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Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Prior to the proceedings today, I would like to welcome to the public gallery Mr. Michael Bartellas who will be the subject of a Ministerial Statement today. I'd also like to welcome to the public gallery Gemma Hickey who will also be mentioned in a Ministerial Statement.

Welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today for Members' statements, we have Members' statements from the Districts of Fogo Island – Cape Freels, Conception Bay East – Bell Island, Burin – Grand Bank, Virginia Waters – Pleasantville, Topsail – Paradise and Exploits.

The hon. the Member for Fogo Island – Cape Freels.

MR. BRAGG: Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to rise in the House today and sing the praises of the many men and women who serve as volunteer firefighters in my district. My District of Fogo Island – Cape Freels is serviced by 19 volunteer fire departments – over 350 volunteers keeping our communities safe.

Last Saturday night, I had the privilege of attending the 40th anniversary of the Lumsden volunteer fire department. Chief Chesley Robbins and his crew sacrifice countless family hours to support their community. These volunteers constantly hold ticket draws and bingo to fund their department.

Forty years ago, their fundraiser was to sell \$100 worth of tickets. The prize was \$20 worth of groceries. Years later, they would drop off a long rubber boot at one of end of town, pass it along until it was full and then run down, empty it and pass it to the next house, raising thousands of the years. What started out 40 years ago with a small pump and some hose has evolved into a

well-trained and equipped volunteer fire department.

I would like everyone to join me in thanking the Lumsden volunteer fire department for 40 years of service.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand today to acknowledge an event that took place a few weeks ago in my district. On September 16, I, along with the federal and provincial minister, the commander of the navy, the Lieutenant Governor, senators and representatives of both the British and French consulates were joined by hundreds of local residents as we attended the 75th anniversary commemorative ceremony of the sinking of four ore carriers off Lance Cove on Bell Island by German U-boat 513.

The ceremony acknowledged the tragic events of 1942 and remembered the 69 sailors who died during the attack, while paying tribute to the many men and women of Bell Island who risked their own lives to save those in the water after the sinking of the ships. Stories of residents swimming out to bring in injured sailors, kitchen tables being used to perform surgery by local doctors, stables used to house the many survivors until accommodations could be secured.

The residents of Bell Island showed true heroism as they launched their own small boats into the water to save survivors and retrieve bodies – all as the enemy lurked still in the ocean below.

I congratulate and thank Bell Island Legion Branch 18 for organizing such a respectful and memorable event. Lest We Forget.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. HALEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my good friend Judy. Without mention of her surname, the name Judy in our province automatically implies Judy Foote. This is an indication of the profound impact she has had on the province she served for three decades, two of those an elected representative, both in this hon. House and in the House of Commons.

No matter the role, whether minister of various portfolios, chief whip, tenacious representative for those who elected her, she earned a reputation as a strong advocate for Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker. This fall, Judy selflessly stepped back from politics; certainly not because she had nothing more to offer but, as we can appreciate, for Judy, family comes first.

Newfoundland and Labrador is a far better place because of Judy's contributions. For me, she has been a tremendous role model; my seven years as her special assistant provided me a wonderful experience.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members of this hon. House to join me in thanking this remarkable woman for her years of service and in wishing her many years of good health and happiness in her retirement.

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 rise in this hon. House to recognize the Church Lads' Brigade, which is celebrating 125 years of service, making it the longest, continuous youth-serving organization in our province.

This past weekend, the organization held their 125th Anniversary Parade, where approximately 400 members were marching in downtown St. John's. The parade marshal was Major William

G. Tilley, who is the longest-serving member, with over 91 years of service to the CLB.

The CLB has been active in all corners of our province since 1892 and is open to all children, starting at the age of five. The organization's objective is to help foster the leaders of tomorrow through the use of educational, recreational and social activities so children are exposed to skills they may not get the opportunity to participate in otherwise.

The CLB has already contributed many members to the community such as Gordon Pinsent, Sgt. Tommy Ricketts and former Premier Joey Smallwood.

I, along with other Members in this hon. House, have first-hand knowledge of how influential the CLB can be in shaping the trajectory of a child's life.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in recognizing the CLB for their dedication and passion to youth in our communities.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

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

Mr. Speaker, back in August, 10-year-old Nicholas Quinn from my district made sports history by being the first person from this province to medal at the World Dwarf Games held in Guelph, Ontario. Among the 400 athletes who competed, Nicholas and Brooklyn Wolfrey from Rigolet, were the first Newfoundlanders and Labradorians ever to compete.

The World Dwarf Games is the largest sporting event in history held exclusively for athletes with dwarfism. Nicholas participated in 11 sport categories and took home six medals, including five gold medals and one bronze. He received gold in Bocce, floor hockey, table tennis, 25 metre swimming and 50 metre swimming, and a bronze in badminton singles.

Some of his wins, Mr. Speaker, came against athletes who had competed within their own countries to earn the right to compete at these world games, quite the accomplishment for Nicholas.

One of highlights for Nicholas was to meet and make so many new friends from Canada and beyond. Nicholas hopes to be part of this again when the games are held in four years' time.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all hon. Members to show our appreciation and congratulations to Nicholas here in the House of Assembly this afternoon. His accomplishments are truly amazing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

MR. DEAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House to congratulate Lloyd Seaward on celebrating his 100th birthday on October 3. I was extremely pleased to have attended the birthday festivities with him and his family at the Salvation Army Citadel in his hometown of Bishop's Falls.

