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Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

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(Night Sitting)

The House resumed at 6 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Order, please!

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Motion 1.

BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Assembly urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to establish and an all-party Select Committee on Democratic Reform.

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to get up and speak on this motion. I spoke on an amendment, actually, to the motion that was presented by our side of the House. It was basically calling on – the existing motion is urging the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to establish an all-party Select Committee on Democratic Reform. We respectfully submitted an amendment, basically, calling for the House of Assembly to establish an all-party Select Committee on Democratic Reform.

In doing that, I think it's in keeping with the intent of what we're – when we say democratic reform, it should be decided by the House, which is 40 representatives from throughout the province; parties aside. We have independents here now, we have the Third Party, NDP. We have the current Opposition, Progressive Conservatives, and the Liberal governing party. I think everyone, we could all – you can make this true democratic reform, 40 Members, parties aside, bring in democratic reform. Bring the issues from the people's concerns.

Ironically, when you go out in your district you think sometimes people are not watching, and they are. How many watch? We don't know, but there are people watching us, and I hear it lots of times. This past weekend I was at a couple of events and, ironically, I ran into several actually, and I found some humour in it when they discussed some of the stuff they're actually picking up on and watching. It was a good reminder, and I appreciate it when they told me.

There were certain things they like and certain things they don't like.

It was interesting to hear, because sometimes we take it for granted. We say there's not a lot of people who actually pay attention, but a lot do, a lot don't. There's a segment out there that don't know what we do in the run of the day. The House is in session, we think everybody knows what we're doing. Our phone is ringing 2:30 or 2 o'clock in the middle of Question Period and we're almost thinking, sure, they should know we're in here. But, realistically, they're in their own world. It comes in their mind to contact you, they don't realize the House is in session.

There are a lot of people who do watch and a lot of people expect us, I guess, to be leaders. You know, we are the lawmakers in the province. They expect a level of professionalism from us. They expect results. They expect sincerity. There are a lot of expectations of every Member in this House.

Each person has their own distinct style, and I think that's evident every day when you sit in this House. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure from your perspective you see it all the time. We all have a very unique way of delivering our message. But that unique way was what got us in the House in the beginning. That was what the person at the doorstep voted for. That's who they picked. Each district picked that person, that characteristic or that – there's something about each one of us they liked, because other than that you wouldn't be here. You wouldn't be in representing your districts.

I say this, and I think about it often, a piece of advice given to me was: don't change who you are. If people vote for you, that's who they're voting for. If they like what they see on the other side of the door, stay true to that person because that's the person they expect to see the next time around and thereafter. That's who they voted for, that's the person they like to see and that's the personality they like representing them. That's the style they like. So why would you change it? That's what gets us all here.

Once we're here in this Chamber, government controls, government got the majority. They're the governing party. In most things they got the numbers to pass most legislation, most bills.

We'll argue as an Opposition to make change. Even sometimes that one sentence, just to change it, turn it a little bit towards where we feel it's more suiting to what our beliefs are, because we all got our own unique beliefs as parties. Individuals, too, for that matter.

We're respectful of each other's place, but to bring a committee, a true democratic reform committee, we felt strongly – like I say, our motion was defeated, but it was very important to bring it to the floor of the House. It bears reminding and repeating, that was what I feel, and I think most of us feel, and I think most of the general public if they were following this would agree, that's true democratic reform.

These all-party select committees, in a lot of cases they're not always successful, but in a lot of cases they work. I happen to be part of the *Towards Recovery*. I was late joining it because it was started prior to when I was elected in 2015, but I sat on it with my colleague. He's the former Member for Mount Pearl North, and Members opposite, and it was interesting.

We sat in a room and there were all parties represented. The governing party controlled the numbers in the room. In the meetings, in the consultation, and when we visited around the province, we still operated kind of as a group. Sure, you have respect of interest. There were certain things that was probably not going to happen. Government controlled the numbers in the committee, but, in fairness, there were a lot of decisions made there that was for the good of the people of this province. It's truly what a democratic committee, a select committee should be doing. That's what it was put there for.

There are a lot of great strides being made in mental health, and *Towards Recovery*. In my opinion, we're heading in the right direction. Is there more to do? Absolutely. We're far from finished, but at least it gives a blueprint for that period of time, that given time, how we think we need to deal with it.

