the House do not adjourn at 5:30 p.m., today, Tuesday, May 10.

Motion 17 on the Order Paper, I would move, pursuant to Standing Order 11, that the House not adjourn at 10 p.m. on Tuesday, May 10, 2016.

Now, what I'd like to do, Mr. Speaker, is I would like to call from the Order Paper, Order 4, third reading of Bill 25.

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

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

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

I move, seconded by the hon. Member for Virginia Waters – Pleasantville, that Bill 25, An Act To Amend The Hearing Aid Practitioners Act, be now read a third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 25, An Act To Amend The Hearing Aid Practitioners Act, be now read a third time.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Hearing Aid Practitioners Act. (Bill 25)

**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 Hearing Aid Practitioners Act,” read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 25)

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I would call from the Order Paper, Order 3, third reading of Bill 3.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that Bill 3, An Act To Amend The Parliamentary Assistant Act And The Parliamentary Secretaries Act, be now read a third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 3, An Act To Amend The Parliamentary Assistant Act And The Parliamentary Secretaries Act, be now read a third time.

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Parliamentary Assistant Act And The Parliamentary Secretaries Act. (Bill 3)

**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 Parliamentary Assistant Act And The Parliamentary Secretaries Act,” read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 3)

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, from the Order Paper, I would move Motion 14, to move that this House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider a resolution relating to the advancing or guaranteeing of certain loans made under the Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957, Bill 26.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that the Speaker now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into –

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

**MS. C. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Stephenville – Port au Port, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Ways and Means to consider certain resolutions and a bill, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act. 1957, Bill 26.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I’ll try it again.

The motion is that the Speaker now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Ways and Means.

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 (Dempster):** Order, please!

We are now debating the related resolution and Bill 26, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act.

Resolution

“That is it expedient to bring in a measure further to amend *The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957*, to provide for the advance of loans to and the guarantee of the repayment of bonds or debentures issued by or loans advanced to certain corporations.”

**CHAIR:** Shall the resolution carry?

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

**MS. C. BENNETT:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

As Members of this House would be aware and, certainly, the briefings that would have been provided for the Opposition, what we’re looking to do today is to amend Bill 26, An Act to Amend the Loan and Guarantee Act. Specifically, we are looking to amend the act as it relates to a loan guarantee provided for the Stephenville Airport Corporation.

As Members of the House would know, the finance – except under established programs such as the Aquaculture Working Capital Loan Guarantee Initiative or the Fisheries Loan Guarantee Program, the use of loan guarantees to provide financial assistance to the private sector, certainly, are continuing to be reduced in recent years.

Amendments to the Schedule to this act are a particular item in the financial administration of the province, with the last amendment having been approved in this hon. House on December 2014.

Under the act, and subsequent to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the Minister of Finance is authorized to provide guarantees to either private sector or Crown corporations covering a variety of financing arrangements, with the most common being guarantees of

operating lines of credit. The act requires that all guarantees that are approved and issued be ratified by this hon. House through an amendment to the Schedule of the act.

The current bill, Madam Chair, includes one amendment to the Schedule to extend the existing guarantee. As I mentioned earlier, this bill relates to the Stephenville Airport Corporation for which the province has been providing a guarantee since 2005. My colleague, the Minister of Business, I believe, is going to speak to this, as well as the Member for Stephenville – Port au Port.

Conditional approval was recently received from the Lieutenant Governor in Council to increase the guarantee to \$900,000. In fact, during the final days of the former administration’s government, they extended the loan guarantee –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

I ask Members for their co-operation to keep the noise down a little bit in the House.

Thank you.

**MS. C. BENNETT:** – for the Stephenville Airport Corporation from \$600,000 to \$900,000 effective to March 31, 2016.

The corporation was required to submit a business plan, a business sustainability plan that would outline how they plan to restructure. However, that plan wasn’t received until the end of March 2016.

I’m pleased to report to the House that I had the opportunity to meet with officials from the Stephenville Airport Authority in February to discuss the requirement for them to provide the business sustainability plan, and they certainly were able to provide that by the end of March 2016. What we’re doing, though, with this amendment is to extend the loan guarantee until June 30 of 2016, and that would allow the time to do the proper due diligence and to review the plan.

The act requires that all guarantees that are approved and issued be ratified by this hon.

