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Speaker: Honourable Tom Osborne, MHA

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MR. SPEAKER (Osborne): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

I welcome to the Speaker's gallery today Members of Neria Aylward's family, her mother Sue Hurley and grandparents: retired Justice, and former Member of this Legislature, the hon. Fintan Aylward and Mrs. Ann Aylward. Neria is the subject of a Ministerial Statement today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: For Members' statements today we have the Members for the Districts of Exploits, Stephenville – Port au Port, Burin – Grand Bank, Terra Nova, Ferryland and Mount Pearl North.

The hon. the Member for the District of Exploits.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DEAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today in this hon. House to extend birthday greetings to an exemplary resident of my district.

Mrs. Ignatia Madden of Grenfell Heights, Grand Falls – Windsor, is celebrating her 95th birthday today with her family and friends. At 95, Mrs. Madden has retained considerable independence, keeping herself busy with gardening and yard work, washing the windows in her house, tarring the roof in summer, and shovelling snow in the winter. Though, she has six children and numerous grandchildren, she insists on performing all of these tasks on her own.

Despite the demands of raising six children on her own, Mrs. Madden still found the time to serve as a member of the St. Gerard's Guild, the Immaculate Conception Ministerial Team, the Catholic Women's League and as a volunteer with shut-ins and the sick.

She is a strong supporter of the Provincial Drama Festival, having travelled to communities

across the province as often as possible to attend them. Mrs. Madden is an inspiration to us all, enjoying a full and independent lifestyle well into her golden years.

I ask all Members of this hon. House to join with me in wishing Mrs. Madden all the best on this, her 95th birthday.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Stephenville – Port au Port.

MR. FINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am proud to take a moment to recognize Mrs. Cheryl Stagg from Stephenville. Cheryl will be receiving the Order of Newfoundland from the Lieutenant Governor at this year's investiture ceremony, being held next week. The Order of Newfoundland and Labrador is the highest honour of the province.

Cheryl is widely known for her involvement as the founding administrative director of the Stephenville Theatre Festival, which just concluded its 38th season, making it the longest-running professional theatre festival in the province.

Cheryl is chair of the board of the College of the North Atlantic and has previously served on the boards of Marine Atlantic and the Canadian National Railway. She's a board member with the NL Film Development Corporation, has served on the NL Arts Council board, the hospital board and chamber of commerce for Stephenville, just to name some of her community involvement.

In addition, she was a founding member and editor of *The Georgian* newspaper. Extremely humble, Cheryl is a compelling leader who is passionate about her community and the province, and she's truly deserving of this prestigious honour.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating Ms. Cheryl Stagg.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for the District of Burin – Grand Bank.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. HALEY: Mr. Speaker, Christmas is a magical time of year. In the Town of Grand Bank, that magic is amplified each year because of the extraordinary efforts of a group of citizens determined to bring a smile to the face of young and old alike.

Several years ago, this volunteer group, led by Chris Emberley, decided to decorate Frazer Park, a park in the center of town. Year by year, the display has grown, to the point this year it has spilled into the community park further up Main Street, Mr. Speaker.

The committee, which consists of Chris and Dallas Emberley, John Hillier, Dave and Dawn Noseworthy, Theresa Cousins, Brian and Amanda Dodge, Kelly Burton and Chantel Clarke, spend countless hours fundraising, planning new displays and erecting them in advance of the official light up, which draws people from Grand Bank and surrounding towns to see what new wonders will be unveiled this year, Mr. Speaker.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating the Frazer Park committee on a job well done and to thank them for their efforts on behalf of their fellow citizens each Christmas. Mr. Speaker, this committee demonstrates community spirit at its finest.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HOLLOWAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to recognize the efforts of the Port Blandford historical society.

In 2013, the historical society was formed with a mandate to focus on researching, preserving and promoting the history and heritage of the community. Their efforts have paid off.

I am proud to advise that on November 27, historical society member Ms. Pamela Leyden attended the 2016 Governor General's History Award for Community Programming in Ottawa and received an honourable mention on behalf of her group for its Story Board Project.

The Story Board Project focuses on 12 unique events in Port Blandford's history, including its connection to the Newfoundland Railway, the Forestry Patrol as well as its history in logging and shipbuilding. Of particular significance are the stories relating to the 1959 tragic death of Constable William Moss and the loss of five lives during the 1963 collapse of the Port Blandford Causeway.

Being recognized by the Governor General last week truly is a remarkable accomplishment for the members of the Historical Society, given its merely three years as a volunteer community organization.

Would all hon. Members join with me in congratulating the Port Blandford Historical Society for its vision and this milestone achievement?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Ferryland.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today in this hon. House to recognize and congratulate the community of Portugal Cove South and the region on the announcement of July 17, 2016 to have Mistaken Point designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Over the past number of years many of the residents, community groups, federal and provincial departments have worked very hard to make this happen. It was indeed a pleasure to work with all who were involved; it was great to see the passion and dedication from the community coming together to achieve such a significant accomplishment, to put the area on the world stage. This will provide much-needed economic growth and will attract many visitors to the area.

I would like to acknowledge the residents who, for decades, recognized the importance of the area and elevated the importance and protection of the site so we could be here today.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members of the House to join me in congratulating the community of Portugal Cove South, all the community partners and volunteers on making Mistaken Point Ecological Reserve designed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Before I recognize the Member for Mount Pearl North, we welcome members of Levandier family today to the public gallery. They're the subject of the Member's statement.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

MR. KENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in the hon. House today with a heavy heart to recognize a long-time resident of Mount Pearl. Richard Levandier passed peacefully away in October surrounded by family.

Richard was well known in the City of Mount Pearl. Any Kinsmen event, and most other community events, you were sure to see him there. Richard was a dedicated volunteer in our community. Recently, he received Mount Pearl's 2016 Community Service Award. He was recognized over the years for his volunteerism, with such awards as the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal and the Beaumont-Hamel Local Hero Commemorative Award.

One of Richard's many passions was slo-pitch softball. He was involved with Mount Pearl Men's Slo-Pitch Softball League for over 25 years. At the Citizen of the Year award ceremony in April of this year, Richard received a big surprise as the softball field was being named after him.

Richard will be greatly missed by his family, members of Kinsmen and Kinettes, his friends, but also all residents of Mount Pearl who will

miss his outstanding dedication to our community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues in this House to join me in honouring the life of Richard Levandier and the incredible contribution he made to Mount Pearl and to Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a historic event for our province: the appointment of the Hon. Mr. Justice Malcolm Rowe to the Supreme Court of Canada. Justice Rowe becomes the first jurist from Newfoundland and Labrador to be named to this illustrious bench, the highest court in our country.

This past Friday I had the honour and privilege of joining Supreme Court of Canada Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin, federal minister of Justice Jody Wilson-Raybould, Justice Rowe's family and friends and members of the justice and legal communities in honour of Justice Rowe's appointment.

Mr. Speaker, it's always been our view that Newfoundland and Labrador has eminently qualified jurists to serve on the Supreme Court of Canada. We advocated for the vacancy created with the retirement of Justice Cromwell to be filled by an appointment from our province. The merit-based approach for appointments has confirmed regional representation and reflects the beliefs of all Atlantic Canadians that this important convention be honoured.

Of course, convention aside, Justice Rowe is the best person for the job. He has a sharp mind and a wealth of experience. This was evident in his

application and the question-and-answer session before the House of Commons Justice and Human Rights Committee and Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee.

Justice Rowe made Newfoundlanders and Labradorians proud as we watched intently during that session. His forthcoming decisions will help form the fabric of our country. For that, we will all benefit.

I ask all hon. Members of this House to join me in congratulating and celebrating this remarkable achievement of Justice Rowe's appointment. We wish him well in this new endeavour.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement today. As the Official Opposition, we join the minister and the government in congratulating Mr. Justice Malcolm Rowe on his appointment to the Supreme Court of Canada. It's truly an honour, I'm sure, for him to be the first jurist from this province to sit on the country's most prestigious bench in the Supreme Court of Canada.

Having individuals from our province to sit in such a position is something that we can all be very proud of and thankful for.

As the minister advocated, I can tell you myself personally, and Members opposite, we advocated as well, and I believe that our efforts have paid off for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I think of young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who are aspiring to have a legal career that this is something they can now also aspire to in their future.

Again, I congratulate, Mr. Justice Rowe.

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. This indeed is a remarkable achievement, and congratulations to hon. Mr. Justice Malcolm Rowe on being called to the Supreme Court of Canada. Canada's Supreme Court is highly regarded internationally for its member's legal scholarship. Justice Rowe will certainly add to that reputation.

Justice Rowe joked that as a young lawyer he had always hoped he would get a change to appear before the Supreme Court. Well, look where he is today.

Bravo, hon. Mr. Justice Malcolm Rowe and thank you for your service.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this hon House to recognize two individuals who have demonstrated a strong propensity to emerge as leaders for the world's future and as a result, have been recently named to the Rhodes Scholars-elect class of 2017.

Neria Aylward of St. John's and Maike van Niekerk of Corner Brook are two of the 95 scholars from around the world selected to commence studies at the University of Oxford in October, 2017.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Aylward completed her undergraduate degree as a Blyth Scholar at Pembroke College, University of Cambridge. Her third-year dissertation studied Inuit political activism in response to the international seal hunt controversy, and for this dissertation she undertook fieldwork in Iqaluit, Nunavut. Ms. Aylward also has a keen interest in international diplomacy, having interned in the Humanitarian Mediation Programme at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Geneva, Switzerland. She is a graduate of Holy Heart High School in St. John's.

Ms. van Niekerk is a Schulich Leadership Scholar currently studying oncology-focused nursing at Dalhousie University. She has earned a perfect academic average, while conducting research exploring the relationship between historical traumas, psychological distress and cancer diagnoses among Indigenous peoples in Canada. Ms. van Niekerk was recently named one of Canada's Top 20 Under 20 for her charitable program, Katrin's Karepackage, which raises money to help offset travel costs for cancer patients living in rural communities. She graduated as class president and valedictorian from Corner Brook Regional High School with a 99 per cent average in 2013.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KIRBY: The Rhodes Scholarship is a life-changing opportunity for exceptional young people with the potential to make a difference for good in the world.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Ms. Neria Aylward and Ms. Maike van Niekerk on becoming the Rhodes Scholar-elects for the 2017 class. We wish these outstanding all-around students every success in their studies at Oxford and all their future endeavours.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. It gives me great pleasure to join with this House and congratulate Ms. Aylward, Ms. van Niekerk on being named to the Rhodes Scholar-elect call of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, I'm confident that all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians take the utmost pride in the accomplishments and success of our citizens, and today is no exception. These individuals are an inspiration to us all and their hard work, dedication and passion is to be commended.

I would like to also extend congratulations to the family and friends of these recipients who no doubt supported and encouraged them on their steps through their journeys. To witness all that these individuals have accomplished thus far in their lives is a testament that the future contributions to our global community will be nothing other than exceptional.

Congratulations to you both.

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 his statement. I am so pleased to wish Ms. Aylward and Ms. Niekerk congratulations on being two of the 95 Rhodes Scholars chosen this year.

Judging by their achievements so far, I know they will make a difference in our society for years to come. This is a reminder to us of the tremendous high quality of our students. In a province with such a small population and the responsibility we have to do all we can to ensure that our educational system supports our students to achieve their full potential as these two wonderful young women have shown.

Thank you, 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.

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

Mr. Speaker, today I ask the Premier: Why was the construction of the ice boom cancelled for this year?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, the construction of the ice boom – what the former premier is talking about is at the Muskrat Falls Project. The cancellation of the ice boom this year was related to some leakages that we had seen within the cofferdam itself, so it required necessary repairs.

Also to that, there were some disruptions around some protests that had occurred. But really it was a combination of factors, I'd say, Mr. Speaker, on why the cofferdam and the ice boom will not be in place. But what Nalcor has done, what we have directed them to do, is make sure they would put other measures in place to actually prevent as much damage to the infrastructure that's at the Muskrat Falls site.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I ask the Premier to tell this House when he was made aware of the delay.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It was just a few days ago through a release from Nalcor. Days prior to that, we knew that because of the decreasing amount of water that had to have been released, there was seepage at the cofferdam.

These are really not unexpected with a cofferdam. This is really not a concrete structure; what you see put in place are rocks that were put there. It's not unusual to get seepage from the cofferdam but this was more than was anticipated and it prevented Nalcor to get the water levels up to the required amount that they would have needed to put the proper boom in place.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I ask the Premier to clarify his statement. Is he saying that he became aware of this as a result of the release issued by Nalcor just a few days ago. Is that how he became aware of it?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think the province – indeed most people were aware that there was water seeping through the cofferdam. This was publicly known that water had to be decreased. As a matter of fact, you go and do the repairs at the cofferdams so it was then that there were ongoing problems. They had brought in people to actually do some regrouting and so on to prevent this from happening.

Ideally, with the weather, with the river freezing up and so on, this is when the boom – it was not just the seepage, but there was a combination of impacts. Of course, the weather in Labrador this time of the year, we saw the river freezing up; that was an issue. We saw the seepage; that was an issue. There were some disruptions, as we all know, Mr. Speaker.

So the engineers, the people who are doing the job at Nalcor, they had made a decision based on a combination of things that were incurring on the project, that putting the boom in place was something that they would be able to do this year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I think he said yes, that's when he found out about it, through the release from Nalcor.

But I ask the Premier: When was the boom scheduled to be installed?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The construction of the boom, ideally if you go back to really September, there was an indication then that they would like to get the water levels up. This, of course, was the notice that went out, as a part of a public advisory. This would let people know that around October they would be in a position to actually put the boom in place. Of course, there was a combination of things that happened. There was some seepage, some extra seepage that didn't allow that to happen.

Mr. Speaker, this was a construction schedule. We've seen these are done by the people that are responsible, the engineering, the people that are responsible for, actually, the construction of the project. So ideally they would have hoped to have that done by October of this year, but there was a window there. Clearly, given what's happened at the project right now, that window could not be met and the boom would not go in place this year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I'll ask the Premier: Why didn't the flooding take place earlier than October?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to clarify something, too, in terms of what the former premier is calling flooding. It was increasing water levels that were a requirement to protect the infrastructure at the project itself. We had met with the Aboriginal leaders as you know and, Mr. Speaker, there was a determination, based on what we had dealt with, with the engineering so that the water could be released again this year – or next spring, I would say.

As part of the construction of the project itself, getting water levels up to put the boom in place,

Nalcor and the people that are constructing that would have hoped to have that in place for this fall. That was put in place really to help protect the integrity of the assets that were in place. Ideally, if they had met their schedule, Mr. Speaker, it would have been done this fall.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

So they haven't met the schedule. Last week the minister said that to repair the cofferdam could be a few weeks away.