Do I think that's the be-all and end-all? No, but it's a great starting point. It has made great strides. We're still nowhere where we need to be, but we're heading in the right direction. There was a committee formed, it was a select

committee, but it was all parties involved. All parties worked together as one group, and there was success to that, Mr. Speaker. I had the fortune of being personally part of that committee, and I'm proud of a lot of the accomplishments.

Mr. Speaker, our new Leader of our Party is (inaudible) honesty in government. He's spoken about democratic reform. These are some initiatives that I know even when he was running for Leader of the Party, these are things that are very near and dear to him, but they also, I think, should be to each and every one of us.

In maybe 2015, 2016, our party – again, the former Member for Mount Pearl North I think introduced a motion, it was for recall legislation. To some people that can be seen as a bit drastic, a bit over the top or what have you, but it's truly a strong statement, too. Because I believe if you go in and you're looking for support to come in and represent – no matter what it is. It doesn't have to be the House of Assembly. It can be council. It can be any level, but if you make promises and you don't keep your promises, or if you go in there and you're not conducting yourselves in an honourable way and you bring disrespect to your position, in turn you're bringing it to your district. I think the people that put you there should have the ability to remove you.

If you went to work in a place and you were not pulling your weight, you were not doing your work and your employer was not pleased with you. Well, at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, you'd be asked to leave. You'd be given your walking papers.

We come in here in the Legislature, you get a four-year term. Now, it can't be just someone that this one person has a bone to pick with you, because we have those people coming in our office every second day. There have to be clear guidelines. But why not have something like that? Why not have this?

We have a Code of Conduct. This is a real Code of Conduct. This is with the voters of your district. That's an agreement you make with the people who elect you. I know some people will feel uncomfortable. It may not go over right with some people. It's an interesting concept. It

shouldn't be used as a weapon. It should be used as an incentive to make you a better politician to represent your district in the best way possible. Everybody wins, but there has to be clear guidelines.

We come in the House here; we come in and we're sitting. We're doing our fall sittings and we sit around and we debate legislation. As I said, a lot of people out on the street don't know we're in here. It's unfortunate, but that's the reality. There's a lot of pessimism. There's a lot of disinterest. Cynicism surrounds what we do. That's been brought on, to some degree, by Members of this House, Members of previous Houses. The picture that's tainted by the media, the general public's stigma that comes with this profession. I guess if you go talk to a lawyer you'll hear the same story. That's unfortunate, but that's the reality we live in. We're going to have our moments, we're going to have our times. We know we're going to have debates. We're going to get heated conversations, and I think that's all part of a healthy democracy.

This session, I know, in particular, it's been very challenging at times. I said to a good friend of mine, a former colleague – a former member of this House of Assembly, actually, a former member for Conception Bay South – what I've experienced in my three years, some people in politics don't experience in their full career. What I've seen happen and transpire in this House of Assembly in three years is incredible. To say that, and certain things were interesting to say you were around, you seen and you experienced. There were some things that was not so fun, that was not so pleasant.

We went through a period a few weeks back, it was pretty hard on I think every Member in this House. The problem with it was – one of the bigger problems was it was hard for everyone in the House. It was hard for the people involved, obviously; but, all that aside, and respectfully to everyone's position, and I respect all sides and every – because that was difficult.

The biggest losers were in this House of Assembly, the Members of this House of Assembly. There are wins and losses in different issues; I'm not saying that. Collectively, the House of Assembly lost because I believe the public checked out on us. It's a sad statement,

but I think if everyone were being honest with themselves, it's a true statement.

We get 50, 52 per cent of the people. I was looking at numbers this past week. I know in CBS I had 55 per cent of the people voted. My colleague for Cape St. Francis, his numbers were fairly high in voter turnout, which is still low in where we should be. As people say, should you have mandatory voting? That's fine to a degree, because I believe in voting. You're always telling everyone you should vote, but how can you force people to vote for something they don't believe in? Because in a way, we've kind of set that bench to collectively – and not this Legislature. The Legislature previous to this.

I've watched the happenings in this House of Assembly for the last 20 years, long before I was ever elected. Back in the day when the previous Liberal administration were in government, I sat in that Chamber and I watched debates in this House. Everyone is to blame. It has just become less tolerant over the years. In today's world it has become less tolerant. In the last number of years, it has become – the social media world, it has become almost zero tolerance – to the public, I mean.