House through the amendment to the Schedule of the act.

Madam Chair, I'll take my seat and allow the Members opposite to speak to this.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I am glad to stand to speak to Bill 26 to amend *The Loan and Guarantee Act*. This act will amend the Schedule to the act as relates to the loan guarantee in place supporting the Stephenville Airport. This act was ratified by a decision in Cabinet to increase the guarantee by \$300,000 to a total of \$900,000. The act also ratifies a decision to extend the guarantee to June 30, 2016, as certainly the minister has indicated.

As we know, this will allow Stephenville Airport to continue to be operational – the help in regard to operations and the guaranteed loan. Government, I understand, is not loaning money to the airport, but is guaranteeing their loans which they currently have on the books. Should the guarantees be called, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador would execute that with the expenditures.

We're certainly a supporter of this. While we were in government, we went through this process on a number of occasions as well. In 2005, the administration at that time authorized the original loan of \$350,000. At that time the Minister of Finance spoke to it about supporting the operations in Stephenville, and certainly giving them the hand up, and not a handout. In 2010, that guarantee was extended to \$600,000 and in November at that time, an increase of \$300,000 was guaranteed and extended to March 31, 2016.

In March, my understanding was Cabinet extended the guarantee to June 30, 2016. I know in my role previous as minister of IBRD I had experience with this, and looked at various airport authorities, as well as working with Stephenville and recognized the importance of that in regard to the region and overall competitiveness of the airport, continued growth and continued to provide that infrastructure in all parts of our province.

The Department of BTCRD is currently, I understand, reviewing the business plan received for the airport. The airport as always is looking for ways to increase their revenue. Looking at possibly soliciting more military traffic, something I'm sure our Liberal MPs will lobby for in Ottawa in regard to get greater traffic, greater access and greater support for the airport.

My understanding is the review that is underway will hopefully be finished by June 30, 2016. Following this, Cabinet will make a decision, extending the loan guarantee, which we expect will occur. We will have to wait and see for that. That will allow the airport to continue to operate with the support of government through the loan guarantee, which is very important to do. Shortage of flights, a bit of a downturn during the winter season but they will certainly use the loan guarantee to get them through sort of a down period.

As part of this bill, I'm certainly supportive of this, recognizing what it does for the Stephenville area and the region in terms of their airport and providing that significant piece of infrastructure that is indeed very important.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development.

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

As the Minister of Finance has noted, this bill relates to the Stephenville Airport Corporation for which the province has been providing a guarantee since 2005. I will speak more to the specific aspect of the legislation.

The purpose of the legislation is to approve the original loan guarantee increase for the Stephenville Airport Corporation of \$300,000 and to recommend extension of the loan guarantee to June 30 in the amount of \$900,000.

Madam Chair, the Official Opposition would be familiar with the loan guarantee extension, as last November they extended the loan guarantee to the Stephenville Airport Corporation from

\$600,000 to \$900,000 effective to March 31, 2016. Conditional approval has been recently received from the Lieutenant Governor in Council to increase the guarantee to \$900,000.

As the Minister of Finance has indicated, the corporation was required to submit a business sustainability plan that would outline how they plan to restructure. That plan was recently received and we are, through this legislation, extending the loan guarantee until June 30, 2016 to allow the time to do proper due diligence and review the plan.

Madam Chair, the Stephenville Airport has been an integral part of the Stephenville-Bay St. George region. After the military base closed in the late 1960s, the airport was established as a civilian operation and is now a non-profit organization with local stakeholder representation.

The corporation serves commercial air traffic and also provides technical stop services. It has two runways, a fuel farm, operations terminal, a hangar, and a cargo building. It employs up to 16 staff, including a general manager who reports to the board of directors. Passenger traffic has steadily declined over the past number of years due a variety of reasons. International flights now utilize long-range aircraft which can overfly directly into the North American heartland or Europe.

Madam Chair, the purpose of the business plan is to include air traffic related activities as well as strategies to better utilize airport land for other industries which can generate revenue.

Again, we are seeking approval through this legislation to extend the guarantee to June while we undertake a detailed review of the corporation's business plan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm pleased to have a chance to speak to Bill 26 today. This is a loan and guarantee act amendment. Previous speakers have explained why this bill is important and why Members will likely be supporting it.

