



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FORTY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Volume XLVIII

FIRST SESSION

Number 67

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Tom Osborne, MHA

Tuesday

14 March 2017

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Osborne): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

We welcome to our public gallery today William Gin and Mary Gin, who are the subject of a Member's statement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: For Members' statements today we have the Members for the Districts of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, Mount Pearl – Southlands, Labrador West, St. John's East – Quidi Vidi, Harbour Main and Cape St. Francis.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last week I had the opportunity to spend a very memorable and powerful International Women's Day representing our province in Ottawa.

As Newfoundland and Labrador's representative on the national steering committee for Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, I attended the Daughters of the Vote event, which saw 338 of Canada's brightest and best converge on our nation's capital to take their seat in the House of Commons.

It was a transformative and deeply moving event for everyone. We heard about the individual journeys of young women from many backgrounds – about the challenges they faced and the obstacles they overcame. Everyone's stories were different but the barriers they faced were similar. We also heard from many notable parliamentarians including Kim Campbell, Canada's only female prime minister.

It bears remembering that in many parts of the world, gender equality remains a distant dream. Even here in our own nation, girls and young women face steep challenges and predictable barriers, but change is possible and change is

happening. Through initiatives like Daughters of the Vote, we can encourage gender equality and help our young women take the place they so richly deserve in the boardrooms and legislatures across Canada and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, a women's place is in this House.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's my privilege to stand in this hon. House to offer congratulations to a group of individuals who have made a significant contribution to sport in my community. The Mount Pearl Sports Hall of Fame was founded in 1995 by the Mount Pearl Sport Alliance and, since that time, has inducted 80 tremendous individuals.

Today, I would like to acknowledge the achievements of two others. Ralph Chapman has been inducted into the Athlete category for his tremendous accomplishments in the sports of tennis and hockey, and Jennifer Folkes inducted into the Builder category for her significant contribution to synchronized swimming in Mount Pearl.

These two individuals are a credit to their respective sports and to their community as a whole. In addition to these two inductees, the 1976 Mount Pearl Dairy Queen Junior Baseball Championship Team has been added to the Hall of Fame's Team Honour Roll.

I would also all Members of this hon. House to join me in congratulating all of these amazing individuals on this significant accomplishment, and wish them all the very best in their future sporting endeavours.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

MR. LETTO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Celebrating as One is the theme of the first joint winter carnival in the history of Wabush and Labrador City being held from the March 10 to 18 in Labrador West.

During the opening ceremonies on Friday evening, hometown hero, RCMP Corporal Curtis Barrett was recognized for his heroic deeds on Parliament Hill on October 22, 2014. I had the honour of presenting Corporal Barrett with the province's Medal of Bravery –the highest honour that we bestow on individuals for such acts of bravery. The Town of Labrador City presented him with the key to the town and named a street in his honour.

Throughout the nine-day event and all the activities, special emphasis is being placed on promoting and reducing the stigma around mental health. Special events around this include Light the Night, a flash mob during the NHL alumni hockey game and March 15, tomorrow, being designated to take a positive pause and commit a random act of kindness.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating chairperson Evelyn Ryan and her committee from both towns for initiating the joint winter carnival, jam-packed full of events, and thanking Corporal Barrett for his service above and beyond the call of duty.

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.

On January 6, St. John's lost a woman remembered and loved by many for her pleasant greetings at a popular Harvey Road restaurant.

Eng Fong Gin was born in Canton, China in 1925 and moved to St. John's in 1955, reuniting after nine years of separation with her husband Yen Hai Gin who had come to this distant land to find work and a better home for his family.

These were, of course, the years of the infamous Chinese Head Tax in this province.

Mrs. Gin, as she was known to all, was a dedicated, hard-working mother of six: Bernice, William, Mary Ann, Mee Ling, David and James. She worked and built a life in St. John's in the restaurant industry with her husband from 1955 until they retired in 1988. The Gins bought 47 Harvey Road from my own parents who had a restaurant there until 1952.

The Gins represented the resilient spirit of a people who were treated most unfairly because of the Head Tax. That didn't stop them from raising a family proud to be Newfoundlanders, creating a vibrant business and becoming committed members of the Gower Street United Church congregation.

I ask all Members to join me in remembering Eng Fong Gin.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Harbour Main.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. PARSLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a dedicated group of volunteers whose efforts have helped clean up and beautify a piece of their community's heritage.

The Marysvale-Georgetown Small Harbour Committee Inc. was created in April 2016 with the objective of making the community harbour, otherwise known as the gut, into an attractive place for residents and visitors, so they can visit the piece of history that members of the town hold dear to them.

Online auctions, karaoke fundraisers, craft fairs and Good Friday fish and brewis dinners are just some of the ways the group is able to help raise funds for their cause. In fall 2016, the group was awarded a Community Enhancement Employment Project which enabled them to build a shed and install 70 feet of new cribbing, making significant improvements to the harbour. Once the major work is done, the group hopes to

create a memorial garden which will sit wharf side for all to see.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members to join me in thanking the Marysvale-Georgetown Small Harbour Committee and their members: Tom Moriarity, chair; Ernest Edwards and Bern Bartlett, vice-chairs; Brenda Moriarity, secretary, and Mary Alice Lush, treasurer, for their hard work and dedication in bettering their community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to recognize Paula Burke, the wonderful Therapeutic Recreation Coordinator at North Pond Manor, a personal care facility in Torbay.

Paula was the first recreational therapist in the private home sector. I am told she basically created the job herself at the time by convincing the owners of the home that the residents needed recreational activities. That was twenty years ago.

Paula goes above and beyond to ensure that the residents of North Pond Manor have the best recreation program available. The games she uses are of her own design and are suited to the residents of the Manor. Paula also organizes a variety of outings and activities that bring great joy to the residents. One of the most popular events is the Christmas party which welcomes over 300 family members, friends, volunteers and staff. Paula also organized the first ever Torbay Seniors Day last fall. She's also known to belt out a tune or two if called upon.

Mr. Speaker, Paula's enthusiasm and commitment to improving the lives of others is unparalleled and benefits many people. I ask all Members to join with me in saluting Paula Burke for a job well done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians throughout our province are beaming with pride at Team Gushue's electrifying win at the 2017 Tim Hortons Brier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: The team, composed of lead Geoff Walker, second Brett Gallant, third Mark Nichols and skip Brad Gushue, rose to the top of a world-class field and captured the hearts of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

It has been said that Canada is the world's greatest curling nation, and now Newfoundland and Labrador is home to the country's best men's team. The intensity and emotion of Team Gushue's charge to winning the title of the 2017 Brier Champions highlights that Newfoundland and Labrador can compete on any stage.

Team Gushue will now proudly wear the maple leaf on their back at the World Championships next month in Edmonton as Team Canada.

On behalf of Members of this hon. House, and all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, I congratulate them on their tremendous success and offer my greatest appreciation to all the organizers, volunteers and staff for their hard work and dedication to the 2017 Brier.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I thank the Premier for an advance copy of his statement today. We join with the Premier and government, and all Members of the House, and all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, in

congratulating Geoff, Brett, Mark and Brad, collectively known as Team Gushue.

I had the pleasure, Mr. Speaker, last week of attending a few of the draws at Mile One and experiencing the excitement and the provincial pride that was occurring there. I can tell you, it was absolutely electric, and for good reason, Mr. Speaker.

Even Sunday night, after many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians faced some of the strongest winds and difficult weather we've experienced in some time, people still gathered around their homes and their television sets in the province to cheer on our hometown team and our home-province team.

So not only did Team Gushue win the Brier, Mr. Speaker, but equally as important is that they've won the hearts of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and also the people of Canada. I've received messages from across the country.

Congratulations and thank you to Team Gushue, to all members, as well as all those who played a part in making what I think was probably one of the most successful Briers in all time.

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 Premier for an advance copy of his statement. I, too, congratulate Team Gushue for their win at the 2017 Tim Hortons Brier. I congratulate as well the hundreds of people who worked so hard to make the Brier such a singular success.

I thank Team Gushue particularly for reminding all of us, especially young sports people, of the value of team work. It was team work that made the event a success. It was team work that put Team Gushue at the top. Congratulations to them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, last weekend we experienced intense winds, the highest this province has had for decades with peaks up to 180 kilometres per hour. The winds caused widespread power outages, damaged property and wreaked havoc for many in their homes and on the roads.

Of primary concern to the Premier and to our government was ensuring all measures were being taken for the safety of residents in the province. The Premier and I were in very close contact with Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and Newfoundland Power throughout the weekend, while the Minister Responsible for Fire and Emergency Services connected directly with mayors and town councillors from many of the affected communities to discuss emergency services.

Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and Newfoundland Power worked collaboratively and were quick to respond to the outages affecting the Avalon and Burin Peninsulas which were mainly due to the loss of transmission lines due to the winds. Utility crews braved treacherous elements and have worked around the clock and I thank them, along with emergency responders, for their service.

I would also like to thank communities and our emergency management partners for their support of residents. The provincial government will continue to work closely with the utilities and municipalities as they assess the damages and to offer assistance where possible.

Mr. Speaker, on Sunday I visited the warming station here in St. John's and heard firsthand the stories of residents who were affected by the storm. At times like this, the people of the province come together by helping neighbours, friends and family, offering warm shelter and food and providing comfort.

Today, reserves of power are quite good. Our system is stable due to the tremendous work of

the men and women of Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and Newfoundland Power. I encourage residents who may still be affected by a power outage to check with the appropriate utility directly. Again, thank you to Newfoundland Power and Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro for their extra efforts and hard work this weekend.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Official Opposition, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the hard-working professionals at Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and Newfoundland Power. I would especially like to recognize those crews who risked their safety and who braved the wind and cold to repair damaged lines, poles and other equipment.

Mr. Speaker, there's also a long list of others that should be recognized for their efforts this past weekend. This includes municipalities in our province who are still doing repairs, the many community groups and non-profits who assisted with the opening and staffing of warming centres, and members of our local police force and emergency response personnel who helped to ensure safety on our roadways and responded to calls as needed.

While the winds have subsided, there are still people in the province who do not have power restored. I encourage those individuals to contact the utility provider and seek help in this matter.

One final point, Mr. Speaker, although high winds were forecasted, government did not issue any preventive warnings to residents. In situations where adverse weather conditions are forecasted, Fire and Emergency Services generally issue advisories in advance; however, this time it did not occur. Yet again, government did not have a plan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement. I welcome this opportunity to thank the front-line workers who, at a moment's notice, went to work in unbelievably harsh conditions and worked tirelessly to make sure we were returned to warmth and safety as soon as possible, and they are still at it, Mr. Speaker.

Some put their lives at risk in doing so. I'm sure everyone joins me in thanking the front-line people, the truck operators, the emergency responders and hundreds of others for their dedication and fortitude.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, today I rise in this hon. House to acknowledge the successful opening night of *Come From Away* at Broadway's Gerald Schoenfeld Theatre in New York City.

Come From Away, written by the team of Irene Sankoff and David Hein and produced by Michael Rubinoff, chronicles the days after almost 7,000 passengers arrived in Gander and the surrounding region during one of the most horrific periods in recent history.

Mr. Speaker, *Come From Away* is about the goodwill displayed by the people of our province following the awful events of 9/11 that had just unfolded. The show doesn't trivialize those events or neglect them. Instead, its simple focus is to make theatre goers feel good about themselves, and how we as a community, when tested, can rise above any challenge.

This stunning act of theatre showcases a portrayal of our heroic hospitality under extraordinary circumstances, depicting the goodness in humanity and I'm proud to say that the show features one of our own, Petrina

Bromley, starring as Ms. Bonnie Earle-Harris, manager of the SPCA shelter in Gander.

Mr. Speaker, *Come From Away* spotlights the compassion shown by our local residents, as well as the enduring friendships that developed as a result. It proves that kindness, generosity, understanding, inclusion and acceptance never go astray in any circumstance.

One theatre critic stated *Come From Away* was such a comforting, uplifting piece of art that 'pushes so many emotional buttons that you wind up feeling like an accordion.'

I invite all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Ms. Sankoff and Mr. Hein, along with the performers, producers and directors on a successful opening night for *Come From Away*.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for the advanced copy of his statement. Today, I'll try not to push his buttons. We actually join the minister and government in congratulating the writers, the cast and crew on a very successful opening night on Broadway of *Come From Away*.

I had a chance to see the show in Toronto last year. I know some folks have seen the show when it made a brief stop in Gander. I encourage anybody in Newfoundland and Labrador to try and get an opportunity to see this show.

This story, while surprising and awe inspiring to so many across our country and world, seems to not be so surprising to residents right here in our own province. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are quite proud of our welcoming and caring nature, and for good reason. It's so inspiring to see such a wonderful story about the goodness of humanity, especially during a time in this world when many question it.

Congratulations to all those involved, particularly the caring and compassionate people of Newfoundland and Labrador who are so wonderfully represented in this show.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister. *Come From Away*, what a huge success on so many levels. We are so proud of the people of Gander and surrounding area for their extraordinary hospitality and compassion, so proud of our own Petrina Bromley and Romano Di Nillo for their extraordinary talent. We are just so proud.

I had the luck of seeing *Come From Away* in Gander with the extraordinary people of that area, the real heroes, and what a privilege. I encourage anyone who can to go away to see *Come From Away*. See this incredible show that celebrates generosity, courage, compassion and community.

Bravo, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Before we start Oral Questions, I recognize in the gallery a former Member of the Legislature, Percy Barrett.

Welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

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

Today, I ask the Premier: If he can explain to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador why his Liberal government accepted a \$100 million

Atlantic Fisheries Fund, instead of fighting for the \$400 million Newfoundland and Labrador fisheries fund that Prime Minister Trudeau promised to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, first of all, like we said at the announcement, why are we settling for \$280 million, as the Member opposite calls it a \$400 million fund. Well, \$120 million of that was from the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. So what was announced on Friday of last week was a \$100 million fund. Added to that, Mr. Speaker, we will be able to participate in some \$30 million in the marketing program.

Mr. Speaker, it was \$100 million, there is more to come. I'm sure Members opposite want to make politics out of this; they want to play politics with it. They didn't deliver a thing. They could not deliver a thing. Never did they show two signatures on a paper with their federal colleagues. They were shut out of Ottawa.

On Friday, Ottawa came to Newfoundland and Labrador and delivered \$100 million, Mr. Speaker, and there's more to come.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Well, I actually do have a signature on a paper. I have a signature from Justin Trudeau, Member of Parliament, who made a commitment to Newfoundland and Labrador that he would provide the fund. So we do have a signature on paper, Mr. Speaker.

So far we've heard no details, we've heard no timelines, we've heard no plan – we're getting used to that with this government – and we've heard lots of spin. The Premier and federal Minister Foote have continued to say \$100 million is more than \$400 million. And it's not more than \$400 million, certainly what the Prime Minister had committed to.

I'll ask the Premier: Will you admit that your public relations spin is not adding up for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and can you try to explain to people how 100 is more than 400?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If it comes to political spin, well the Leader of the PC Party would know all about that. This was a Member, Mr. Speaker, who only just a few short years ago, when asked by the AG where the \$5 billion infrastructure plan was and could nowhere to be found.

So when he talks about plans, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you he has a history of not having a plan for anything. I can just remind the people, when he stood up in front of Statoil at a convention and said it's coming in weeks. We have not seen that happen either. It did not happen, Mr. Speaker.

We were proud on Friday to stand and have federal colleagues present in the room, unlike the party they had at The Rooms a few years ago, when the federal colleagues, the group that they were supposed to be negotiating with were nowhere to be found, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

We're becoming quite accustomed to hearing lectures about the previous administration when they can't answer the question. That's what we hear every day in the House here, Mr. Speaker.

On May 12, the Premier stated: We won't drop the minimum processing requirements if we don't get a deal.

So I ask the Premier: Why would you give away \$300 million of a fund specific for the Newfoundland and Labrador fishery in exchange for a \$100 million cost-shared Atlantic fund? It makes no sense, Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, obviously, it doesn't make any sense to the Member opposite. Why should it? He delivered a goose egg, Mr. Speaker. He delivered a goose egg to the fishery of this province, Mr. Speaker. He went up and told his Prime Minister that he couldn't trust him.

Well, I can tell you that Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Foote, on Friday of this week, made a commitment to the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador – \$100 million, Mr. Speaker, was not the last that you're going to see from federal investments in this province. It's not even the first that we've seen, Mr. Speaker, and there are many more to come.

They've already announced – part of an announcement that was made in St. John's, Newfoundland just a few short weeks ago, was the Oceans Protection Plan. Mr. Speaker, that's \$1.5 billion. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will be positioned and participating in that fund as well. We already have \$100 million to start the investment in the fishery now, Mr. Speaker, more than they've ever delivered.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I can tell you what's on the minds and concern of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians today is the Premier that we can't trust. That's the problem we have here in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: In May, the Premier went on to say: We're not prepared to just give up on MPRs on behalf of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We're not prepared to be just giving up on MPRs. That's what the Premier said.