I ask the Premier: What impacts will that have on the flooding of the reservoir?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Getting the water levels up to where they want it, the current repairs are undergoing at the cofferdam right now. Plus they're looking at other mitigating efforts that will be put in place to protect the integrity of the assets at the Muskrat Falls site.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the ideal situation that we'd see. The boom itself would have been what the project would have liked to have done, no question about that. But now, what Nalcor has been doing, through the work of the engineers, is to put in place other mitigating efforts to actually protect that infrastructure that's in place.

Obviously, it is a very complicated project. I'm not an engineer, Mr. Speaker, but what I've been told and what Nalcor are putting in place is the best that they can to help protect that infrastructure for this winter.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I'll ask the Premier: What is the actual risk to the infrastructure as a result of these delays?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The former premier would know that this happens as a combination of things. We've seen slippage in schedule in this for quite some time, slippage that you would see in schedule maybe back when he was the Premier. I would suggest it would have been part of this as well, because, if you remember, the diversion of that river was to occur long before now. So when the former premier, on his watch, I would say, Mr. Speaker, some of what we're seeing today is a result of what has happened in the past few years as well. So there's a combination of impacts that are here.

Mr. Speaker, the number in terms of the dollar value and the schedule lost right now, the CEO, in a report that he gave last week, would anticipate that this could be a few months. Of course, there is some money that would be attached to that, in upwards to about a couple-hundred million dollars.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Well, the weather challenges in Labrador are well known, the risk of damage to infrastructure if timelines weren't met is well known. The Premier of the day has been in power now for 12 months.

So I ask him: When were you first made aware there was potential damage to infrastructure if the timelines weren't met? Premier, when were you first made aware of it?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I just mentioned earlier, there are a number of different impacts and targets they were trying to meet with that project.

The level of water seepage that was coming from the cofferdam was not something they would have been aware of until they started increasing water levels at the cofferdam. So these were ongoing. These were daily occurrences. The managers of the project did the best job they could do. They're currently working at that now with re-grouting, replacing rocks and so on, also making extra efforts, by other means, not just by the boom alone.

This was just a few days ago, Mr. Speaker, that we were made aware of this. No different than I would anticipate when the former premier was in place, that he would meet with the CEO and so on and get his regular updates.

Mr. Speaker, this is an ongoing problem and now they're looking for resolution.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

It sounds again like the Premier just became aware – I believe it was on Friday when Nalcor issued a release on the impacts of these delays.

I'll ask the Minister of Natural Resources, who's responsible for the file and responsible for Nalcor, if the Premier only became aware on Friday, I ask the minister, when did she become aware that if timelines were not met, flooding was not completed, that there could be infrastructure damage?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I indicated last week, the developments around the cofferdam are fairly new. About mid-month we understood that the seepage was a little bit more than they had anticipated, so Nalcor lowered the water levels. They brought in some specialists, geotechnical engineers, SNC-Lavalin and Hatch, as I indicated last week.

This is an ongoing situation developing. I would say in the last few days, last week, I was made aware there is a potential that they could not put in the log boom as they had wanted to do. They are looking at how to mitigate the risks involved in the downstream assets. So this is an ongoing situation. Today there are engineers on site looking at how to best move forward, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Last week in one of the comments that the CEO of Nalcor made, he said they ran out of time. He said they simply ran out of time, and he referenced the October protest.

I ask the minister: What was the impact of the protest to the contracts and the timeline in the budget of this project?

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

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, as the CEO of Nalcor has indicated, the impacts of the time delay around the protests have made an impact on getting the cofferdam completed and getting the water raised in the reservoir. We don't have finalized details on what those impacts would be, because this is an ongoing situation. Nalcor is working on mitigations. They're working diligently to make sure that we protect the assets downstream on behalf of the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I'll ask the minister: When is the last time that she visited the Muskrat Falls site to view for herself the circumstances that exist there and the mitigation efforts that are taking place? When is the last time she actually went on site to have a look at that?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am not a geotechnical engineer, and we have a very skilled workforce in Muskrat Falls actually doing the work. We have brought in SNC-Lavalin as well as Hatch, who are geotechnical engineers, who are reviewing and working on the site at present time.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that if the Muskrat Falls Project had been well managed from the beginning we wouldn't be this far behind in the project, nor would we have the enormous costs we have with Muskrat Falls.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

It almost sounds like she hasn't been to Muskrat Falls. And the talented work –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. P. DAVIS: Well, she never answered the question, I say to Members opposite. She never answered a very simple question. The talented workforce that works at Nalcor is the same talented workforce that did the project when we were in government too, I say to the minister opposite.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: So I'll ask the minister again: What steps are being taken to minimize the concerns and the potential for significant damage to the infrastructure at Muskrat Falls?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have SNC-Lavalin as well as Hatch geotechnical engineers on site today. Nalcor, as the project manager, they have an integrated management team on the project. They are on

site, Mr. Speaker. They're looking at all the different opportunities there are to mitigate risk downstream.

They are also watching the weather patterns and the freeze up on the river itself. They are making progress on bringing in, as I said last week, materials for the cofferdam. They are doing grouting, Mr. Speaker. It will be a couple of weeks and then they will be able to raise the water levels.

What's important, Mr. Speaker, I understand from the geotechnical engineers is to be able to raise that water, and that's what they're focused on today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

A few weeks ago during the time while protesters were stating their beliefs and taking their position in Labrador, officials had made a comment that they believed that the delays could cost between \$200 million and \$300 million just in contractual delays and claims from contractors who had to shut down the site.

I ask the minister: Do you have an update on the potential cost to the project as a result of those delays, as well as potential damage to the infrastructure because of your construction delays?

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

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, if the former administration and the former premier had taken the opportunity to meet with and understand the issues around the Muskrat Falls Project put forward by the indigenous leaders, we wouldn't be in this situation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, we do not have an understanding at present because this is an

ongoing situation. We do not have a finalized figure on what the delay in the project is costing because of the protest or because of these changes with the cofferdam. We will bring that forward as soon as we have that information.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, we are very much focused and Nalcor is very much focused on mitigating the risks to our downstream assets.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I wouldn't expect there would be finalized numbers for quite some time but if the minister could provide an update as they understand and grasp an understanding of the increased cost because of the delays over the last number of months. Maybe if the minister took the time to go visit the site, she could understand it better and learn better what was actually taking place down there.

So I'll ask the minister – well, she's had lots of opportunity, I say to Members opposite, to rise in her place to say when she went there. She had at least two opportunities and she didn't do it. So I'll ask the minister when will you provide an update on the cost and the schedule implications at Muskrat Falls as you know it again.

Minister, you're responsible for the file; when will you advise the House and the people of the province what the latest is?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I've noticed that the former premier is asking a lot of questions about Muskrat Falls and that project today. He's even made reference to some of the Aboriginal consultations and discussions with the Aboriginal leaders. Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud that we've had a working relationship that is much stronger than what we've seen from the former premier.

The line of questioning that he's coming with today is we know there were going to be

increased costs; we know there are losses scheduled as a result of the protesters. But I want to remind the people of this province, remind them of this: It was only just a few weeks ago that this former premier stood up at a convention in Gander when asked about methylmercury and he said this: Well, I didn't make myself familiar with the science. Today, he's standing in this House asking about project delays when he had years to get familiar with the project and made a conscious decision not to.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

What the Premier is referring to is the flip-flop by his minister who, in June, agreed with the methylmercury reports, and then in the fall took a completely different view, which according to them led to significant delays in the project.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: This is coming from the Premier who is also the Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs. According to the ATIPP information that we received, he spent no more than seven nights in Labrador since he became the minister. Twelve months he's been the Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs and he's spent seven days in Labrador on this, where the most important project in the history of our province is taking place.

I ask the Premier: Do you have an update on what the actual costs are going to be? Two hundred million to \$300 million, I suggest, what we knew during the protest, is probably small compared to what could happen as a result of the delays and the damage that could happen over this winter.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to remind the former premier that we have four MHAs that represent Labrador. We work very closely with those MHAs, as we do with our MP, as we do with Aboriginal leaders. Mr. Speaker, we are working very closely. I can assure the former premier of this: That we have made ourselves quite familiar with the impacts on this project in Labrador and for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

The recent numbers that we've had between \$200 million and \$300 million, these are the numbers. The schedule delays that we have out there, they're the ones that we know we can use for best judgment right now, Mr. Speaker.

But I will assure you of this: That we are working with the people of Labrador and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to get this project back on track. We were left with quite the mess because of the situation that you did not pay attention to.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Natural Resources: When were you first made aware of the issues concerning the obligations of the 2013 Voisey's Bay agreement and the possible impending layoffs at Vale?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

During November, Vale did come to see the officials in my department. They have had a conversation with the officials. We received a letter; I believe it was last week. We are responding to that letter asking for more technical details.

Obviously, this is a change to what would be the project milestones, if it is agreed to. We're requesting more information so that we can make an informed decision.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if the Opposition hadn't raised this issue last week, the public likely would still not be aware of what's going on.

When was the minister going to let the public know exactly what was happening with this project?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We certainly would have let people of the province know about Vale's underground mine when it was responsible to do so. Mr. Speaker, Vale has only made a representation to the department. It was only last week that we received a letter from them. It's only now that we're responding, asking for more technical information.

Mr. Speaker, no decisions have been made. They are putting forward a case for making some amendments to the agreements and we're reviewing that. At that point in time, once we have all the information, we'll certainly make it available.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I say to the minister: Any time there are employment layoffs or there are elements of an agreement that's not being followed, it's certainly important to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. They have a right to know.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HUTCHINGS: I ask the minister: Is your administration holding Vale to their commitment to produce first ore at its underground mine by 2020? How does the latest news impact their contractual obligations and particular timelines?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the question.

It's very interesting, I say, Mr. Speaker, when I'm listening to the Member opposite asking these questions about Vale and the underground mine. The underground mine is continuing. Vale has not asked for any extension to the 2020 obligations. What they've asked for and as I indicated last week – what Vale has asked for is they've asked for some time to do more advanced engineering before they go to procurement.

That's their question before us. We've gone back asking for more technical information before we make any decision or even have a full view of what their anticipated impacts would be under the agreements.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister referenced last week about engineering procurement. Those are elements of the operation of the business plan of that company. That's not something we're concerned with. There were timelines laid out, there were contractual obligations. It's up to them to follow her; it's her job to oversee it.

I ask the minister: What the people of the province want to know is what are you doing to deal with these issues?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

As my hon. colleague would know, Mr. Speaker, there have been several amendments to the agreements with Vale because Vale is making decisions and moving forward on the development of the underground mine. There are several, several amendments under the former administration.

We have been asked, as of a week or so ago, by Vale to consider making a change to their agreements. We are reviewing the information they have presented. We have gone back and asked for more technical details.

We'll know more as we move forward, Mr. Speaker, but certainly this government will make sure that it is in the best interest of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Mr. Speaker, any amendments that were made in Vale in the project were made with the best interest of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. That project was up and kept running and moving forward because we have an underground mine that is under construction, and that's what the minister needs to be concerned about.

Can the minister tell us directly: What changes have Vale requested in terms of the current agreement?

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

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, we have only just – in the last number of weeks – received a letter from Vale asking for some changes because they want to make sure they have advanced engineering before they get into procurement. That is the request. They're asking for some time within the existing framework of time in the agreement. We've gone back to ask for some detailed information.

As I receive this information, as we review and consider impacts, we'll consider whether or not an amendment is even possible, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Employees at IOC said they are working in a climate of fear. People are being forced to work overtime, not getting any required time off and subject to disciplinary action if they take a day off.

I ask the Minister of Labour: Has your department undertaken an audit to make sure that all labour laws are being adhered to?

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

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has one of the most robust labour regimes anywhere in North America. It is a jurisdiction which takes great pride in our ability to meet the needs not only of employers but of employees, especially within the context of a collective agreement. Collective agreements are in place. There are ways and means to be able to deal with all issues that arise in the course of a working day and in the workplace. Those processes are underway.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island for a quick question.

MR. BRAZIL: While in Opposition, Members opposite constantly raised concerns about labour relations and requested government undertake an industrial inquiry. Today it appears things have only worsened.

I ask the minister: What actions are you taking to address these issues?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Educations, Skills and Labour.

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, officials from within the labour branch are always in communications with all affected parties, stakeholders, in this. Whenever a specific request or a circumstance arises that needs the attention or is being requested to receive the attention of officials within either the labour board or within the department, they're acted on accordingly and with haste.

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.

The independent engineer's report, arising from the Muskrat Falls site visit in July, identified – and I quote – a risk of serious leakage with respect to the cofferdam.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: When did Nalcor first learn of this conclusion of the independent engineer and when did Nalcor inform the government?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Nalcor certainly appreciates, as do the people of the province, the work of the independent engineer. The independent engineer does visit the site on a regular basis. On an ongoing basis, as a province we listen to and respect what the independent engineer has to say, as does Nalcor.

With regard to the specific question, the independent engineer did raise some issues around broken rock and other issues around some of the work taking place at Muskrat Falls during the summer. This is unrelated to the cofferdam, Mr. Speaker, but we did make sure that Nalcor was made accountable for that work, and made sure that they were mitigating in that.

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 point out that the quote that I used in the first question related specifically to the cofferdam.

I ask the Premier: Can he explain why we are only now learning that major cofferdam issues were identified in July?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The independent engineer did his work in July, returned, produced the report – the finalized report was received, I believe, by November 1. The Oversight Committee, obviously, has gone back to Nalcor on this report, has received a response from Nalcor making sure – this is the benefit of the Oversight Committee – that all of the issues have been addressed. This is the ongoing process, Mr. Speaker, and an important one.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Two government representatives were present at the July site visit with the independent engineer.

I ask the Premier: Are we being told that they did not immediately report on such a serious matter?

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

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, Nalcor, as the project managers, would have had people on site. The Oversight Committee would have had people on site; they would have discussed this issue.

The independent engineer offers some suggestions in what could happen, make sure

that people understand and they would have worked on those. The Oversight Committee would have spoken to Nalcor about these issues and we have an ongoing process of making sure that these issues are addressed.

Mr. Speaker, regarding the cofferdam, seepage is not unusual and work was still ongoing on the cofferdam during the summer and into the fall.

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, Mr. Speaker.

Last week in response to a question on the cofferdam, the Minister of Natural Resources downplayed the significance of the leakage, as she's doing today. A day later, Nalco's CEO said problems with the cofferdam will now lead to project infrastructure damage.

I ask the minister: Why did she downplay the issue in the House last week? They've had the report since November 2. Has she read the independent engineer's report?

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

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, I was indeed asked a question on Thursday with regard to the cofferdam by the Third Party. I responded we were concerned about the time of year. We were concerned about ice coverage. We were concerned about the delay. I answered that in the question, and *Hansard* reflects that, Mr. Speaker.

With regard to independent engineer's report, I have seen a copy of the report. It is available publicly on Nalcor's site.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I will allow a very quick question from the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

MS. MICHAEL: I ask the Premier: Is this province's multi-billion dollar asset in jeopardy?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The work is ongoing at that Muskrat Falls Project. We just recently have been able to secure another \$2.9 billion in the enhanced federal loan guarantee. I would not consider this project to be in jeopardy. It is no doubt, as you would know, creating a fair amount of interest and a financial demand on our province.