Given that the Minister of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development has spoken, I thought I would join in the debate as well – from that perspective, actually.

As the critic for Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development, I want to speak in support of the Stephenville Airport and the potential economic growth it could generate for the region. I know that people in the area on the West Coast are very passionate about it. They recognize the potential for the airport to be a real economic driver, even beyond what it has been in the past. I want to make some suggestions that I hope are actually helpful to government, and suggestions that they may be able to pursue to help the region grow and help the airport grow as well.

Some of these may be a little farfetched, some of them maybe not, but I think we all talk about the need to diversify the economy. I think when you have an airport with the capability and the potential of Stephenville Airport, strategically located as it is, then there are some opportunities that are worth pursuing. I suspect Members from the area, and I know there are several in the House, will support that line of thinking as well.

Given the history, one opportunity would be military use. Perhaps the government could lobby the federal government for some DND use. Maybe there could be some National Defence presence at the airport. Given the size of the airport – I mean we're talking about a site that was at one point an alternate landing site for spaceships. I don't know if it still is or not.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** It is.

**MR. KENT:** It is, one the Members for the area is telling me.

So there is significant infrastructure there. Maybe our own National Defence Department could utilize some of the assets at the facility. Maybe it could be used for drone training. Maybe there are opportunities for aerospace.

Maybe there are opportunities for other defence training. It's Innovation Week, so let's look at doing something innovative with that resource that exists on the West Coast of our province.

Maybe it's not just with the federal government, Madam Chair. Maybe we collaborate with Memorial University's Department of Engineering or the private sector, whatever. Maybe we bring together the right people from the university community and from the business community and from the federal and provincial governments and from the region to explore some of those possibilities for Stephenville Airport.

Maybe even we can work with NATO. Beyond the Department of National Defence, maybe there are opportunities for NATO or other governments for training purposes. I know that other governments and NATO have used other airports in our province in the past. There's been military activities and training on the base and at the airport in Goose Bay, for instance. So maybe the same kind of opportunities could be pursued on the West Coast of the Island as well.

I also wonder if there's some potential for tourism collaboration. Now that may sound a little strange when we're talking about an airport on the West Coast of the Island, but when you think about the past military users, the Americans, for instance, maybe there is some potential to create an interesting destination that highlights the history around the airport and builds on it. Maybe link in some world flying clubs and create a real destination.

So, again, these are big ideas. Maybe some of them are practical, maybe some of them are not but I refuse to acknowledge those who say, well, we don't need two airports on the West Coast. The Stephenville Airport is a real asset. So I think we need to be creative and innovative in identifying ways to enhance the airport's use and make it even more valuable for the region.

When you think about tourism on the West Coast of the province, the Southwest Coast in particular –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

I ask Members to take their conversations outside.

Thank you.

**MR. KENT:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

When you think about the tourism potential that exists on the Southwest Coast, some of the ecotourism opportunities rely on air services. So there may be some opportunities by pursuing those markets as well.

I think it's worth noting that the province's largest francophone community is in that region of the province. So maybe the airport and the region should enjoy some type of special federal protection and support and stimulus. Maybe that could tie into the uses for the airport. There may be some opportunities there. Again, if levels of government get together and are creative and innovative then who knows what might be possible.

There's also a tremendous arts and cultural community in the area. So I wonder how that sector could potentially tie in as well and build a site that links all communities in the region and really creates a destination. There is a lot of infrastructure there. Again, I think we need to think outside the box.

When I think about the land use in the area, there is significant agricultural activity. There is a need for more and maybe there's an opportunity for agrifoods export. Maybe the airport could play a greater role in pursuing that. Because proximity to an airport would be a real asset for the export of food that need to kept very fresh; perhaps high-end food that would have special labelling to identify the source, the date packed, the growing conditions and status of the crops and so on. Again these are big picture ideas. They won't necessarily happen overnight but these are the kinds of things that could be possible if we put our heads together.

I think there is also a need to consider the Stephenville Airport as an emergency air transportation hub. There are times when the ferry can't cross. There are times when the Wreckhouse region is impassible. So having an airport that is so close to Port aux Basques and to the Wreckhouse area, I think can be really



valuable in times when there are transportation challenges.