There was a time when television cameras were not in this Chamber. There were no television cameras. You based it on the media; the local media would come in and do a story. The House sat until 1 o'clock this morning and passed this legislation. You read it in the media. I read it; we all did. Anyone who paid attention, you read that in the media. That's all you knew.

You did not know what was going on in this Chamber other than what you read in the media. Now we're televised. Social media is alive and well. You're in the House of Assembly during Question Period, you have the media who are tweeting out everything you do; you have local people at home.

We hear it, we all see it, everyone here. You get criticized, you get complimented. A lot of criticism, of course, but whatever side you fall on in an argument, they're tweeting or they're messaging you in the middle of Question Period. It is constant saturation, but you have to rise above a lot of the stuff. You have to rise above all of that stuff.

We're not perfect. I trust you, Mr. Speaker, I'm the furthest thing from perfect. I'm very flawed, but I think everyone in this Chamber are. Being honest with yourself and being honest with the people you represent, that's the best thing you could tell them.

I ran into this lady this past weekend, she's 97. A wonderful lady, and she watches the House every day. She pointed out several days she liked what I done, several days she didn't like what I done. When she said it – I'm still smiling now – I was so appreciative of the honesty. She was serious when she told me. I told her, well, I won't disappoint you. I'll do my best. I'll keep that in mind. From now I won't do this or I won't do that.

That's refreshing to a degree, that she can reach out to a local politician and tell him what she likes and don't like, but it's also a good educational for me as the representative to say, you know what, these people expect more of us. That lady, at 97 years old, God love her, to be watching this House, and she's probably watching right now. If she's watching, I got your message loud and clear. Because what she said, there's a lot to be said for that.

There's a lot to be said, because she apparently marked an X for me and she expects me to come in and not conduct myself in a certain manner, and I'm going to take her advice. I'm going to try. I told her that I can't promise for certain all the time. It depends on the mood, but for the most part I am going to take her advice and do my best to pay attention to what she told me.

I think every Member in this House got constituents that can tell them the same thing, to point out their good and their bad. What we need to do is make it consistently day in and day out, or at least make that effort. Because, again, we're not perfect. We're all flawed, but make the effort to do it on a day-to-day basis. I think we'll all rise to an acceptable level and maybe – it won't happen overnight, it's little by little – maybe the public, maybe the media, maybe the naysayers will start to look and say, you know, they're conducting themselves in a better manner. This is probably more of what we expect.

On that note, ironically, the media were always so critical of the chatter and the heckling that goes on during Question Period. I sit in this House and again I've watched the Question Periods in this House for the last 20 years. These are some of the quietest Question Periods I ever remember having.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know you want to take credit for that and you probably deserve it, but the media – or no one gives you credit where credit is due sometimes because – Question Periods are civil. There was a time in this House when Question Periods were like, you couldn't hear yourself think up in the seats. And if you listened to *Open Line*, they were bashing the House of Assembly, the way you're getting on. But on the flipside – and fair game, maybe I'll call out them for that, too. There's no credit given when you're changing – there are good changes happening.

So there is an effort, obviously, it's an effort from all Members in this House to try to rise above that and to come across – be more genuine, be more respectful of the people that are watching. Seriously, when you sit back sometimes – a couple of times I've gone in our caucus room and I sat back and I watched on television some debate and you hear some of the back and forth. We all do it, but it's probably not something we should be doing on a regular basis, especially during a serious debate, Question Period, when the public want to hear. They want to hear what we have to ask the government. There are a lot of important issues of the day.

The last couple of days we've spent a lot of time talking about the oil spill. That's pertinent news of the day. I left here yesterday and I stopped at Tim Hortons across the street. The first person I ran into, I vaguely knew him. I knew him a bit. He used to work with government, actually. The first comment out of him was about the oil spill.

As I went home, I had to stop and get gas. I went in and I ran into another person and that was their question. I'm like, wow. Again, I knew it was important, but that's just a couple – the two people I ran into yesterday, that's their issue. If I would have ran into more that becomes the issue. That's what we're asking questions about

here. Those are the questions of the day for the last two days.

On other days on another issue. We've had Canopy Growth – whatever issues. Those issues are issues that people want answers to. Whether they get the answers or not, we don't know. Some days they don't, but we're still asking the questions. As an Opposition, that's our duty. That's our duty to this House. As parliamentarians that's our duty, but it's a duty to the people we represent. It's a duty to the people of this province.