Mr. Seaward was in the Royal Navy from 1939 to 1947 and proved to be a true hero. While on patrol in the English Channel he was injured and sent to the Royal Navy hospital. As he was recovering, his doctor recommended sending him home to Newfoundland but Lloyd would not go and insisted on going back instead to the patrol boats.

In 1942 his cruiser sank in the Java Sea and he was taken prisoner of war by the Japanese. In prison he was seen making a pair of wooden clogs and when asked, told the officer he was a shoemaker. This resulted in a transfer to Makasura Camp to make boots for the Japanese Army.

I am happy to see that Lloyd is still in good health, busy with family and friends and hobbies, in which he has an expertise in fashioning floating replicas, a rarity in our

province, of the traditional Beothuk birchbark canoes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, our government believes in equality for everyone and we respect the diversity of all individuals. That is why we adopted the policy to allow for a change-of-sex designation on a birth certificate from female or male to non-binary.

During the fall sitting of this hon. House of Assembly, I will introduce amendments to the *Vital Statistics Act, 2009*, which will remove the requirement to submit a statement from a medical professional prior to a change in sex designation for those 16 years of age and older. Children aged 12 to 15 will still require a parent to apply on their behalf, and consent of a child is also required.

Information pertaining to sex designation at birth will continue to be collected after the amendments have been made. This data is important for personal health service decisions, as well as informing government policy and programs. Last week I also announced a new, more secure driver's licence for our province. Individuals who qualify for a gender-neutral birth certificate may also avail of a gender-neutral driver's licence.

Mr. Speaker, we appreciate activist Gemma Hickey's efforts in bringing this issue forward. It is important that we remain progressive as a government and continue to empower people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I'd like to thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement. I would also like to recognize the tremendous advocacy efforts of Gemma Hickey, who has led the public conversation on this issue. Gemma is a remarkable individual who, through making their story told, showcased the need of gender-neutral birth certificates, driver's licences and other forms of identification, and we look forward to discussing the amendments of the *Vital Statistics Act* in the upcoming weeks.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement. We're very glad government has recognized the need to amend the *Vital Statistics Act* to better reflect the diversity of our province. Allowing individuals to change their sex designation to non-binary is an important step towards inclusion.

We, too, congratulate the continued efforts of activists such as Gemma Hickey, who has raised this issue, and look forward to seeing this change take place.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

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

I rise today to congratulate Michael Bartellas on being awarded the 2017 Charles Tabachnick

Canadian Medical Hall of Fame Award for leadership and innovation in health care.

Mr. Bartellas is the co-creator of MUN MED 3D, Newfoundland and Labrador's first biomedical 3-D printing laboratory. As part of the design process, Mr. Bartellas draws on his Red Seal certification as a carpenter.

MUN MED 3D had supported more than 40 biomedical projects, including the mentoring of Holy Heart high student Nora Boone. Ms. Boone went on to win the goal medal Youth Can Innovate Award at the Canada-wide science fair earlier this year.

Mr. Bartellas is a third-year medical student at Memorial University's Faculty of Medicine. He's just one example of the vision and innovation that incubates at Memorial University and throughout communities across our province.

I invite all Members of his hon. House to join me today in celebrating these remarkable achievements and congratulating Mr. Bartellas.

We wish him every success in his future in medicine.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. We join with the minister in congratulating Mr. Bartellas on his winning of this year's Medical Hall of Fame Award for leadership and innovation.

Mr. Bartellas is a prime example of some of the great minds we are nurturing and developing at Memorial University. That is why, Mr. Speaker, we must continue supporting the important work happening in one of our province's premier educational institutions.

I want to again congratulate Mr. Bartellas on his prestigious award and wish him all the best in

his studies. I suspect this will not be the last time we hear this gentlemen's name.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of this statement. I was delighted to hear that medical student Michael Bartellas won this prestigious Canadian Medical Hall of Fame Award.

The work he is doing with his colleagues at the 3-D printing laboratory is truly impressive, including the very important work of mentoring students such as Nora Boone, helping them develop projects to improve health care delivery in our communities.

I'm delighted to congratulate Michael Bartellas and all who worked with him in this laboratory.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

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

Mr. Speaker, Supreme Court Justice Gillian Butler in her ruling on special ballot provisions frowned upon how quickly the 2007 bill moved through the House of Assembly. She went on to comment that there was no study or analysis of the effects caused by the special ballot provision.

I ask the minister: As it relates to your proposed bill before the House, what studies and analysis has your government completed?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

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

I'm certainly happy to stand up and speak to this piece of legislation and this issue. I agree with Justice Butler; we don't want to go through this House, like the previous administration did, forcing bills upon the people without knowing what they were doing.

The fact is that there's been significant research and analysis done of this bill since the decision was laid down on September 6. We've had numerous lawyers look at this, people like Todd Stanley, Isobel O'Shea and Dr. Barb Barrowman who did clerk at the Supreme Court of Canada. So we've had tremendous analysis of this bill. Then we've also reached out to Elections NL.

What I can tell you is we have a bill that is constitutionally sound and will allow for a fair, balanced and democratic election.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Well, Minister, will you share that analysis with Members of the House of Assembly before the debate begins in second reading?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

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

What I would say is that the bill that's been placed out there and given to the Opposition days ago is the analysis. This is the result of what we have here. We've done a bill and drafted a bill based on the work done by bureaucrats and lawyers within the Department of Justice.