I ask the Premier: How did Newfoundland and Labrador fund turn into a shared Atlantic Canada fund?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I've always said, MPRs are phased out over three years. We intend to be compliant with CETA, Mr. Speaker. I think everyone in this room agrees that CETA would be good for Newfoundland and Labrador. But, Mr. Speaker, we are not giving up on anything. There are no conditions put on where we were. We will be CETA compliant.

Mr. Speaker, we have a good working relationship with the federal government. Friday's announcement of \$100 million is not the end; there is more to come. We had federal colleagues at that table, at that announcement, Mr. Speaker. Right now, what we have opposite here is a Member that's trying to make this very political about a deal that they could not deliver, Mr. Speaker.

I can assure you, working with the federal Government of Canada and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, as the Premier of this province, we will be delivering, Mr. Speaker, for the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador. It wasn't the beginning on Friday and it's certainly not the end.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Well, Newfoundland and Labrador gave away the long-standing tradition and policy of minimum processing requirements. The other Atlantic Provinces have given up nothing. They've been giving up nothing when it comes to the fishery. The government across the aisle here gave away the minimum processing requirements on this new deal.

I ask the Premier: Why is Newfoundland and Labrador not being compensated as was negotiated? Why is it?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, as the Member opposite should know, it was his own words back a few years ago when he said he could not find what the value of MPRs was. He could not even put a value on the table of what they were worth to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Mr. Speaker, when I was Leader of the Opposition I asked many questions about how you would evaluate minimum processing requirements. Mr. Speaker, he could not do it.

Mr. Speaker, what we have here today is a working relationship that has already delivered \$100 million. It is delivering more than that when you look at the opening of search and rescue. The MRCC is something that we've been pushing for, Mr. Speaker, and asking for. They could not deliver that. We have scientists in Newfoundland and Labrador as a result of investments by the federal government. There is more to come. Mr. Speaker, \$100 million is not the end. There is more to come for the fishery in our province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Well, I think what the Premier just said in answer to the question is there is no compensation for MPRs. It's the biggest sellout in the history of the fishery, what we saw on Friday, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: The biggest sellout by that government over there.

Minister Foote said there is no \$400 million fund. It's gone. Prime Minister Trudeau committed to the fund when he was campaigning, and in a letter to me the Prime Minister said that Newfoundland and Labrador, we earned it. That was his words.

So I ask the Premier: Which is it? Did we earn it, or is it the fund never existed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, what I know, the fund didn't exist in their world; because it never, ever got delivered to our province. So to answer your question, in your world the fund didn't exist. No, because you didn't deliver a thing to the fishery of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: You generated more economic value of running back and forth to Ottawa trying to collect money, trying to get meetings that you couldn't get into.

What we delivered on Friday was \$100 million to the fishery that will immediately start work in this province, Mr. Speaker, restoring the fishery.

Mr. Speaker, what is shameful about this today, at such a critical time in our history with the fishery in this province we're seeing shrimp, crab, waiting for cod to come back, and this Member opposite has the gall to stand up in this building today and complain about \$100 million that is going to start work in transitioning the fishery already, and there is more to come.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I'll do my job for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and I'll do the job that I was elected to do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: Minister Foote said that the federal government is committed to the fish and seafood sector in our province.

Can the Premier explain why the prime minister didn't honour his commitment to give us the \$400 million that he promised? It's a simple question, Premier: Why didn't the prime minister live up to his commitment?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, first of all, I'd like to remind the Member opposite that the fund that he thought he had, that he never did get, was \$280 million from the federal government, not \$400 million. So just like the previous Finance Minister who used to sit right here, when he was premier of this province, math was not his forte either, and math is certainly not his forte, I say, Mr. Speaker.

We delivered to the fishery of this province. There is more to come. We heard the words of Minister Foote, Mr. Speaker. She speaks on behalf of the prime minister of Canada on Friday. There is more to come for the fishery in this province.

I can tell you, the words that are coming from the industry leaders that were in that room on Friday, they were pleased with it. Unfortunately, the Members opposite are not pleased with it. It is political. It is clearly political today. They could not deliver the fund, Mr. Speaker. They should be ashamed of themselves for complaining what happened in this province on Friday.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Well, the Premier says the \$400 million fund was cost shared. Well, the \$100 million is cost shared as well.

Premier, how much of the \$100 million will be paid for by the province?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, finally, a decent question. Mr. Speaker, right now there are no conditions on this fund by the federal government. It's \$100 million. Yes, the provincial government will be participating, but so will the industry. The industry will be participating too.

They're looking for the opportunity to bring investments in the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador. Some of it could include the aquaculture industry as well. What was delivered on Friday is very flexible, and we're going to consult with the industry to see where the best benefit could be.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador, something that this previous administration failed on – they failed the fishery. We are committed to rebuilding it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

The Premier says there are no conditions attached. He says he doesn't know what the ratios are, so he doesn't know how much this is actually going to cost Newfoundland and Labrador, what their contribution is going to be. Maybe it's 50-50, like they just announced they're doing with roads for small communities in rural parts of the province.

They don't know when the money is going to flow and they don't know how it's going to be applied or what it's going to be used for. So, Premier, tell the people of the province: What really was it you announced on Friday?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

One hundred million dollars for the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador – much more than that crowd ever delivered, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: One hundred million dollars, that is what was delivered on Friday, Mr. Speaker. We're working with the industry; we'll be consulting with them.

I can assure you, there is a partnership with the federal government and the provincial government and industry. Shamefully, they're the only group that doesn't agree that Friday was a good announcement for the fishery in our province.

They couldn't deliver. We were there on Friday, delivering money to the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador. There is more to come. That's the good news, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

This is nothing other than a sellout to the federal government. That's all this was, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: No conditions, no ratios. They won't know how the fund is going to be applied. We don't know how much Newfoundland and Labrador has to put into it. We don't know when the money is going to flow. We don't know who is going to hold the strings and decide where the money goes.

How can you assure us that Minister Foote and the federal government won't control how this money is spent? How can you assure us – the Premier who is not trusted by the people of the province – that this won't be decided by the industry?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We had members that were in the meeting, sat in the chair, made the announcement and demonstrated their concern for the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador. Minister Foote was there. There were other members there as well.

Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite, when you think about the years they had spent trying to get away with LIFO or do away with LIFO in our province. The federal government, just a few months ago, delivered on the commitment on behalf of the fishing industry in this province. Friday, I can assure you, was not the first announcement and it will not be the last announcement.

These are terrible times for the fishery in our province. Members opposite had lots of opportunity to help this industry. They failed to plan for the future, Mr. Speaker. They made one investment for the people of this province; that's the investment they guaranteed that they will double their electric rates in just three years. That's the legacy of that government. They have to live with it. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians were forced to deal with it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

The Premier won't even speak to the people who rely on the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador, the people who are concerned about this fund and the future of the fishery.

Mr. Speaker, this is so important that in Ottawa's news release, the Newfoundland and Labrador \$100 million doesn't even appear anywhere. It doesn't even appear in Ottawa's news release. The number seems to have just come out of nowhere and, as you've seen today, there's absolutely no detail from the government on how it's going to be spent, what ratios they are, when the money is going to flow. No details whatsoever from this Premier.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask the Premier once again: Why is it with no conditions, no ratios, no knowledge, no conditions at all, you allowed the prime minister to back away from the \$400 million promise that he made to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians? How can we trust that we'll get anything from this government?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We also said on Friday that things like innovation, infrastructure, fisheries science, safety for the industry; these are all areas that would see investment from this \$100 million.

I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you this that Prime Minister Trudeau has not backed away from Newfoundland and Labrador. He is committed to working with this province. For those that have followed the investments that have been made by the federal government of this province, I think these are tangible investments. It has been very obvious that he's invested in this province, and I can assure you these investments will not stop.

This previous administration left this province nearly on its knees – left us nearly on our knees as a result of their mismanagement over 12 years. Working with the federal government, we will get it back on track.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I was at this so-called announcement also on Friday. There were no details, there was no money, and the Liberal government gave up \$300 million.

I ask the minister: How could you settle for \$100 million versus \$400 million, with a \$300 million loss?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was happy to see the Member opposite in his role of critic and representing the Opposition, Mr. Speaker. I will say, though, that in that room that day, he was the only person – the only person – speaking out against the fund.

We had the industry, FFAW and others. The producers were there. We had fish harvesters there. They said that what they want to do is keep government's feet to the fire. I would appreciate the fact that we keep government's feet to the fire. It was a fire that they could not even get started.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: Let me tell the Premier that the invitation went out about a news conference, and there was nothing mentioned of CETA. You invited your own people to the meeting. I talked to fisherpeople over this weekend and they're very concerned about it. I talked to harvesters and I've talked to plant workers – that's the people you should be talking to.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: Again, I will ask the minister: How could settle for \$100 million versus \$400 million, with a \$300 million loss?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, it's obvious the Member opposite is doing a lot of talking. What you saw on Friday was action. What you saw on Friday was action – \$100 million delivered to the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador. And the very fish harvesters that the Member opposite was talking to, we're going to be talking to them too. Because they have a big role to play on how this money gets rolled out across our province, Mr. Speaker.

That is what you really call partnerships. That is really what you'd call a commitment to the fishery in this province, Mr. Speaker. We delivered. They can talk all they want. We're delivering benefits to the fishery of this province, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: Well, I'd ask the Premier to go talk to the harvesters, go talk to the plant workers. We're a month away from the crab fishery starting. We have harvesters out there that don't know what the quotas are. They're not sure what's going to happen with their quotas. Plant workers are not sure if there's going to be enough work. Those are the people we should be talking to, and those are the people you should be talking to.

Again, Minister, I'm going to ask you: Why did you settle for \$100 million versus \$400 million and give up \$300 million to our fishery that is needed today?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

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

The Member opposite talks about the news conference on Friday. Well, at least our federal counterpart showed up for this news conference, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, as the Premier has said, this is one element of our policy for fisheries as we go forward, \$100 million.

Look back over the past 15 months and what we've done as a government working with our counterparts in Ottawa: 22 new fishery scientists at DFO; \$18 million for a new Coast Guard facility on the south side of the province; \$8 million for fishery science at Memorial University; addition of \$1.5 billion in the oceans

protection plan that will be announced in next week's budget. And I can go on, Mr. Speaker: a new Coast Guard station for Bay de Verde; a new Coast Guard station for Twillingate; refurbishing the Coast Guard station in St. Anthony, and some major Small Craft Harbours infrastructure.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, it's obvious the minister doesn't know what the fund was for. It's obvious he doesn't know what this fund was for.

Mr. Speaker, it's a time in our province where our whole industry is asking questions. Minimum processing requirements were put in place to protect jobs, to protect rural Newfoundland.

I ask the minister, who represents a lot of those harvesters and plant workers: Minister, how did you, with good conscience, give away these requirements and get absolutely no compensation for them?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the hon. Member for the question. I do understand the fishery because there is a lot of fishery in my district, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you, as a government, we will work with harvesters and processors on how this fund is going to be spent. We will go out and seek their input.

Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite gets up and talks about the value of MPRs. Well, it was his leader, the former premier, on December 9, 2014, said: We firmly believe, Mr. Speaker, there will be no negative impact because of our CETA agreement on MPRs. That was his own leader in December of 2014.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: I'll remind the minister again, that was with a \$400 million agreement.

Minister, first there was the Atlantic Growth Strategy –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. K. PARSONS: – then there was no Atlantic Fisheries Fund. I remind the Members opposite, you were not elected to represent Atlantic Canada but you're supposed to stand up for the people right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: I ask the minister: Why did you give away the \$400 million Newfoundland and Labrador fishery fund and settle for a share of the Atlantic Fisheries Fund?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, the Members opposite continue to talk about the agreement they had. Well, Mr. Speaker, the last time I seen an agreement it had two signatures. They didn't have an agreement.

The Government of Canada didn't even show up to The Rooms, Mr. Speaker. When was the last time you seen the Government of Canada commit to \$280 million and not even show up to an announce it? Just think about that one for a minute, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what we're delivering is a \$100 million fund to help our harvesters. We're about to go into some really tough times in the fishery in this province. Just this past year, under our Seafood Innovation and Transition Program, we

set aside \$2 million. We managed, Mr. Speaker, to leverage that in almost \$3.7 million for harvesters and processors in our province.

Mr. Speaker, we're looking at innovation. This money has to go to innovation for our harvesters. We need new hook and line systems. We need automatic jiggers. Mr. Speaker, we need to invest in our harvesters and processors.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister announced significant changes to the cost-share ratios under the municipal infrastructure program for small towns, and small towns should be concerned. As of April 1, roadwork requests for communities will be 50-50 cost-shared between the province and municipalities.

I ask the minister: How can you expect small communities struggling with the 90-10 cost-share ratio be able to take advantage of this funding?

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Before I get to that answer, which I will very easily, I heard the Leader of the Opposition talking about, how can you trust the Premier? I say that Premier delivered on the acute care hospital and the hospital in Corner Brook and the long-term care when that Leader of the Opposition had a seat sale of Air Canada because he went out so many times to make the announcement that they didn't deliver on. So don't you go talking about what this Premier did.

I say to the Member opposite, is that what happened is there was federal funding and we came through dealing with MNL who sat at the table with us, one mayor. Here's what one

mayor said today, Mr. Speaker. Here's what a mayor said today: Anybody who's surprised at this announcement is not living in the real world; 90-10, 80-20 could not be maintained.

What we did, we leveraged every bit of federal funding we could. We took the money – any money we saved, we put back in the fund.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: Minister, I was a former mayor of a town and the 90-10 really helped the town that I was involved in, and I'm sure it also benefits many towns in rural Newfoundland.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. K. PARSONS: Minister, there were also changes to the cost ratio to recreation facilities, fire halls and as of April 1, municipalities of all sizes will have to go 60-40 on a cost-share.

I ask the minister again: Small communities who found it hard to contribute before, where are you expecting them to find the money?

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At the Premier's forum, when we were there, that's what we heard. We had to try to encourage regionalization. If you had to attend the conference, I don't know if you did, conference of MNL, that's the theme we heard from MNL.

Mr. Speaker, I said earlier, and people heard Mayor Oldford yesterday at the press conference saying we need to leverage every bit of federal money we can. The money that we're saving from the cost-share ratio is going back into the fund.

I'll tell you what we won't do. In 2014, there was \$34.6 million left on the table from the federal government that they wouldn't use, Mr.

Speaker. We're leveraging every cent we can from the federal government to help the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Water is our priority, which we were told by MNL and at the Premier's forum.

Water, waste water – it's a priority for everybody to have safe drinking water, and that's what we're going to do, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: Many small communities across the province have a declining tax base, aging demographic and the majority of the residents are on fixed income.

Minister, there is only one taxpayer. Isn't it that these new funding formulas downloaded on municipalities will already burden this tax on residents?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment for a quick response.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We hear from Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador. We hear from the mayors all the time. I even hear from you. Do you know what your priority is? And I give you credit, you're pushing. You're doing well as an MHA. You're doing your job. Do you know what it is? Water and waste water. That's what we made – the majority of funds last year were for water and waste water.

We have to make priorities. We're hearing from the municipalities. We're hearing from MNL who sat at the table and is pleased that water is a priority. We're pleased. They're also pleased we're not leaving any federal funds on the table. We're bringing it back to Newfoundland and Labrador; \$209 million this year alone, Mr. Speaker, is going to be spent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At a highly political announcement on Friday, the Premier and our representative in the federal Cabinet defended the slashing of their commitment to a fisheries fund arising from the CETA agreement by talking about federal spending on unrelated matters like Coast Guard operations, and that was echoed a few minutes ago by the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

I ask the Premier: Is he not aware that the federal Liberal election platform promised improved funding for Coast Guard and search and rescue, in addition to promising to honour the previous government's commitment for a \$280 million fisheries fund for this province?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, very much aware of that, Mr. Speaker – guess what? They've also committed to it. They've delivered it to the people of this province, and we're very proud that they've delivered on that commitment.

I appreciate the fact that the Member opposite is asking about the fisheries fund, the \$100 million dollars that will go into innovation, go into infrastructure, will go into working with harvesters and processors.

We know we are at a critical time with the fishery in our province right now. It's the industry themselves that have been reaching out and asking for the provincial government, along with its federal colleagues, to help support the transition into a ground fishery.

Mr. Speaker, the announcement on Friday goes a long ways in doing that. And I can assure you, we are not finished yet.

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

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I point out to the Premier I was talking about a fishery fund of \$280 million, not \$100 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. MICHAEL: Will the fund that he's talking about, and was so quick to endorse on Friday, require any matching of funds from the province and, if so, how much?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The province will be participating, as I just mentioned, after. But I do want to acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, at least someone opposite is watching what happened. The Member opposite got the 280 figure right. It was the other Members that were talking about a \$400 million fisheries fund that would have required \$120 million of provincial funding. That was the ratio that they were talking about, Mr. Speaker.