In terms of the project itself being in jeopardy, what we would see right now, when you look at the transmission line, many of the projects and different contracts that are in place are ongoing. There has been a lot of discussion around the cofferdam itself and around the generation station right now, but I would not consider this project to be in jeopardy.

I do know our job right now is to get it back on track, get the schedule back on track and get this budget back intact as much as possible.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act No. 4. (Bill 60)

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The City Of Corner Brook Act, The City Of Mount Pearl Act, And The City Of St. John's Act. (Bill 58)

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Municipalities Election Act. (Bill 57)

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. JOYCE: I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Workplace Health, Safety And Compensation Act. (Bill 59)

MR. SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following private member's resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Assembly urges government to request a conflict of interest advisory committee, pursuant to section 14 of the *Conflict of Interest Act, 1995* to review the terms of employment contract to the Chief Executive Officer of Nalcor Energy and Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and determine the appropriateness of the employment contract; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this House urges the Lieutenant Governor in Council to ensure the conflict of interest advisory committee's report on this review is made public.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 63, the private member's resolution just entered by my colleague will be the one that we will debate on Wednesday, December 7, on Private Members' Day.

MR. SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

MR. KENT: Wow, things are moving right along here today, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS the decision of the United Kingdom to withdraw from the European Union presents new trade opportunities; and

WHEREAS the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has a historic trade relationship with the United Kingdom; and

WHEREAS the two regions may mutually benefit from trade opportunities;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to develop an economic strategy which capitalizes on trade opportunities between the United Kingdom and Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to have an opportunity to raise this issue once again in the House of Assembly. Back in June, the people of England voted in a referendum to leave the EU. Since then, the new prime minister has made it clear that the will of the British people will be brought into effect, and that by March of next year, the UK will have formally started the process of leaving which will, of course, take some time.

It's important to note that during this process, known as the triggering of Article 50 of the

Lisbon Treaty, the UK remains a fully paid-up member of the EU as before. It's also worthy to note that Europe and the European Union are not the same thing. For instance, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland are not EU members.

As the UK leaves the EU over the next few years, powers that have been taken to Brussels will be returned to the UK government in Westminster. Most importantly for this province is the power for the UK to make its own international trade deals.

You may ask why that matters. Doesn't the EU strike its own trade deals? One only has to look to Belgium where Canada's trade deal with the EU was at one point vetoed by the region of Wallonia. It is very difficult to get an EU trade agreement. Twenty-eight member states all have to agree on the trade treaty or it falls through.

However, a bilateral trade deal between Canada and the UK will be much easier. The deal would be a best-fit model for these two countries; countries that share so much history, two countries that could come together to promote trade and commerce without the hindrance of 27 other European states vying to get a better deal for champagne producers or Italian car manufacturers for instance.

So this really matters to our province because the UK is the second-largest buyer of goods from Newfoundland and Labrador on the international market. That's significant, so it makes sense for us to build a stronger and better relationship between our countries.

It can't simply be about the ongoing work we've been doing within Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development for years. There's lots of good work being done, but this requires a concerted effort because there's a unique opportunity that's before us and should be pursued.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. 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 Newfoundland and Labrador has the highest percentage of the workforce earning the provincial minimum wage in Canada, with women, youth and those from rural areas making up a disproportionate number of these workers;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to legislate an immediate increase in the minimum wage to restore the loss of purchasing power since 2010 and an annual adjustment to the minimum wage beginning in 2016 to reflect the consumer price index.

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

Mr. Speaker, I point out how disappointed the petition signers are that the minister chose this year, in 2016, to ignore what they were asking for and to ensure that minimum wage earners in Newfoundland and Labrador in 2017 will still be living in poverty. A 25 cent raise in April, and a 25 cent raise in November of 2017, is not going to take care of the concern of the people who signed this petition. There is no way that 50 cents in 2017 is going to restore the loss of purchasing power since 2010, the last time these workers saw a rise in the minimum wage.

There's no way that 50 cents is going to ensure that we move above being the lowest minimum wage in the country, because while we may be going up, the other provinces are going to be going up in 2017 as well. I can assure the minister that most likely we will still, in November 2017, have the lowest minimum wage in this country and we will still have people working for a wage that is putting them below the poverty line, Mr. Speaker.

It's our minimum wage workers who are going to food banks. It's our minimum wage workers who can't make ends meet. There is no reason why this government could not have put the minimum wage up further and ensured that we

would continue to have workers improving their lot, not worsening their lot, Mr. Speaker.

What was asked for and what this government hasn't done is to bring the minimum wage up to a point that makes up for the lost earning power and then add to that, Mr. Speaker. The minister has chosen not to do that. He has ignored the voice of the people who are living in poverty in this province. People who are working, some of them holding down two and three jobs because not only being on minimum wage, the jobs are temporary very often. There's insecurity. They have no idea if they're going to be able to keep all of the jobs they have. We have to end poverty in this province, and this is one way to do it, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS government has once again cut the libraries budget, threatening 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.

Mr. Speaker, this particular batch of petitions comes from Port au Port. Like so many other public libraries in small rural communities, the Port au Port library at St. Thomas Aquinas school is highly valued by the people who use it. As one patron put it, a library is a library because of the people. It's not just about books.

Another patron speaking about an elderly woman in her community who had been through a period of illness said, books delivered from libraries got her through hours of not being well and a library keeps a world open for seniors when it would otherwise be shutting down on them.

Library users in Port au Port noted that Service Canada had previously offered help with job search, only to lose that service when the Service Canada office in the community was closed. The library had taken over that service but now even that is in jeopardy. As we've seen in the past few years, the number of services that have been stripped away from rural communities all over the province and this is just another service that is on the verge of being stripped away.

Mr. Speaker, as in other communities, the Port au Port library hosts a number of programs and events, including a breakfast program, the only summer program for kids in the community, the only one, storytimes, school visits, a program to help dropouts, knitting classes and shut-in services. So this library serves the people of that community in a broad number of ways.

An interesting program in this area with a significant Indigenous population is a special program educating people about the Indigenous community's history, language and culture. The people of Port au Port will be the poorer for it if they lose this important pillar of their community.

As we heard on CBC Radio Sunday morning, there was a whole program on the importance of libraries, not just about books but about being at the heart of the community.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS the education of children is one of the most important and vital investments that can be made in the success of our children; and

WHEREAS the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador should be choosing educational options that will provide all students of our province with a higher standard of education and enhance the learning experience for all youth; and –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. BRAZIL: WHEREAS the government's decision to make cuts to teachers and to our educational system will have a negative effect on the students;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to reverse the decision effective immediately.

Mr. Speaker, I had hoped, with the first term of our school system being done, that this wouldn't still surface. It was very doubtful, knowing the dramatic impact that the cuts have had on the education system; but knowing the due diligence by our administrators, by our educators, by the volunteer groups, by parent organizations and school councils, that maybe, maybe some way we could dodge a bullet here.

Unfortunately, the feedback I'm getting from administrators, the feedback I'm getting from school teachers, the feedback from organizations, particularly those who deal with the schools themselves, the school councils, but particularly from parents and even students, this hasn't happened. The impact on their ability to have a quality of education has been severely

tarnished here, and tarnished because of the lack of supports here.

First of all, we're cutting teaching units in our schooling system. So obviously that has an impact on the time that a teacher can spend with a student, particularly those who may have some challenges in particular areas or may need some additional help in some way, shape or form. The challenges around overcrowding, obviously it's adding to an inability to be able to offer programs in the proper environment, in a learning, conducive environment.

Issues around multi-grade classrooms: We know teachers are struggling with the fact that the ability of resources and the ability for them to be able to spend quality time with people are limited. Also around some of the training that would have been necessary to be able to make that transition more fluent. The all-day kindergarten, while a great asset to have, because of the preparation not being done in advance, added challenges with overcrowding, with the supervision, challenges around those things.

The loss of core French programs: Obviously, for those who would have some options around potential careers down the road and having to modify exactly their stream of education has had a major impact. When we look at busing, even the busing schedule has a detrimental effect on the learning ability of a number of young people. Their families have been, no doubt, put in an area here where it becomes a challenge being able to get the students to school on time. Some of the issues around the stress around getting a kid who has to walk a further distance, or all of a sudden there is a time frame there that they miss extracurricular activities after school because the timing doesn't work.

There was little to no consultation with people, all of these factors and the factor here that the consultation between all the key stakeholders wasn't done in advance so that you best address the issues that are going to be relevant when you talk about cuts to education.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll add this petition again. No doubt, I'll get a chance to speak to it again.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Orders of the Day.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I call Order 2, third reading of Bill 51.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that Bill 51, An Act To Amend The Emergency 911 Act, The Emergency Services Act And Fire Protection Services Act be now read the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 51 be now read a third time.

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

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those against?

Carried.

CLERK (Ms. Barnes): A bill, An Act To Amend The Emergency 911 Act, The Emergency Services Act And The Fire Protection Services Act. (Bill 51)

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 51 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 Emergency 911 Act, The Emergency Services Act And The Fire Protection Services Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 51)

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 3, third reading of Bill 52.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, that Bill 52, An Act To Amend The Consumer Protection And Business Practices Act, be now read the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 52 be now read a third time.

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

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those against?

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Consumer Protection And Business Practices Act. (Bill 52)

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 52 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 Consumer Protection And Business Practices Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 52)

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, again seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting Secure Withdrawal Management For Young Persons, Bill 55, and I further move that the said bill now read the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded by the hon. the Government House Leader that he shall have leave to introduce Bill 55 and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those against?

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services to introduce a bill, "An Act Respecting Secure Withdrawal Management For Young Persons," carried. (Bill 55)

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting Secure Withdrawal Management For Young Persons. (Bill 55)

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 55 has now been read a first time.

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 55 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting The Rooms Corporation, Bill 56, and I further move that the said bill be now read the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded by the hon. the Government House Leader that he shall leave to introduce Bill 56 and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those against?

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development to introduce a bill, "An Act Respecting The Rooms Corporation," carried. (Bill 56)

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting The Rooms Corporation. (Bill 56)

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 56 has now been read a first time. When shall the said bill be read a second time?

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 56 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting Regulatory Accountability And Reporting, Bill 54, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded by the hon. Government House Leader that he shall leave to introduce Bill 54 and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Service NL to introduce a bill, "An Act Respecting Regulatory Accountability And Reporting," carried. (Bill 54)

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting Regulatory Accountability And Reporting. (Bill 54)

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 54 has now been read a first time. When shall the said bill be read a second time?

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 54 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 4, second reading of Bill 53.

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

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that Bill 53, An Act To Amend The Labour Standards Act No. 2, now be given second reading.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 53 be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Labour Standards Act No. 2." (Bill 53)

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

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

This is an important piece of legislation that I feel may receive support from all Members and all parties from within the House on its substance and the value that it creates to those that are impacted, those who are charged with

the requirements of caring for someone who is gravely ill.

Mr. Speaker, amendments to the *Labour Standards Act* which we are asking for leave to codify, to create into statute, build upon existing labour standards that prescribe and allow for a protected leave by employees from their workplace, from their employment, to be able to care for a direct relative, a family member, who is gravely ill and, in fact, facing unspeakable circumstances. Those that we would never wish to have to be placed on anyone.

Mr. Speaker, this bill, this amendment to the *Labour Standards Act* will build on an existing provision for compassionate care leave. Family members who are charged with the responsibility of caring for a family member who is facing terrible circumstances such as near death, currently can avail of up to eight weeks to 28 weeks – up to eight weeks of protection to be able to leave their employment and still be able to provide care for unpaid leave. This act, this amendment will increase that statutory protection to 28 weeks. It brings in line our legislation with recent changes introduced by the federal government to the federal labour code and to the Employment Insurance program.

Mr. Speaker, in January of 2016, the Government of Canada enhanced access to compassionate care benefits under the Employment Insurance program increasing those benefits from six weeks to up to 26 weeks for benefits. In addition to this, the period during which leave can be taken was expanded from a 26-week window to a 52-week window. The federal government also introduced changes to the *Canada Labour Code* to provide up to 28 weeks of job protection for federally regulated employees. Our legislation effectively mirrors this.

Mr. Speaker, compassionate care has indeed been in existence since 2004 when the federal government implemented changes to the Employment Insurance program to be able to enable workers to avail of up to six weeks of paid EI benefits while they are temporarily away from their work, to be able to provide care and support for a family member who is at a significant risk of death within the next 26 weeks or in six months.

The *Canada Labour Code* was amended at that time to provide job protection for up to eight weeks to enable employees under the federal jurisdiction to avail of this new benefit. The eight-week compassionate care allowance accounted for the two-week waiting period required to access Employment Insurance benefits.

Following the federal changes to both the EI program and the *Canada Labour Code*, in 2004 the province amended our own *Labour Standards Act* which establishes the minimum terms and conditions of employment in the province. The changes were to align with the changes made at the federal level and to ensure that workers could access this EI benefit should the need ever arise.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments to the *Labour Standards Act* before the House today will once again align our legislation with that of our federal government counterparts and will ensure increased job protection for workers providing support and care for a family member during, what we all know to be, an exceptionally difficult period in their lives. The increase in length of these benefits will help so many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians be more at peace during a challenging time, indeed. The last thing people should be worrying about is job security when duty calls you to look after a family member who's facing death.

Mr. Speaker, this is a benefit not only to employees but to employers as well. Obviously, an employee who's facing such circumstances will naturally be distracted. They will naturally be elsewhere. They will naturally need to be able to care for their loved one, for their family member. All employers would recognize how important it is to be able to provide such an opportunity, such a necessity to their own employees during such a difficult time. This is what we are all about, not only as a country, but in particular here as a Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Imagine, Mr. Speaker, if your own loved one became gravely ill. I'm sure that each and every one of us would want to spend as much time with them, caring for them, providing companionate care to help comfort them and to

provide them with some peace. These changes would do just that.

It would allow up to 28 weeks, that is approximately 6 months, of comforted care for a family member who is gravely ill, without that family member ever having to wonder or to question or to be uncertain about whether their job will be secure for them when it's time for them to return. That's why our government is proposing this legislation today and the change therein, as it will have a great impact on the lives of the people of our province who are facing such a challenging time.

The provincial government amended its own compassionate care leave policy I would like to add, to allow for extended access to unpaid companionate care leave, mirroring what we're doing here today, but for the provincial public sector employees who are away from work to be able to provide care or support to a gravely ill family member. Public service employees may be eligible to receive now up to 28 weeks of companionate care leave in the form of unpaid leave, an identical way we are offering it here on the floor of the House.

I want to say a very special thank you in recognition to the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board whose own leadership brought forward this particular policy within the provincial public sector, and it should be recognized as just that, leadership.