What I will say is contrary to the practice that was adopted by the previous administration where the previous bill was actually put into this

House without any briefing provided to the Opposition whatsoever, the fact is that this Opposition was given a briefing. I understand it was very quick because they didn't actually have many questions.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

He certainly opened the door on a number of issues now. It's too bad he's playing politics on an important matter where politics should be removed from them, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: The very crux of Justice Butler's decision was to remove an advantage to government or to any incumbents or to anyone in the House of Assembly or anyone who wants to run, not to enter politics in the discussion and the debate as the Member opposite is doing, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: And there certainly were questions. As a matter of fact, in the short briefing that happened on Friday morning, Mr. Speaker, there were changes made to the bill. Imagine what could happen if there was a good analysis and study done by Members of the House of Assembly before it comes to the House of Assembly.

I'll ask the minister again: Will you table the analysis done, with all the people you mentioned, with Members of the House of Assembly? As Justice Butler said, that people in the House of Assembly, the Members of the House of Assembly, those passing the bill should consider those analyses.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

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

Again, the Member asked for an analysis. We have a piece of legislation that we placed on the Table. In fact, we've given them significantly more time than they ever allowed us when we were in Opposition to debate this.

The fact is we're here in a special session to debate a piece of legislation that's necessary for all of us. Now, the Member opposite is talking about an unfair advantage for the incumbents; this coming from a Member who brought the House back here to eliminate seats from the House of Assembly so he can extend an election and keep himself premier for a few extra months.

The fact is they had every opportunity, and there remains every opportunity to ask questions. I look forward to a full debate where we can sit here and listen to what they have to say, and I will not do it behind closed doors as the Members opposite have requested.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I remind the Member opposite that it was the Opposition House Leader of the day in 2007 that allowed the bill to proceed the way it did. What I suggest to the Member opposite, that he not rush it through like it was done in 2007, that he not be the author of that and that the right analysis, the right considerations be given by legislators, as Justice Butler has referred to. They should be left to consider those analyses, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, I'll ask the minister this: We were told that Cabinet directed to drafting the bill, why were changes not led by the Chief Electoral Officer? Why were consultations not held prior to the bill coming to the House?

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I have no idea what the Member opposite is referring to. What I can assure him is that the Chair of Elections NL had plenty of input into this piece of legislation as it went to Cabinet; the same process that he would have followed when he was on this side of the House.

The fact is we are here because the bill from 2007, led by the other administration, is not constitutional. We have no choice but to be here to make those changes. We've put forward a bill; we've given every opportunity for briefings and questions. I look forward to a debate on it, but the debate will rest on whether they actually want to do that here in this House.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

We raised this over a month ago and the Government House Leader dismissed it. He did make a comment, he would do consultations with Members of the House of Assembly that he hasn't done.

As a matter of fact, what we were told in our briefing on Friday is the department was told just go get it done – just go get it done. So it doesn't appear there was any analysis or any study done on the impacts of the provisions that they had brought before the House, Mr. Speaker.

I'll ask the government this. The bill imposes five days after government decides to call an election to get all candidates in place. Candidates have to get their affairs in order, parties have to hold nominations.

So I ask the Premier: Do you accept that this provision is an unfair advantage to the governing party, especially when you control the decisions?

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately 45 seconds is not going to be enough to address all the things that I'd like to address, so I hope we can do it later in debate as well.

What I can say, the Member talks here about coming into this House – this is the same person that August 7 said don't come into the House for a half-hour; it's a waste of money. He comes in here yesterday, and probably today, and continues to waste money. The same thing he did when he was here on this side of the House.

The fact is we didn't open the House on September 6 like the Member asked because we had to do analysis. The Member opposite would have had us open the House and come in and debate something that nobody had had any analysis done.

The fact is lawyers within this department have done significant work. They have reached out, and we have a constitutionally sound bill that will comply with the decision made by Justice Butler. What I can also say, Mr. Speaker, is I look forward to more changes to the *Elections Act* as we continue on.

Thank you.

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

MR. P. DAVIS: So, Mr. Speaker, we have a circumstance here where the Government House Leader criticizes the 2007 rushing of a bill and criticizes us today for not allowing them to rush it through. That's what we have happening here in the House today, Mr. Speaker.

The question was very, very simple. Does imposing a five-day maximum time for nominations provide an advantage to the governing party? A very simple question, Minister: Does it provide an advantage to you when you hold the decision?

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, we are here today because legislation led by that Opposition when they were in government was unconstitutional.

The answer that the Member should want to know is: Will this legislation, will this stand up to constitutional scrutiny? Will it survive a challenge? The answer, Mr. Speaker, to that is a resounding yes.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. P. DAVIS: He won't answer the question, Mr. Speaker, a very simple question. He won't answer it, because everybody in the province wants to have an open and fair opportunity to nominate candidates for office when you run in a provincial election. You want good quality candidates, an opportunity to recruit those candidates, encourage them, have a fair process for running. I submit to the Members opposite that five days to do 40 candidates in a general election, when they can call it essentially whenever they want, is not enough time.

Do you agree that provides an advantage to the governing party, Minister?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite is talking about a general election that's two years away, and here we are because there's a resignation of a Member opposite and causing a by-election that we need to call now.