I also think about the fact that the College of the North Atlantic headquarters is in Stephenville. Imagine if the college could build some kind of centre of excellence around aviation. Maybe there is a tie in for the airport there, or maybe there is some other program that the Stephenville campus can specialize in that would utilize the infrastructure there and make the local airport a real asset in that regard. Maybe there is long-term potential, maybe even some short- or medium-term potential for manufacturing and trade, local industrial development to replace the Abitibi operation.

Madam Chair, these are just a few ideas. I feel as the critic responsible for Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development, I just wanted to make the point that we have a good piece of infrastructure that already plays an important role in the region. Let's make it play a truly vital role and let's figure out how we can use that infrastructure at the airport to generate long-term sustainable, innovative economic activity for the people in the region.

Those are things we would support and happy to work with the minister and the MHAs and other ministers within the government to help explore those kinds of possibilities because that's exactly what we need to do in various regions of the province.

So speaking in support of the airport, speaking in support of the bill and speaking in support of some of the economic potential that I believe exists, I hope others will agree.

Thank you.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

**MS. MICHAEL:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I'm happy to stand and speak to this, An Act to Amend the Loan and Guarantee Act. Actually, I think it's extremely important that this has come to us, to the floor for us to talk about. I'm not

going to take long but to say I am totally in support of what this amendment is doing. I think this is the kind of thing government needs to be doing, looking at what's happening in communities where communities are really trying to make something happen and to support them in doing that. A loan guarantee is an excellent way of showing the support.

All of us, at different times, have used the Stephenville Airport. I know I certainly have. It's an excellent facility. I think we really would want something to happen for the good of the people and the economy that the people are a part of on the West Coast to make the Stephenville facility work.

We were led to understand through a conversation with an official that in actual fact the report is not quite ready yet, that the corporation is still awaiting the report. So if that can be clarified for me because I think it was said that the report is finished, but we've been told by an official that the corporation is still waiting. I'm sure that part of the reason for having to extend the date for the expiry of a loan is the fact that they have to get the report in their hands to see what they're going to do.

I'm not going to pretend that I know what can happen out there, but I'm sure that the people in Stephenville and the Airport Authority and others who are involved have a lot of ideas. I certainly hope that the consultant's report is really going to help them find a way to make this facility work, as I said, for the good of the people and the economy that the people are a part of. So we'll be very happy to vote for this.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Stephenville – Port au Port.

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

**MR. FINN:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

It is with great pleasure I rise to speak about the Stephenville Airport, of course, being the Member for Stephenville – Port au Port. Right now, this is essentially just a bill that we're going to guarantee the loan and that's certainly important. But in addition to some of the history

of the airport and this sort of nature, I really want to kind of just paint the picture of the actual importance of the airport and what that means.

The airport in Stephenville is not just for Stephenville; it is a provincial asset. The airport in Stephenville supplements all of the air traffic across the province every single day. So when we look at the air traffic that flies into St. John's, the air traffic that flies into Gander, Deer Lake, St. Anthony, Wabush and Happy Valley-Goose Bay, one of the key things that Stephenville Airport serves as is an alternate.

Every time a flight leaves, they have to have two alternates. One of the alternatives has to be what's called achievable. Technically speaking, that would mean you need to reach your destination – if you miss your original destination – within a 30-minute requirement of not having enough fuel. So Stephenville is frequently used as an alternate.

One of the things that people don't realize but we see it in Stephenville because I've met with the board, I know the staff quite well, is when fog rolls in St. John's which happens – let's be honest – quite often. The second they get a fog forecast in St. John's, the phones in the Stephenville Airport go off the hook. We get calls from West Jet. We get calls from Air Canada. We get calls from every airline. They just want to know what our runway report is. That's what they're looking for because they know they've planned us as an alternate.

Stephenville Airport wasn't built in Stephenville by accident. Quite opposite from the city here, it's 97.5 per cent of the time fog-free. Now, isn't that wonderful? I think that why we call the West Coast the best coast.

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

**MR. FINN:** The airport itself did see a decline in passenger traffic. That was a result of Transport Canada kind of decommissioning their role in airports all across Atlantic Canada. That took place during the '90s. So, in fact, the Stephenville Airport Corporation was formed just after Transport Canada kind of devolved itself of the assets, I believe, in 1998.