There are only seven of us here on this side in the Official Opposition, but we have to ask the questions for all people in this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador on issues that are important to the province. And we try our best. We succeed some days, we may not succeed others, but collectively we do. It's a lot of work. We take a lot of pride in what we do. We may not always get the results we want, but at least we can be on record. We're here, we're stood in the House, we stand in our place and we ask the questions that are important to the people of the province.

Sometimes it could be about our district, but most times it has to do with our critic roles. We're asking questions that are very important, and answers – again, it's a funny thing about it. When you're on government side, and I understand sometimes as ministers – I worked with former ministers, and it's not easy sometimes. You're rolling with what the question is going to be. You're trying to prep yourself, and sometimes you may not have the answer and you've got to get up and be creative in your response. I get that.

It's fine to keep answers from Opposition for various reasons, but sometimes the public – again, when I say expectations, the public does expect a bit more. There are times that I hear frustration in the public, and not only – and it happens when all governments are there, and governing parties: Why don't they answer the question? They've been asked a question, why aren't they answering the question?

Isn't that not something – I know there was a former minister of Environment, who's no longer there, he's sitting in the Speaker's Chair

now. I thought it was the most refreshing thing ever, as critic in Environment, every time I asked him a question he answered me. It became a point that you could not even get angry, you had a real appreciation. Every time I asked a question I got an answer, and I know that's not common in this House,

I'll say it while I'm on record in my last few seconds, I thought it was fitting for me in the democratic reform debate to point that out because I think it's a very rare occasion that happens in this House. For that, Mr. Speaker, I commend you, and I thank you for the time. I'll take my seat.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. George's - Humber.

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's great to get up and have an opportunity to speak in this very important debate that we're having here today. This debate is a little bit different than we usually have in the House. Usually, when we have a debate in the House, it's about something that has gone wrong, or the questions are about something that are immediate.

For example, on the Order Paper today we were looking at the management of the greenhouse gases; we were looking at workplace health and safety legislation. We were looking at protection and promotion of public health and we were looking at the *Highway Traffic Act*. So we were looking at things that have a real physical impact on the lives of people and are more immediate, but it's important to have a discussion about democracy.

Democracy is something that is maybe more immediate in our lives than we sometimes realize. It's a known fact that people who have studied governments around the world, that places that have strong democratic institutions are places that have more robust economies and are wealthier.

So that's one of the things we know about – democracy and wealth usually goes side by side, and how democratic you are usually leads to better administration of public funds, more prosperity, money being spent where it should be spent. Those are issues that are important to us all as well.

This debate today is: “BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Assembly urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to establish an all-party Select Committee on Democratic Reform.” So this motion if it's passed, and I hope it will be, will set in motion a process that will result in us having a select committee on democratic reform. It's always good, I think, to have a discussion, a public discussion about democracy and how it works, and how it can be improved and what we're doing. So I certainly support the principle of how we're doing this here.

Now, some people – and the Member for Conception Bay South mentioned it in his comments. Some people may think, well, people aren't interested in democracy. People don't care what we do here. They're not watching, but I sort of had that view and somewhat skeptical about how closely people were watching us and how interested people were about democracy.

I went to Flat Bay a few weeks ago and they were having their annual general meeting there of their band council, and there were about 30 or 40 people there at that public meeting. They were talking about the by-laws and how their community was going to be ran. They were having a good discussion about who should be able to vote in the band council process: Did you have to be from the community? Did you have to live in the community? How long did you have to live in the community before you were allowed to vote, and those sorts of things? So that was the type of debate about how democracy would work in their community.

I've seen this similar type of discussion at town councils in Pasadena, in Steady Brook and local service districts, as well in the Bay St. George south area. So I've seen this same sort of interest in democracy in these debates on important issues that impact on – so I think people are interested. If we give them an opportunity to have some input, they will take that opportunity and they will have input. They will have a say,

and I think the possibility is there that we will have a better system, a better democracy because we've done this, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not going to use all my time. I just wanted to talk about some possible items that might be dealt with here. One of the ones that comes up often is fundraising. I've looked at fundraising, political fundraising all across Canada and in other jurisdictions as well. In terms of regulating who can give and how much money they can give, Newfoundland has one of the weakest pieces of legislation in terms of there are no caps on how much a person can give, there are no restrictions on how much people can give and there are less restrictions on who can give money to political parties than in any other province across Canada.