The fact remains that this decision is actually being appealed as well. Who knows what is going to happen? Who knows if we will have to convene this House to debate further changes necessary for this act? The fact remains that this is certainly no advantage in the by-election that we have to deal with now. It does not affect anybody adversely whatsoever. The Member opposite is just grasping at straws. The fact is

we're here to debate a bill, and I would ask him to let us debate.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Justice Butler was quite clear about the need to make sure that election processes were fair and balanced for all Members of the House of Assembly and for any candidate anywhere who wanted to enter in the process. What I'm suggesting is that this is not fair for all.

So, Minister, let me put it to you this way: Leaders change from time to time and, at some point in time, the leader of your party and the leader of our party are going to leave. If the Premier should be replaced today, before the end of the third year, you can call an election virtually any time, with only five days for Members to have to fill those seats, fill those nominations. Is that fair, Minister?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the first point I'll address is certainly we know what it's like to have a change of leaders. There was a revolving chair of leaders when we were in Opposition watching this crowd on this side. What I can say is that, number one, this bill is constitutionally sound; it is fair. We are confident that it will withstand scrutiny.

The Member talks about speculation, hypotheticals, possible situations down the road. What I would say is yes, it would survive any challenge whatsoever. The real reason remains that we are here today to debate changes to the legislation that are necessary. Right now, we have an act that doesn't allow for special ballots. It's unconstitutional. We need to change it. The Members need to debate, so I would say let us debate; we've given you plenty of opportunity to review.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. P. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, it is most unfortunate – it is – that the Government House Leader feels the need to display his continued arrogance and political pokes when we're discussing a very important issue before the House of Assembly today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: A very important issue, Mr. Speaker, and he continues to do so and he finds that need, and it's most unfortunate, instead of just answering the questions.

Mr. Speaker, this bill does not require special ballots to contain names and affiliates of candidates which are affiliated to a party – something that Justice Butler had talked about.

I'll ask again: Do you agree that this was a serious oversight that can leave special ballot voters uninformed? Is that not fair, I ask the minister? Is that not a fair process?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Well, you know a debate has descended into the Opposition not having a point when they have to descend into name calling; that's the first thing that I will say, the Member opposite talking about arrogance.

The fact is that we are here today; we have a piece of legislation that is constitutionally sound. I know what Justice Butler said; I read the decision multiple times. I can tell you who else read the decision multiple times: multiple lawyers in the Department of Justice, who have significantly more expertise in the drafting of the legislation than the Members opposite. I take their advice; I take their expertise. What they are saying is that this bill will withstand any

constitutional scrutiny; it will be in compliance with Justice Butler's decision.

The fact remains that they just don't like what this has to say and I don't know why they won't have this debate.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Recent media reports told of a tragic story of two ladies left to deal with an unfortunate situation concerning their deceased brother's condo. While the credit union claims ownership, from a CBC report as I quote: "... a group of delinquent investors, including the premier of Newfoundland and Labrador."

I ask the Minister Responsible for Service NL: What actions have your department taken regarding a most serious situation and what have officials done at any level (inaudible)?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, let me say that as the Member opposite mentioned a business situation that has been in the news lately in the last few days, as I said publicly many times, my business interests are in a blind trust. The decisions that are made with the business assets are made by the blind trust.

The word delinquency, Mr. Speaker, the Member just mentioned a few minutes ago is certainly not fact. As a minor shareholder prior to my assets going into a blind trust, I lived up to every single commitment of a minority shareholder – every single commitment.

So the language that was used is unfortunate, it's unfair, it's a disappointing situation for me personally, Mr. Speaker. I understand the sensitivities around the decisions that are being made.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: I remind the Premier that's just what CBC quoted in their story of what they said. Since the plight of the residents –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Can I just remind all hon. Members that when I direct someone to speak, that is the only person I wish to hear from at that time?

Please proceed.

The hon. Member for Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: I ask the Minister of Service NL: Since the plight residents at Sundara have faced over the number of years, have new or additional steps been taken to enhance consumer protection for condo owners?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

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

I'll stand up and take this question. The fact is that we have a situation here and I know everybody on this side feels concern for anybody that's been done wrong by this situation.

The fact that this Opposition is going down this path today, a day where we're here talking about Elections Act, talking about democracy. We're here talking about Muskrat Falls inquiries, we're here talking about the fiscal situation of this province and the Opposition wants to get into a mudslinging match here is what they're doing to do, Mr. Speaker.

The fact is it's absolutely despicable but, please, ask another question.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: I'd like to remind the Minister of Justice that this is about two ladies that find an unfortunate situation of trying to settle the death of their brother. This is what this is about. This is not about mudslinging; this is about residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: My question is to the Minister of Service NL and it's a simple question: Have you any new or additional steps being taken to enhance consumer protection when it comes to condo affairs?

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

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

The Member asked a question and I'm going to answer this question. He can say what he wants but we all know the question that he's asking here.

If he wants an answer to the first part about consumer protection, I can guarantee you that every Member here, especially the Minister of Service NL – and, certainly, I do as well as the person responsible for legislation, we're willing to look at all measures necessary to protect consumers in this province. It's a piece of legislation that I looked into when I was in Opposition but, of course, the government at the time did absolutely nothing about it.