So the \$100 million that was announced on Friday got to be used. It is a very flexible fund that can go into innovation, can go into infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. It will depend on who the partners would be. In some cases, the processors, the harvesters, are willing to make significant investments. We will use every opportunity to leverage as much federal money as possible.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I remind all hon. Members that the only individual I wish to hear from is the individual identified to have the floor.

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

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

Whether it's the federal Liberals divide-and-conquer federalism on the health accord, or slashing \$180 million from their promised fisheries development fund, the Premier is first in line to cheerlead for his federal cousins without any details.

I ask the Premier: When will he start going to bat for Newfoundland and Labrador in Ottawa, instead of going to bat for Ottawa in Newfoundland and Labrador?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At least right now, I will say, we're having good, meaningful, productive conversations with Ottawa – something that has not occurred in this province for quite some time.

I would suggest – I've said it many, many times – that Friday's announcement is not the end, Mr. Speaker. This is not a slashing of funds. This is not the end to the fund. This is not an end of federal investment in the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador. I can assure you that they will be there to help transition the fishery from where it is today.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very critical time, as the minister has just mentioned, and as the Member opposite has just mentioned. We will be there working with this industry. We are very concerned about our communities, about the fishing industry. We will be there to support them.

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 ask the Premier: Why did he announce a drastically reduced fisheries development fund without providing the details? We don't want your promises; we want the details.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I'm assuming by the question from the Member opposite is that she's suggesting that

we shouldn't be consulting with the industry. I'm assuming, based on that question, she doesn't want us to talk to industry, Mr. Speaker.

We're not going to work like that. We are going to consult with the industry. On Friday, the industry leaders that were in that room, clearly that is something they wanted to do. They wanted us to work with harvesters, work with processors, work with plant workers, Mr. Speaker.

That's what we are going to do. One hundred million is not even a starting point. We've seen previous investments; \$100 million is another step. There is more to come. We are committed to the transition of this fishery into a successful ground fishery.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

I've asked for the co-operation of Members before; I'm going to ask one final time. If Members are not respecting the individual who's stood to speak, that individual will not speak for the remainder of the day.

Before we move with other items on the agenda, I welcome Mayor Wayne Power of Placentia to our public gallery.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: As well, we have Harold Piercey, a former Member of this Legislature. Welcome.

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 Member for Labrador West.

MR. LETTO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member for Torngat Mountains:

WHEREAS Crown lands make up 89 per cent of the land mass of the province and this land is a significant economic and social resource for Newfoundland and Labrador; and

WHEREAS government has recently announced increased access to Crown lands available for agriculture production;

WHEREAS the announcement to increase access to Crown land delivers on a commitment in *The Way Forward* to increase food self-sufficiency and supports government's goal to foster economic growth throughout the province; and

WHEREAS increasing access to Crown lands benefits residents, municipalities and businesses throughout the province;

BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House recognizes the importance of increasing access to Crown lands and increasing agricultural production and commends the provincial government for doubling the amount of land available to farmers and agricultural producers.

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

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

The private Member's resolution just moved by the Member for Labrador West shall be the private Member's resolution to be debated this Wednesday, pursuant to Standing Order 63(3).

MR. SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

MR. K. PARSONS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS the recreational ground fishery is a part of our culture, history and heritage; and

WHEREAS the federal government is proposing a tag system for the recreational ground fishery in 2017; and

WHEREAS participants will have to purchase a licence and purchase tags in order to participate in the recreational fishery;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to urge the federal government not to implement a cost or fees for those participating in the recreational food fishery in 2017.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is the second time in this Assembly that I got up on this particular petition. It's very important to me, and I know we have a lot of really serious issues in our fishery today. It's a lack of response from the minister and this government over across the way to do anything with our fishery, but our recreational fishery is very important to everyone in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I know personally, myself, I get no better enjoyment than going out and jigging a codfish. I get no better enjoyment than coming home in the yard and filleting a few fish. I get no better enjoyment than giving somebody a feed a fish. That's what we call it: a feed of fish.

It's a great time in our province. It's an opportunity for us to really see who we are as people. It's important that we be treated fairly. All I'm asking for government is to – I know the MP for Central Newfoundland, Mr. Simms, went to some of the consultations that were on

the go and he's going to urge the federal minister not to go ahead with this tag system.

It's time for our minister to urge the federal government minister – I know the Premier talks to Minister Foote every Sunday night. I wonder if one of these Sunday nights can he ask Minister Foote not to go ahead with this tag system because it's unfair to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We like to be treated like the rest of Canada. This tag system is nowhere else in Canada. Nowhere else do people have to pay to go out and catch a codfish.

So I ask government to really get out there and talk to the people. This fishery is so important to people. It shows who we are as a people. It's important that our government help and make sure that this tag system doesn't come into play.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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 removed the provincial point-of-sale tax rebate on books, which will raise the tax on books from 5 per cent to 15 per cent; and

WHEREAS an increase in the tax on books will reduce book sales to the detriment of local bookstores, publishers and authors, and the amount collected by government must be weighed against the loss in economic activity caused by higher book prices; and

WHEREAS Newfoundland and Labrador has one of the lowest literacy rates in Canada, and the other provinces do not tax books because they recognize the need to encourage reading and literacy; and

WHEREAS the province has many nationally and internationally known storytellers, but we will be the only people in Canada who will have

to pay our provincial government a tax to read the books of our own writers;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government not to impose a provincial sales tax on books.

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

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this petition so clearly articulates the contradictions and the ridiculous situation that we're in with adding a provincial sales tax to our books.

This week, we will celebrate and hear the announcement of the winner of the Winterset Award. There's Paul Rowe who has been nominated, Michael Crummey and Robert Chafe – three incredible authors from this province. So anybody here in our province, in order to read the books of these three nominees for the Winterset Award, we will have to pay more than anybody else in Canada to read books of our own writers.

There's something wrong with that. It's absolutely – you may forgive me, Mr. Speaker; it's idiotic. This is such a regressive sales tax. There's no good reason to do it. There's every reason to rescind this and reverse this decision.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. ROGERS: This is about our writers; it's about literacy in the province. What was government thinking? They could not have been thinking clearly. Obviously, their vision is clouded. Obviously, they don't have an understanding of the importance of literacy and literature in our province.

Everywhere else in the country, it's so, but not here. How did that happen? Are we that desperate, Mr. Speaker? Is this province that desperate to add a tax on books, even to our own writers? Mr. Speaker, it's a mystery – a mystery yet to be written.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. KENT: It's hard to follow that, Mr. Speaker, but I'm going to try.

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 Marine Atlantic ferry rates continue to rise, becoming increasingly more cost prohibitive; and

WHEREAS increased rates impact the cost of goods being shipped into our province, as well as those products being exported out by local businesses; and

WHEREAS tourism is negatively impacted by the ever-increasing, cost-prohibitive means of ground transport into the Island portion of our province;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to open a line of communication with the federal government and begin to advocate on behalf of residents and businesses of the province, not stopping until results are realized.

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

Mr. Speaker, we've raised this issue before. We will continue to raise it. There is at last one government minister, when he was in Opposition federally, used to raise this issue a lot, but we don't hear so much from this government on this issue.

We spent some time in Question Period today talking about the cozy relationship between our provincial and federal government and, unfortunately, it's only resulted in a sellout so far. So today, we heard lots about the most recent sellout of our fisheries fund. Well, here's another example of an issue where I fear that our current government will sell out Newfoundland and Labrador once again.

We need leadership. We need leadership by our provincial government and by our federal government to ensure that our constitutional

rights as people of Newfoundland and Labrador are respected and honoured.

The continued increases to Marine Atlantic rates, that's been an issue for quite some time, but given the cozy relationship that now exists between the provincial and federal government, you would hope that there would be some action instead of just endless compromise and nobody standing up for Newfoundland and Labrador.

The last time I presented a petition related to Marine Atlantic, I talked about the impact on consumers that will take place on April 1. Another group that has expressed concern about the Marine Atlantic rate increases is Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador. As of April 1, passenger and vehicle fares, as well as drop trailer fees, will increase by another 2.6 percent.

Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador has said that in an industry with small businesses, any cost increases can be devastating. Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador acknowledges that there have been some service improvements over the last number years; there's still a need for rate stabilization when it comes to Marine Atlantic. Tourism and hospitality is a growth industry for our province, so we need to do what we can to keep costs down.

Mr. Speaker, I know my time is up; I will continue to raise this issue in the House of Assembly, even if certain others won't.

Thank you.

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

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

I know it's unusual in that it doesn't fall within the Standing Orders, but I have seen on occasion in this House, with unanimous consent of both sides, for a Member of government to stand up and respond to a petition. I would ask for that opportunity today, given that I would assume that the petition that was put forward asks for government's thoughts on this. I'd love an opportunity to offer them, with leave.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Does the hon. Member have leave?

AN HON. MEMBER: No leave.

MR. SPEAKER: Leave has been denied.

MR. A. PARSONS: I guess they don't want to hear our thoughts on it.

Thank you, 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 there have been an identified lack of mental health services in our provincial K-12 school system; and

WHEREAS the lack is having a significant impact on both students and teachers; and

WHEREAS left unchecked, matters can and, in many cases, will develop into more serious issues;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the government to increase the mental health services and programs in our province's K-12 school system.

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

Mr. Speaker, nearly three years ago, we did something historic in this House of Assembly. We set up an All-Party Committee on Mental Health. A very important committee that was set up; took the politics out of addressing issues around health, but particularly around mental health; travelled the province, had stakeholders engaged; met with average citizens, met with educators, met with health professionals; went through a whole dialogue on how we would

approach that. In their report, the emphasis that was put on it was around early diagnosis, early intervention and identifying particularly needs that may be identifiable at an early age around the issues around young people.

That was so significant, and there were processes and discussions around the types of programs that we could put in place. There was a discussion and a scan around other jurisdictions about what programs and services would work. We've heard from educators, we've heard from school counsellors, we've heard from administration, we've heard from parent groups, we've heard from parents and we've heard from students about the impacts that lack of programs and services, lack of education around mental health is having on their ability to cope in the school system.

We all know there are additional stressors on everybody in society, but particularly young people, and particularly young people when it relates to school. We've started a great process of identifying how we deal with bullying. Well, bullying has an impact on students in the school system from a mental health perspective.

There are other signs within the school system that a teacher, a teacher's aide, an educator, a parent, a coach would identify certain, particular things, but there are areas of training that are necessary. There are extra resources that are necessary. There are extra abilities to be able to free up staff time within a school system.

There's the actual physical resource that's needed, rooms where you can go in and have proper dialogue in a comfortable, safe, engaging process. We don't have that with overcrowded schools. We don't have that with lack of resources. We don't have it when we are cutting resources. We don't have it when we have an inclusive program but we don't have the resources to be able to make that program work efficiently. We don't have the proper dialogue between the education system and the department, with the health department about how we look at programs that can be developed, or existing programs that could be offered within the school system.

So, Mr. Speaker, I've petitioned this to the House in the last number of weeks and I'll continue to do that in the near future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

WHEREAS many feel their problems and concerns are not being addressed in an appropriate and timely manner;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly call upon the House of Assembly, urging government to use all-party town hall events as an avenue, whereby people can express their concerns to all parties.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ask to be heard.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to stand and present this petition in the House. It is a major concern to the general public, to the people who put us in this House, that all parties be involved in the discussions that go on with regard to the issues that concern the people of this province. Not just here in the Assembly, in legislation when we deal with bills, which is a pretty structured kind of way of discussing the issues – obviously, the people signing this petition want a much freer airing of their concerns and an airing that is heard equally by all parties in the House. Not just by the government, not just by the Official Opposition, not just by any other party, not just by independent people who are sitting in the House, but everybody who's elected needs to hear the concerns of the people of the province.

I was delighted, for example, when the Task Force on Educational Outcomes, which wasn't a committee of the House but a committee that was appointed by the government, that I felt very free to go to the task force without any

strings attached, without being told what the questions were that I had to respond to. I could go and present to the task force freely, as could everybody else who was there that night and at all the other consultations that the task force conducted.

These people on the task force know what real consultation is about. What the signers of these petitions are saying is they want the issues that they have to present to government to be presented to all parties, that we all hear their concerns, that there are not these strings attached, that there not be a structure that controls how they present their opinions. This is something that's being observed by people – not just those who got to sign the petition, but by people at the university; for example, political scientists.

One person who expresses an opinion quite strongly is Steve Tomblin, one of the political scientists, professors at Memorial, who recently wrote that the elimination of 287 managerial positions, the reasons for them – the good and the bad – should have been communicated to the public. And these petitions are asking for that kind of thing, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you so much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Orders of the Day, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

MR. A. PARSONS: I call from the Order Paper, second reading of Bill 69, An Act To Amend The Health Professions Act, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources.

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

MR. KENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Good afternoon. I'm pleased to have a chance now in second reading stage of debate to speak to Bill 69, An Act to Amend the Health Professions Act. It's not a very long bill. It's not a very complicated bill, and it's slated to come into force on September 29 of this year.

I'll quickly, as the minister's really already done, but because it's been a while since we've debated this legislation, I'll present a little bit of an overview of what's contained in the bill, and then I'll conclude my comments. I won't speak for the full 59-and-half minutes I have left, I don't think. Unless I get inspired, you never know. Stranger things have happened in this hon. House.

This is a piece of legislation that I certainly support. The bill will amend the *Health Professions Act*, which we have had in place for some time in this province, to "reduce the number of elected and appointed members of the council; provide that the registrar can perform the duties of the registration committee where those duties are assigned to the registrar; provide that the council's by-laws can address the appointment of replacement members to the council; provide that the quality assurance committee can appoint health professionals who are registered or licensed under the laws of another province or territory to be assessors; and change the composition of complaints authorization committees due to the reduction in elected and appointed members of the council."

So that's effectively it. The primary amendments, the first relates to reducing the number of members. There will be six persons who are not members of a college that falls under this legislation, will be appointed by the minister. The second amendment relates to assigning the duties of the college's registration committee to the council's registrar, which makes reasonable sense. The third amendment is to avoid instances whereby conflict of interest may arise or there's a perceived bias. Then the quality assurance committee will be permitted to go outside of the province to appoint an investigator.

Being a little bit familiar with the *Health Professions Act* and some of the challenges with the legislation as it currently stands, as the professions involved have evolved, these

amendments will allow the health professions involved to, and for the council to function more appropriately and in a more streamlined and, hopefully, a more effective way.

In terms of the council's composition; one member from each of the six college board of directors elected from and by each college, and then there will be six members appointed by the minister who are not members of a college. So there will be 12 in total.

Previously, it was the elected chairperson of each of the colleges, plus one elected member from each of the colleges. Then the minister would appoint one member per college who are not members of the colleges. So it was 18 in total, which given the purpose and mandate of the council, that does feel rather large. That means a higher number is required for quorum. There are just some practical and administrative challenges with the current structure.

Duties, as I said, will be assigned to the registrar as a result of these changes. The college's registration committee will be able to do that. It's taking, basically, responsibility from the individual colleges and placing it with the council. It's already being done in most cases, and this is really about bringing that into legislation. The council will be responsible for registration and quality assurance and disciplinary actions as well.

In terms of the changes to the quality assurance committee process that are outlined, this will aid in circumstances whereby conflict of interest may arise or there's a perceived bias. The committee will be permitted to go outside the province to appoint an investigator. This probably won't be necessary very often. It's anticipated this would only be done in rare circumstances, but this will allow for that to happen when it is required.

The other amendments are fairly straightforward as well. As a result of the changes we've discussed, particularly related to the composition of the council, there are some other changes that need to be made elsewhere in the legislation to reflect those changes. So that's logical and makes sense.

There's also a transitional clause to avoid any shock to the system, so to speak; members will continue until the expiry of their terms. The transition will be a gradual one. No term is greater than three years. I think the proclamation date, as I mentioned, of September 29 of this year, gives the council the time it needs to update its bylaws and to manage this transition and manage these changes.

So these changes were requested by the council in hopes of having a more efficient and effective process. The changes sound small. They are relatively small, but they're important for this organization. I understand that the council has been consulted throughout the process. These have been in the works for some time and the council is in agreement with the proposed amendments.

I'm pleased to speak in support of Bill 69. The amendments make sense and it just makes sense to get on with them.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters – Pleasantville.

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

I always add the beautiful and historic District of Virginia Waters – Pleasantville. I'd like to thank the Member for Mount Pearl North for standing up and, what I seem to think is, supporting this bill, Bill 69.

I'm very pleased to stand in this hon. House again; as I am each and every time I stand and get the pleasure to stand. I'm going to speak on behalf of another health-related bill here, similar to what we did last week, just cleaning up some legislation that we need to make the health profession that much stronger. So Bill 69, An Act to Amend the Health Professions Act.

In his opening comments for this bill, the Minister of Health and Community Services spoke about the three substantial amendments to the *Health Professions Act*. They are as follows: reduce the number of elected and appointed members of the council; providing legislative

authority to the registrar to perform duties of the registration committee; and allowing the quality assurance committee to appoint health professionals registered in another province to act as assessors.