Amid some financial difficulty, the airport is still maintained. It has gone through a number of different measures to do so. There's a great board of directors there now working to promote the airport.

The loan guarantee is very important for the ongoing operations. We're looking at maintenance of old assets and old buildings. We just had an all new, brand new lighting system for the runway and the tarmac, just bringing everything up to technological standards of today, Transport Canada regulations right now with respect to security, the ever revolving technology with runway reporting and so on so forth.

Again, when we look at Stephenville, we have to look at it as a provincial asset, as I said, with weather alone. In order to be a provincial asset, we need to be a 24-7 operation in Stephenville. Currently, we are, but let me tell you that certainly presents some financial challenges.

Last year, Stephenville was on record as the snowiest municipality in the country, with some close to seven to nine feet of snow that fell last year. It was between Stephenville and Deer Lake in terms of the highest snowfalls in the country. So you can imagine clearing a 10,000-foot runway every day for the entire winter, consistently. The cost of such is quite high. When you don't have commercial traffic flying in regularly, it's hard to support your efforts when you're looking at raising revenue.

But they still managed to survive, and importantly so. We do have some commercial traffic – and I'll get to that in a moment, and I am cognizant of time as well. What I want to point out is perhaps something that's also not often talked about, and that's medevac. So Stephenville serves the entire Southwest Coast, when we look at medical emergencies and medevac.

I'll just give you an idea in terms of some of the numbers – and these are air ambulance to St. John's. In 2012, we had 77 medevacs from Stephenville Airport to St. John's; in 2013, we had 81 medevacs; 2014 saw that number jump to 96 medevacs; 2015 had 132 medical evacuations from Stephenville Airport to St. John's.

**MR. WARR:** Aging population.

**MR. FINN:** So, the numbers – and as the Member for Baie Verte – Green Bay just mentioned to me, it could be attributed to an aging population or what have you.

In any event, when you look at strategically being positioned on the West Coast, we support anyone that may be involved in a medical emergency in Burgeo, Port aux Basques, Cape St. George – we're talking an hour away. So Stephenville is strategically located for these medical evacuations in the event that anybody else on the Southwest Coast would have to travel an additional 136 kilometres to Deer Lake. So Stephenville is there, so that is not an option, because when you're looking at medical emergencies, let's face it, emergency speaks for itself.

What's interesting is I just spoke with the day-to-day operations manager just yesterday, and today is May 10. In the month of May, they've had eight medical evacuations from Stephenville. So in terms of it being important and in terms of the ongoing operation of the airport, it certainly speaks volumes when you're talking about saving lives; there's no doubt about it.

Stephenville Airport also serves with the alternate designation and it handles some of the traffic that other airports can't handle. While Stephenville is comparable in size to Gander and when you look at individuals making their flight plans and choosing an alternate site, and Stephenville and Gander are very similar in terms of the size and capacity, but there's often times again where your weather comes into play – and when the weather is bad in St. John's, it can quite frequently be bad in Gander.

We just saw some two new runs here this summer; last year, Porter Airlines stepped on. They're now into their third year out at Stephenville. Between Porter Airlines and Sunwing, we're looking at some 200 passengers a week that will travel into Stephenville. A little-known destination for others, but Porter Airlines is certainly playing a significant role there and connecting folks to the mainland.

The other assets at the Stephenville Airport – and the Member for Mount Pearl North made some great suggestions. In fact, some of them are actually being done right now. The Marine Institute's SERT team, that's the Safety and Emergency Response Training. That's firefighting training. That happens at Stephenville Airport right now. The Marine Institute is actively involved in that and they certainly play a role.

NAV CANADA is there with a contract with respect to the weather. There are other things they're looking at doing in terms of enhancing their operations. We can certainly be achievable in terms of generating our own revenue and try and move away from a loan guarantee situation.

The commercial spaces are also used. Emera is using it right now with respect to their efforts with the Maritime Link. They're using commercial office space there. Atlantic Minerals, as well, is using office space there. There are certainly a number of avenues being explored with respect to military traffic as well.

The Member for Mount Pearl North also mentioned about the Department of National Defence. Interesting to note, as well, there was a report commissioned in 2011 by the Department of National Defence and it specifically referenced that it was looking at moving two Hercules aircraft from Greenwood, Nova Scotia to Stephenville. The idea being to improve search and rescue response times throughout Atlantic Canada and the North.