So I think that's something that we have to look at: How elections are financed in this province and the limits that we have on donations. For example, the federal rules limit it to personal donations. They limit it at, I think, a little over a thousand dollars now that individuals can contribute to political campaigns. So that's something that's interesting as well.

Something else this committee might look at would be the operations of this House; how the House is operated. I know we had a Select Committee on Standing Orders which has been doing some good work in terms of changing some of the rules of the House, the constituency week that we have, so that Members can go home every third week to attend to meetings that they have with their constituents and things like that. I think those are positive changes.

Other things that we can do, I think, are we need to look at our committee structure. Most other provinces in Canada have a way more robust committee structure. In terms of the way we review legislation, I think there are possibilities of improvement there. We should look at the possibilities of doing those things.

We used to have legislative review committees in the early '90s. I think they were quite effective in terms of that people, parties and Members of the House had an opportunity to look at the legislation before it came to this House. Sometimes that led to more public input before it got to the House and better debate in

the House, I think. That's something, I think, that's worth looking at as well.

In other jurisdictions, another thing that comes up when people talk about democratic reform is the voting system; how do we elect people for this House? As the Member for Burin - Grand Bank said, when she spoke a few days ago on this motion, we have a system which is first past the post. You don't need to get a majority of voters; you just need to get more than anyone else, basically. That's it.

Some other systems have a ranking system where your second choice is also registered. Other places have proportional representation and that brings into different dynamics as well. But it's worthwhile having a discussion about these things and how they would impact our democracy. Would it make it stronger? Would it make it weaker? What are the possibilities of things that could be done in terms of our voting system?

The other thing that has come up is voting age. For example, the chief electoral officer of Canada has said that we should look at the possibility – and he was talking about the federal system – of reducing the age of voters down to 16. What impact would that have on the system? Some people say people aren't mature enough at that age to make a decision about voting, but there are other things that may happen. Other people say it helps people get better accustomed to the voting system and get people considering how they're going to vote early, Mr. Speaker. Those are some possibilities there as well.

Other sort of things that often come up when you talk about democratic reform is the possibility of referendums or recall, things like that. Those might be things that would be worth having a discussion about. In some cases these are presented as solutions to problems that we have, but I think it is worthwhile having a full and open public debate about where we want to go with issues like that; what would be the benefits, what would be the drawbacks, how it would impact on our system here, how it's impacted on other jurisdictions where it has been brought in, Mr. Speaker. If we have that debate, maybe it's something we wouldn't want to consider.

I think in terms of democratic reform, it's always beneficial to have this type of debate about how our system works, how we can make it work better. Those are things that we should do. I think it's very positive and I think this whole idea of looking at how our government system works, how strong our democracy is, is also beneficial in terms of how our economy works. And I think, as I said earlier, there's definitely a connection between strong democracies and wealthy jurisdictions.

I just wanted to make those points in the debate and I'll be supporting the motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: Thank you.

The beautiful District of Cape St. Francis, Mr. Speaker.

It's indeed a privilege to get up here again tonight to speak in the House of Assembly, as I always do say, to represent the District of Cape St. Francis, the beautiful district that it is and the beautiful people that live in it. It's an absolute pleasure to be able to have the opportunity to do so. That's what democracy is all about, when you look around and you see what opportunity we have here today as politicians to be able to do so.

I always go back to the first time I was elected as a mayor. I remember my mother and father coming the night that I got elected. My father said to me what an honour it was to be able to be the mayor of the Town of Flatrock when I was. It was such an honour.

The people in that small community voted. There were a lot of people that got out and voted and they selected me to be the mayor of their town. That was a great honour because I was representing the town. The same thing when we come here to the House of Assembly. It's an absolute honour to represent the people that elected you. It's always important to remember

that. It's so important that we always remember the people that elected us.

I know that most people in the House of Assembly – and most politicians in general – do know who elected them and they respect the people that did elect them. I know there are a lot of times you'll get phone calls from people and you'll say: Oh my God, I have to hear that again. But you do have to hear it again because that's your constituent. They have a right and they have an opinion that you should listen to because they're the people that put us where we are.

I always say that the people in Cape St. Francis – they'll say, b'y, thanks for this. I'll say, b'y, you're my boss. And they are because without our constituents we would never be here. We should always listen to our constituents. The 40 of us in here, we have vast opinions.