Government is committed to providing family friendly policies for its employees and this policy applies to all provincial employees. We continue to work with our federal partners, Mr. Speaker, to find the right balance to better support workers, improve mental health in the workplace, and meet the needs of employers, given the changing nature of work, not only here at home but globally.

These proposed changes align strongly with the government's commitment to work with and support employers, employees, and unions to foster positive employment relationships and work environments, which contribute, ultimately, to a stronger workforce and stronger economic growth here at home.

I would like to thank all Members of the House for what I anticipate will be support for this particular piece of legislation. For those who will take the opportunity to speak to the bill, I invite all hon. Members to share their perspectives.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. Members of the House for sharing their views of this bill with me already. I am encouraged by the support expressed by hon. colleagues for the working people of the province. Dealing with the modern demands of work, life and family in balance can be challenging enough without the added burden of caring for a gravely ill family member.

These amendments can help ensure that workers can be there for their loved ones when they are needed most, without having to worry about keeping their jobs. This bill supports Newfoundlanders and Labradorians by ensuring they have job protection and a source of income from the federal EI program during a very, very difficult time in their own lives.

I look forward, Mr. Speaker, hopefully, to the speedy passage of this legislation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is indeed a privilege to be able to stand and speak to Bill 53. I, too, have to agree with the minister that this is an important piece of legislation and it is a very important amendment to Bill 53, because it's about quality of life. It's about quality of life for an employee, but it's particularly about quality of life for a family member who finds themselves in great peril around a health condition, and it's about the whole concept of the family being able to support each other.

Obviously, what we think about here in our society, particularly Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who are the most caring and giving of any society, it's about how we support each other, but particularly how do we support each other when we're at a serious crossroads in addressing our health needs. In this case, when

you're in peril and you have a condition by a family member that is so grave that it may end up in the loss of that individual's life, you need to be able to concentrate on the quality of life for them and the quality of care. And everything else shouldn't be a distraction, and everything else shouldn't be a hindrance, and particularly it shouldn't be a stressor to you and your family when you deal with that.

And what this piece of legislation here does, it gives the people of this province an ability to minimize one of the impacts, the financial impact, on how they provide proper care for that individual.

I'm glad and I want to thank the minister and his staff for the debriefing. We had a good, open conversation about what this really means for people. The finances, no doubt, are important. It's about the stability; it's about the peace of mind for someone to be able to move towards providing a service, providing health care, and providing peace of mind for a family member for up to a year. That is very important and it's important for a number of reasons.

It's important because we keep our family unit together. It's important because you want to ensure whatever services or whoever provided health care, or whatever interventions can be done to ensure that persons quality of life – no matter what time frame may be left in it – is given and is supported in any way possible.

It also gives us any opportunity here to ensure that employers here are very cognizant of the fact of being supportive of their employees. There's no doubt in Newfoundland and Labrador we probably have the most supportive group of employers, from the Federation of Businesses to the Federation of Labour, to all of the unions to the private business people, small and large businesses, who support their employees.

That's why you notice employees who come in, in businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador, stay for the duration of their careers because they're committed, they're treated properly and it becomes a family-oriented process. In some cases, the employer has no control over what you may have access to when it comes to financial security.

EI is one of those processes where we all contribute to it. All employees and employers contribute to it and it gives you at least some peace of mind for a period of time that you have some sustainable income. Your concentration should be on the quality of health care.

So there's no doubt it's a great piece of legislation. It's been supported by the business community and they understand the merits here, and they understand the philosophy and the culture in this province of being able to support people. But there's no doubt, unless you've been through it, to understand the impact it has when you have to care for somebody who is terminally ill, having those things not to be a hindrance and not to have an impact on the other parts of your life about finances, knowing you still have to keep your own finances in order and your own homes available, you want to have additional monies to be able to support whatever the needs are of that one you're caring for.

So this is a good piece of legislation. It shows that we're proactive here, that we'll be only one of the four jurisdictions here that are bringing this in, in a timely fashion to improve the quality of life here. It also adds some stability here from a financial point of view, because the small disruption – and I know in talking to some of the employers, they accept this – may be they may have to retrain some people to come here. It may mean they change the process or they move people around, but they're accepting that.

They're accepting because for the betterment of their employee and the betterment for their reputation as an employer, but particularly for the betterment of the quality of care for that individual who's going through a particular very serious health situation that they want to be supportive of this. That is why this is a key piece of legislation.

It does alleviate some of the stresses that families are going to face. It would hopefully bond the family units here, because it's an opportunity here for a multitude of people in a family setting to be able to support the loved one that they're going to care for. It also ensures that our economy still moves forward, that our businesses are not hindered to a certain degree and that there's money still in the process here that we've been paying in for years and years.

Very few people, if anybody, would like to draw down on EI. It's a necessary support mechanism that's part of our process. In this case, it's not about the financial ability; it's about the stability to be able to offer what's being done here.

Mr. Speaker, I know myself and, no doubt, us on this side of the House of Assembly will be supporting this change to this piece of legislation. We think it will move forward in ensuring people have a better quality of life and families are reunited as they care for their loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for that. I compliment the minister and look forward to this passage in the House.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Harbour Grace – Port de Grave.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. P. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It certainly is a pleasure to stand here to speak to Bill 53. I'm very pleased that our government is introducing a bill to amend the *Labour Standards Act* to increase compassionate care leave provisions from eight weeks to 28 weeks, to bring our legislation in line with recent changes introduced by our federal counterparts.

Government is committed to providing family-friendly policies, as the minister outlined, for its employees. This policy applies to all employees. You should give your employer as much notice of your intentions as possible. Then, if you qualify, you can apply for EI benefits. At this time, your doctor should also provide a medical certificate to accompany your application. Employees under provincial jurisdiction and employed with the same employer for 30 days qualify for compassionate care leave.

We continue to work with our federal partners, business and labour to find the right balance to better support workers, improve mental health in

the workplace and meet the needs of employers, given the changing nature of work. The department engaged and researched cross-jurisdictional analysts with respect to current legislation and future amendments in relation to compassionate care in Canadian provinces and territories. This review confirmed that Manitoba, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have implemented legislation changes to increase compassionate care entitlement to 28 weeks and, as we understand, all other provinces are expected to come in line.

Our government believes in these situations the people of our province should not have to choose between their job and their family when faced with a serious medical crisis. Mr. Speaker, we can all put ourselves there. We never know and we can never take for granted our good health or what we will be facing at any given day.

Given the recent expansion of the companionate care benefits under the federal EI program, the province wants to bring our legislation in line with the federal government and other governments across Canada who have implemented legislation changes to enhance companionate care leave legislation.

I encourage all Members and our viewers at home, all of our constituents across Newfoundland and Labrador, if you have questions, to reach out and contact the Labour Standards Division of the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

Mr. Speaker, every Newfoundlanders and Labradorians pay in to EI benefits. We get up, we go to work, we take our jobs very seriously and we work hard. We pay these taxes. Lord knows we pay a lot of taxes here in our jurisdiction and in our country. So, of course, we deserve the very best; all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians deserve the very best. I look forward to the co-operation of all Members of the House. This is certainly a no-brainer. It's positive all around.

It is a pleasure to speak to Bill 53. I will take my seat and I will look forward, of course, to the co-operation of all Members on this.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's certainly a privilege and an honour for me to rise in the House today and speak briefly to Bill 53, An Act to Amend the Labour Standards Act No. 2. Myself and all my colleagues here in Opposition are proud and delighted to be supporting this bill, Mr. Speaker, because it really is a bill that is quite important to families who are facing critical illness.

I can speak to this based on my own personal experience. Back in 2002, my mother had a heart attack and it left her with only 20 per cent of her heart capacity functioning. At the time, all we could qualify for was five hours of home care a day. So I managed to work the hours such that I would take my lunch break and be with her in between when the workers weren't there and come 4:30, I was back at the house with mom. I stayed there until 9 o'clock the next day when the home care workers arrived again.

We were very blessed, Mr. Speaker, that our mom managed to live an additional five years. It was not expected that she would live beyond a few months. I truly believe it was the exceptional care that we were able to give her as her health care providers for the five hours, and as her family that she managed to enjoy five more years of a very good quality of life. All of her siblings, all of her brothers and sisters, her children and her grandchildren got to enjoy her wonderful company for another five years.

I won't say it was easy, Mr. Speaker, because it was exhausting. There were many a nights when I didn't shut my eyes because you were dealing with quite serious health care issues. By the time the end of five years was up, I was quite exhausted.

If a program like this had been available at the time, I most certainly would have availed of it, as would some of my brothers and sisters, Mr. Speaker. It truly does make a difference. There is nothing, I do believe, more important to any of us than the optimal care of our loved ones. I truly believe there is no one who can provide

such optimal care other than family members. The level of compassion, the level of understanding that we have as family members, I think, is second to none. It's certainly a wonderful initiative to bring forward, a great bill, as my hon. colleagues have already discussed here in the House today.

You have many worries when your loved one is suffering from a critical illness. The last of them needs to be where you're going to be able to put food on the table to sustain yourself and your own family during the time of caregiving. An incredibly stressful time, as my colleagues have already stated here again today. You really want to focus on enjoying quality of life that you have left with a person who has a critical illness. This bill is truly going to make a difference, I believe, in the lives of the caregivers and of the persons who are suffering from critical illness.

So we certainly will be supporting this bill on this side of the House. We look forward to its speedy passing here in the House of Assembly as well.

Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I, too, am happy to stand and speak to Bill 53, An Act to Amend the Labour Standards Act No. 2. I think the minister did a good job of presenting what this bill is all about, and my colleagues who have spoken to date as well. It is a pretty straightforward bill because it does increase the provincial compassionate care leave from eight to 28 weeks to reflect, I point out, the federal government's increase to compassionate leave to 28 weeks in January, 2016.

So we are joining with other provinces in bringing our legislation up to date with the federal government changes. We don't need to speak a lot to that, just to say that I am proud to be part of a country that does recognize the need for workers to be able to be involved with our families, and that family life and work life are

all intermeshed. That we need to take into consideration the fact workers have parents and children and members of extended family in their lives that are part of their lives and affect their lives.

We are very fortunate in this country to have Employment Insurance. To have an insurance that even though right now I find is quite inadequate for the needs of workers in the country and we have too low a percentage of unemployed workers who are eligible for it after paying into it. We have a lot of weaknesses in our Employment Insurance, something I would hope that my colleagues on the government side would recognize. It is something I would like to see the federal government take a very strong look at, but I think it takes provincial governments pushing the federal government on this issue.

Having said that, this one particular point with regard to compassionate leave I'm really glad to see, because in 2004 when the federal government first made the changes which allowed for the eight weeks, leave was granted for an employee who had a family member with a significant risk of death within 26 weeks; yet, the worker was only going to be able to take eight weeks to be able to be at home with that family member. So the eight weeks was quite inadequate when you looked at the 26 weeks that they had to show the loved one had probably left in life.

I was moved by the presentation by the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune, because I too had a similar experience of having a parent, my mother, who was bedridden for two-and-a-half years. I really felt with her when she talked about, towards the end, how tiring it became. I know that experience as well, being awakened in the middle of the night because my mother died at home – being awoken in the middle of the night to help take care of her needs. During the day of course there were caregivers, but in the middle of the night there wasn't. It does become very tiring and it does take a toll on the person you love, the family member. I loved my mother dearly, yet I had to admit to myself it was becoming difficult.

I do believe we have to do more as well than have the significant risk of death. I think we

have to be able to look at a chronic condition that takes a longer time to worsening and if there is any way to determine death, and that's a very difficult thing to do. I think we need to find a way to really help with chronic care and the situation that happens for family members when it comes to somebody who is undoubtedly going to die from the condition but you can't pinpoint it.

I think we've taken big steps in Canada, especially now that the federal government has upped the benefits to 26 weeks within a 52-week period. I think that's a big step, but I do think we need to even look at the situation in terms of determining who needs help. If I would have been able when my mother was bedridden, if I would have been able to take 26 weeks at that time, as my colleague said, that would have been a tremendous help both to my mother and her care and also to myself.

We're probably not the only ones in the House of Assembly who've had a similar experience and who understand the importance of this legislation for workers. I think the fact that shows this piece of legislation is a solid piece of legislation and one that we're happy to support is it is supported by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Employers' Council.

Obviously, we support the federal legislation, and our legislation is bringing us in line with the federal government. I think this is extremely important that we are doing this. Obviously it is going to be in place anyway, whether we change our legislation or not, but we have to have our legislation in sync with the federal government practice and the federal government legislation.

So having said that, Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted we are joining Manitoba, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in making the amendments to our legislation, and I'm sure the other provinces that haven't done so yet will be doing so.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Mount Pearl – Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to Bill 53. I'm not going to take too long but I do want to have a few words just to show my support for this bill. I think this bill, Mr. Speaker, recognizes the reality of life, quite frankly.

When you look at life in the 21st century – I know if we were to go back in time, there was a time when we primarily had one person working in the household. One spouse was working and the other spouse was home caring for family. Whether that was child care, or later in life it was elder care with the grandparents and so on, that was something that was, I would suggest, the norm in most households in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Of course, as we fast forward to the 21st century where two spouses are working, generally speaking, we realize it is a different time and there are pressures placed upon families, as I said, whether you'd be dealing with issues around child care and the growing issue – because I can recall going to, I believe it was a seminar or whatever, maybe it was with the Seniors Resource Centre or Mount Pearl Seniors Independence, one of those groups, and they were talking about perhaps one of the biggest stressors on families these days is actually senior care, elder care, looking after your mom and dad as they age.

With the baby boomers coming through now and the aging population, it's just going to become more and more of an issue for families in Newfoundland and Labrador. So any time we can bring in what I would term as progressive legislation, which is going to help families when they deal with any issues around care, then I think it's important we do that and we support that.

This particular bill, as has already been said, is to deal with a situation where you have a loved one who has come down with a particular illness or disease and they are in their final days. It has been determined by a physician that they only have so much time left and, of course, with that

comes the need to care for your loved ones. Certainly I think there are a lot of Newfoundlanders who have experienced that, a lot of Members of this House I'm sure who have experienced that.

I've experienced it in my family with the passing of my father in particular a few years ago. In that particular case, it was my brother who had taken time off work and was in a position to be able to care for him in his last days. I know the challenges around that, the stresses around that. I think if we can do something that's going to be able to assist families in caring for their loved ones in their final days, then we need to do that.

Of course, as has been said, this is going to basically mirror the federal legislation. So now if you have a family member who is in their final stages, you can apply for 28 weeks of compassionate care under the Employment Insurance fund. That's what's in place federally.

Of course, it's not much point in having that federal – I mean it's great to have that federal legislation and have that ability for people who are working to be able to take time off and receive that pay because, obviously, the world doesn't stop. It may stop in some ways, I guess, emotionally when you're dealt these situations that you have to care for a loved one who's in that position but the reality of it is the bills still have to be paid, the mortgage has to be paid and all the other bills associated to living. You still have to eat, you have to have groceries. The fact that the federal government has a program now where you can take time off and receive compensation from the federal government to be able to do that, it's very important. It's a very positive thing.