Some of these have already been dealt with by the minister; I'm just going to go into a little bit more detail. To give effect to these substantive amendments to the *Health Professions Act* a number of additional amendments were required as well: providing that the council's bylaws may address the appointment of replacement members of the council; updating the act's appeal provision to reflect the fact that the registrar may be making certain decisions around registration; and changing the composition of the complaints authorization committees to reflect the changes in the amount of elected and appointed members to the council.

The additional amendments will now allow the council's bylaws to include direction relating to how replacement members will be appointed to this council. There were no previous rules on how these members would be appointed. So subsection 8(6) of the *Health Professions Act* allow replacement council members to be appointed in situations where an elected member either resigns, dies or becomes incapable of performing his or her duties.

This subsection provides that an instance where an elected member resigns, dies or becomes incapable of performing his or her duties, the remaining members of the council shall appoint a member from the same profession to serve up until the expiry of that particular term. This tends to make insurmountable sense in that making sure that council maintains its composition, a strong composition and representation from the different colleges and councils that it represents.

The *Health Professions Act* does not currently provide any direction on how this appointment can occur, so now we're straightening up that absence or gap in the legislation. Bill 69 will provide that council have the ability to address the process of appointing replacement members within its own bylaws.

The second additional amendment to update the *Health Professions Act* is the appeal provisions to reflect the fact that if the registration committee has assigned certain of its duties to the registrar, a person could be appealing the decision of the registrar instead of the decision of the registration committee. Currently, the act only makes reference to an appeal of a decision to the registration committee. The registrar needs to be added to this as well.

Mr. Speaker, I'll take a second now to talk about the third amendment which relates to the composition of the complaints authorization committee. I know this is riveting for everyone in the House, but I just want to make sure we highlight it very clearly.

The health profession regulators have an important mandate to ensure that not only competent health professionals practise in our province – sorry, that make sure only competent health professionals practise within our province. The way that health professions regulations fulfill this mandate is through the disciplinary process. Under the *Health Professions Act* if an allegation of misconduct by one of its health professions regulated under the act is received, then the council's registrar may attempt to resolve this matter. However, if the matter is not satisfactorily resolved by the registrar, the matter can be referred to the complaints authorization committee.

This committee is an important component of the disciplinary process for self-regulating professions. When an allegation has been submitted to the complaints authorization committee, the committee may exercise a number of powers. They can refer this matter back to the registrar for investigation or alternate dispute resolution. They can conduct an investigation itself or by appointing a person to conduct that set of investigation. They can conduct a practice review of the respondent's practice. They could require the respondents to appear before them. And they could refer the allegation to the quality assurance committee.

If the complaints authorization committee is of the opinion that there is reasonable grounds to believe that the health professional has engaged in conduct deserving of a sanction, the committee may do a number of things, such as

counsel or caution that professional, instruct the registrar to file a complaint against that professional, and/or refer it to the disciplinary panel and they could suspend or restrict the professional's registration – I have to apologize in advance for my throat; it's a direct reflection of Team Gushue and the Brier win.

If the matter gets referred to the disciplinary panel, a three-person adjudication tribunal would be appointed from the disciplinary panel to hear the matter. An adjudication tribunal hears evidence and submissions from the respective parties. The tribunal makes a decision as to whether the conduct of the profession in question is conduct deserving of a sanction. However, many matters can be dealt with by the registrar or at the complaints authorization committee level well before it gets to be escalated to the full hearing before the adjudication tribunal. We're speaking about a very small number of incidents; still, nonetheless, we have to make sure those are covered under this legislation.

The health professions council currently appoints at least three of its members to be on the complaints authorization committee, including at least one public representative. As the number of the council members will be decreasing over time to the amendments contained in this bill, it will also be necessary to change the required composition of the complaints authorization committee. This bill will no longer limit the membership of the complaints authorization committee to just council members.

You recall, Mr. Speaker, that the council members will be members elected from each of the college's board of directors. Instead, the health professionals from those health professions designated in the schedule of this act will be able to be appointed to the committee. In practice, it is expected that the health professions from the same college as the health professional named in a disciplinary matter will be chosen to sit on that complaints authorization committee.

However, the revised provisions contained in this bill, Bill 69, provide that the council will have the flexibility to appoint professionals from other colleges, which may be appropriate in

some instances, such as where the conflict of interest may be or at least the reasonable apprehension of bias could exist. Expanding the pool of potential members of the complaints authorization committee will be of particular benefit to those professions with a small number of registrants.

It's very important, if you only have a small pool of people to draw from for this complaints authorization committee, if you don't have – there could be some conflict of interest there. So you want to make sure the conflict of interest is gotten rid of or removed, by expanding that pool of people you can draw from. Whether that be from other colleges, or probably from other people from other provinces.

The current requirement is at least one public representative to serve on this complaints authorization committee, and that will not change. The public representatives have an important role in governance of self-regulating professions and bring a valuable, unique perspective to disciplinary matters. Officials within the Department of Health and Community Services have worked closely with the Council of Health Professionals and the council is very supportive of these amendments.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments contained in Bill 69 will assist the council in fulfilling its mandate to protect the public by ensuring that competent health professionals are providing quality health care for people in this province from now and into the future.

Mr. Speaker, it's – or, Madam Speaker. Sorry, Madam Speaker. I didn't see the change there, it was that quick. Like the hawk moving in there on that, for sure.

One of the major pieces that I'd like to highlight again from this bill is the reduction of the number of elected and appointed members to the council, which is important; giving the legislative authority to the registrar to perform these duties of the registration committee, and allowing the quality assurance committee to appoint the health professionals registered in another province to act as assessors.

That's some of the key points we'd like to highlight in this bill. Because we're changing

some of those key requirements, we have to again make some amendments to some subsequent areas in the act. So making sure we have the ability to appoint new representatives to the council, or new members to the council is very important, and there's nothing in the act currently that covers the appointment of new members.

If someone can't perform their duties, his or her duties, whether they are incapable because of changes in their work life or die, God forbid, or just can't fulfil those duties, it gives an opportunity in the bylaws in this act, the change we're making here today, to allow them the ability to appoint someone else to represent their profession on this council. I think that's an important provision we have to look at.

Obviously, some of the changes we're making in the first part of our bill, changing the appeals provision to reflect the fact that the registrar may be the person you're having the issue with, the decision the registrar made, it's very important that that is a part of this bill as well, because previously you could only make a complaint about the registration committee. The registrar is an important piece of that, because they're making that decision. It's important that's part of the amendment as well. The composition of the complaints authorization committee, it'll have to reflect the reduction of the number of elected and appointed members to this council. So that's an important piece that we really need to highlight in this as well.

While these proposed amendments are relatively minor in nature, as a couple of people have already mentioned in this hon. House, they're going to make a great improvement in the council's regulatory regime and give them the ability to make those changes and make them a little bit more robust and make those actions a little bit better for them.

So, Madam Speaker, I have no problem supporting this bill, and I ask all of my colleagues in this hon. House to stand with us and make these changes to make the health system and the amendments to Bill 69 much stronger. I'll be voting in favour of Bill 69.

Thank you very, very much, Madam Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MADAM SPEAKER (Dempster): The Speaker recognizes the hon. Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

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

I'm pleased to stand this afternoon and speak to Bill 69, which is a bill to make amendments to the *Health Professions Act*, an act that was created in 2010. I remember that act when it came in because I did have some concerns at the time.

It's an umbrella act, and it's an umbrella act for a number of professions that have small membership: the acupuncturist, audiologist, speech language pathologist, dental hygienist, medical lab technologist, medical radiation technologist, midwives and respiratory technologists. So they are very important professions, extremely important to the health of this province but they do have a smaller membership than a lot of the other professions such as doctors, nurses, et cetera.

There was an agreement to put an umbrella act together that all of these professions agreed with at the time. I had hope at the time, I remember because midwives are included that we would have seen more action with regard to midwives by the government of the day. That didn't happen. I point it out now so that the government of this day may give more thought to the issue of the need for midwives in this province. It's not enough to have regulations for midwives unless we have midwives recognized as part of our health care system, the full public health care system.

So I mention that in the light of speaking to this bill. When this bill was put together – when the act was put together council was set up, a regulatory body that encompassed all of the professions that were covered by the act. I'm glad that the government has noted that the amendments that are being made are because of a request from the council, and that's good. It shows the kind of consultation that needs to go on when we're talking about legislation, both creating legislation from scratch or amending current acts.

I'm not going to go into all of the details with regard to the changes. The minister did that when it was presented first on March 6, I think it was when the minister made the opening presentation on the act and the two speakers of today have made reference to the changes. One has to do with streamlining the council itself and the others have to do with the registration committee and the complaints committee, both of which are extremely important for the running of the council.

There's one thing, though, that I'm just a little bit surprised about, that the council would want this, and maybe the minister will speak to it – not the first point. The first point in clause 3, section 12(3), adds a new subsection to the act. It says to the list of registrar duties will be added: to perform registrar duties as assigned by the registration committee. That's fine. The old subsection (e) is now (f), stipulating that the registrar can perform other duties assigned by the council.

Of course, that's a pretty common thing that you do a list of duties but then you also tack on – there might be something else that council at one time or another might come up with and assign to a committee or some times to a staff person and you make sure that proviso goes into the act.

But what I'm questioning is that subsection (4) now says that the registration committee may assign some or all of its duties to the registrar. I'm a little surprised by that. I'm surprised the council would want it because it actually is allowing duties of the committee of the council to be carried on by the registrar without consulting the council. I would think that some of those duties, the committee would want to maintain responsibility for. So I'd like a little input from the minister on that point.

So, for example, when it comes to recognizing who can be seen as a member of a profession, this would assume if it's left totally in the hands of the registrar – if that particular thing was left totally in the hands of the registrar, that the registrar would have to really be on top of all of the requirements for the different professions in identifying or saying yes to somebody who is looking to become a member under the act. It sounds a bit strange to me that that particular responsibility could be totally given to the

registrar without consulting with the committee, which would have people on it representing the various professions.

I would think the professions would have wanted to keep control over that particular piece. So I will be interested in hearing from the minister on that particular point. Overall, we support the amendments, except this one I have a query about, but if it's what the council wants, then I'm obviously ready to support it. Because, for the most part, I'm told that all the amendments, we have been told, are council driven.

I'd like to point out something again in the context of this discussion with regard to the act. Sections 58(1) to (4) of the act discusses the circumstances under which the minister would undertake a review in the public interest, including such things as the performance of the council, but also the administration of the act. So that's in the hands of the minister and that stays there.

I think – this act came into play in 2010; it is now 2017 – that we'd like to see a review done that would include input from the professions and from the public to ensure the legislation is meeting the needs of the professions and acting in the public interest.

Now, it could be that the minister, in discussion with the professions, knows that they're satisfied, but the act does call upon a review that would be held in the public interest. So I think maybe the time has come for a review that would show us how this act is working.

I've already mentioned, for example, the midwives and the issue that I've raised that we have regulations for midwives but the midwifery is not yet under the public health care system, in the same way as other medical professions that do similar work to midwives. I'd like to know where the midwives fit in this one. Is this really meeting their needs?

So that's one thing that I would like to put out here right now that I'm not happy about, and I would like to see the minister looking at this seriously and opening up the broader discussion around midwifery. Ontario has reviewed its legislation, some 16 years ago. So their

legislation was much older than ours, and they recommended tightening up some procedures, but also better public education. They found that the public was not aware of all the professions that were governed by the legislation, or that a complaint could be made, or how to go about it.

From time to time, you hear about people who have been unhappy with an individual maybe in one of these professions and really don't know that they have the right to complain and that there is a complaint procedure. It's easier to be aware of that when an act particularly names the profession.

This act doesn't name the profession; it just says *Health Professions Act*. So maybe the public is not aware of all of the professions that fit under this, and aren't aware – and I'm sure they aren't actually. I know that from some personal experiences, hearing people coming with concerns that they aren't aware of the professions that are covered, and that they do have the right under this act to make a complaint.

These are some of the major points I'm concerned about, Madam Speaker, and I do look forward to a continued discussion and to hear what the minister has to say about the points I've raised.

Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It is certainly a pleasure for me today to stand and speak in favour of Bill 69, and I'll reference some of the explanatory notes attached to this particular bill. The intent is to make changes to the *Health Professions Act*, I guess to bring it more up to date, and certainly handle some of the, I guess, somewhat challenges that would have been under the original act and to bring it to a point where we can work within the parameters now that this act will give us.

Some of the references that we want to make there, Madam Speaker, are to reduce the number of elected and appointed members of the council. We're also looking at: provide that the

registrar can perform the duties of the registration committee where these duties are assigned to the registrar; provide that the council's bylaws can address the appointment of replacement members to the council; provide that the quality assurance committee can appoint health professionals who are registered or licensed under the laws of another province or territory to be assessors; and change the composition of the complaints authorization committees due to the reduction in elected and appointed members of the council.

Again, Madam Speaker, this particular bill is making significant improvements to the original bill in order for the professions act to be complaint and give us some flexibility with regard to what it used to be.

Madam Speaker, I normally speak without notes, but I felt that in this particular area today it would be prudent if I would use some references to make sure that I'm complaint with what the act is saying and some of the questions that certainly would come from this particular *Health Professions Act*.

So what I've done, Madam Speaker, is I've compiled almost like a question-and-answer period so we can address some of the questions that may arise from these particular amendments to this act and changes to the act and, hopefully, be able to bring some sort of clarity to some of these questions with the answers.

Madam Speaker, one of the questions that certainly would come forward that I have is a question that says: Why are these amendments being made? Is there something wrong with the legislation? Certainly, just a very simple question but I think important. The answer to that particular question is: No. There's nothing wrong with the *Health Professions Act*. These amendments are being made at the request of the Newfoundland and Labrador Council of Health Professionals, which is the regulatory body responsible for the regulation of health professions, governed under the *Health Professions Act*.

The Department of Health and Community Services agrees that these amendments will enable the council to better meet its mandate. The department is working closely with

regulatory bodies, such as the council, to bring forward amendments to legislation as required from time to time.

The second question, Madam Speaker, that I wanted to get some answers to. It was another very simple question: Are we actually weakening the council's governance by now having one college representative instead of two? The answer to that question that came from Health and Community Services was: No. The amendments in this bill that reduce the size of the council are being made at the request of the council and it is administratively difficult to bring an ever-increasing number of people together for a council meetings.

There are currently 18 members on the council, and every time a new profession is regulated under the act, three new members are added to the council. Sometimes with those increasing numbers, Madam Speaker, it can become somewhat cumbersome, and we can see the challenges that could create in trying to have meetings to do the business of the association in such an expedited manner, and sometimes that's a challenge with that.

The amendments that we're making today, or will make in this act, will make it easier for the council to hold meetings, while still ensuring the individual colleges are well represented at the council table. Aside from council meetings, Madam Speaker, there are other ways for people to get involved with council and the college activities, and the health professionals can get involved with committees of council and can bring questions and concerns to their college representatives who can, in turn, bring the matter forward to council.

Madam Speaker, another question I wanted explored is: Isn't reducing the number of public representatives on council a bad thing? The answer, again, that came from Health and Community Services says: If these amendments are made, there will still be six public representatives on council, and this will be more than sufficient to represent the public interest.

While the number of public representatives varies across the health professions within the province, many of the other professions' regulatory bodies only have two representatives.

Even as the number of health professions regulated under this act increases over time, the ratio of public representation would still be strong and appropriate.

I think, Madam Speaker, that was an important question to ask, because I think it's important for us to realize and to know that if we have representatives on this council, that this council gives us true representative across the sectors that we have. So it was important for us if we're looking at health professionals under the different sectors, that the ability to have that represented would be very, very important.

I guess another question is: Why are we talking about bringing in health professionals from other provinces to act as assessors? Are there not enough people in Newfoundland and Labrador that can do this job? Very good question; I got a very good answer.

It is not expected that it would be necessary in most instances to bring in a health professional licensed in another province to act as an assessor. It will helpful at times when a health profession has a small number of members and there could be a conflict of interest or bias issues within the small membership.

So I think, Madam Speaker, for me, the answer to that question was very important because again we always like to think that we have enough expertise within the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador that would be able to give us those opinions and give us that advice. For me, it was certainly a bit of an eye-opener in that yeah, I didn't think about that. There are some professions that have a limited number of resources and by giving us the ability to look at opportunities outside the province when, in fact, there could be a conflict of interest, that would certainly take care of that within the act.

Another question I had, Madam Speaker, is: Would it cost a lot of money to bring in assessors from other jurisdictions? Always a question, a concern. It is not expected that it will be necessary to bring in assessors from other jurisdictions very often. I guess that was just a supplementary question to my previous question when I wanted to find out if, in fact, it was necessary to bring assessors in from other provinces. That's always a concern when we

look at cost factor and I've been assured that that certainly will not be the case. Probably when we look at assessors coming from other provinces, it would be under extenuating circumstances and there would be a smaller pool of resources they could have.