I listened to the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island today for an hour and I have to say he did a fantastic job on a bill this afternoon. I learned a lot from him. Then, my colleague for Mount Pearl North got up and I learned a lot about cows and how they don't get chicken pox and stuff like that. We can all learn.

AN HON. MEMBER: You can get cowpox.

MR. K. PARSONS: You can get cowpox but you couldn't get chicken pox, I think it was.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. PETTEN: That's right, yes.

MR. K. PARSONS: But we all can learn from each other; we all can learn from each other. It's so important.

We just went through it for a couple of weeks in this House where my colleague from CBS said it was a down time, because we have to respect each other. We have to respect each other's opinion. We have to be able to work together. I don't care if I'm a Liberal a PC or an NDP, I'm here to represent the District of Cape St. Francis, and I have to do my best. If I have to go over and speak to the Minister of Justice or the

Minister of Finance or the minister of any of them – Municipal Affairs or anybody. I could go speak to the minister for women, right.

AN HON. MEMBER: Status of Women.

MR. K. PARSONS: Status of Women. I can go – if I have an issue, I should be able to go speak to her. And so we should. I should be able to speak to the Minister of Education. We all have to be able to do that. But if we work in this House where we don't have the opportunity, if Members of this House don't have the opportunity to go across and talk to a Member or talk to a minister about an issue they have in their district, there's something wrong with it. So we have to do that, we have to be able to do it.

I don't care if you have a large portfolio, or you have a small portfolio, we should have the opportunity to speak to the Premier of the province. If we have an issue with the Premier's Office we should be able – and I've done that. I spoke to the Premier on issues, but I should feel that it's a part of being an elected representative to represent the district that I represent and my constituents that I have the opportunity to be their advocate, to be their voice, to be able to talk for them when it comes to important issues.

Whether that's an education issue like we do talk about on a regular basis, like the 1.6 busing and the distance for children to have to walk to school. I'm after going to the minister and after bringing petitions before the House of Assembly. But I'm not doing that for me, I'm doing that for the people that elected me. It's important that we do that and it's important that we always remember it.

I always think that we should engage people more when we come to political – and, I guess, that's a part of democratic reform also, how do we get more people involved in politics? The last election, I believe, I'm almost sure, that my district had the largest turnout in the province when it came to 72 per cent of the people in my district voted.

AN HON. MEMBER: Awesome.

MR. K. PARSONS: It is awesome, it really is awesome, because we need to find a way to

make it 92 per cent or a 100 per cent in all our districts. We need to know a way that we can engage people. And maybe some form of reform to elections, to how people vote; whether it is online voting, whether it's – maybe it's a two-day vote, maybe it's a vote that we can go to different areas and make sure that people do get out and vote, advertise more on when people can vote; any way that we can get people out.

Now some people are just not going to vote and there's nothing you can do about that. Some people are not going to vote, but I can assure you that the majority of people will get out and vote if they feel, listen here, my voice is going to be heard, and that's why democratic reform is important because people want to have their voice heard.

I looked at my district the last time and I know that there was a large, say, 18 to 25 vote that got out in my district, and I attribute it all to my two children who have a form of social media way better than what I do. They understand it a whole lot. They know how to engage. They know how to start a group.

I was called one day and someone asked me, they said, you got a Vote Kevin Parsons web page or Facebook page set up and there are 2,400 people on it, and they asked me, how did you do it? And I had to say I don't know, because I didn't know because it was a couple of young people that set it up, and they invited people, and that person invited another person, and it grew.

We engaged 2,400 young people, and most of them in my district, even to be talking about politics, to get into politics and say, well, listen, I'm going to vote for – I know his son, I know his daughter, he lives in Flatrock, I'm going to vote for him because I'm from Flatrock. Any way we can engage.

I know we've spoke about this before, and maybe it's a way that we should be in our schools, talking to young people in schools, and make it a point that we all do a certain amount of speeches in schools. I know there are opportunities in my area, and I'm fortunate, because I live next to the House of Assembly and I got a very small district, it's only 25 kilometres long and I can get to the schools in

my district. I know there are people like – I know Members from Labrador that have a hard time even getting back to their district when the House is open.

But there has to be ways that we can get into our schools and talk to our young people. Maybe that will engage them; maybe that will give them some interest in coming to the House of Assembly. Maybe the voting age, if it was 16, that may get more people interested at an early age and they may stay engaged in democracy and stay engaged in what we do here in the House of Assembly.