While we certainly feel sad for the hard situation that anybody's facing, the Members opposite know this is one issue that they're trying to sling mud and they're trying to stay away from pressing issues like the *Elections Act* and Muskrat Falls debacles that they got us into.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House the Minister of Education talked about fantasy versus fact. Well, let's talk some facts.

The Premier's Task Force on education was released months ago. At the time, the minister said there was no rush to act quickly on it, the sky is not falling. Well, news flash, Mr. Minister, the title of the report is *Now is the Time*.

When does he plan to implement these recommendations?

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

MR. KIRBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm really glad to have this question. I want to once again thank the four members of the task force for their important work.

We have a lot of work to do, to undo a lot of the mess I guess you could say, created by the previous government. There's not a day that goes by that I don't feel for those children with special education needs who are in our school system, who are not getting the level of educational services that they need because the previous administration forced a failed inclusive education policy onto the system without consulting with anyone other than themselves.

We will implement all 82 recommendations of that report and they will hear more about that in the budget.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Member's time is expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So two years as minister, four years as the Education critic, a task force with outlined recommendations by professionals who did a very high-level, due diligence job and you have no plan to implement these recommendations.

I ask the minister: What is the projected cost of implementing these recommendations?

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, contrary again – I mean talk about fantasy versus fact. The day the report was released – and that's just three months ago, so he talks about it like it was six years ago or something – we fulfilled one of the 82 recommendations by hiring an esteemed educator from this province to oversee the implementation.

Staff in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development – and I want to thank them as well – have been working around the clock. Just today, just within the last two hours, I had a meeting with the senior staff in the department to look at the plan for moving forward.

They're going to hear lots about that in due course, but we've got an internal process that we have to abide by. I assure the Member he'll see everything in the fullness of time but have internal processes to go through. We will implement that report and not leave it on a shelf like they did with everything they did in education during their time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: The Minister has had it for four months, has acted on absolutely nothing and has talked about stuff that he was going to implement before the report was ever put in play.

So, again, knowing that the minister obviously gives mixed answers to questions, I'm going to ask a very simple yes-or-no: Does he support more inclusion or less inclusion in classrooms to meet the recommendations?

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, I think we all support the notion of inclusion. The problem we

have with the inclusive education, or so-called inclusive education policy that the previous administration foisted onto the school system with no consultation, is that there are insufficient supports.

The report points this out. I've been saying this for six years now. There are insufficient special education services and supports for children with special education needs. We are going to fix that.

As I said the day the report came out, we are going to start down that road in September 2018. It has always been public information about the Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes that we would start to implement the report in its fullness in September 2018.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I applaud the minister for saying that he is going to address it and start dealing with it. I do ask when he's going to start to do that. The report was short on details addressing inclusive education supports.

Does the minister have a plan for inclusive education? It's that simple. You can't say it's down the road; you can't blame a former administration. What are you going to do to address inclusive education? Simply, year three has started.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, I think if we could get technical services to check this microphone because I don't think the Member is hearing what I'm saying over here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, in 2018 we are going to have more support for children with special education needs. We are going to have more literacy intervention, early intervention. We are going to have a new role in our schools for caring for and providing special education services for children, as per the report. We are going to fulfill the recommendations of this report and put the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development on a path to full implementation of this starting in September 2018.

I can't be any more clear than that, Mr. Speaker. The Member does not want to hear this, so he chooses to ignore what I'm saying.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

In the spring, your government made a bizarre decision to move the Crown Lands branch and 30 employees to Corner Brook. We now know that only seven of those employees actually moved to Corner Brook.

Minister, will you now admit that this move was never about efficiencies but, rather, a political move? As you said yourself, staffing up Corner Brook.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, this government has a very ambitious plan, a plan which will succeed to grow our land base, to grow agriculture and to create synergies between four branches of our Department of Fisheries and Land Resources that were not as effectively working with each other to make sure that they did.

This past year, we have actually seen a five-fold increase in the number of agricultural land applications in Western Newfoundland, a 40 per cent increase in Central Newfoundland. And why is that the case? Because we are growing

our agriculture sector, we're growing our industrial opportunities, our economic opportunities, and we're doing so because we have a plan to make sure that our land base is properly, effectively used to grow the economic value of our province. That, Mr. Speaker, is what our plan is all about.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: I'll remind the minister that the majority of the Crown land applications last year were made to the eastern region of the province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: Minister, there are 24 Crown Land employees who did not move to Corner Brook and are still working within government. Where do those 24 positions come from, and were there any new positions created?

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

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, there were 32 positions affected in the headquarters move, seven of which – highly technical positions – moved to Corner Brook. There were two people that sought employment in the private sector. There were two that stayed in St. John's associated with the vault. There were eight retirements; three of which, because they had not completed their retirement requirements, actually were given employment here in St. John's. There were another 13 that were offered employment.

Every member of the Crown Lands group was offered two alternatives, two options for employment, either with Crown Lands or outside in other government departments and agencies. What is true, what the Member is not talking about is that before this plan, his government, there were 20 unfilled positions within Crown Lands (inaudible) –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis for a quick question; no preamble, please.

MR. K. PARSONS: I ask the minister: Does this mean that there are 24 new employees in Corner Brook added to the public service?

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

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, the options for employment were given to the entire civil service of Newfoundland and Labrador. The headquarters did indeed move to Corner Brook and those positions are either staffed up or being staffed up.