Beyond having that federal program, there also has to be the ability for someone to be able to take time off work from a provincial point of view, for their employer to allow them to apply for these benefits and to take time off work. Currently that doesn't exist. What we're doing here is we're going to pass a bill provincially that would basically ensure that if an employee had to take time off work to care for a loved one in that situation, then in addition to receiving benefits from the federal government, the employer would be required to allow that person

off work without pay to avail of that program. That's really what it's doing. It's just matching up the provincial legislation with the federal to ensure that a person can actually take time off to care for a loved one.

I'm sure, as has been said, that this is going to be unanimously passed. There's no reason why we wouldn't want to pass it. It's the right thing to do. It recognizes the realities of life. There's nobody, I'm sure, that hasn't been affected or could be affected by this, whether it be a direct family member or distant family member, relative or friend or whatever, this is something that, there's no doubt, will be utilized. It's a great social safety net and I'll be supporting the bill 100 per cent.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. minister speaks now he shall close debate.

The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

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

The heartfelt stories of those who have been impacted by the serious consequences of caring for a terminally ill family member do provide perspective to this debate and also create a sense of urgency to passing this kind of legislation. That's why I take it with great satisfaction that this House appears to be endorsing this legislation unanimously.

It sends a great signal not only to family members, to the community at large, that this Legislature takes very seriously their own personal circumstances, is prepared to act on it collectively but it also speaks to, I think the wisdom and the sense of decency within our business community, within our province as a whole, that we would embrace this as a universal quality and a universal circumstance that needs our attention.

Mr. Speaker, I'll just speak very briefly to some of the nuances to this particular piece of legislation, to the regulations that will follow.

Important to point out, that when a terminally ill family member needs the support of their family, it is not one specific individual who exclusively has to be designated to provide for that care.

The additional benefits, the EI benefits, but as well the weeks of protection, the additional 28 weeks of protection, can indeed be spread over several family members.

For example, if a family identifies a particular member who is facing a terminal illness, they can decide within the family itself that maybe two, maybe three, maybe four members of the family can assist and share that burden and divide the number of weeks out according to the family's own schedule and needs and opportunities to be able to provide that benefit throughout the entire family so that it does not have to bear on one exclusive family member. The benefits can be shared throughout several members of the family, within the context of a 28-week period.

Another thing is that it does not have to be a contiguous use of the benefit. You can decide, if the individual circumstances of the family mean that compassionate care is required for, say, a six-week block, maybe because of the regime of the treatments, there could be a break for a period of several weeks and then the compassionate care benefit could pick up again at the conclusion of the particular episode or particular series of treatments. So the benefit itself could be spread out over a 52-week period but still within the context of a 28-week total protection. That's an important to make as well.

The final thing I'd like to add is that within the provincial government itself, as I alluded to in my initial address, the provincial government is providing protections within Treasury Board policy for provincial government employees that mirror this legislation. I think that's very progressive and very appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, with that said, I'm very heartened, very pleased, to be able to hear the comments that have been offered. I am especially pleased to know this piece of legislation, the amendments, will be endorsed by all parties and appears to be all Members. I think that sends a great signal to the entire province of what

happens when this House acts in a common cause and a common voice on a matter of equal concern to all citizens of our province.

I say to all Members of the House, thank you. I appreciate it and well done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

The motion is that Bill 53 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 Labour Standards Act No. 2. (Bill 53)

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 52 has now been read a second time.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Labour Standards Act No. 2," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 53)

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 53.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 53.

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those against?

Carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Dempster): We are now considering Bill 53, An Act To Amend The Labour Standards Act No. 2.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Labour Standards Act No. 2." (Bill 53)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I was just wondering if we could get a definition of family member. Does this pertain to mother, father, child, brother, sister or cousin? How far does the definition go with respect to family member?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

MR. BYRNE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

It would be my considered opinion that the definition would meet with the same that's contained within the federal statute and would mirror that, but it would also contain – I believe there are references within the *Labour Standards Act*. I'll have to check that specifically, but it would be for a direct family member which would be brother, father, mother, within the same family group.

CHAIR: All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

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?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Labour Standards Act No. 2.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report Bill 53 carried without amendment?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Deputy House Leader.

MS. COADY: I move, Madam Chair, that the Committee rise and report Bill 53.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 53.

Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

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 directed me to report Bill 53 carried without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Whole reports Bill 53 carried without amendment.

When shall the 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: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Motion 1, Bill 41.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Ways and Means to consider certain resolutions and a bill relating to the amendment of *The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957*, Bill 41.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 41.

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, the Speaker left the Chair.

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Dempster): Order, please!

We are now debating the related resolution and Bill 41, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957 No. 2.

Resolution

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."

CHAIR: Shall the resolution carry?

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

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

It's a privilege, as it always is, to stand in this hon. House today, at any point, to speak on behalf of the members of my district, certainly

the members of the province. The particular bill that we're speaking with today is related – as has been mentioned in the preamble – An Act to Amend the Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957 No. 2, or as we commonly are referring to it as Bill 41.

This particular amendment, which is listed in the bill documents, specifically is related to the loan guarantee provided to Stephenville Airport Corporation that was enacted in 2005 and was amended in 2010. The amendment that we're proposing today is to suggest that we strike the expiry date of this October 31 by substituting the expiry date of March 31, 2018.

Madam Chair, periodically amendments are required to *The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957* in order to ratify new loan guarantees or changes such as increases in term extensions or existing guarantees.

Through this legislation guarantees are provided to support the borrowings for a number of companies, both Crown owned and private companies, and except under established programs, such as the Aquaculture Working Capital Loan Guarantee Initiative or the Fisheries Loan Guarantee Program, the use of loan guarantees is to provide financial assistance to the private sector and has been reduced substantially in recent years.

Amendments to the Schedule to this act are a regular item in the financial administration of the province, as Members opposite and certainly Members on this side of the House would be aware. With the last amendment having been approved in this hon. House in the spring session and prior to that, specifically related to the Stephenville Airport, there was an amendment made in the fall of 2015.

Under the act and subsequent to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the Minister of Finance is authorized to provide loan guarantees to either private sector or Crown corporations covering a variety of financial requirements, with the most common being guarantees for operating lines of credit.

Madam Chair, the act requires that all such guarantees that are approved and issued be ratified by this hon. House through an

amendment to the Schedule of the act. The current bill includes two amendments to the schedule, two extensions of the existing guarantee.

This bill relates, as I've said, to the Stephenville Airport Corporation for which the province has been providing a guarantee since 2005. These amendments allow for the extension of the loan guarantee until October 31, 2016 and then to March 31, 2018.

The act requires that all such guarantees that are approved and issued be ratified by this hon. House through an amendment to the Schedule of the act. Madam Chair, that's what the bill is proposing to do upon debate through Committee.

We'll look forward to answering any questions that my hon. colleagues may have about this particular piece of legislation as it relates to *The Loan and Guarantee Act*.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm certainly pleased to stand and speak to Bill 41, as the minister indicated, An Act to Amend the Loan and Guarantee Act. This is specifically related to the Schedule of the act as it relates to the loan guarantee placing support for the Stephenville Airport.

I'm somewhat familiar with this. When I was the minister of IBRD as well there have been a couple of amendments made to assist in terms of guaranteeing that loan debt with the Stephenville Airport, to assist with operations.

The minister has referenced the fact that there's been some ratification made to this by Cabinet to extend the guarantee – and we're extending it from October 31, 2016 to March 31, 2018. Some may recall that back in the spring in Bill 26 there was a ratified increase to the guarantee by \$300,000 to a total of \$900,000. That was extended to expire on June 30, 2016, and that was debated on May 10 in the House of Assembly.

So now we're here with Bill 41 to extend, as I said, the guarantee to March of 2018. As well, the amount is not changing, as I referenced before in regard to assisting the Stephenville Airport to continue to be operational. It's not an instance here where there's actual – I don't believe – money being loaned, it's guaranteeing the current loans that are currently on the books. Should the guarantee be called, the Government of Newfoundland would incur those expenditures.

As I said before, Cabinet has already approved the extension of the guarantee up to March 31, 2018. In accordance with *The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957*, Cabinet has the authority to approve guarantees or approve modification of the extensions to the guarantees. But it must be ratified by the House, once Cabinet does that and then it's added to the Schedule of that act.

The reason for this is that should, as I said, a guarantee be called, the province would have to fulfill the actual payment; therefore, that would have to go through the House. That's why it goes through the House and it's approved here in the Legislature.

The payment is what's often referred to as a statutory expenditure. It would not be contained in the approved budget funds but would be paid through a subheading in the Consolidated Revenue Fund. Because it's not a budget expenditure, there certainly needs to be legislative authority to fill the guarantee should it be called. Normally we'd go through Estimates and the budget to debate it here and it would be voted on. That's why we're here through Bill 41 to amend the guarantee and the legislation.

As the minister has indicated as well, in 2005 I think the prior PC administration authorized the loan guarantee of \$350,000, supporting the operations. In 2010 it was increased to \$600,000. In November 2015 there was an increase of \$300,000 for a total of \$900,000 which was extended to March 31, 2016. In March it was extended to June 30, 2016, by the Liberal government. That was, as I mentioned, for ratifying Bill 26 to increase the guarantee. That was debated in May, I think it was, here in the House of Assembly.

Bill 41 is now extending the guarantee from October, 2016 until March 31, 2018. As I said, the two amendments are needed as Cabinet has extended the guarantee twice. Obviously, this is important to Stephenville Airport in regard to their ability to remain open and with this support, hopefully, continue to advance and increase their operations. Now, I know there have been some challenges in regard to the airport itself, but this provides some guarantee in terms of debt that's outstanding and allows them to continue to operate.

I do note, back in May when there was some debate done, in the discussion from the Minister of Finance, maybe, I think there were talks about the business plan for the Stephenville Airport Corporation. I'm just wondering, when the minister gets up, if she can comment on whether that review was completed and what was contained in the business plan going forward.

There was discussion too about various uses for the airport, whether it was military, innovation or opportunities there and if any of these have been explored with the corporation since that time, since we had that discussion here in the House of Assembly.

I also wonder if the minister could respond to the question, if there are any conditions put on the guarantee that's identified here in Bill 41. I don't know if it's the Department of Finance or it could be BTCRD that would be responsible for that. I'd certainly like to have some feedback on that, whether there are any conditions put on it.

Well, the technical parts, the actual guarantee sits with Finance. I think Cabinet's submission to extend the guarantee would come from BTCRD. So when the minister or ministers get up, maybe they can respond to those couple of inquiries. I certainly look forward to debate.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

It's a great opportunity to speak to Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957 No. 2. I guess I'll respond a bit to the Member opposite as well in my role as Minister of BTCRD.

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'm going to speak more to that specific aspect of the legislation.

The purpose of the legislation to approve the original loan guarantee increases the Stephenville Airport Corporation of \$350,000 and recommends an extension of the loan guarantee to March 31, 2018 in the amount of \$900,000. The Official Opposition will be quite familiar with the loan guarantee extension as last year they had increased the loan guarantee to the Stephenville Airport Corporation temporarily from \$600,000 to \$900,000 to allow to set for expiry of March 31, 2016. So this was subsequently extended to October 31, 2016, and now is recommending it continue until March 31, 2018.

Conditional approval has recently been received from the Lieutenant Governor in Council to increase the guarantee to \$900,000 and extend to March 31. That's very important because it allows the Stephenville Airport Corporation the ability to borrow and operate based on having that guarantee to its corporation. Because we know that prior to, the Stephenville Airport Corporation had gone through a creditor protection and needed some ability to work with a financial institution, like a bank but backed by a government guarantee so that it could ensure that it could operate.

Just to put it in context, Madam Chair, the Stephenville Airport Corporation, which is located on the West Coast of the province, was constructed by the United States Air Force in 1941. This airport was the largest US Air Force base outside of Continental United States of America. In 1966, the ownership title was transferred to Transport Canada until 1998 when the title was passed to the Stephenville Airport Corporation.

The Stephenville Airport has been an integral part of the Stephenville, Bay St. George region.

After the military based 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 Stephenville Airport Corporation currently serves commercial air traffic as well as provides technical stop services and transport services to patients requiring medical services. Stephenville is one of many airports or airstrips throughout the province that transports patients to hospitals within Newfoundland and Labrador. In 2015-2016, there were 120 air ambulance transport and 110 of those were from the Stephenville hospital.

The Stephenville Airport Corporation 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 to a variety of reasons.

International flights now utilize long-range aircraft which can overfly directly into the North American heartland or Europe, but the Stephenville Airport Corporation also provides technical stop services to overseas traffic. Overall, while passenger and overseas traffic has been declining, it is important to note that the Stephenville Airport Corporation is adjusting its business model to reflect new realities and the corporation is looking at other ways to generate revenue.

One aspect of that is in the field of training and the partnership they have through the CERT centre, and the partnership with the Marine Institute and the ongoing training that is there. There's opportunity to look at the passenger service, technical stops, and other commercial developments, whether it be looking at airport land in conjunction with the town for new investment and new industrial ventures.

The Department of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development has ongoing dialogue with the Stephenville Airport Corporation and the Town of Stephenville to look at on a regional basis how we can look at enhancing the economy in the Bay St. George area.

Our government is very cognizant of the important role the Stephenville Airport plays in this area of the province. That's why we're seeking approval through this legislation to extend the loan guarantee to March 31, 2018, in the amount of \$900,000. It's certainly important to be able to get this approval to allow for the airport corporation to continue its ability to operate, basically, Madam Chair.

So I hope my explanation has provided thorough details to the Member opposite when I talked about the business case and the opportunities and the ongoing dialogue that is taking place with the airport corporation and the town.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl – Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

It certainly is a pleasure here to stand and speak to Bill 41. Obviously, in terms of the technicality around the bill, we know this bill relates to the ongoing operations of the Stephenville Airport and the loan guarantee there. I would suggest that everybody here is going to support that particular aspect of the bill. I'll just say, for the record, that I will be supporting it; however, I want to talk about a couple of other things now.

The first issue I'd like to take the opportunity to speak to, Madam Chair – and for those watching, of course, they're wondering, I may be off topic; it's because it's a money bill, I understand, so I can speak to whatever I decide I want to speak to. Like I said, I support this aspect of the bill.

Anyway, I want to talk about paid family caregivers for a moment, Madam Chair. This is an issue that is an important one because I was contacted by a family in the province. The district doesn't matter, but anyway it wasn't my district. A very sad situation basically where a gentleman had been working in Alberta for, I guess, a number of years and his wife became ill; she was basically terminally ill. So he had to leave his employment in Alberta to come home and care for her.

He thought that he would be able to avail of the Paid Family Caregiving program to take care of his wife and he found out when he checked with the department and so on that would not be possible. Because under the Paid Family Caregiving program a family member can care for, as it says, another family member but the only place it doesn't apply is for a spouse.