I always remember first – I haven't seen it lately now, especially in this session I haven't seen it, but we always used to have classes come here to the House of Assembly. I know when I was on the government side, I always wanted to make a point that, listen, there are kids up there watching. There are children in the House of Assembly and they're watching, so behaviour is so important because they see us down and heckling and not being attentive to the person that is speaking, and they look at it.

I spoke to a teacher here one day, and I was almost embarrassed because of the behaviour of House of Assembly. People look at us as leaders, they look at us as people in society, I think they do, to look up to, and we have a standard that we have to stay here. I believe that's – when we're in the company of, for example, children in the House of Assembly or whatever, we have – Mr. Speaker, I give you credit. You're doing a fantastic job, like the Member for CBS, and I'm a hard case, I like to heckle, but a minor – just a one-liner type thing, and I do it, but I'm doing my best, and you're after giving me good credit saying: You're becoming a lot better at what you do.

But there are ways that we have to be able to make sure that people give us the respect that this position, not that I deserve, but this position that I have been given the honour to serve, do it, so that people can say: Well, that's an honourable position. And it is, it's a very honourable position.

So, democratic reform, when we talk about changing how democracy – we've all heard the saying: What does democracy look like? It's

what way we want democracy to look like. I want democracy to look like people have respect for this position.

I can remember coming to the House of Assembly when my father was in the House of Assembly, and just looking down and being so proud of him, just knowing that was an elected representative for the area – it was called St. John's East Extern at the time. It carried that weight that, b'y, you're up there, you're a representative of the people and you're the fella that's making the laws of the land. That's what we, as politicians, and as people of this House of Assembly, we have to get back to, because I think if this position becomes the honourable position that it is, we will attract more people to get involved in politics.

Politicians today, I don't know if we have the same respect that they did years ago, and I believe that's all about democratic reform; it's about making sure that we have respect. But in order for us to get respect from our constituents and the people of this province, we have to show respect to each other and we have to show how we carry ourselves in the House of Assembly; it's important.

Democratic reform: I just wrote down a few notes. One part of democratic reform people always talk about is money, and the amount of money it costs to run a campaign, to make yourself visible to the electorate to make sure that they know who you are.

Today, social media plays a huge role; we can do a lot with social media. Today, we have email and you can do a lot through email and email accounts, but still, at the end of the day, it all costs money. Now, where's that money going to come from? That's the question that everybody talks about.

When we talk about electoral reform, do we talk about corporate donations? Do we talk about where the money is going to come from to pay for your signs? Where is the money going to come from to pay for your brochures to go out? Where is the money going to come from to pay for your campaign?

Well, if we cut all that out, Mr. Speaker, there's not going to be a lot of people interested in

politics, because for one thing, it's going to cost them too much to get in it. When we do democratic reform and we talk about the cost of elections, there has to be an even way that we look at it to make sure that it's equal and everybody gets the opportunity to be able to show the people that elected them what I have to offer. That's very important.

I mean we'll set up committees and, again, I was hoping to see an all-party committee, which was what we proposed and to be able to be part of that committee. Now, I don't understand why the government side didn't vote for it, because on any committee, no matter if it's – we worked together on a fisheries committee when it came to shrimp quotas and stuff like that, and there was also the health committee. Government usually always has the majority on the committees anyway, so I really don't understand why the committee phase never showed up and didn't vote for it. It really surprised me.

We're after making some big changes here in the House of Assembly and some good changes – there have been some good changes. Some of those changes are there; government said there are changes to be able to attract people. We definitely need more women in the House of Assembly. I'd like to see 50-50 right across the board, because everybody's voice is heard and it's equal right across the board.

I went down the other night to the Lions Club, down in Pouch Cove when they had their charter night. A guy got up and the one thing, when he read out all the members, he said: You know what the nice thing about all of this is? He said: It's 50 per cent women and 50 per cent men. What he said then was that we have a great perspective and everybody has great ideas that come in because it's equal. That's what we do need in the House of Assembly. We definitely need it in the House of Assembly. I mean the opinions of everybody need to be heard and that's what's important.

Some of the changes that were made: The constituency week. I really like that because I know when you're in here – now, I can only imagine what it's like for Members outside to get back to your district and be able to do the groundwork that you have to do. I do it; I got an opportunity to do it in the nighttime because I

can go home. Last night I had a lot of calls to my house, and I answered them all and got to do work. But I can only understand what people outside in Grand Bank and the Burin Peninsula or the Northern Peninsula, wherever you come from, they have a hard time being able to do it.