They are being staffed by qualified individuals, and we are making great progress in advancing our agricultural opportunities and, as well, dealing with the incredible backlog in the Crown Land's process, which was a consequence of their government's decision not to staff up 20 unfilled positions in the Crown Lands group.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, they should be asking themselves the questions and explaining to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador why they didn't want to (inaudible) –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Yesterday the Government House Leader sought leave to do notice of Bill 14 and first reading of the bill on the same day. This bill is seeking to correct changes to the *Elections Act* that were made too quickly in 2007 and, with haste, Justice Gillian Butler has spoken to.

I ask the Government House Leader: What is his rush about?

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I cannot wait to address this because I'm going to give the play-by-play of how this happened. The fact is that we opened the House on Wednesday, of which I gave the Member advance notice – something that had never been done. They got the legislation Thursday – something that is unusual because usually you have to wait until far later.

Friday, they had a briefing and they had every opportunity to ask questions. At this point, I was not contacted once; nothing on Saturday, nothing on Sunday. At that point I had asked the Member opposite on Wednesday, I said: Do you mind if we come back on Monday? Instead of doing nothing and wasting taxpayers' dollars, why don't we get notice and first reading done and move to second reading so I can at least get my part done and if you want to wait till Tuesday, we can do that?

I'm waiting for the next question.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We weren't in the House Wednesday and Thursday. The minister may have given some notice privately. We had a briefing on Friday –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Speaker is having great difficulty hearing the speaker, the Member.

The Leader of the Third Party.

Thank you.

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to take time to explain as well. We had a briefing on Friday – Friday. We had questions at that briefing. We could not get the answers to those questions at that briefing.

Saturday and Sunday, I believe you do not find Government Houses open across this country. We could not do the kind of research we wanted to do, and we came into this House yesterday.

So, once again, Mr. Speaker, I ask the House Leader why he would meet with the other House Leaders to talk about the process that we're going through, not to talk about the content of the bill but the process. Why would he not sit down with us as three House Leaders and talk about how to do the process?

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

The fact is I did what no other former Government House Leader ever did, which was reach out well in advance. I agree I misspoke. I said we were in the House Monday. No, I gave notice that the House was something – the Member opposite should realize that was never done during any of the time that she was here.

The fact remains she did not ask a single question of me in any way, shape or form until after Question Period yesterday, never reached out to discuss it. I made it quite clear: Let me begin second reading so I can discuss the government's perspective on this piece of legislation. Then we can continue to debate on Tuesday, we can continue to debate on Wednesday, we can continue to debate on Thursday.

The reason I wouldn't agree to have a backdoor meeting is because we're going to do this open, in front of everybody right here on the floor of the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I cannot let that go, because the reason for the meeting was to talk about the process. We come to this House time after time after time discussing bills. We raise our concerns in every way in the second reading, we do it, and we ask questions in Committee of the Whole. And governments – I've sat here since 2006 and had both sides, both governments, ignore everything that's raised.

I want to know if the Government House Leader is really going to listen to the changes that we are going to propose and one that I'm going to propose when we go through the process.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, if the Member opposite really wanted to have a meeting and discuss this, she may have asked prior to the House even opening yesterday, which she did not. She gave no notice whatsoever until after the House was adjourned yesterday.

The second thing I will say is the way this debate usually works is that we open second reading and every Member in this House gets an opportunity to speak and to bring up their perspectives. The fact remains that if I was given notice of what the other Members – their issues with this bill, I'd be happy to debate them and have that debate here on the floor of the House.

If they are reasonable changes that will bring an improvement to the legislation and will be constitutionally sound, I will listen, but right now they've done none of that.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Third Party for a quick question; no preamble, please.

MS. MICHAEL: I ask the Premier: What changes does he anticipate that need to be made to the act to make information about Muskrat Falls open and transparent?

I'm talking about the *Energy Corporation Act*, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I think the issue the Member opposite is talking about is the embedded contractors. There are a number of options that will be available to us.

As I said yesterday in House of Assembly, right now this is under review by the Privacy Commissioner. We have the CEO of Nalcor looking for options. He, too, has said publicly that he wants to get this information out there. We have asked for the aggregate totals in some correspondence that we've seen back and forth, Mr. Speaker.

As I said yesterday, and said many times, we want to make sure, this government wants to make sure that Nalcor is as open and as transparent as any department within government. So when we go through this process, when we hear back from the review by the Privacy Commissioner, we will see what changes will need to be made to make Nalcor open and transparent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The time for Oral Questions has ended.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Pursuant to section 5(2)(a) of the Supply Act, 2017, I am tabling one Order in Council relating to the usage of the Contingency Reserve for the 2017-18 fiscal year.

Further, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 26(5)(a) of the *Financial Administration Act*, I am tabling nine Orders in Council relating to funding precommitments for the fiscal years 2018-19 through 2027-28.

MR. SPEAKER: Further tabling of documents?

Pursuant to section 8 and section 10 of the *Public Tender Act*, I hereby table reports of *Public Tender Act* exceptions for March, April and May 2017 as presented by the Chief Operating Officer of the Government Purchasing Agency.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The House Of Assembly Accountability, Integrity And Administration Act, Bill 19.