He could care for his daughter, his could care for his father, he could care for his mother, his son, if he had one, whatever and his wife could care for her sister and so on, but the spouse can't care for the other spouse. Certainly, when I checked into that policy to find out the rationale, the response I got back from the Department of Health and Community Services and the minister's office was that there is an inherent responsibility, as the department sees it, for a spouse to care for the other spouse in the event that they are ill and so on.

I want to say that I do understand where they are coming from in terms of that inherent responsibility that's there. I don't think anyone would argue that and nobody would. But the reality of it is in this particular case, if the gentleman was able to care for his terminally ill wife, there would be absolutely no additional cost to the system whatsoever because currently a stranger could care for his wife, another family member could care for the wife, it's just that he can't care for the wife. So it's not like she's not going to get the care and someone is not going to get paid, the care will happen and the cost will be there. So there's no difference in that regard.

I could understand where the department was coming from, I suppose, about the inherent responsibility and so on and I suppose not wanting to open up a big can of worms what about if someone was just ill and, in theory, they could have some kind of a chronic illness that could last for years and are we going to pay spouses to stay home for years taking care of a chronically ill spouse and so on.

So what I had recommended to the department, to the minister, was that a simple amendment can be made to say that in the event there was a terminal illness and a spouse was terminally ill, deemed to be palliative by a doctor, of course – there would have to be a note or a form to be completed by a physician to demonstrate that is

the case, then for that circumstance, with the documentation there, why couldn't the spouse care for the other spouse who is terminally ill. I think that was a reasonable compromise. Unfortunately, it came back and I think they said we would consider it at some point in time when we do a review because this was a pilot project now.

This was implemented by then, I believe the minister was Susan Sullivan at the time, so that's going back two or three years ago when this – so I'm not sure how long this pilot project is supposed to last and when this review will happen; but, in the meantime, we do have this one case, and there could be many other cases, but one that I'm aware of for sure where you have a very sad situation where this gentleman has to care for his wife who is terminally ill.

They have no income. The only income he qualifies for, I believe, is a little bit from AES which is next to nothing. He's had to sell all his assets. They had some assets built up over the years where he was working in Alberta and so on. I guess they bought vehicles and all-terrain vehicles, whatever they had, I don't know, but they had some assets. They've advised me they've had to slowly sell off all their assets in order for him to be able to look after his wife and to pay the bills and survive.

It's a very sad story and I think that there is a solution, as I said, that could be put in place, an amendment to the Paid Family Caregiving policy – and that's the other thing, it's a policy. So if it's a policy unlike if it's legislation – if it was in the act, then we'd have to bring it forth to the House of Assembly and have a debate and change the act. This is a policy. So the policy, the department can change it tomorrow if they want to; they can amend their policies.

I've wrote the department, I wrote the minister and I told this gentleman – he's contacted me back and forth every now and then and he asked me would I raise it in the House of Assembly. I said if I get an opportunity to raise it in the House of Assembly, I will. So I'm just putting it out there because I think it's something that could and should be looked at.

I'm not being critical of anybody, any department, per se, I'm just saying that it is

simply a policy there that could be looked at and could be changed and I'm putting out there again to consider making those changes.

I have a couple of minutes, so the other thing I want to just speak about very quickly relates to the workers' compensation review division. We recently seen in the media where employers saw a lowering of their workers' compensation rates because of the fact that I guess there's been less accidents, which is a good thing. I'm assuming the duration of claims when there are accidents have gone down as well. That's a good thing. Hence, the payments that are being made to injured workers and all the costs associated to the system have gone down.

We have a very healthy injury fund in the province and, as a result, they've said because these stats have gone down, because there's a healthy injury fund, I guess there's more money coming in than needs to be expended, they decided that they would give employers in the province a break in recognition of that and lower their rates. Now, that's a good thing. It's a good thing for employers and so on. I'm sure they're very happy about it. And employers contribute, as we know, greatly in the province, so I'm not knocking that.

However, at the workers' comp review division we have a backlog of cases. They've been there for a long time and legislatively a case from beginning to end – once you submit a case to the review division until the decision is 60 days by legislation – we're going anywhere from six months to a year to get these cases heard and we only have four commissioners when the legislation allows the appointment of seven commissioners. So I call upon government and the minister to look at that and potentially appoint more commissioners.

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. LANE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: I remind the hon. Member his time for speaking has expired.

The Chair recognizes the hon. Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I'm glad to have the opportunity to stand today as we discuss Bill 41, the *Loan and Guarantee Act*, which deals with extending the expiry date for the loan guarantee to the Stephenville Airport Corporation to March 31, 2018. I won't have a lot to say about that topic itself. I think it's a good thing to do. I'm very happy to be able to support the government in doing this.

We know the airport has struggled over the years but it is important to the local economy. The airport board is working on a new sustainability plan. I am aware of the hard work they've been doing over the last few years with regard to coming up with their plan and to making things work, not for the airport alone, but for Stephenville and the area. So it is something important for the people of that whole area. I certainly hope that the additional \$300,000 loan guarantee will give them the room to manoeuvre the need to begin implementing their plan. So I'm happy to deal with that.

I wish it were so simple to deal with some of the other issues in the province, Madam Chair. One of the biggest issues we have in our province right now is something that's looming over our heads and that is the loss of funding from the federal government with regard to health care. It's an extremely serious issue.

We know the First Ministers are meeting on Friday and that the Premier will be at that meeting. I hope our Premier is going to raise his voice along with other premiers who are extremely upset by what is going to happen in 2017.

We've been blessed with the health accord that we had in place in this country. We had a federal government that recognized its responsibility to work with the provinces that deliver the health care programs in our country; delivered by the provinces, not by the federal government. We have been used to having initially a 50-50 agreement where the federal government's transfers were 50 per cent. They covered 50 per cent of the cost in a province.

The cost of delivering the health care was split 50-50. Well, that has changed radically. Where we are now is very, very disturbing. We stand to lose half a billion dollars in health care funding over the next 10 years if the current federal government adopts the former federal government's plan to reduce annual increases in health transfers to provinces and territories.

When the Harper government brought this in everybody was extremely upset. All of a sudden we have the Trudeau government maintaining what the Harper government put in place and nobody's opening their mouths about it. The Newfoundland government has been extremely quiet while other provinces have spoken up strongly against the federal government's plan to cut transfers.

I listened on Saturday morning to CBC Radio to the program *The House* and I heard the premier from Manitoba, Premier Pallister, speaking strongly about what the impact would be on Manitoba with the cut in funding. He talked about the concern: Where is the money going to come from? We have to maintain our health care. Where does the money come from? Is the money going to come from our educational system? Is the money going to come from our social services? Where is the money going to come from with this cut?

Make no mistake about it, it is a cut. Yeah, the federal government is talking about putting in \$3 billion across the board for home care, and that's fine to have targeted money for home care, but that will do nothing to take care of the fact that we would be getting a cut in the transfer that will affect our whole health care system.

The Canada Health Transfer was first negotiated 2004 with the provinces and territories and the Liberal federal government of the day. It was a 10-year deal that provided annual increases of 6 per cent; there was an escalator clause. The health transfer was \$36 billion in 2016, and Newfoundland and Labrador's share was \$528 million.

The federal share of total provincial and territorial health care spending increased from 17 per cent to 23 per cent by the end of the accord in 2014. The health accord earmarked funds for post-acute home care and wait -time

reductions. There was initial talk of a national drug plan, but the federal government would not co-operate. We have benefit here in this province from money going into post-acute home care.

The problem, of course, here in our province is that while people can have post-acute home care in their plan, that when they're in hospital and they're dealing with the professionals and they say what the person needs and the person can have post-acute home care taken care of for a period of time when they go home, but because our home care is not fully part of our health care system, people are on their own when they go home. They have the approval, the post-acute home care will be paid for but they still have to find, without any help, they have to find somebody, a home care worker from one of the agencies or not from an agency – they have to be recognized as home care workers, obviously – to come in and take care of them.

We need a better home care system. We need home care that's part of our health care, that's more than just post-acute care for two weeks or during palliative care time when somebody has been declared dying, which is now the only time the home care is covered, those two times. We need it to be part of our health care system. It's good that the federal government is going to earmark money for that; however, in 2014 when the accord was due to expire, that's two years ago, the federal government refused to negotiate a new one and devised a new formula for health transfers starting in 2017.

Now this was the Harper government which did no talking about sitting down and working with people and working in partnership or anything like that. They made a decision and that was it. They weren't going to negotiate a new one and they were coming up with a new formula.

When the health accord expired in 2014, the Conservatives announced they wouldn't renew it. They announced a plan to cut the annual increase in health transfers from 6 per cent to 3 per cent and introduce a per capita formula that would penalize provinces with aging populations like ours because of the higher per capita costs.

So being a province with a small population and an aging population, we're going to be doubly or

triply affected by what is going to happen federally, something which the Harper government did without any consultation and something which the Trudeau government is going to do without any consultation. The difference between the two of them being Trudeau said he believed in partnership and he believed in sitting at the table and he believed in working things out. So I have to ask of this government, why aren't you complaining? Is it because Trudeau was from the same party camp that you're from? That shouldn't stop us from speaking out and talking about, loudly, what is going to happen to this province.

If we lose the amount of money that we know we're going to lose because of the transfer going down 3 per cent and because of the per capita formula, where is the money going to come from to maintain our health care system that already is suffering? Where is it going to come from?

So we have a serious issue and I'm looking to the Premier to start speaking out, to start joining the other premiers who have spoken out, to start joining the premier from Nova Scotia who said recently that the decrease in the annual escalator from 6 per cent to 3 per cent would be a second hit on top of amending the formula to base it on size of population.

Premier Pallister from Manitoba has said the same thing. The New Brunswick premier has said the same thing. So where is our province? Why isn't our province shouting from the rooftop we cannot accept this new situation? If the province thinks it can, then what is the Minister of Finance going to do? Where is the minister going to come up with the money to make up for the loss in money that we are going to getting from the federal government?

This is an extremely serious situation, Madam Chair –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS. MICHAEL: – and I don't appreciate Members on the other side of the House acting as if it isn't.

Thank you.

CHAIR: I remind the hon. Member her time for speaking has expired.

The Chair recognizes the hon. Member for Stephenville – Port au Port.

MR. FINN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

It is certainly great to take an opportunity to discuss Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957 No. 2, as introduced by the Minister of Finance and she alluded to in her opening remarks, specifically here, this is in reference to the Stephenville Airport. And of course, being the proud Member for Stephenville and the Stephenville area it is certainly great to take an opportunity to discuss, but I'll just be a brief moment or two.

This is essentially just a bit of housekeeping item around our finance piece here with respect to the loan guarantee. So essentially, what the government has done since 2005 is really just kind of held the guarantee on a loan for the airport. This would certainly allow for ebbs and flows of accounts receivable, as things move financially.

Of course, running an airport is certainly no small feat and is a substantial investment and a substantial exchange of dollars. So right now, this is in reference to legislation that we had introduced in the spring. There was a bit of debate at the time. I discussed the situation there in a bit greater detail. The legislation in the spring was only referencing a deadline. The deadline at that time was June. For legality purposes, with respect to finance administration, we need to extend the deadline once again.

I'm certainly seeing some co-operation and positive comments from the Member for Ferryland on the subject. I expect their co-operation and support. But right now this is essentially, as alluded to, just extending the deadline to 2018 which is good news for the airport in general.

The Stephenville Airport Corporation being a volunteer board of directors is certainly a great volunteer board of directors I've had the pleasure to meet with now on multiple occasions over the last number of months in my role as Member. It's something that's near and dear to

my heart and a file that I've been meeting on quite actively.

They are pursuing other avenues, as alluded to in their business plan with respect to military stopovers and traffic. I believe there is some great opportunity there with the good group that we have now onboard. This new board of directors has been around for the last three years specifically and has recently sought out some help from some retired Colonels; two retired Colonels of which are members of the Royal Canadian Legion in Stephenville.

They've been doing some great work with respect to recruiting military traffic for technical stopovers and what have you. Of course those types of technical stopovers certainly add to the commercial traffic that is there. Another of their operations there, the Marine Institute, of course, the safety and emergency response training is a great component and a great asset to have there.

Overall, the operation does require a bit of support. This is something that the government has long supported, so it's certainly great to see the continuation of such and the guarantee of the loan by the government and extending that on into 2018.

With that said, Madam Chair, I'll take my seat. Again, as I mentioned, it was great to hear some support from the Members opposite in reference to Bill 41. I certainly look for their co-operation moving forward.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. Member for Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I know what we're discussing here is Bill 41, but it's also considered a money bill. So it gives us an opportunity to get up and talk about something that's very, very important. It could be something about our district or something that we really believe is important in the province.

Madam Chair, it is important. It's an important piece of legislation. We're after having a lot of speakers now, but it's an opportunity that I'd like to be able to get up and I really want to talk to something that's really important to me, and that's the fishery in this province. I know some Members across the way are shaking their heads and saying it's pretty important to them also, but the fishery, as far as I'm concerned, is our life. It's what we are as Newfoundlanders. You know where you come from how important the fishery is in your area.

Sometimes in this House I really don't think we put enough emphasis on how important the fishery is to rural Newfoundland and Labrador. Not only rural Newfoundland and Labrador, I look at St. John's and I look at the area – I don't know if we're considered rural or not – in my area Torbay, Flatrock, Pouch Cove where fishing for years was part of the mainstay, why everybody came, why everybody was there.

There are a lot of things happening in the fishery today. We all believe the cod fishery is coming back. I'm very concerned that we, as a province and a government, are just not going to be ready. I really believe that. I have been speaking to fishermen, I have family members who are fisher people who are out on the water all the time and every change I get to go, I go myself.

I can remember as a young boy my father fighting with me. It's too rough to go. It's too rough to go, but I would be down by the boat and bawl my heart out and I'd get to go. That was part of who we are as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. I think it's a part that we forget about. People have forgotten about how important it is to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians: the fishery.

I go back to the type of people we are because the fishery brought communities together. It brought who we are together. To give someone a feed of fish meant a lot to people. It means a lot to me today when I go out for the food fishery and I can come in and give someone a feed of fresh fish.

Do you know what? The fishery is coming back and we're always looking for diversification. We're always looking for what we can do to make our communities more viable. Well,

maybe there is some planning that has to be put in place so we can do it.

I don't know. I'm after hearing all kinds of plans about the union and processors getting together and talking about marketing. I haven't heard anything about marketing and what's going to happen. I have fishermen in my community today who went out and caught fish right until the end of November. Do you know the biggest problem they had? It was selling their fish. There are only a couple of plants in the province that will handle cod. Right now, we have no plants that are able to do cod.

I suggest too if you went to rural Newfoundland and Labrador, if you started a plant tomorrow, we'd get nobody to be able to fillet fish like they used to. I can remember going into Witless Bay and just being in awe of the people on the line filleting fish, watch how fast they could go down, boom, boom, done. I'm not even close to that.