I've also been told, Madam Speaker, that any cost of bringing in assessors from away would be funded through the council from fees that are collected from its members. So that's not, in essence, a direct cost to the government but more, in fact, it would be a cost to the council. They incur revenues through fees that they collect from their members. So that would make it a lot easier for us to be able to bring in assessors from other provinces, if that is necessary.

Madam Speaker, I know that my time is just about gone; I do have another about 10 questions that I asked Health and Community Services that obviously I'm not going to get time at this time, that I asked and got answers for. So I will allow –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. HAWKINS: Do I get leave?

I will pass it over to my hon. Members if they have any statements to make and certain Members on this side, but if I do get an opportunity to speak again I do have a number of questions that I asked and do have the answers that I can put out there.

I asked the questions and I got the answers, so I wanted to put them on the floor so everybody will have the answers to the questions that I had concerns about. I really wanted to make that –

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. HAWKINS: – I thought it was a prudent thing to do, Madam Speaker.

Thank you for the opportunity. It's always a pleasure.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Speaker recognizes the hon. Member for Mount Pearl – Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a pleasure to stand here in the House and speak to Bill 69. I'm only going to be a couple of moments.

I have to admit, I haven't done the same degree of due diligence that the Minister of Transportation and Works has done. I have to say, I'm pretty impressed. I've never seen a minister come to the House and have a whole list of questions and answers and all that kind of stuff. I tell you, I'm impressed. I got to say, I'm impressed. Now there are some people who wouldn't believe it, but I believe he went through all that exercise himself.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. LANE: It's awesome, and I'm sure they're not trying to stall time because of the lack of legislation, my colleague says. I'm sure that wouldn't be the case. I'm sure that it was just a case of due diligence.

Anyway, I'm going to make this very short so we can move on to some other legislation. All I want to say, Madam Speaker, is that I support Bill 69. Obviously, it's An Act to Amend the Health Professions Act. We know the importance of our health practitioners and so on, and we need to have legislation in place to ensure they're operating properly; they're following all the standards, operating ethically and systems in place to ensure that. If there are any issues around that, to have mechanisms to report things and have things looked into, appealed and so on.

This has obviously been done in consultation with the stakeholders, which is a good thing. They've asked for these changes and we're bringing forth the changes that they have asked for; therefore, based on everything I have heard, I have no problem with it and I will be supporting the legislation.

Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Speaker recognizes the hon. Member for St. George's – Humber.

MR. REID: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's great to have an opportunity to speak to Bill 69, amendments to the *Health Professions Act*. Some people maybe have described this piece of legislation as housekeeping legislation and that, to a degree, may be true, but it's not in a way to diminish the importance of the piece of legislation.

We all know what happens if you don't keep your house clean, tidy and up to date. What happens, it becomes problematic. So this piece of legislation really looks at the growing health care professional field in this province and it looks at the way these bodies regulate themselves, Madam Speaker.

It used to be, years ago – some of us are old enough to remember – when anyone could put out a shingle and claim to be a certain profession. There was no regulation of what qualifications were required and what they had to do. It's a very dangerous situation for patients and people who availed of these services. So it's very problematic to have a situation like that without regulation, without government standard, without these bodies governing themselves, Madam Speaker.

The *Health Professions Act* regulates several health professionals under an umbrella model. There are several health care professions that come under this piece of legislation. Each of these professions plays an important role in providing high-quality health care in this province.

Just to give you a list of some of the people we're dealing with, and others have given us as well, but just in case someone is just joining us: the acupuncturists, the audiologists, the dental hygienists, medical laboratory technologists, respiratory technologists and speech-language pathologists. These are some of the professions that are governed by this piece of legislation, and really they govern themselves in many ways.

Each profession has their own college, their own group of people who regulate, who can register with this profession, what's required for them to renew their registration and other requirements specific to each of the professions. Each of these

groups have their own group that help regulate themselves, but they all come under – the Newfoundland and Labrador Council of Health Professionals is the overall regulatory body under this act.

Each profession has its own college that is responsible for providing professional expertise and guidance to the umbrella council in terms of the standards of practice, the scope of practice, the conduct and ethics, and the continuing education required for each of these professionals, Madam Speaker. It requires a certain standard of practice, each body determines that.

The scope of practice; that would be something where you have several professions governed under these regulations. If you did not have this type of regulation you might have some overlap between certain professions, but this piece of legislation provides for the scope of practice of each of these health care professionals. So it's important in that way as well, Madam Speaker.

The health care council currently regulates approximately 1,100 health professionals in practice, and has been in place since 2011. I think the initial legislation might have been passed in 2010, but not enacted until 2011, I believe. So these 1,100 professionals, a significant size group in our community, made up of 33 acupuncturists, 37 audiologists, 224 dental hygienists, 515 medical laboratory technologists, 148 respiratory therapists, and 140 speech-language pathologists. A number of these professions make up that – that are governed by this legislation today.

The amendment addresses changes requested by the council. These aren't changes that were brought forward by people in the Department of Health or other departments, or were brought forward by members of the public. These are changes that are being requested by the council themselves. The changes that are being made here is reducing the number of elected and appointed members of the council; the second kind of changes are providing legislative authority for the registration of people from entering the profession, and also the third is allowing the use of assessors from provinces and territories for the purposes of quality assurance.

I think some of these changes, the number of elected and appointed members of the council – as this council regulates more and more professions, as the other professions want to join this council and want to be governed by this piece of legislation, the requirements of having a certain number of people from each group on the council would make the council itself a little cumbersome, a little difficult to operate and be functional. This piece of legislation changes that, it gives more flexibility. It's a very practical thing. It allows the council to operate in a more effective and efficient manner. So that's a very important change there.

It allows for the use of assessors from other provinces and territories. I read out the numbers of professionals in each of these professions, and you can see that some of them are quite small, like 33 acupuncturists, 37 audiologists. We've got small numbers of people, so sometimes it's fitting that we have people from outside come in and to do assessments in terms of the professionalization and make recommendations in relation to the practices in certain fields.

So I think that's an important and very fitting amendment to the current legislation. Changes are needed to make the operation and coordination of these groups more manageable and it will allow for the addition of new professions to the council in the future.

These health professionals provide important services to the people of this province. I want to thank them all for the services they provide and the way they have responsibly managed their own affairs in this province, and the way they have made recommendations to government in terms of future regulations of their professions.

It's a very positive piece of legislation. Some might say housekeeping, but as I said at the beginning, housekeeping can be important. Housekeeping is important, and it's important to make these kinds of changes in this legislation so we can continue to have good regulation of these important professions in our province.

I want to congratulate the minister, and the parliamentary assistant to the minister, for bringing forward this piece of legislation which seems to have support on all sides of the House, Madam Speaker.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MADAM SPEAKER: The Speaker recognizes the hon. Member for Stephenville – Port au Port.

MR. FINN: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

It's great to hear from some of my colleagues this afternoon. I'm just going to lend my voice to the debate for just a few moments and try and, I guess, put a bit of it in context. I know a lot has been said from the hon. Member for Gander, the Minister of Health and Community Services certainly spoke quite eloquently to this when we began debate. As the Member opposite noted just a few weeks ago, and some others across the way have spoken to the bill as well, and of course a few on our side.

What we're talking about, An Act to Amend the Health Professions Act. We're not amending everything in the *Health Professions Act*; we're actually just speaking specifically to the Newfoundland and Labrador Council of Health Professionals, which is the regulatory body for a number of designated professions.

The Member for St. George's – Humber spoke to some of those professions and had listed them out: acupuncturists, audiologists, dental hygienists, respiratory therapists, speech-language pathologists, just to name a few, and certainly acknowledged, and as I will, the great work that these folks do.

This council represents just these few different professions. I guess the reality is they approached us as government and said we'd like to see some changes with respect to the act that will help us and give us the greater ability to govern. They were looking for some small changes, some small things tweaked that would allow them to be more efficient in their operation, and also to ensure that their board didn't grow beyond the means that was going to be really difficult for them to operate.

One of the primary things here in this change of this legislation is to reduce the number of elected council members. The reasoning for that is, I guess with any board, committee or group,

if you will, you can have six people sitting around a table, seven, eight, nine, 10, and, of course, the greater the size of the board or council the more difficult it is at times to get everybody together to accomplish certain tasks and objectives.

I guess that's one part and parcel of the change here, but more specifically is that as professions, individual professions would get added under this council of health professionals, they too would then have to have representation on this board. So what we'd seen was a board that grew to 18 members, and we also had public representation as well.

The intent here is to reduce the number of individuals. Of course, they will finish out their respective terms, but to reduce the number of individuals so that not only are all professions represented, and our public representatives are there as well, just so they can do work more efficiently.

You can imagine, Madam Speaker, some of the individuals that would represent the different professions on this board would come from different corners of the province, and simply getting everybody together as a designated body to oversee these professions and some of the work they do and some of their mandate is extremely difficult. So that's part of the reduction.

One of the other changes that was listed as well is to allow the council to change some of its bylaws. I think that's only fitting to give a council of this magnitude – and under their mandate this is something they requested and something the Minister of Health and officials in his department have reviewed and certainly have no trouble with.

To that note, the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi – and I'm certain we'll get to Committee on this and the Minister of Health and Community Services can speak to, but in looking at why was the council not consulted and what have you, I'm certainly of the impression, as I just stated moments ago, that this was all brought on and recommendations from the council. That's certainly my understanding. I see the Member opposite doesn't seem to agree with that. As I mentioned,

we'll certainly leave it to the minister when we get to the Committee stage, but that was something they had brought to us as well.

There were some other things, other than the size and changing some of the bylaws, giving some of the abilities to the registrar, where they'd use the registration committee. There are just a few things there that kind of change this piece of legislation. As most have admitted, there is certainly no trouble supporting it. It's not something that is certainly a huge game-changer, if you will, to the organizations here. It's something they've requested, something the department officials have worked with them on.

So having said that, I certainly have no trouble supporting this bill; and my colleagues in the House as we get into the Committee stage, I'd certainly look forward to hearing more details as they emerge there.

Thank you very much for the time to speak, Madam Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MADAM SPEAKER: If the hon. Minister of Health and Community Services speaks now he will close debate.

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm pleased to hear in general the support of all sides of the House to move forward with these amendments. I thank the Members opposite and my own colleagues for their comments, which have added to the discussion.

I think the question about this legislation was, as with any bill or certainly any amendment is, what problem is this designed to fix? Essentially, this legislation had been in force for just under five, six years, and worked through some teething troubles and transitional periods.

As my colleague from Stephenville – Port au Port said, we, in the department, have a regular dialogue with the health professionals council and it was them bringing these ideas to the department that's the genesis of this amendment.

This is, if you like, a kind of internal review that they have done, whereby they feel the act can be improved and work better. It's not unusual for regulatory acts in other jurisdictions and our own to require tweaking as the bugs work out of the system and to realize ways that things could be altered or improved, to improve on their ability to deliver on their mandate.

Again, just to reframe, the *Health Professions Act* is actually an umbrella piece of legislation. The health professionals council allows for a consistent approach and structure towards protecting the public but also has underneath it, as it were, modules and components that recognize the differences of what can be quite small, numerical groups of practitioners.

My colleague from the West Coast alluded to the small number of acupuncturists, for example, and indeed speech-language pathologists and audiologists recognized a critical mass function some years ago and actually amalgamated under the umbrella structure to have one regulatory quality assurance body under the umbrella legislation.

The issue now around the composition of the council was the first issue, as it were, that the council brought forth. Essentially, the previously legislation had been somewhat unwieldy with the advent of new colleges and new disciplines being incorporated under this act.

The previous one had required two elected practitioners, as well as one layperson. So for every new college or new discipline you brought in, three members would be added to the council. I think looking to the future, there are other health care professionals who would probably take advantage of this approach to become self-regulated and as autonomous as possible under the umbrella of this legislation. Several of these have expressed interest and are at various stages of readiness for this.

What the new proposal would do is simply to produce one elected representative from the board of the appropriate discipline and would cap the number of public representatives at six which would, in the view of the council, maintain a significant presence and a diversion of presence to reflect the general public interest. The relevance of that, again, the mandate of this

body is protection of the public and they do this through a regulatory framework.

That would have the effect of allowing a much more nimble council. Again, colleagues have alluded to the fact that once a group gets beyond a certain size, it becomes logistically difficult to get folks there, as well as expensive and it would also be a matter of managing those large groups.

There is no cost to government from this because the functioning of the council and it's, if you like, subordinate groups is funded entirely through subscriptions to the professional bodies from, for example, speech-language pathology.

So the first one would be to reduce the number of elected and appointed members – the appointed members, just to refresh the House's memory, because my initial statements now are sometime in the past, these would be done through a Public Service Commission system.

The second thing would be to provide a legislative authority for the registrar to perform the duties of the registration committee and some flexibility in how those duties would be allocated initially and potentially reallocated over time, it builds in a certain level of flexibility.

Some self-contained regulatory bodies, and I'm thinking of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, as well as maybe the ARNNL, have tended to move away from registration committees and have a full-time registrar who assumes the duties of that committee. Those are delegated and they are monitored as part of the fiduciary responsibilities of the council.

The final amendment is around the issue of quality assurance committees. These are, in effect, the watchdog committees who have certain legislative powers when it comes to protecting the public and investigating matters of concern. So these would currently have to be composed of practitioners within the discipline licensed within the province. Again, it speaks to the issue of critical mass, and I would refer the House back to its collective deliberations last sitting on the amendments made to the *Hearing Aid Practitioners Act* whereby the precedent was set that in such small groups it can be very difficult to find a panel or a tribunal to sit and

have no bias, real or otherwise, about the individual whose issues are being brought before them.

It is very difficult to guarantee that where there may be only a handful of practitioners in that discipline in the province and, often, with a tendency now to want to work in teams or groups of practitioners, they may actually be your fellow coworkers.

So what this does is, in line with the *Hearing Aid Practitioners Act*, it allows the council of the college to use practitioners that are licensed in another jurisdiction in Canada as panel members for a tribunal. It expands the pool and removes in those situations where if they are used, removes or diminishes significantly any apprehension of bias, I think is the legal phrase.

Set against this is a challenge that the college has to rewrite its bylaws to some extent to amend them. So there is a proposal contained in this draft amendment before the House that the changes proposed would not commence on Royal Assent, but the proclamation would be deferred until the fall of this year, specifically September of 2017, to allow time for the health professionals council to wrap up the loose ends and make sure that their regulatory bylaws under these new amendments align with the legislation.

So that's very brief, very much a bridge summary of this piece of work, which I would commend to the House as being generated by a process of ongoing consultation which exists not just with the health professionals council, but between the Department of Health and Community Services and pretty well every professional group within the province.

We've made it a departmental policy in the last 15 to 16 months to actively seek out, where at all possible, input from groups that haven't traditionally had the ear of government. And we have met with and will schedule meetings with groups of practitioners, often as few as six or eight, who provide key services through the health care system, who traditionally haven't been in a position to have the ear of government or to have any input. I think I would like to commend that approach as being one of the pillars of this government in general and not just

my department. I can't claim originality for that idea.

I think, Madam Speaker, with having said that, rather than consume oxygen unnecessarily in this debate, I would close and commend this bill to the Chamber.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MADAM SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 69, An Act To Amend The Health Professions Act 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.

MADAM SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, An Act To Amend The Health Professions Act. (Bill 69)

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

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

MS. COADY: Now.

MADAM SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Health Professions Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 69)

MADAM SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that the House resolve

itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 69.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MADAM 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 (Warr): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 69, An Act To Amend The Health Professions Act.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Health Professions Act." (Bill 69)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 10 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 10 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

MR. KENT: Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Sorry, the Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you very much.

I have a question for clause 5. Maybe the minister spoke to it when he stood in his final comments, but if he did I missed it and that was probably my fault, but I did question the whole thing of the registration committee being able to assign some or all of its duties to the registrar. I have no problem with the some but I am confused about all of its duties. It seems a bit problematic.

I guess what I'm asking the minister is was that – can he remember what the reasoning of the council was to be willing to say that the registration committee could assign all of its duties to the registrar?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

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

This was a request again of the council itself. I suspect they are looking down the road and want to adopt an incremental option.

As I alluded to in my closing comments, some self-regulating professions have actually moved away from a registration committee completely and have a full-time registrar whose duties are assigned by the council. I suspect what this arrangement, the motivation behind it, is that it allows them the option of essentially moving in that direction without seeking further input from the House but simply guidance from the council.

It would become a matter internally for the council and its registration committee to decide what role the registrar would have, vis-à-vis

what role the registration committee might have. I think wherever they chose to draw that line in principle it would probably not be a matter for this House or for a legislative approach. Because there are a variety of styles that have worked in other disciplines and I would suggest it gives them complete flexibility in not just how they start now, but how they could end up in say another five years' time.

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

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

Just to get further clarification – and the minister did make reference to different groups having different styles and different ways of doing their acceptance of members, et cetera.