MR. SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

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

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

WHEREAS deaf and hard of hearing children in the public education system of Newfoundland and Labrador are not receiving full and equivalent access to a quality education because of the lack of appropriate full-time resources; and

WHEREAS from 1964 to 2010, deaf and hard of hearing children were provided with a full-time quality education in the Newfoundland School for the Deaf, but deaf and hard of hearing children currently placed in mainstream schools receive only a fraction of a school day with a teacher qualified to instruct deaf and hard of hearing children;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to undertake an immediate complete and thorough assessment of the supports in place for deaf and hard of hearing children by a committee of at least two independent and recognized experts in the field of deaf and hard of hearing education, and to accept the recommendations of these experts, and in the interim take measures to honour the support commitments made to all current and future students upon closure of the Newfoundland School for the Deaf in 2010 to ensure that all deaf and hard of hearing children are provided with access to a quality education equivalent to hearing classmates, as well as access to sign language.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition speaks to a very serious situation in our schools right now. We have hundreds of children – I've received two different numbers, but it's anywhere between 250 and 350 children – who are deaf or hard of hearing in our schools. They have very, very particular needs. Today they are not getting the services they need.

I've been told by children themselves, by their parents, that even with cochlear implants – which this government is very, very strong on – many students still have trouble hearing, understanding and learning. As one parent put it to me: a cochlear implant is a tool, a cochlear implant doesn't take away deafness and it doesn't take away the fact that the child is hard of hearing; it's a tool and those tools do no work perfectly.

It's one thing to say they have cochlear implants. That doesn't mean that there are other services that they were used to having in the School for the Deaf that they still need to have. What's

happening is that we're getting poor academic performance because of this reliance totally on this tool that is imperfect. Most tools are imperfect.

In order to have the same access to quality education as hearing students, deaf and hard of hearing students in our schools have many needs. I think I'm going to have other opportunities to speak to those needs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: 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 many students within our province depend on school busing for transportation to and from school each day; and

WHEREAS there are many parents of school-aged children throughout the province who live inside the Eastern School District's 1.6 kilometre zone; therefore, do not qualify for busing; and

WHEREAS the policy cannot override the safety of our children;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to eliminate the 1.6 kilometre policy for all elementary schools in the province and in junior and senior high schools where safety is a primary concern.

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

Mr. Speaker, this issue has come up and it was brought up yesterday in Question Period by my colleague from Conception Bay East – Bell Island. We've had petitions on it and it's been in the media a fair bit. There is a lot of outcry in

different areas. I'm sure Members on both sides deal with it in their individual districts, especially in the beginning of the school year with busing.

It is a huge issue; it's been around a long time. It's crossed both party lines. It's not something that's new, come over in the last two years, it's been around for decades. On that note, things have changed a lot over the last number of years. The family model is one big thing that jumps out at me. I know in my district, I deal with this on a pretty regular basis; last year and every beginning of the school year. It's still ongoing now.

I have a lot of children now, elementary children, who have to find their best way to school. Parents have to adjust their work schedules. Some parents have in-home daycares that some actually had to – one family in particular had to stop their in-home daycare, a small daycare in their house because they couldn't get the busing for the children there. So it eliminated their ability to actually earn a living, which was kind of an extreme case, but that's actually happened and I have documentation to prove that.

The family models have changed. When this policy was in effect a lot of years back, you had a support system. The parents lived there and more than likely the mom and dad or the grandparents lived around the corner and there was an aunt and uncle, there were neighbours. It was a full support model.

I know when I went to school I had to walk a long ways to get to my school but it was different. The traffic on the roads was totally different. It was a different time we lived in. I mean I'll go for my own district. Route 60 has upwards of 20,000 vehicles a day; it's a four-lane highway by two elementary schools. Those children have to find the best way to get there. There are some sidewalks in some areas. In the new school there are no sidewalks up there, but in the one in St. George's there is.

Do you want to let a five-year-old to 11-year-old – five to 11 year olds are primary and elementary children. They walk to school every day during the wintertime, during the bad weather. It's not a perfect – it's not a little

garden road where the school is on and you walk a mile. That's not a big deal to any child I think, if it's in a safe circumstance.

Where a lot of these are located, those children cannot get to school in a safe manner, and I think it's a huge issue. We can punt it back and forth to the district and punt it to government and back and forth, but the thing is everyone agrees with me when I bring it up but no one wants to make a change. I think it's time for everyone to stand up and try to do something for all these young families and small children in our elementary schools.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: Good job, Member.

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 regulations link harvesting quotas to vessel length; and

WHEREAS many harvesters own fishing vessels of various sizes but, because of federal regulations, restrict them from using smaller vessels, sometimes putting their crew in danger;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the federal government, to make representation to the federal government to encourage them to change the policy, ensuring the safety of those fish harvesters.

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

I've continued to do this petition for the last number of years. It's very important in my district and it's very important to people that I know personally that are out fishing. A lot of times what happens, just to explain the situation,

is that harvesters mainly in the snow crab – there are different zones.

Under the 200-mile zone, they can use a certain size vessel, around 50 feet or larger. Then, there's another zone inside, which is inside the 200, probably 200 to about 80-kilometre zone and then there's the inside zone.

Sometimes what happens with harvesters, obviously if they have four or five vessels, they have a couple of vessels that are in really good shape. They're good vessels; they're 'sealy' bound. There's no problem to go offshore with them or whatever.