Do you know what? We've lost that. I don't know what we're going to do when the fishery comes back. I don't know if we're going to be ready when the fishery comes back, and I hope government doesn't drop the ball. We have to be ready. It has to be a priority of government. We're looking for how we can revitalize Newfoundland and Labrador, how we can make our communities survive.

Well, the fishery survived us for hundreds and hundreds of years and we're doing nothing about it. I don't know what the plans are in place for when the fishery comes back. How many plants in this province can do cod? Not very many. How many communities?

I can remember down the Southern Shore when there were fish plants in nearly every community down there and the place was alive. I don't think we can go back to the fishery of the past, I really don't believe it. I don't believe the markets are there to be able to go back to that fishery, but we're going to be competing in a global market. We're going to be competing with people like in Iceland and Norway and all over the world. We're a very, very small part of that market, but we better be doing something to get prepared for that market. We need to get prepared. We need

to make sure our product is as good a product as anywhere in the world.

We have the opportunity now to be able to put a plan in place. It's not here today but it's pretty close. I believe it could be the saviour for Newfoundland and Labrador. It could be what our young people – get them interested in the fishery. I don't know if we're going to go back to cod traps. I don't know if you're going to be able to come in with 60,000 or 70,000 or 80,000 pounds a week. Maybe you might have to come in with 5,000. Maybe the market will only say, okay, we need fresh cod. We're going to send it whole to the US market. These are the markets that are going to replace it, but we've got none of that done.

We got a lot of interest out there. I believe the young people – there's a way for young people to stay in their communities. The days of the fish being worth 10 or 11 cents a pound are over. The days of going out and catching 60,000, 70,000 pounds of fish a week, that's over; but we have no markets in place.

We have nothing in place right now that can help our fishermen down the road. I really believe that government has to put an emphasis on this. We talk about everything in this House of Assembly but very seldom, only a few of us, get up and talk about the fishery. Now, there are a few Members in here who talk the fishery, but it's a very important part of who we are and it's very important as our culture, our traditions, everything like that. It's so important that we not forget about the fishery and realize how important it is to our province.

We need to develop markets. We need to work with the industry. We need to work with the processors. We need to work with the harvesters, ensuring that the products are the product that we have to bring on side.

I know a lot of the products this year are coming in and it is depending on how you get paid for it because you have to have it in ice, keep it at a certain temperature so that when it goes to markets the quality is so important. Years ago quality was just catch, catch, catch but today in order for us to compete we need to ensure that the quality of the fish coming in is as good as it is in Norway, as good as it is in Iceland, or we're

not going to be able to compete in those markets in the world that want it.

Like I said, I've been in the House of Assembly now for the last 12 months and listened to all kinds of different policies and everything else, but I really believe the emphasis we need to do, and one of the emphases – we have a lot of things to do in this province, but I really believe that if we don't get the marketing and get down pat what we have to do to make our fishery viable in the future, it's going to be very important.

Now, I only have a couple of minutes left. It's still about the fishery. I really want to talk – I've got a lot of calls. I've been doing a petition in the House of Assembly for the last number of weeks; I did it twice last week. It's on the recreational food fishery. I spoke to so many people.

I went to the Cabot – I think it's the hotel where they had the consultations. I listened to people in there talk about the fishery and how they want Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to be treated the same way as the rest of Atlantic Canada and the rest of Canada. I heard the minister get up. When I asked a question one day he said that we should be the same as they are in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and PEI. I agree with that, but nowhere in those provinces this year is anybody talking about bringing in a tag system. Nowhere in any other provinces in Canada do they have to pay to go out and catch a codfish and I believe, as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, we shouldn't have to do it either.

I realize. I understand the idea. We have to understand that, listen, we should – because we can't go back to '92 when it was just a free-for-all and everybody was out catching fish. I agree. I fished this summer; I was out nearly every day that I could get out fishing. I never saw one monitor on the wharf where I came in to see how much fish I had to catch, or ask me the questions of the size of fish or what I thought of the fish. I never saw one person. I saw a plane the first day fly over our heads and that was it, and other than that, nobody.

Now, here we are, the Government of Canada is expecting us to go out, get the tags, go pay for our tags, go pay for a licence and the only

province in Canada to have to go out and be able to do that. I think it's unfair. I really do believe we have to stand on this together and say it's not right. We're Newfoundlanders; it is part of who we are as people. It's a right that we have and we're not out there.

Listen, we're cut down to five fish per person a day and only 15 for a boat. That's not a lot of fish. If you looked at the overall – and again, I don't know and I don't have the figures, but I do believe it's not very high. The percentage that's caught in the recreational cod fishery is very minimum, maybe just a couple of per cent. But I really want to urge government – and I'm sure everyone who has people that go out in their areas, that go to the recreational food fishery are after hearing it from these people, are after hearing that this is something we don't want. We want to be treated fairly.

They talk about a tag system. We don't even know how many tags they're going to give. Are we going to be reduced?

Last year I applauded the federal government for giving us a little bit more time on the water. I'd like to see us be able to go out – I think you should be able to go out whenever conditions are good. I don't believe in the September fishery because I don't think people should be put out on the water in small boats. It will be dangerous.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. K. PARSONS: It's good fish. Yes, September fish, there's no doubt, is good fish. As one of the Members said across the way, it's good fish. But do you know what, let's do it right. Let's make sure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are treated like everybody else in Canada.

Thank you very much.

CHAIR (Warr): Order, please!

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

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

I'm very happy to stand to speak. I'd like to talk a little bit about housing right now. We haven't had much of an opportunity to speak about housing so far in this session of the House. Over the years I have spoken quite a lot about the issue of housing. Particularly in the past few years, we've used the words housing crisis a number of times. Sometimes people have said, well, that's an exaggeration. But what I find very interesting is that the mayors of the municipalities and towns across the province have also used those terms, those words together, that we are in a housing crisis.

Over the past few years not that much has changed. I believe that there is an interest and an intention to try and alleviate the housing crisis that we find ourselves in, but it's very slow going. One of the things that is particular to our province is we don't have a division of housing. What we have is Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, which is social housing, but we don't have a division of housing that overlooks the whole aspect of housing and housing policy for the province. We've been calling for that for a number of years and I believe it's still needed.

Some of the issues I would like to sort of shine a light on today in the 10 minutes that I have is to look at, where are some of the real hot spots? Where are some of the real crisis areas in our province around housing? Again, they have been identified. They've been identified by the mayors of our province. They have been identified by health officials, by people in frontline agencies. So I'd like to talk a little bit about that.

First of all, when we look at the issue of seniors and housing, we have a growing number – our population is shifting significantly in terms of proportions and we have the highest growing percentage of seniors of anywhere else in the country. Housing has become a real problem for seniors in our province, particularly seniors, (a), who may own their own homes but live in areas where the housing market is very suppressed. Their houses may be old and they want to downsize, and they may want to move to larger centres where they're closer to services. They cannot get for their houses what they need in order to buy a smaller house or to buy a condo, or even to rent in certain areas.

So they don't have a lot of equity in their own homes. We have again the highest percentage of seniors in the country in receipt of OAS and GIS, which means they live on something around \$12,000 to \$14,000 a year. If a senior is going to move, say, into St. John's or into Clarendville, for instance, to either be close to family or to be close to services, their rent, if they are to live in a safe space, a safe, centralized location, their rent will probably be at least \$900, unless they live in a place that might be in a basement, which is often difficult if you have any kind of mobility issues.

That's a lot of money; that's the majority of their income. Now, if you have a couple, your income is a little bit more. But if you are a senior living alone on GIS or OAS and your income is about \$1,200 a month, then \$900 for rent leaves you only with about \$300 a month. Out of that \$300 you have to pay for your heat and light, you have to pay for your cable, you have to pay for your groceries, you have to pay for your over-the-counter drugs, now. You have to pay for your own dental work as well now, since the last budget.

So it's not enough money to live on. A lot of our seniors need rent supplements. The Newfoundland and Labrador Housing has a program where they give rent supplements, but there have been no new rent supplements over the past few years – although we have a growing number of seniors who need them. We also have a growing number of seniors who are slipping into poverty and the rent supplements are simply not available to them.

Now a few years ago the former administration, the former government, started a pilot project making some of the rent supplements to seniors portable. That's something that I pushed and pushed and pushed for, because what happens is, for instance, if a senior is living in a certain area or in an apartment and they're close to family, maybe they're close to a bus route, they're close to their church, they're close to friends, they're close to their doctor, they're close to all the support networks they need and then they need a rent supplement, well, they couldn't get a rent supplement for where they lived. They would have to move to wherever a unit with a rent supplement already existed which meant it might put them really into isolation because it

wouldn't be close to their church or their community or their friends.

So there was a pilot project where they did provide some rent supplements that were portable. Meaning the rent supplement went with the senior and was attached to the senior's needs, wherever that senior was living or wherever that senior wanted to live; and if the unit passed inspection, then the rent supplement would be attached to the unit that the senior had chosen. So it's still not fully a portable Rent Supplement Program, but it did have a little more flexibility than the standardized Rent Supplement Program.

Now, that's no longer on the go. It was a pilot project. It's kind of interesting because it came about at a time when there was a growing need for it, yet instead of extending it, it was discontinued.

Doctors have spoken so much about the social determinants of health. All health care professionals speak so much about the social determinants of health and also the Seniors Resource Centre that did a lot of research around seniors and housing. I get a lot of calls; I know many of us here in this House get a lot of calls about the issue of seniors who simply cannot afford to eat properly. Their income hasn't gone up. The cost of living has gone up.

We all go to the grocery store, we see it. We see how expensive, for instance, meat is, fish is, fresh vegetables and fruits. It's very interesting because how many times we talk about how important it is to eat healthy in order to prevent disease, to prevent illness, yet there are so many people in our province, because of the high cost of housing, cannot afford to eat properly. Many of us in our offices get calls from constituents, particularly seniors, who are having a hard time with housing.

That's one issue that I'd like to address. I also get a lot of calls from seniors who say: We can do this. I believe we can as well. I know that Newfoundland and Labrador Housing is looking at this issue, but we haven't seen anything concrete in a while. We know we need more rent supplements. We know that we need portable rent supplements for our seniors. For instance, in BC they have a complete comprehensive

housing policy and housing program for seniors, where they get assistance in looking for accommodations and there are portable rent subsidies. The rent subsidy goes directly to the senior who then pays their own rent.

So there's also the issue of pride. How many seniors say, you know, I've worked hard all of my life and here I am now close to homelessness or pushed into poverty because of the high cost of housing. I don't think any of us in this House want to see our seniors have to deal with that in what are supposed to be the rest of their lives after they've worked so hard. They've raised children and they've worked in our province to build up the economy in our province.

That's one issue I wanted to speak about: housing. There are a number of other issues. I see my time is running out, Mr. Chair, but again I believe that we can do a better job around housing for seniors, about making sure we have safe and affordable housing for our seniors, that we can have supportive housing programs for seniors as well so that seniors can live independently. The research has shown us that 90 per cent of seniors want to stay in their homes. They don't want to be in long-term care facilities; they want to stay home.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for St. George's – Humber.

MR. REID: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I just wanted to add a few words on this bill. It's Bill 41, An Act to Amend The Loan and Guarantee Act. Of course this bill is specifically related to the extension of the loan guarantee on the line of credit for the Stephenville Airport until March of 2018.

Although it's a finance bill and we've had a wide-ranging debate that allows Members to bring up topics that are related to other important issues, I want to talk specifically in relation to the Stephenville Airport.

The Stephenville Airport is a tremendous asset for the province and particularly for the Southwest Coast of the province. As I think the Minister of Business said in his comments, it's

the largest air force base that the Americans had outside of the continental US. So it's a quite the facility.

To get another sense of how big and how important this airport is in terms of its global dimensions, at one point it was an alternate landing site for a space shuttle, so it has that sort of infrastructure and that space there to service large military aircrafts and civilian aircrafts as well. Those are some sort of history and background about the Stephenville Airport.

The loan guarantee was first put in place in 2005. It's continued since then. It's an important part of the operation of the airport. So I'm pleased to hear from all sides of the House here today that we have general support for this bill to extend that loan guarantee, Mr. Chair.

There are many reasons for optimism about the Stephenville Airport. For example, it's a centre for training. The search centre is there. The Safety and Emergency Response Training Centre is there at the airport in Stephenville using some of those assets that were left after the Americans left there. So it's a tremendous training facility there for people in safety and emergency response. It's also a possibility for other training to happen there as well, Mr. Chair. I think those are possibilities that the board is exploring as well.

Also, in terms of search and rescue, it's a very interesting site that holds possibility in terms of search and rescue placement as well in terms of the area that it would cover, Mr. Chair. That's another positive for the Stephenville Airport. Also, I think the niche for the Stephenville Airport – and this is something that the board has been pursuing very aggressively – is being a fuelling centre for huge military airplanes.

The idea, the concept of Stephenville servicing these airports, it has the space. It's not a busy airport so it's a place where these flights could come in, refuel and be off very quickly. So this may be a real niche that the Stephenville Airport can fill. That's another possibility there as well that the board is pursuing for the airport.

Before I conclude my brief comments, I just want to compliment the board on the work that they're doing to continue the operation of this

airport. They spend a lot of volunteer time working on this issue and I want to compliment them and recognize their efforts, certainly.

Also, I want to compliment the ministers who've spoken on this side and other Members as well who've been supportive of this bill. So with that said, I'll conclude my remarks.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

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

During the debate this afternoon there were a couple of questions that were asked and I'd like to take the opportunity to provide some information to the Members who asked those questions.

In particular, the Member for Ferryland asked questions about the Stephenville Airport's business plan as it was related in the earlier debate that we had this year. I think it was with regard to Bill 21. As well as some feedback on the military and corporate plans for the airport. I think the minister who spoke earlier, as well as the representatives from the area, both the Member for Stephenville – Port au Port, as well as the Member for St. George's – Humber, spoke very eloquently to some of those particular questions.

One question that he did have in particular was whether or not there were any conditions on the guarantee, and I wanted to advise the Member opposite in the House that there are no conditions related at this point on the guarantee.

I do want to take an opportunity briefly if I can, Mr. Chair, and speak directly to comments from the Member opposite, the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi, who spoke about health care and the federal model for supporting health care throughout Canada and the provinces.

I certainly want to provide some feedback to the Member, particularly in light of her comments that this government, our government, didn't appear to be as – I think she said making enough noise on the health care file nationally. Mr.

Chair, I'm sure Members of this House and certainly Members on this side of the House were quite aware that our own Minister of Health and Community Services actually participated long before the premier that she referenced from a Western Canadian province on a program called *The House* on CBC with host Chris Hall, where he spoke quite eloquently as to our province's position on health care transfers.

I would refer the Member opposite to that audiotape where she can certainly hear the words of the minister in his own words speak very passionately about our position on health care.