There is an interesting thing about this bill and our *Health Professions Act*, which is an umbrella act, as we know. In some of the other jurisdictions where they have umbrella legislation – in most of them, actually – the individual colleges for each profession actually still acts as the regulatory body for the specific health profession.

With our act, when it came in in 2010, it's actually the council for all of the health professions that are under that act; that is the regulatory body for all of the health professions that are governed under the act. Again, was that discussion had between the minister and the council? Because my questioning – and I'm not questioning the council, I just want to make sure of the consultation that happened.

It would seem to me recognizing members into a profession is a pretty singular responsibility of the group that represents a profession, their association, and saying that just anybody could make that determination of who is accepted as a member of the profession seems rather strange to me. So, once again, I just want to know, was there a discussion of that nature between the minister and the council.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Well, the short answer is yes. By way of an explanation however, the council is responsible for the registration. The licensing requirements, the eligibility for that, are very much contingent on input from those bodies whose members make up the council.

For example, in the situation of say acupuncturists, it would be the group of acupuncture professionals who would recommend to the council criteria for licensing and eligibility. It is simply through the auspices of the umbrella that that authority would be translated into legal framework.

This is a critical mass issue as much as anything else. We do not have large numbers of any of the smaller groups. Probably the single largest is the laboratory technology group numerically, followed by the X-ray group. So outside of those, the rest are often a matter of handfuls of individuals.

Really, in terms of who does what in the machine, this arrangement whereby the council is an umbrella and currently its registration committee, and maybe in the future its registrar, they do the actual paperwork and administrative duties, but they do it within a framework that's advised by the individual groups simply because these groups are so small. It would be very difficult for them to actually have the physical or even financial manpower to do that as individual groups, but together, pooling resources, this is done on their behalf through the council.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 10 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 10 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Health Professions Act.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report Bill 69 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 bill without amendment, carried.

CHAIR: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: I move, Mr. Chair, that the Committee rise and report Bill 69.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 69.

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.

MADAM SPEAKER (Dempster): The hon. the Deputy Chair of Committees.

MR. WARR: Madam Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 69 carried without amendment.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 69 carried without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

MS. COADY: Now.

MADAM SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the said bill be read the third time?

MS. COADY: Tomorrow.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 70, *Patient Safety Act*.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that I do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 70.

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MADAM SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Warr): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 70, An Act Respecting Patient Safety And Quality Assurance In The Province.

A bill, “An Act Respecting Patient Safety And Quality Assurance In The Province.” (Bill 70)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

MR. KENT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don’t have many questions in Committee because I posed them in second reading and the minister did answer them. I would like to be on the record again just with the couple of concerns we do have. Overall, this is positive legislation. It’s been in the works for some time. I know a lot of work has gone into it, and I appreciate that.

Our two concerns – which the minister did address in his closing comments in second reading, so I’m not asking him to say the same thing again. If he wishes to I respect that, but even despite his explanation, we remain concerned that this legislation pertains to – the problem with this legislation is the incidents that relate to children and youth, serious incidents, critical incidents, won’t get reported automatically to the Child and Youth Advocate. That’s fundamentally the issue.

It was concerning that the Child and Youth Advocate, in the end, was not consulted on this legislation, given the significant discussion that we’ve had on that issue for some time. So the discussion related to mandatory reporting of critical incidents and deaths has been discussed between the Child and Youth Advocate and the

former department of child, youth and family services, Health and Community Services, Justice and Education and we just feel there's a missed opportunity here to actually deal with the concern raised by the Child and Youth Advocate in this legislation, which would cover the health system. So I don't know why the minister wouldn't agree to have the Child and Youth Advocate notified when a critical incident occurs in one of our regional health authorities.

We also had concerns about the level of consultation that didn't occur with the Citizens' Representative. But our other substantial concern with the legislation related to who's actually covered. So a number of health care providers are not covered. The ones that are directly supervised and funded by the regional health authorities are, but private ambulance operators are not; general practitioners in their own clinics are not; paramedics that work for private operators or non-profit operators are not captured either; even home care, home support agencies. In fact, community supports and home care is listed in the services covered by this legislation, but there's no practical application for this as those activities take place outside of regional health authorities.

So those are the gaps we see. Again, I don't want to rain on the parade too much because I do think overall it's good legislation that's needed, but these are two gaps that we were hoping, through debate, could be addressed and even through Committee stage here could be addressed.

Those are my only concerns. I was on record in second reading; I'm now on record again. I welcome any further comments from the minister, but I plan to leave it at that.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. Minister of Health and Community Services.

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

I think, in part, I did address these in second reading. The issue of practitioners who work outside of the RHAs, this legislation is designed to look at systems' approaches and an approach

of a just culture. It's not specifically designed nor was it ever intended to be to address matters of clinical competence, skills or knowledge. There are other avenues for that. I would argue for those individual contractors, fee-for-service physicians, who have no hospital affiliation at all, which again is actually quite the exception rather than the rule, there are other mechanisms to deal with issues in that arena.

With relation to the ambulance service, it's interesting; there is a mix of ambulance providers across the province. We have some that are RHA. We have a significant number that are community based and we have a larger group, finally, that are privately owned and operated. They all have to operate to provincial standards and there are monitoring systems in place to ensure that happens.

As far as the paramedics themselves are concerned, there is a Provincial Medical Oversight mechanism, so all their documentation is actually fed in centrally to Provincial Medical Oversight, which is currently housed as a subdivision of one of the RHAs. So, indirectly, there is that connection. Whilst it was not intended to deal with those specifically, there are, again, other things coming down the road for the ambulance service and paramedics in particular.

As far as the home support area is concerned, again, that is principally a private arrangement often between individual families and caregivers, or between individual families and a private business. So regulation in the context of quality assurance like this is less easy. It is, however, covered by service level agreements.

For the benefit of Members in the House, it has been subject to a review recently by Deloitte and there is currently a very active consultation on provincial home support taking place between my department and stakeholder groups across the province over the coming weeks to inform an implementation plan, which will go to address some of these.

Again, for completeness, the issue of the Child and Youth Advocate has been consulted extensively on adverse events in children and youth. There is a separate mechanism in the works to deal with that, which elevates child

issues and particularly the issues of children in care to a different level and, I think, avoids them being subsumed in this legislation. It will be dealt with.

I think those are the best ways of addressing the gaps that have been highlighted, or the apparent gaps that have been highlighted by the Member opposite. This is part of an across-department approach to quality assurance and this is just simply the RHA health service piece.

CHAIR: Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 32 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 to 32 inclusive –

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

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

I basically have one question, but it is in relation to three different clauses. Clause 4, "A report of a close call or an occurrence made by a health care provider to a regional health authority shall be made in accordance with the regulations." Clause 5, "Where a close call or an occurrence is reported, the regional health authority shall review and report on the close call or occurrence in accordance with the regulations."

Clause 7(1), "A regional health authority shall give notice to the minister of an adverse health event that arises during the provision of a health service carried out, provided or undertaken by or under the authority of the regional health authority in accordance with the regulations." And subsection (2), "A regional health authority shall give notice to the minister of any occurrence that involves multiple patients or

multiple regions in accordance with the regulations."

A key clause in those three clauses is "in accordance with the regulations," and the other issue for me is what's missing. So I have some questions for the minister based on all of that.

First of all, in clause 4 and 5, a report will be made by a health care provider to the regional health authority. And in both cases, it's clear that it's to the regional health authority, but there's nothing to indicate, number one, if that report is going to be made public. The word "public" is not in there at all. And there's nothing in there to indicate how these reports are going to be maintained.

Now, it says that the report shall be made in accordance with the regulations, and in clause 5, the health authority shall review and report – again, report – on the close call or occurrence in accordance with the regulations. So when we, in the briefing, asked questions on that, it was indicated that well, some of this will be public by nature. You can ATIPP and get information, but there's nothing here to show that there's a commitment to these reports being public.

In the legislation in other jurisdictions, that is one of the features, is that there is a database – it's not personal, it doesn't name names or that kind of thing, but you have databases that show the types of events and the numbers of those events. There is absolutely nothing here to indicate that we will have that.

So I'm asking very particularly of the minister: What is the intent with regard to public notification? Not we give you an answer on demand, but public notification. Whether we're talking about the things that are covered in 4 or 5 or the things that are covered in 7, can the minister tell us that he is committed, that the regulations would indicate databases be kept and that public reports be made? Not give out information by request, but that there would be an active reporting through a public database that would be posted.

There is nothing in this document to show that there's a commitment to that openness to the public, and it is a common practice.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

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

It raises an interesting topic; one which I would suggest is not necessarily quite as black and white as the Member opposite would have you believe. Certainly, one of the four pillars of the patient safety quality assurance piece is the concept of indicators and reporting benchmarks and comparatives. I don't think there is any doubt in the literature, both from a health policy point of view and from a system's point of view, that approach yields significant dividends.

We are several steps away yet from, say even, Nova Scotia where they have a portal where these indicators can be compared. We do subscribe to CIHI, which has some very good info graphics that are dynamic. I would commend those to the Members opposite, should they be interested in looking at particular indicators: hospital standardized mortality rate, wound infection rates, C-section rates. Those are already out there because we send them to CIHI.

To replicate that on a local level, certainly is something we would be keen to pursue in the fullness of time. We have, as a government, talked in *The Way Forward* about digital by design and openness and kind of digital governance and government.

I think in terms of the regulations, it was almost captured as though in some way, because they were all in regulation and these things were not available now, that we were attempting to be less than open. I think that may not have been the intent, but it was kind of a vibe I picked up from this side of the House.

Quite frankly, as far as close calls and adverse events are concerned, again, it's not binary. It either is an adverse event or it isn't. There are in actual fact grades of closeness of call and grading of adversity from events. Some of these thresholds are so low that in actual fact you get what I would call a high noise to signal ratio. You'd be hard put to sort out what's what.

I think there's a lot more nuance around what in a small province should be disclosed in the way

of near misses and adverse events. Because despite anonymising these things, it is actually very easy for people to be identified in small communities where there are maybe five or 10 beds in a health care institution.

I think where you have those calls are more systemic in nature, that show a pattern of adverse events or close calls across a variety of geographical locations or institutions. This is very much what this legislation is aimed at. It's aimed at highlighting, identifying those areas and highlighting them. The exact mechanism through which these would be published, I think is actually going to depend on what approach we as a government decide to take about sharing a whole variety of information.

The concept is there, and I'm certainly not averse to having those discussions but I think we need to do it in a way that what we put out there is information and not data, and it actually informs the debate rather than clouds the discussion.

So that may not be specific enough for the Member opposite, for which I apologize, but I think it's an honest enough answer that it stands scrutiny.

Thank you very much.

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

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

I thank the minister for the explanation he's given so far. I understand some of the nuances that he's talking about.

If public reports are coming from the regional health authorities and they're coming in the way – for example, he mentioned Nova Scotia, that Nova Scotia does, you're reporting under a regional authority the type of event. There is absolutely nothing indicating where it has happened, there is nothing indicating anything personal. It's just four adverse events in a period of time under that authority.

I understand what he's getting at. If in having the discussions it appear that his concern about

people being able to identify a particular place where something happened, one way of doing it would be to have the reports made on a departmental level so that all of the data from the four regional authorities could be put together without identifying areas. I understand his concern, but I do believe we can move towards doing that.

I think the minister's attitude should be more, we want to do that and we're going to find the way to do it, is what I would like to hear from him because I think that has to be the goal. We want to do it and we will find the way to do it. Because having the information now publicly is important.

I think I made this point in second reading, but when Nova Scotia did its act and talked about the public nature of reporting, they put it that it was important for the public to be educated with regard to the health care system and how well the health care system was operating for them. It was important for them to be aware of possibilities so they would be more open themselves of reporting something if something happened to them or to a family member. We should be looking for that information, not saying we have to stop the potential for that kind of thing happening.

Having things reported is what we should be looking for. I think having a database and having that public, in terms of the broad way in which Nova Scotia does it, would help towards freeing up people to make reports. I think that's a goal that we should have.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

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

I don't really think the Member and I are that far apart. I think my comments versus hers probably reflect a difference between policy versus advocacy.

I think what I would like to do is highlight, and take the opportunity to highlight, the fact that when it comes to the reporting mechanism for

unusual events or adverse events or close calls, and indeed the entire mechanism that we're talking about for quality assurance, there has been a fairly good stab at separating that from the rest of the administration within an RHA. There is, if you like, or will be a chain of interest going up to the level of a provincial health quality assurance advisory group and this would be the departmental provincial level which data would be aggregated.

As far as the RHAs are concerned, they would have parallel mechanisms within their own jurisdictions and the idea, from my point of view, is very much to separate the concept of quality assurance from discipline and skills competency issues. So that the people who were involved in quality assurance could look in the machine and poke around without being viewed as a form of police, whereby at the moment the medical mechanism for quality runs through the chief of staff, who is also the senior physician in an institution responsible for disciplinary matters.

That conflict of interest or that conflict of viewpoints has led to a lot of uncertainty in the system from a cultural point of view. There's still a view that this is very much a blame-and-shame kind of approach when there's an adverse event or a close call. I'm hoping that one of the quiet revolutions that will happen as a result of this new approach is to remove that concept and to talk about what they would speak of as a just culture.

Again, I would reiterate, that in a small jurisdiction it would not be that difficult, even with provincial level aggregate depending on the amount of descriptors that were put into the database, for folk to get identified. The nearest analogy I can use is the aviation community where near misses, and Transport Canada reports and this kind of thing, whilst to a large extent the close call ones are anonymized. It's still not that difficult for someone who works full-time in the industry to be able to pinpoint folk involved, or to think they have, which may be even worse.

So as I say, in summary, I don't think the Member opposite and I are really philosophically that far apart. I'm just trying to be pragmatic in where we get from here to there.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 to 32 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 32 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act Respecting Patient Safety And Quality Assurance In The Province.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill 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 bill without amendment, carried.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Deputy Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 70.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 70.

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.

MADAM SPEAKER (Dempster): The Speaker recognizes the hon. the Member for Baie Verte – Green Bay.

MR. WARR: Madam Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 70 carried without amendment.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 70 carried without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

MS. COADY: Now.

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

MS. COADY: Now.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services that Bill 70, An Act Respecting Patient Safety And Quality Assurance In The Province, be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MADAM SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting Patient Safety And Quality Assurance In The Province. (Bill 70).

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act Respecting Patient Safety And Quality Assurance In The Province," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 70)

MADAM SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Madam Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 2, Committee of Supply, a resolution and Bill 71 respecting the granting of Interim Supply to Her Majesty.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that I do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole for Interim Supply.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MADAM 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 (Bragg): Order, please!

We are considering the related resolution and Bill 71, An Act For Granting Her To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2018 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

Resolution

"That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2018, the sum of \$2,703,698,200."

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Thank you for addressing me this afternoon in debate on Interim Supply. For people who are tuning in right now, Interim Supply is a bill whereby the House approves funding for the government to continue the work of government. It allows government to pay its bills, to pay public servants on an interim basis until the budget is actually passed.

Mr. Chair, I won't need much time this afternoon to make my remarks because we've been debating now Interim Supply for 4½, and I

can tell you that, as the Leader of the Official Opposition, I speak for my caucus over here and let the House know that we are quite prepared and ready to vote on this resolution.

We will support the bill on Interim Supply so that the government can continue to do the work of government, so it can pay its bills, it can pay its employees, it can continue to provide the services and programs that government provides. We're quite ready and willing to vote on that bill at this point in time. We don't see any further need for any further debate on it. We've already debated the bill for 4½ hours.

So that people understand, the legislation and the House of Assembly process allows for 75 hours debate on the budget, and Interim Supply is part of that debate. So having used about 4½ hours on Interim Supply, leaves just over 70 hours remaining to debate the budget.

Our position, Mr. Chair, is that the people of the province would rather we, as a House, and Members of the House, debate the budget – the new budget coming from government, rather than spending our time here on Interim Supply when we are quite willing to vote on it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

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

I also understand now with the other two bills passed, the only other two matters on the Order Paper right now is Interim Supply and also Address in Reply, and there's been significant debate on Address in Reply as well. We've got 2½ hours tomorrow morning in the sitting of the House – Wednesday morning, first time now as a House we have Wednesday morning sittings. Tomorrow afternoon is a private Member's resolution so it won't be Interim Supply or Address in Reply. Then we have three to four hours on Thursday available as well.

Mr. Chair, we know that the government is facing some very difficult challenges and very difficult decisions. From my perspective and our perspective as a caucus, we don't see much point

in continuing the debate on Interim Supply. We're willing to vote for it; we're willing to give Interim Supply to the government after 4½ hours of debate, and we're ready to support it.

For an Opposition, that's our comment this morning, Mr. Chair. If the government wants to call the vote on it, we'll be more than happy to support it. We see no reason for further debate.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety and the Government House Leader.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

I'm happy to stand here and speak to Interim Supply, a very important debate. This is my first opportunity and I'll take a couple of opportunities to speak to this important bill.