Because of the restrictions that are in with the federal government, based on size of vessels – and I can understand the size of vessels because it came in when this was all a new fishery, but most of the fishermen and fish harvesters that are in the crab fishery today are well established. In one particular case, I know a group that has five boats. I know in another case a group that has four boats, but it's all about the safety of these individuals.

Sometimes what happens, Mr. Speaker, is they go out and sometimes it's even rougher inshore than it is offshore. You come in 12 miles with the swell and everything else around the rocks and you get a heave on. Sometimes it's a lot rougher inside than it is outside, and anyone that's familiar with water will agree with me on that.

All I'm asking is for our government to go to the federal government and make the changes necessary for harvesters that are on the water so it's safe for them to be able to go to work each day.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Further petitions?

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 humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS there has been an identified lack of mental health services in our province's K to 12 school system; and

WHEREAS this 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 government to increase mental health services and programs in the province's K to 12 school system.

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

Mr. Speaker, we had a good debate today about the education system and the needs, and particularly the lack of services that are available there. Unfortunately, the minister missed the point when I asked him questions about the answers. It wasn't that I didn't get his answer. I don't like his answers. We can't wait two and three years down the road.

He's been there for two years to implement programs around mental health, around inclusion, around how we support those particular needs; the school system itself, the administrators, the teachers, but particularly the parents and the students. They're the key components here, and we've already been identified.

We don't have to reinvent the wheel. We have a very fluent, a very competent, a very engaging process through the All-Party Committee on Mental Health who identified a number of key components that had to be supported to ensure mental health issues within schools got addressed, so that they didn't develop into more serious mental health issues and didn't have a major impact on our students being able to complete their education and compete on a world market for post-secondary education. So, that's already been out there.

We've talked about it in the Premier's task force, and we've talked about the supports that are needed for inclusion. Mental health issues are part of our inclusion process, being able to give our students an opportunity to deal with the challenges they have in our school system, but that has to be done through supports. The supports come from professionals, from outside agencies that we can partner with, from having open dialogue, from ensuring the administration are key to the process here, but particularly, that the parents and the family supports are there to ensure these students get the supports they need.

It's a very simple process. It's been outlined, it's been discussed, it's been talked about. Health professionals have said it. They've adopted that this has to happen because they see the remanence and the fallout of the issues of not being addressed at younger ages when they have to deal with mental health issues in the school system. The legal system will tell you if things are not addressed at a younger age, they can see a trend, unfortunately, where it's going to lead to issues because of mental health when it comes to legal issues in our system.

So we have health issues. We have legal issues. We have economic issues because people are not as productive in our society and it takes a major toll on everybody in our system.

We need to go back. It's already out there. Let's start implementing. Don't talk about 2018 or 2019. Let's talk about next week, next month and the next six months down the road to ensure this happens.

Mr. Speaker, I'll get a chance to speak to this more often as we get in the House down the road.

Thank you.

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

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

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Shall the motion carry?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Securities Act, Bill 15, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded by the Government House Leader that he shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Securities Act, Bill 15, and that the said bill shall now be read a first time.

It is the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Service NL to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Securities Act," carried. (Bill 15)

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, An Act To Amend The Securities Act. (Bill 15)

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 15 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced

Education, Skills and Labour, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Labour Relations Act, Bill 16, and I further move that the bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Labour Relations Act, Bill 16, and that the said bill shall now be read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Labour Relations Act," carried. (Bill 16)

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Labour Relations Act. (Bill 16).

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 16 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I move seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Labour Relations Act No. 2, Bill 17, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and

Labour shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Labour Relations Act No. 2, Bill 17, and that the said bill shall now be read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Labour Relations Act No. 2," carried. (Bill 17)

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Labour Relations Act No. 2. (Bill 17)

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 17 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Service NL, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Prepaid Funeral Services Act, Bill 18, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Service NL shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Prepaid Funeral Services Act, Bill 18, and that the said bill shall now be read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

This motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Service NL to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Prepaid Funeral Services Act," carried. (Bill 18)

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Prepaid Funeral Services Act. (Bill 18).

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 18 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Elections Act, 1991, Bill 14, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Elections Act, 1991, Bill 14, and that the said bill shall now be read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Government House Leader to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Elections Act, 1991," carried. (Bill 14)

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Elections Act, 1991. (Bill 14).

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time? Tomorrow?

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, at this point I would ask leave, pursuant to the Standing Orders that allow for the House to give unanimous leave, to move past a normal motion, carry on and do second reading of a bill. I would ask: Do I have leave to begin second reading of the *Elections Act* amendments, 1991?

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Government House Leader have leave?

AN HON. MEMBER: No leave.

MR. SPEAKER: No leave has been granted.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

Again, the Opposition doesn't want to work. So on that note, I would adjourn, seconded by the Leader of the Official Opposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

This House is in adjournment until 10 o'clock tomorrow.

MR. P. DAVIS: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: A point of order has been called.

MR. P. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, the Government House Leader just identified me as seconder to a motion to adjourn the House. I have not seconded that motion, Mr. Speaker. So the

House is not adjourned because I did not second the House to adjourn.

MR. SPEAKER: The Government House Leader would require a second seconder.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, given we have no choice because of the action of the Opposition Leader, I would move, seconded by the Minister of Service NL, that the House do now adjourn.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that this House do now adjourn until 10 o'clock tomorrow.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 10 a.m.