You can imagine, if you take Stephenville on a map and you drew a circle, it's strategically located. While the operation is now in Greenwood, Nova Scotia, the idea was to supplement their operations by putting aircraft there. I've actively had that conversation with our Member of Parliament, Gudie Hutchings. I'll certainly continue to further that dialogue as we look at expanding potential and opportunities for the Stephenville Airport.

With that said, my time is getting is short. I could go on all day, but it is a provincial asset. Again, it certainly supplements all of the other airports across the province. It's there for safety. There are other operations as well, as I said, with respect to our commercial air traffic and our

military air traffic, and they're going to explore those avenues.

From a safety standpoint and from a standpoint when you're looking at making your flight plans and planning achievable alternates, I don't think it's too far off to suggest, your air traffic in St. John's and Gander and Deer Lake would decline if Stephenville wasn't there as an achievable alternate as well.

With that said, Madam Chair, I thank you for the opportunity to speak to Bill 26. I will let the Opposition take over.

Thank you.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for St. George's – Humber.

**MR. REID:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'll keep my comments brief, just a few minutes. I want to rise and make a few comments about the importance of the Stephenville Airport and the possibilities that might exist there.

Madam Chair, I think the state of the infrastructure there is positive; the size of the airport, the quality of the airport. As some of the other Members have mentioned, it's an alternative site for the landing of the space shuttle. That's a testament I think to the infrastructure that is there, left from the American base that was there. I think that's one reason for optimism about this airport.

The other reason is the efforts that are being made to increase fueling stops at this airport. A lot of transatlantic flights stop at this airport to refuel, particularly military flights. So I think that's another reason for optimism about the Stephenville Airport.

Also, I think search and rescue is another possibility that should be examined for this airport. In terms of reach and the ability to service a large area in Atlantic Canada, Stephenville is ideally situated as an airport to serve the largest area. I think that's a possibility we have to pursue with the federal government and I think there are a lot of possibilities there.

In terms of another possibility for this airport and reason for optimism about this airport is the possibilities that exist for using it as a training facility. Marine Institute's SERT centre is there now, Search and Emergency Rescue Training centre is there now and they provide a great service there. I think there are more possibilities there for partnering with the College of the North Atlantic, maybe other facilities to expand the programs that are offered there because these facilities exist.

Also, I think there are many possibilities for use of this great facility in conjunction maybe with Port Harmon as a way of attracting industries to this area.

Just in summary, I want to say I support this piece of legislation. I support the airport.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** Seeing no further speakers, we'll call.

Shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

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

**CHAIR:** Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

**CLERK:** An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957.

**CHAIR:** Shall the long title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Madam Chair, I move that the Committee rise, report the resolution to Bill 26 carried without amendment.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise, report resolution and Bill 26, carried without amendment.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Osborne):** The hon. the Deputy Speaker.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Ways and Means have considered the matters to them referred, and have directed me to report that they have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee of Ways and Means reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same, and ask leave to sit again.

When shall the report be received?

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** When shall the Committee have leave to sit again?

**CLERK:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. SPEAKER:** It's reported, sorry.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the resolution be now read the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that this resolution 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:** Be it resolved by the House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows:

“That it is expedient to bring in a measure further to amend the Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957, to provide for the advance of loans to and the guarantee of the repayment of bonds or debentures issued by or loans advanced to certain corporations.”

On motion, resolution read a first time.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the resolution be now read the second time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that this resolution 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 resolution.

On motion, resolution read a second time.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Loan Guarantee Act, 1957, and I further move that the said bill be now read the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To

Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957, Bill 26, and that the said bill shall now be read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the said bill be now read a first time?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance to introduce a bill, “An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957”, carried. (Bill 26)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957. (Bill 26).

On motion, Bill 26 read a first time.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that Bill 26 be now read a second time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 26 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:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957. (Bill 26).

On motion, Bill 26 read a second time.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that Bill 26 be now read a third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 26 be now read a third time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957. (Bill 26).

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 26)

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, at this point – after talking to my opposite House Leaders – we will take a short recess until 7 o'clock. We will resume debate at that point.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The House now stands recessed until 7 p.m. tonight.