I want to take an opportunity to respond to the comments by the Leader of the Opposition who, as many people know and have been referenced before, was the premier of this province at one point, was a Cabinet minister at one point and was a backbench MHA at one point.

If I understand correct, I think his comments, if I heard them right, was that we've put four or five hours into this debate and that we should conclude it now. We should shut down this debate and not talk about the financial status of this province. This is a bill where we're talking about billions of dollars and he says we should shut it down.

Now, what I want to do, I want to go back and look at some history. I want to look at some history because what I have here in front of me is a chart, a piece of paper showing the amount of time spent on debate of Interim Supply over the last number of years.

To the people out watching right now, we've spent four or five hours. In 2015, when he was the premier, we debated this for – let me see, was it 19 hours – 19 hours. I think before that

we debated it for 10 hours. Let me see here, and I might have to get correction from the staff here. I think at one point we may have debated it for 18 hours, and 17 hours. There's one date here, it's 20 hours. Let me see. Yeah, there are a lot of 17 hours here. And all of these were the times when the Member opposite, who said shut down debate now, stood here as the leader of this province or a Cabinet minister.

So I find it funny, Mr. Chair, that the Member can stand up for two minutes and complain about debating, which is the complete opposite of what he did when he stood on this side. So please, tell us: how do you want us to do this, I say? How do you want us to do this?

Should we stop debating this important bill? Should we not carry on – are you saying that everything you did when you were here was wrong? Because sometimes I feel that way, but I'm looking at all the times here when he was a Member of the previous PC administration, when they had significant time to debate.

So I'm going to take my seat now, but I had to stand up and put on the record and put in Hansard that he's saying one thing now that's completely opposite of what he did when he was here, and I had to point out the facts of the matter on the record of this House.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Baie Verte – Green Bay.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: The Chair recognized the Member for Baie Verte – Green Bay.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. KENT: A point of order, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Under what section, Sir?

A point of order, you say?

MR. KENT: It's a clear tradition – sorry, Mr. Chair, I was waiting for the light.

It's a clear tradition in this House that we go back and forth. I just want to acknowledge that the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi was on her feet twice so far this afternoon and hasn't been recognized. She was clearly on her feet prior to the hon. Member rising, the Government House Leader spoke. I feel it's only fair in –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

Order, please!

MR. KENT: – recognition of the traditions in this House that the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi be the next Member to speak.

CHAIR: Order, Sir.

I thank you for your input, but being the Chair, I recognize the Member for Baie Verte – Green Bay.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WARR: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to take the opportunity to speak to Interim Supply, Bill 71, which is An Act for Granting to Her Majesty Certain Sums of Money for Defraying Certain Expenses of The Public Service for the Financial Year ...

Before I do that, I just want to – for those at home, it's an opportunity for us to stand up and speak to – it's a money bill, an opportunity for us to speak about anything, including our districts. I certainly want to speak with regard to my representation of the lovely District of Baie Verte – Green Bay.

Before I do that, Mr. Chair, I want to take my opportunity as well to highlight what happened here this afternoon, or actually at lunch hour when we had the opportunity as a government, and Members of this hon. House, to recognize Brad Gushue and Team Newfoundland and Labrador –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WARR: – in their winning of the Brier.

Mr. Chair, as a curler myself, and I started curling in 1975, and the son of two curlers. My parents still curl today even at their age. It was an exciting time for them as well. I always look at my mother and wonder where I sort of was situated with regard to the six children she has, did I sit as number one child or did I sit as number six. I guess after the weekend, Mr. Chair, and her excitement over the Gushue team, I now sit at number 10 because those four guys came first.

I also wanted to highlight the issues over the weekend and compliment Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, as was said in the House today, and Newfoundland Power for their hard work this weekend.

I also want to compliment Transportation and Works, because as the people here on the East Coast were receiving wind and rain, we received tons of snow on the other side of the Island. So I want to take the opportunity to compliment the minister and his staff for the good work they're doing on our side.

I'd like to take the opportunity, Mr. Chair, to update the activity in our district, as well from the office perspective. We've been a very busy office. We're representing 42 communities in Baie Verte, or White Bay and Green Bay. It's certainly a real busy office, fielding anywhere from 10 to 20 phone calls per day, including the drop-ins as well. I want to highlight and express my gratitude to my CA, Kathleen Hynes, who's doing a fabulous job for our first 15 or 16 months into our term. She's been very good to the communities that we represent and it's only what I expected, Mr. Chair.

I've had the opportunity to meet with most councils. Again, we have 42 communities in the district. So I've had the opportunity to meet with most councils, most fire departments, local service districts and community and district meetings as well. I've taken the opportunity to get to learn the issues of each one of our communities and local service districts and have passed along my feelings towards their issues with the proper ministerial people.

Mr. Chair, I want to take a different route here again today. I've been doing some reading with regard to positive attitudes over the last while. I want to read the fact that we all do things that undermine our opportunity for success, whether we are consciously aware of it or not. The challenge here is for us to realize the consequences of some of our choices and how they undermine the opportunity for success, and this province is no different.

Many of us want success, make plans for it and work hard in order to see our districts and our province be successful, but we daily display attitudes that work counter to our long-range goals. We need to stop what encourages failure, ensure our attitudes are aligned with our goals and those of our province, and we'll prosper into the next generation. To produce a healthy province is to realize that success depends on us, as a people, possessing a real willingness to change and a desire to fight for success.

I say that, Mr. Chair, because I guess when we look at the position that we find ourselves in, as a government, today and as a province, the fiscal shortfalls that we've had, I still think that is important – and I speak to all sides of this hon. House that it's important that we foster and bring positive attitudes to this workplace.

We've all been blessed with the opportunity to sit here. We have a tremendous opportunity to enlighten the people here and to bring positive attitude to this hon. House. I, for one, Mr. Chair, coming from a family business, we've had tough times. We've had tough times in our family business. I've had to endure layoffs with my staff, but the one thing I brought to my place of business everyday was a positive attitude and the fact that there are better times. I want to make sure everybody is aware that there's a light at the end of the tunnel.

I had a conversation with a gentleman, who works in this hon. place called the Confederation Building, and we had the opportunity to have a chat and that's what he relayed to me. Everybody understands the position that we find ourselves in. The unfortunate part is we need to portray and to ensure to our public servants that – not only to the public servants but to the people of the province and Labrador that there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

I want to take an opportunity, Mr. Chair, to highlight some positive things that are happening in the lovely District of Baie Verte – Green Bay. I want to start off by highlighting the Point Rousse Project at Anaconda Mines in Baie Verte where we are shipping 30 per cent of the waste rock, or 3.5 million tons of the waste rock, to South Carolina for a state infrastructure project.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WARR: Thank you.

That's going to yield \$2 million in revenue and upwards to 70 jobs. If you take the volume of the waste rock that we're shipping via a barge and put it into truck loads to be moved by road it would be 100,000 truckloads of waste rock.

I certainly wanted to highlight some good things happening with the mining industry. Rambler Metals & Mining, I want to highlight their operations as well, Mr. Chair, both in the underground operation and the operation at Pine Cove and, obviously, their loading facility at Goodyear's Cove. I just want to go on record as saying this is a growing concern here in the district, and it looks like if Anaconda gets it their way and one of their main contractors are able to provide the service, it looks like there's going to be a doubling of that activity on the Baie Verte Peninsula over the next year. So I want to ensure I make those points known.

I want to talk a little bit about the aquaculture industry. I've had my conversations with the Minister of Fisheries. And to *The Way Forward* document, I want to talk about the aquaculture projects in Green Bay South. Green Bay South is certainly a beehive of activity as well for mussels and, even now, we have the opportunity to open up a secondary processing plant in Triton where we're going to employ another 20 to 30 people – all good things happening in my district.

I see my time is winding down, so I'll save the rest of my comments for the next time I have the opportunity to stand.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, I want to add my voice to the voice of the Leader of the Official Opposition. We are here debating Bill 71, which is the Interim Supply bill. We should put it simply for the public. We are here to approve the expenditure of money continuing after March 31, since we don't have a budget in place. Continuing after March 31, so that the public workers in this province can continue to do their jobs; that we can continue to have cheques go out to those who get Income Support; that we can continue to have all of the services that go on in this province, everything from the cleaning of roads right through to what's happening in our hospitals, et cetera. For all of those services to go on, we are here to approve that expenditure. That's the reason for the Interim Supply.

It's an essential part – it's actually the beginning of the budget discussion; however, we do not have the budget yet. We don't know what's in it and because of that, we have to be careful, I believe, about how much time goes into discussing Interim Supply when we all know we are going to vote for the bill, because we know it's related to keeping government running and it's related to keeping the services going for the people of this province.

So, of course, we're going to vote for it. We always vote for it, because we have to vote for it. It's our responsibility to keep things moving, but what's going on in this House right now is absolutely unacceptable. I've been in this House of over 10 years. I've never known a time when I've been faced with nothing else but Interim Supply without any legislation on the Order Paper. We have one bill left to do third reading of. That's it, and we've been doing this now since last week.

I haven't seen it before. I've never seen an Order Paper so sparse as what we have right now. We've been told by the Government House Leader in response to comments that were made by the Opposition House Leader that we don't want to take part in this really, really important

debate that is the Interim Supply. I want to have the time to take part in the really important debate that's going to have to happen once we know what the budget is.

At this really important debate that we're taking the time here today during this really important debate, we're congratulating our curling team – we did that today. We did that outside, where it should be done. We did it. We all turned up. We congratulated our curling team. We are so proud of that curling team, but we're using Interim Supply to congratulate the curling team. We're using Interim Supply to get a lecture on a positive attitude. Come on. This is what we're being led to believe. People are not stupid in this province; they see what's going on.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. MICHAEL: People are coming to me and asking me: Why is this happening? Why is nothing going on in the House?

So this is ridiculous. I do not want our time eaten up in what we're doing in this House right now. The time for being able to look at the budget that's going to be put on this table, is that budget going to have a light at the end of the tunnel? I ask my colleague for Green Bay South: Is that going to have a light at the end of the tunnel?

That's what I'm going to want to look for. That's what I'm going to want to speak to. Not stand here eating up our precious time, and I don't want to hear about the past. I don't want to hear from either party in this House about the past. It doesn't matter to me, what happened in the past. I'm talking about the present.

We have serious issues in this province in the present. And I'm going to want the time to speak to those issues when the budget comes out, because that's what the budget will be dealing with, is what we have going on in this province in the present.

So I really call upon the government to recognize what it is doing and to recognize that people see what is going on. There's nothing else for me to say. What's going on here is ridiculous. As I said, I've been in this House for over 10 years and I've never seen the like of it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Harbour Main.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. PARSLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon to you, as well as to my colleagues in the House of Assembly. It is quite normal for this House to discuss Interim Supply. It has been discussed in the past, and we need to discuss it and we need to get it done.

It's quite an honour for me to speak to Bill 71. In fact, Mr. Chair, any time we get up to speak in this House, it is indeed quite an honour. I am very fortunate to represent the great District of Harbour Main, a district which runs from the rocky shores of Upper Gullies, Conception Bay, to the summer playground in North River.

In between there is Brigus, home of the Blueberry Festival, Marysvalle, which I spoke on early today, Cupids, Georgetown, the Town of Harbour Main, Holyrood, Clarke's Beach, Colliers, Conception Harbour and Avondale, Roaches Line and, finally, Makinsons. All are beautiful towns which are rich in a unique heritage and I'm proud to say fall into the boundary of my district.

Mr. Chair, as a life-long Newfoundlander, it's a humbling experience on Sunday evening – I know we're all talking about Team Gushue, but I have it in my notes here. It was humbling to see the Brier championship on home ice. Their hard work and dedication certainly paid off, and to top it all off it was on home ice with all at Mile One, or rather an entire province, cheering them on.

Since getting elected on November 13, 2015, I have been blessed to have met many people throughout my time; many I had the pleasure to work with on the different matters and committees. I stand here today able to say many of these people I consider friends.

Our caucus is more than a group of people who were elected under the same party. We are a

team and we work together through the wins and through the losses. We help each other out when we see someone in need. Then, at the end of the day, no matter how difficult it has been, we're leaving this building that has become a second place as a team.

When someone decides to take a leap into the world of politics, their expectations can vary. For me, my experience as a councillor, deputy mayor, later mayor of the town, which I call home, I felt I brought a lot to the table in terms of experience. Our caucus has a wide variety of individuals with different backgrounds and different professional experience, but this is what makes politics such an interesting place to work.

Just looking at this past weekend and the wind storm that hammered down on this province, I couldn't help but think back to DarkNL in 2014. My late husband was very sick with cancer at the time, but was still fulfilling his duties as the mayor of our town. At the time, Harbour Main didn't have any equipment to provide residents with a warming centre. Knowing that it was our responsibility as a community leader to help the residents, we decided to open up our front door, quite literally, and turn our family home into a community warming centre. The woodstove was generating heat to fill the entire house, as well as food for those in need of a warm meal.

Sadly, Mr. Chair, as many of our colleagues here today know, my husband passed away in May of that same year on Mother's Day. Picking up the pieces following his passing was not easy, but I continued to fight for our town, as I know it's what he wanted and I. My commitment to the town for a warming centre became a reality a few years later. I'm pleased to say that the warming centre was used during the storm this past weekend.

Mr. Chair, I believe everyone in Newfoundland and Labrador understands the importance of community and helping those in need, not just our neighbours but also any come from away, which I'm proud to say is receiving rave reviews.

When we talk about municipal politics, we really mean the heart of our communities. I was taught early in life you have to fight for what

you believe in. During my tenure as mayor, I remember a time when we came here to Confederation Building to apply for capital works for our town, and we were basically laughed out of here. Told to go home and put your financial affairs in order before even considering looking for assistance. Well, that's what we did and when I left the Town of Harbour Main, we had all new equipment and monies enough beyond that to be able to apply for what we needed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR (Dempster): Order, please!

MS. PARSLEY: Just as now, we have to realize the fiscal situation which our province finds itself in. It's not easy to sit here some days and hear the utter mess the PC government has left us with, but we were elected to do a job and it is a job we must do for the sake of our children and our grandchildren, and it's our duty to leave this place in a better state than what we found. Something our predecessors could not accomplish.

Madam Chair, my father worked for CN Marine all his life on the coastal boats, and after each trip he would return home, especially in the winter, and say you need to weather the storms, stay the course, until eventually you and the seas will become calm. Well, that is what my colleagues on this side of the House are doing to put some positive things back in our province and guide us on our way towards a better tomorrow.

Despite what Members opposite say, Madam Chair, our government has taken many great steps to help deliver legislation to the people of our province. For example, Bill 46, also known as the procurement bill, which allows public bodies to get the best value for goods and services rather than the cheapest, the people asked for it, and we delivered. Bill 59, a bill that provides firefighters and volunteer firefighters with the presumptive cancer coverage, giving care to those each and every day who put their lives on the line for our safety, cares for those as the rest of us are running out of a building when they're running in – a promise kept.

Bill 68, otherwise known as the MADD bill, a bill that helped protect the public at large and hands down stricter penalties to those who make decisions to drive while impaired. Before this bill, our province received an F for impaired driving legislation. We are now leading the country.

Madam Chair, I almost forgot the introduction of the seniors and low-income benefit which delivered quarterly payments to the people who need it most. On top of this, the Seniors' Advocate, something Members opposite call a luxury item, when in fact given our aging population, I would call it a wise investment in our seniors.

Before I finish off, I would like to say my day started out this morning in the beautiful Town of Holyrood, which under the Department of Tourism we released over \$43,000 for the oceans industry, alongside of my counterpart, the MP for Avalon, Ken McDonald, who delivered \$80,000 for different things in our district, like the seniors, restoration of bathrooms and other things, but you know, when we get up to speak in this House we often speak – the negativity is so bad. If we all would get on a positive side and try to move and see the good things that we're working towards, we would probably make it a better place because if we don't have hope in this province, what do we have ?

If we get up every day and it's doom and gloom, and come to this House and criticize one another, that's what our days are, but if we can come in and work together, each side of the House, our colleagues, and take responsibility for our actions. We all have to take responsibility in life. If we don't take responsibility, where are we?

We need to come into this House as individuals. We were all elected, each and every one of us here in this House, to do a job, and if we don't do that job we're finished. We have to realize that our province is on a course, it's hard times. It's hard times for everyone. Let me tell you, I've heard it throughout my district, but, like I said, if we can keep going and keep positive, keep announcing money, all of us need money from our federal, and they're a big help to us today.

I am going to take my seat now and say thank you, Madam Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KENT: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just want to build on the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition and the House Leader for the Third Party. I think anybody watching is getting a sense of what's happening here in this House and also what's not happening.

We've got an Order Paper here and there's nothing left to debate. We have Interim Supply, which has been explained, and Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, the last Speech from the Throne. There's a new one coming. Based on how things are transpiring in the House this week, I suspect the new one is coming on March 27, would be my guess.

I heard one Member of government say that we're here in this debate, which has gone on now for over five hours, to talk about the state of the province's finances. Well, if you listen to the remarks from Members of government this afternoon, it's pretty clear that's not what we're talking about.