I would add to that, that I can assure the Member opposite that the Minister of Health and Community Services at every single, face-to-face meeting and every single conversation he has had with his federal colleagues, has spoken about the federal transfer concerns of our province – as has our Premier, as have I – where there have been several Finance Ministers' meetings since last December.

I can assure the Member opposite, that not only did I speak to it personally but I also made sure it was on the agenda last year, last December, I think some four or five days into our government Cabinet being appointed that we, at that federal Finance Minister's table, brought up the discussion which at the time wasn't on the agenda. So for the Member opposite, I want to assure her and her constituents and the constituents of our province and all the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that our government is working very hard to ensure the importance of the federal government understanding and acting on federal transfers related to health are heard.

Now the Member opposite may feel it is important to have those conversations publicly and brazenly in the local airways but, quite frankly, Mr. Chair, we feel it's important for us to have those conversations at the tables where decisions are made. I can assure the Members of this House that quite contrary to her comments; Members on this side of the House have been doing an incredible amount of work to make sure the federal government understands our concerns when it comes to health care transfers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Chair, I would like to now, as I conclude my brief remarks – certainly from what I've heard, Members opposite have indicated their support for the amendment. I want to bring everybody back to the discussion we're having here today which is, An Act to Amend the Loan and Guarantee Act as it relates to the loan guarantee that was provided to Stephenville Airport.

Based on what I've heard from my colleagues today, I assume they are going to be supporting this amendment. I thank everybody in the House for their comments. I'm sure there'll be more to come.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

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

I'm happy to stand and speak again. I thank the minister for pointing out what they are doing at the tables. I have every reason to believe that that's the case. But I also know that, she mentioned my constituents, that people are wondering what government's position is. People are very concerned. People are aware of the fact that the health accord has come to an end and that a new system has been brought in place. They really are wondering what government is doing about it, what are they saying about it, what impact is happening on the federal level.

With the First Ministers' meeting on Friday, people are really watching to see what the Premier is going to be saying. They don't want to see anybody, either a minister or the Premier, going out there shouting and screaming. That's not what they're asking for, but they do want to know where is government standing and what is government going to do?

The per capita funding that is coming in, and that the Trudeau government is continuing from Harper, means that each province will receive an amount corresponding only to its population. There will be no consideration of the income

level of people in our province, the demographics, the degree of urbanization. Any other aspects, which are part of the province's need, will not be considered in the formula. The fact that we have an aging population will not be considered in the formula. The per capita formula hurts provinces with a high percentage of seniors because it does not recognize that health care for seniors cost more than for non-seniors. We are one of those provinces in a big way, Mr. Chair.

Canada is unique among developed countries in ignoring age in calculating health transfers. That's something that was reported by *The Globe and Mail* in a March 28 edition of this year. That's a shocking thing to consider, that among the developed countries, we are ignoring age in calculating health transfers. Look at what that means for us here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Most of the provinces oppose the new formula because of its potential to harm health care systems. Some provinces proposed an age-adjusted formula that would be fairer to seniors and to all provinces, but that was rejected by the Conservative government. So people want to know what the federal government is listening to. Are they listening to any of the proposals that are coming forward from the provinces? My constituents want to know, and I'm sure the constituents of every MHA in this room want to know.

The new formula would reduce health transfers to Newfoundland and Labrador by \$491 million over 10 years. It's \$36 billion for all provinces and territories. The Canada Health Transfer is worth \$36 billion this year. So what's happening for us here in Newfoundland and Labrador is that in 2015-16, which we finished, it was \$502 million; in the current year that we are in, it's \$528 million. However, beginning in 2017, we will see half the increase in health transfer that we received this current year. So beginning with April 1, 2017, we are going to be getting half the increase that we would normally get under what was in place prior to what the Harper government has brought in and that the Trudeau government is maintaining, possibly even less depending on our Gross Domestic Product and population figures.

So even if our population goes down by some hundreds that would be significant. We will lose currently, possibly \$16 million in the increase. So what are we going to do? Are we going to educate our children more poorly? Are we going to let seniors be cold in their homes? How are we going to make up the money that we are going to be losing? This is what people are looking at, Mr. Chair, and this is at a time when an austerity budget was brought in, and a budget that doesn't seem to have considered for 2017 what we're facing with regard to the health transfers.

During the fall of 2015 in the federal election campaign the current prime minister promised to sit down with the provinces and territories and discuss an increase in federal health transfers and a new health accord. I do know that the minister took part in meetings and this was a discussion point. Is it going to be a discussion point Friday? Is the prime minister really going to sit and listen to the premiers and the territorial leaders? What is our Premier going to be pushing for?

Let's listen to what the prime minister said during the campaign: "We're also committing to sit down with the provinces immediately to start negotiating the future of the Canada Health Transfer, the Canada health accords. We need to make sure that the federal government is once again a leader," he said when asked if he would maintain the 6-per-cent increases. "The provinces have done an extraordinary job of stepping up in the absence of all federal leadership but it's time we had a federal government and a Prime Minister committed to re-engaging to address health-care concerns."

This same prime minister is now maintaining what Harper put in place and not having real consultation at the table. He's made that decision without consultation. This is disgraceful and so this is why people are concerned and this is why I've brought it up here in the House.

And that's not to deny – I do believe that the Minister of Finance is concerned. I do believe the Minister of Health and Community Services is concerned.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS. MICHAEL: But they are going to have to be more vocal –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

They're going to have to be more vocal about letting people know that. I'm glad that it came out here in the House today and that I was able to get it out here in the House today, because people want to know what's going on.

The Liberals also promised – and I mentioned this when I spoke earlier this afternoon – to inject \$3 billion in home care across the board, reduce the cost of prescription drugs, provide more seniors' housing and long-term care and improve mental health services. Well, so far, apparently we are going to get the \$3 billion in home care. The rest of it, forget it.

The 2016 federal budget did not indicate that the 6 per cent escalator would continue. It had no plan for spending in the other areas except for that \$3 billion. Apparently that's the one they're keeping while dropping money, while having the decrease occur because of the change from 6 per cent to 3 per cent.

The Canadian Health Coalition wrote to the federal minister decrying the lack of progress on a national public pharmacare program, a national seniors plan. It called on the federal government to establish a new health accord with equitable funding to provinces and territories, and to lead in the creation of a national drug plan and seniors strategy. That's what people are wanting from the Premier of our province. They want him to come out publicly with a letter to the federal prime minister saying that we stand for a new health accord with equitable funding based on the needs of the provinces, not on per capita.

At a health minister's meeting in January – and our Health Minister was there – the federal health minister did commit to working towards a long-term funding arrangement that would take into account what she called the different circumstances and starting points of

jurisdictions, but she didn't give a timeline. Can we hope to get a timeline when the premiers, the prime minister and the territorial leaders are at the table on Friday? Can we expect some details? Can we expect a plan? That's what people are looking for.

It has become clear that the federal Liberals have decided to carry on with the former Conservative government's plan to limit annual increases in the health transfer, and calculate the transfer on a per capita gross-domestic-product basis. So I mean it looks like, even though the minister said that in January, nobody follows through in their budget and there's no plan in place and so what do we expect.

I know that some of the premiers in November called for the federal health transfers to continue and to rise by 6 per cent annually. I know the health ministers have done that as well, but we are going to need our Premier, we're going to need this government to be more vocal so that people know they really are at the table saying that. Let's get a voice out there. Let people realize that our leaders are there at the table fighting for them, because people are scared about what's going to happen. People are scared about the cost of drugs. They're scared about not being able to get home care. They're scared of what's going to happen to our health care system as the transfers from the federal government go down.

The reality is the federal government has a moral responsibility and legal responsibility to be putting money into our health care program. Provinces deliver the services; the federal government should be upping the money.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

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

I would like to continue to speak a little bit more about housing. Again, housing has truly been identified as a crisis issue by mayors across the province, by health care workers, by social workers, by community activists.

The last time I spoke, I spoke about the issue of housing for seniors. I believe we can take more concrete actions in order to ensure that our seniors have safe, affordable housing. I believe we can do that, and in the long run it saves us money.

I'd like to move on to look at the issue of boarding houses and rooming houses here in the province. The City of St. John's has a wonderful initiative called End Homelessness St. John's. They have a whole program where they have a goal to end actual homelessness in St. John's within a few years.

Mr. Chair, we've seen this happen in the cities of Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Calgary, Edmonton. The reason municipalities are so involved in this is because they know in the long run it saves money. In order to be able to house someone safely and affordably with some wraparound supports is far cheaper than paying the cost of somebody in a hospital, or paying the cost of somebody in a per diem shelter, or paying the cost of incarcerating someone.

Oftentimes, what we see are some of our most vulnerable people who may have persistent needs, whether they be mental health and addictions needs or other kinds of challenges in their lives who are living in poverty, that it costs us far more in the long run to deal with the spinoffs of homelessness than it does to provide affordable, safe housing for people. In the long run it costs us much less, and it costs much less in human suffering as well. It makes it more possible for people to get to work.

Mr. Chair, I've had the pleasure for the past year of being on the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. We travelled all over the province. We heard from experts. We heard from front-line workers. We heard from general practitioner doctors, family doctors. We've heard from psychiatrists. We've heard from

mental health workers. We've heard from communities and mayors. We've heard from corrections officers. We've heard from police. And without exception, absolutely without exception, they all talk about the need for safe, affordable housing.

We actually had one psychiatrist who said to us it's almost no point for him to treat some of his patients if they don't have a safe place to live. That's an amazing statement coming from a psychiatrist; that unless they have a safe place to live there's almost no point in him treating them.

We've heard from corrections officers who talk about when people leave one of our prisons or correction facility, they go out the door and if they don't have a safe place to live they can almost guarantee that person is going to be back in jail. So much of this is preventable.

Again, what I find very interesting is that the mayor, for instance, of Medicine Hat, who was very, very much a fiscal conservative, once he heard the stats on how much the cost of homelessness costs the public purse, he was then convinced that investments to end homelessness, in fact, saves money and also saves suffering.

I asked questions in the House a few weeks ago about certain boarding houses in my District of St. John's Centre. Some of them are really quite horrendous places. They're very, very, very dysfunctional on a number of levels. Some of them, the actual bricks and mortars, the actual physical structure are in disrepair. They're filthy. They're crowded. There are a lot of people there housed in these situations with very little support.

For a person who needs some kind of supportive living environment in a boarding house, the landlord is paid about \$950 a month. Now, legally, this landlord cannot have more than four bedrooms: four people, four bedrooms in a housing unit. However, we know that a number of boarding houses exceed that. Once they exceed that, they actually come under the *Residential Tenancies Act*, but if there are four or fewer rooms, they do not come under the *Residential Tenancies Act*. There's no way to really regulate them. There are no regulations in our *Residential Tenancies Act* that applies to these boarding houses or these bed-sitters. So

imagine now, \$950 a month and that's to include people's food as well. The food often is very substandard.

I spoke with a former health care worker whose work was solely around outreach to people who were living in boarding house situations like this. She said that many of the people she worked with were starving. She said they were literally starving. These were adults who were not being fed properly in these houses. They didn't get fresh fruit or vegetables. A good meal was maybe pasta with some bottled sauce, maybe a can of meatballs. She said they weren't getting good food.

Part of her job was to take them out and to train them about – hopefully, to be able to get them out of these places and get them to work, but to get them acquainted with what is good food. She told a story of one guy who she took to a grocery store and when he saw the produce he started to cry. That's how serious it is. Nobody believes that's really happening in our own communities. Nobody believes that's happening in Newfoundland and Labrador, where we have such a culture of really taking care of one another.

I was in a house in my district where there were six men sharing a boarding house. One of the gentlemen told me there was one towel between all six men. Many of them, I'm sure, their sheets haven't been changed in I don't know how long. I'd say at least months. The food is substandard. There aren't a whole lot of social workers that come and see them because now the regulations for social workers, for their own safety, and I don't knock that, is go two by two. Already their caseloads are heavy so it's really hard. If they have to go two by two, then that also cuts down on the time they have to check up on folks.

There are stories of younger guys really putting the screws to some of the older guys sometimes for their meds, sometimes for the little bit of money that they have. They have a comfort allowance of \$70 or \$75 every two weeks. But many of these folks, who may have persistent and chronic mental health issues, need to get out of those boarding houses. They need to be able to go to places like the Gathering Place or to peer support groups or mental health groups.

Many of them now – AES has a new policy – no longer have access to a bus pass. The new policy is you have to have at least eight medical appointments a month in order to qualify for a bus pass. A bus pass is \$70 a month, Mr. Chair. These people get \$75 twice a month. What will happen then is their bus pass, if they buy one, eats up half their monthly allowance, so they're left with \$75 to \$80 a month for everything else. If they need to buy themselves extra nutritional food, toiletry articles – you know how much a razor is and how much shaving stuff is – shampoo, clothing. Seventy-five bucks a month, that's it – if they need to buy someone a birthday card, maybe a child or a mom a birthday card.

The other thing is we know they're not safe. I know we can do better. The City of St. John's is asking the province to come to the table to look at the *Residential Tenancies Act* that's five years late. There was a whole consultation process done around the *Residential Tenancies Act* and now, five years later, we still don't have a new *Residential Tenancies Act*. The ideal thing is to have these types of places covered by the *Residential Tenancies Act*.

I could go on with horrific stories. Again, it's hard to believe that's happening in this day and age in our province. It's hard for us to believe.

And, Mr. Chair, I look forward to getting up and to talking about some possible solutions, but I know that some of the solutions will be the province and the feds and the municipalities working together.

CHAIR: Order, please!

I remind the hon. Member her speaking time has expired.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you.

CHAIR: Seeing no further speakers, shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

A bill, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957 No. 2. (Bill 41)

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.'

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957 No. 2.

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 41 carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the resolution and a bill consequent thereto, carried.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: I move, Mr. Chair, that the Committee rise and report Bill 41.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 41.

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, the Speaker returned to the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Osborne): The hon. the Deputy Chair of Committees.

MR. WARR: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Ways and Means have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report they have adopted a certain resolution and recommended 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 has 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.

When shall the report be received?

MR. A. PARSONS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the Member for Baie Verte – Green Bay, that the House do now adjourn.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I was definitely a little ahead of myself there for obvious reasons.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. A. PARSONS: If I could get some protection, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the resolution be now read a first time.

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

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

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those against?

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 Education and Early Childhood Development, that the resolution be now read a 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?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those against?

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 Environment and Climate Change, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957 No. 2, Bill 41, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded by the hon. Government House Leader that he shall have leave to introduce Bill 41 and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those against?

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957 No. 2," carried. (Bill 41)

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957 No 2. (Bill 41)

On motion, Bill 41 read a first time.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that Bill 41 be now read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 41 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 No. 2. (Bill 41)

On motion, Bill 41 read a second time.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Transportation and Works that the Bill 41 be now read a third time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 41 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 No. 2. (Bill 41)

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 Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957 No. 2," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 41)

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

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

I would move, seconded by the Member for Cape St. Francis, that the House do now adjourn.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: Carried.

This House now stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

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