I understand the tradition of Interim Supply, but if you look at the history, never once in our history have both Opposition parties stood in the House on the same day during Interim Supply debate and said, let's vote. We've had five hours of debate, let's vote. Let's get on with it. Let's move on to other important matters, if there are any that government wishes to address.

We may have spent considerable time on Interim Supply in the past. I recall sitting in government and wondering at times why the Opposition would want to eat in so much to the time allocated for the budget debate. It's clear from what's happening here this afternoon, that the current government has no desire to have a full debate on its next budget. They were pretty uncomfortable during the last budget debate, and anything they can do at this juncture to limit the amount of time for us to have a democratic

process, a debate on the budget, any effort that could be made to eat into that time is now going to be made.

So I beg to differ with the Government House Leader; what's happening today is actually a first. We have both Opposition parties rising in this House – it hasn't happened in my time here, maybe it happened at some point in the past, but we have both Opposition parties rising and saying, we've had sufficient debate on Interim Supply.

We know that come April 1 the people of the province that work for government have to get paid. We know government services on April 1 have to continue to be delivered until the budget has passed. Not passing Interim Supply means that there is no money to pay the bills on April 1; that government effectively shuts down, and we obviously can't allow that to happen.

We also understand the parliamentary tradition of the Interim Supply debate, and we're saying we need time to fully debate the budget. Five hours is plenty. Our fear, Madam Chair, what's shaping up here, our fear is that tomorrow morning we'll come in at 10 a.m., and until 12:30 p.m. we'll do more of this. Then on Thursday, following Question Period, we'll do it for another three-and-a-half hours, and we don't believe that's necessary. We don't believe it's responsible, because that's time that will take away from a debate on a budget that we have yet to see.

So we're happy – if the Throne Speech is going to be on March 27, that's fine. We look forward to the budget that will follow, and we look forward to new legislation being introduced so we can continue to do the important work that we do in this House. But what we're doing here right now is actually going to take away from the important work we do in this House, because it's going to limit our ability as Opposition parties to hold government accountable for the budget it is about to deliver.

We've done it for five hours; it's part of the process. Now for the first time we have both Opposition parties saying let's get on with it, let's vote on Interim Supply. So that's what's taking place.

When the House Leader for the Third Party tried to raise her concerns this afternoon, I heard someone shout out that she should sit down. Well, that's not acceptable, Madam Chair.

I'm going to take my seat now in a moment because I don't want to waste time that could be spent debating the budget, and that's what's important. That's what this discussion this afternoon is about. We're saying let's get on with it. We've talked about Interim Supply for five hours. As you can tell from the speeches that you're now hearing from government Members, they're not debating the state of the province's finances, and this won't in any way contribute to the budget debate that we've yet to have.

So that's why we're raising this concern today. We're saying thank you for the opportunity to debate Interim Supply. We want people to get paid on April 1; we want government to continue to function until the budget passes. So let's vote on Interim Supply and, please, we're asking government not to eat into our debate time for budget.

We're not going to be able to fully debate the budget and fully ask questions that need to be asked on various departments and divisions of government because of what's happening today and because of what we fear will happen tomorrow and because of what we fear will happen on Thursday. So that is the reason we're raising this concern at this point in time.

I felt that the Leader of the Opposition tried to do so this afternoon in a respectful way. I was pleased to hear the comments from the House Leader of the Third Party and we're simply saying, we'll vote. We're ready to pass your bill. We're ready to get on with it. That's what we're here to do today.

To suggest because in the past there have been times where we spent additional time on Interim Supply, well that's the prerogative of Members of the day. Again, there have been moments where I have wondered why Members would want to eat into budget debate time. Maybe there were years where Opposition Members weren't excited to challenge and debate the budget, but in this particular instance we're concerned about

what's coming in the budget based on what we're hearing.

We know in health care, for instance, I've heard from good sources that the number is actually in excess of \$100 million in terms of the target, which is probably why I got such a reaction out of certain ministers last week. So there are big issues to discuss. There are big challenges facing this province.

The budget debate is an important one, and we don't want to lose two-and-a-half hours of budget debate as a result of what could happen in this House tomorrow morning. We don't want to lose another three or four hours of future budget debate because of what could happen in this House on Thursday. That's what we're saying.

If we need to go back into Address in Reply to buy some time so government can get the Throne Speech ready and get the budget ready, that's fine, but don't blatantly make an effort to stand in the way of the democratic process and to stand in the way of a full and open budget debate which needs to happen in this House.

This is not about theatrics. This is about ensuring that we have as much time as possible to debate the budget, and that's why we're raising these concerns today and we're asking respectfully for government to acknowledge, and let's vote on Interim Supply and let's get on with it.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Government House Leader.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

I wasn't going to get up and speak, but I had no choice to respond – and it's a hard act to follow because that last speech was certainly a frontrunner for next season's Oscars. That really was a frontrunner right now, and it's going to be hard to top the performance of the Member opposite, who, I'll remind everybody that's out watching, sat here as a Member of this

government for the entirety while I was in Opposition. So right now, he's saying go ahead and vote. You need to vote. It's responsible. You should do that.

But I'll remind him, when he sat over here as a Member of the government, as the deputy premier, as a leader in this Cabinet, let me see, that would be the shortest, by far, of Interim Supply since 2011. In fact, I'll remind him in 2012 – because you remember in 2012 we got elected on October 11. Now, this was a three-term government that had plenty of time to come into this House and have a session, unlike us when we got elected for the first time November 30 and Cabinet put in December 15, but we came back in early. We came back in the spring in a reasonable amount of time and we had a very long session in the House last session. We had a good budget debate. We had lots of legislation.

But going back to when they had – they had an election on October 11. The day after, their former boss stood up and said well, we're not going to go back to the House because I think it's a waste of time. So sorry if I don't take your advice on how this House should work because

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. A. PARSONS: – their advice when they were in government was to keep it closed. But again, do you know what? We went into a budget debate that year. Now, did they spend four hours debating Interim Supply? No. Did they spend five hours? Did they spend six hours? No. Madam Chair, they spent 15 hours debating Interim Supply. It's the heights of hypocrisy what we see here right now – the heights of hypocrisy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. A. PARSONS: They had every attempt, every effort to do by –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. A. PARSONS: Oh, Madam Chair, I see him piping up now. They don't have the guts to stand on their feet.

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. A. PARSONS: Get on your feet and talk. Oh look, I hear the Member for CBS got lots to say when he's sat down, but there's not much said when he gets up, not much said.

Madam Chair, again, I gave him the courtesy of listening to him in the limited times that he stands up here, but when I stand up it's nothing but chirping – chirping from the other side.

So it's funny, I must have gotten a rise out of him. Because again, even though he wasn't a Member, he was one of the executive members following around here at the time. He had a large part in all this stuff that went on, the hypocrisy that's going on here today. So I appreciate the fact that they want to stand up and lecture this government on how we should run the House. We're going to run the House the way we want to.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. A. PARSONS: You had every attempt to do it, you had three terms over there, and right now you're speaking against everything that you did while you were in this House. Tried to keep it closed; wanted to keep it closed; didn't think – in fact, I remember the comments they had when we talked about Muskrat Falls. I'm not sure if we should have a debate on that because the quality of debate wouldn't be there. It's a waste of debate. That's when they rammed that through.

Again, I don't need to belabour this debate talking about their position on Muskrat Falls and where we are with that. But if they want to stand up and talk about Muskrat Falls and go back to *Hansard* and look at all their comments, I say: Bring it on. Bring it on. Let's have that talk any day. Let's have that talk. Let's go back to *Hansard* and look at what they said about Muskrat Falls. We can have that debate.

He talks about the fears – the fears – that they have about not having a proper budget debate. Now, there were no fears when they had their budgets and they had 15 hours and 11 hours and 12 hours talking Interim Supply. They didn't have those fears then, but they have those fears now. It's amazing, I hear the heckling coming from the other side, the heckling –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. A. PARSONS: Again, they didn't have any issue then. They had no issue. But what I'll say, the best part of the budget debate besides Interim Supply is the Estimates. I loved it when I was in Opposition, and I love it when I'm in government. Because it's a chance to sit here – I think it's an excellent debate where the Members on the other side have three hours – three hours – allotted to ask questions of ministers, their departments, but here's the funny thing. I can remember when I sat on that side and I tried to ask questions and they would shut you down. They'd say stick to the lines.

And just so people understand, there's a budget book, you go line by line, you go through it, and sometimes you diverge from that. Now, I've spoken about this in the House before, and again I have given the Member for Mount Pearl North credit before, because he wasn't unwilling to talk about policy, to diverge from the line debate – he was willing to expand. But it's funny. There were times when there were Members who sit over there now, who wouldn't go away from the line; they said we're not going to discuss policy. They refrained from having a proper debate.

What I remind them, in my one opportunity to sit in this House and to stand in this House and have a debate on the Estimates, I didn't sit there for three hours either. I sat there for over four hours and answered every single question that they asked, and I can promise them now I'll do the same thing this year because I have no problem talking about the decisions that we make. Not one problem and I promise you we'll do the same thing now.

Madam Chair, the Member just stood up and took seven minutes to complain about it and didn't mention one single thing about – actually sorry, he mentioned one thing. He did mention one thing. He talked about sources say. Sources say. He took a long time to talk about nothing – to talk about nothing.

So, Madam Chair, look, I have to set the record straight. I have to remind the people out there that they did one thing, they say another but

we're getting used to that. The record speaks for itself. We're still dealing with it.

On that note, I look forward to continuing to talk about Interim Supply or any single matter that we want to talk about in this House because I'm here all day.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Lewisporte – Twillingate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. D. BENNETT: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I will take a minute to congratulate Team Gushue and all of his team mates: Skip, Brad Gushue; Third, Mark Nichols; Second, Brett Gallant; and Lead, Geoff Walker. On behalf of all the people in the Lewisporte – Twillingate District, thank you for the great job you did and you did our province a great honour. I would also like to acknowledge all the volunteers, the City of St. John's, the sponsors and everybody else who made this tournament such a great success.

Madam Chair, it's always a pleasure to rise in this hon. House to represent the beautiful and scenic District of Lewisporte – Twillingate and today to speak to Bill 71, Interim Supply. Before I speak about the great things happening in my District of Lewisporte – Twillingate and the things that's happening within the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development, I would like to address a comment made by the hon. Member for Cape St. Francis last week when he told people from this great province that an MHA from this side of the House of Assembly was afraid or hiding from constituents in their district.

I can assure that Member that I have not been hiding from any constituents and I'm quite sure that all Members on this side of the House have not been hiding either. In fact, I have visited every community.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. D. BENNETT: All 40-plus communities in my district. I've attended dozens of community functions, met with municipal councils, community organizations and constituents. Not one meeting did I refuse.

Were people upset with some of the decisions we've made? Yes. They were tough decisions that no matter what side of the House, we didn't want to make them. None of us wanted to increase taxes and none of us wanted to reduce services. Many people in my district that I spoke to openly addressed their concerns, but the vast majority of these people realized the financial situation we were put in as a government was a result of the poor financial management of the PC government.

Madam Chair, other PC Members in the Opposition also referred last week that constituents from the district were coming up to them expressing their displeasure. I ask them: Were you being honest to your constituents? Did you tell them that your estimated deficit prior to the election was \$1.1 billion, when in reality it was \$2.2 billion? Did you tell your constituents that as of March 2016 you left this province with a net deficit of \$12.7 billion in a time when you had \$25 billion in oil royalties alone, or that because of your financial mismanagement today, we have to spend more money on debt servicing and interest than we spend on educating our children?

Madam Chair, I'm willing to bet these sad facts that Members on the opposite side forget to tell their constituents; either that or they're too ashamed to tell them. So if anybody should be hiding, it should be Members on that side of the House not us. We have to deal with the situation they left behind.

On a more positive note, Madam Chair, over the past 15 months I have thoroughly enjoyed representing the people of my district, and worked very hard to represent them to the best of my ability. I'm proud to say that through the combined efforts with –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

The Chair is having trouble hearing the hon. Member, and I would ask Members for their co-operation to give him his time to speak.

The hon. the Member for Lewisporte – Twillingate.

MR. D. BENNETT: Thank you for protection, Madam Chair.

I'm very proud to say that through our combined efforts, we have been able to secure a significant amount of funds to many councils, local service districts and service organizations throughout my district that will greatly benefit the residents of my district.

This past fall and winter, my district received over \$400,000 through the community enhancement program; the local service district of Virgin Arm, Carter's Cove and Parkview received over \$37,000; the Town of Comfort Cove-Newstead over \$72,000; the Town of Summerford received funding close to \$53,000; the Embree boating association received \$24,000; the Town of Twillingate, in excess of \$52,000; the local service district of Bridgeport received \$16,000; the Town of Birchy Bay, over \$68,000; Baytona, \$27,800; the local service district of Stanhope, \$21,000; the Town of Lewisporte, which is my home, \$48,000; and the local service district of Cobb's Arm, over \$10,000.

These funds help our communities do repairs and upgrades to recreation facilities and community halls, improvements to walking trails to increase physical activity and wellness for our residents, expansions to docking facilities to meet the growing demand of the recreational boating industry. This fund also helped people in my district to obtain or require their hours to qualify for unemployment insurance, and to obtain work experience that will assist them in finding long-term employment.

Madam Chair, agriculture and agrifoods is very important in my district and employs a large number of people and has great economic benefits to the region. Through the Growing Forward 2 program, which is a federal/provincial and territory initiative that is designed to enhance and strengthen the sector of

innovation, competitiveness and market development, six businesses in my district received funding of over \$390,000 this past year to further their industry.

Our government has identified the need to become more self-sufficient when it comes to food security. That is why in *The Way Forward* document we have committed to working with the agriculture and agrifoods industry throughout the province to increase our food self-sufficiency from the current estimated 10 per cent to 20 per cent by the year 2022. I am committed to working with businesses in my district and the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources to help achieve these targets and further the industry in my district.

Madam Chair, having access to clean and safe drinking water is also a priority of this government and many communities in my district –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. D. BENNETT: – along with the disposal of waste water in an environmentally friendly way.

This past year, three communities in my district received funding under the Clean Water and Wastewater Fund. The Town of Comfort Cove received \$362,000 at a 50-50 cost-shared program by the federal government and also the provincial government to upgrade their pump house and community water supply, and to improve the quality of drinking water to residents of that community.

The Town of Campbellton, \$370,000 from the Clean Water and Wastewater Fund to upgrade their waterlines within the community; and the Town of Lewisporte received over \$2.7 million towards phase 1 of their sewage treatment plant. The funds will be used to consolidate seven outfalls in preparation of future sewage treatment.

Madam Chair, the health and well-being of residents of our province has always been a priority of mine. Prior to being elected, I worked with the Town of Lewisporte for 25 years as recreation director, promoting physical activity and healthy living to people in my community.

Now in my role as parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development, I'm able to work with the department and the many great stakeholders throughout Newfoundland and Labrador to continue to advocate for a healthier province.

Sadly, Madam Chair, Newfoundland and Labrador have some of the highest rates of chronic disease in Canada. Contributing to poor outcomes are the province's poor rates of breastfeeding, smoking, physical activity, obesity, and veggie and fruit consumption. To improve the health of the population and to reduce acute health care costs in the long-term, our government will continue to develop and implement quality programs and initiatives to support improved health outcomes.

Healthy living actions and targets in *The Way Forward* document, our government's vision document, focuses on breastfeeding, healthy living, anti-smoking and physical activity. We will increase awareness, introduce policies, practices and programs and create environments which support healthy living, starting with our schools and our communities.

Our healthy living plan is currently being developed and will be addressed, the actions and targets, in *The Way Forward* document. The plan supports Health-in-All Policies approach and will require working together with our schools, communities, community groups, health, recreation and sport and various other partners. The action plan builds on and enhances the successes of ongoing initiatives such as the Carrots Rewards app, participation campaign, Veggie and Fruit Campaign, Healthy School Planner, Participation Nation and Active Schools, along with other great initiatives.

The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council has been engaged and a new healthy living council is being established. We continue to support wellness and better outcomes for the people of our province through support of 41 organizations who receive annual funding for a total amount of \$5.8 million.

Through an investment of \$180,000, six regional wellness coalitions throughout the regional health authorities engage groups in their local areas. Furthermore, Madam Chair, we continue

to support healthy living initiatives through the Community Healthy Living Fund to an amount of \$1.84 million.

Madam Chair, I can continue, but I see my time is running near. I look forward to speaking again on Bill 71, Interim Supply.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Order, please!

The Chair recognizes the Deputy Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

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

Is it the pleasure of the House 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 Speaker.

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair of the Committee of Supply reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

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

directed her to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

When shall the Committee have leave to sit again?

MS. COADY: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, report received and adopted.
Committee ordered to sit again on tomorrow.

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

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Labrador West, 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.'

Carried.

This House now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., being Wednesday.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 10 a.m.