There's one thing I thought about there a little while ago. For this session I'd like to see the constituency week change. I don't think it should be the third week, I think it should be somewhere around November 11 so people get back to their district.

Listen, I know how important it is. This year, the House was open and I got to one school in my district because it was a morning thing, and knowing the children and the kids, who were in that school – and the parents – appreciated me being there. And I think as elected officials, that is the week we should have our constituency week, during Remembrance week, November 11, because it gives us all the opportunity to go back and make sure that we attend the functions that are important, and show the respect to the people that served and gave up their lives for us.

I know my colleague for Conception Bay East - Bell Island had the opportunity to go to one of the schools. We talked about it and it was great a thing. I think, for the people outside, it would be a great idea that we do change that week. We're only here for five or six weeks as it is, so make sure that that week is the week that we take our break and we can go back into our communities and be able to be seen and show the respect that is deserved for people that gave the ultimate price for us. I think that's just one of the changes I'd have in this session of the House because, like I said, we're only here five or six weeks.

One of the things that they took away – I loved the filibusters, I really did. I thought filibusters were great but they're gone now. I did – I really did. It was different. I really believed that filibusters were like a team-forming thing, you worked as a team. It was a real building – it really was, the teams just came together.

Do you know what? It was difficult, it was hard. It's hard when you only have Members of the NDP with a couple of Members. It's very, very difficult and I understand that, but that's only my opinion. I have to say, the Table Officers and

the staff, I understand how hard filibusters are, but that's just something that I liked.

If the vote came 39-1 to get rid of it and I voted for it, well, I'd accept what you all say, but I did like that part of politics. I know with the 2016 budget when we had so many different issues and we had the opportunity to get up here, I know we were here in the nighttime, 3 o'clock in the morning and there were people sending us emails: Ask him this, get up and talk about this. It was getting a lot of people going.

Democratic reform is a part that we'll all have a different opinion on. We'll all have a different opinion on how we see democratic reform, but at the end of the day, I hope everybody gets the right to give their opinions and tell what they like. We all need to ensure that at the end of the day we get a way that people will come out and vote, no matter how old they are or whatever and, also, that people want to be in the seats that we're so fortunate to be in today. That's important.

I'm not going to be here forever. I have 11 years in now and who knows when I'm going to be out of this seat and there will be somebody else. In my District of Cape St. Francis, I'd like to see everyone want to come here and be a part of what I had the opportunity to do for the last 11 years, and that's to make the laws of this land.

Now, not everybody is going to agree with what we do. Nobody is going to agree with what we do, but as long as we're here for the right reasons, to represent the people in our district, to represent Newfoundland and Labrador and do what we believe is best for everybody here, we'll be okay. But it all comes back to making sure that people have respect for each other and that people that elected us look at us and say, listen, they're doing a good job. They're not all going to say you're doing a good job, if not nobody would be in this place. We will have people that will be against us and won't be voting for us. But you know what, at the end of the day, when everyone is finished here, we just hope that they respect us for what we did.

If we do the proper democratic reform and make sure that people are engaged, and we get our young people in and we do the right things here in the House of Assembly, it will be an absolute

privilege. Like, I always do say when I get up, it is a privilege to stand here in the House of Assembly for the people of Cape St. Francis and it always will be a privilege.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

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

I'm very happy to stand and speak to this motion for democratic reform. It's been a while now. This was first introduced – we first started debate on this issue May 12, I believe it was, or was it June 12? No, it wasn't June 12. Anyway, it was May, it was sometime in May and here we are again still dealing with this issue.

It was very interesting because the Official Opposition introduced an amendment to this asking for this committee, because the motion is calling for an all-party select committee to deal with the issue of democratic reform. Then the Official Opposition introduced an amendment to the House during the debate asking for the committee to be struck by the House of Assembly and to be answerable to and report to the House of Assembly. Now government has decided that they want this committee to be struck –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

They want this committee to be struck by government, and what they did – again, we are looking at the issue of democratic reform, reforming the way that we do democracy inside our House and outside the House. A complete reformation of our democracy, which is what we sorely need. Mr. Speaker, I believe the irony – the irony – is lost on government, that they voted against an amendment that in fact would actually make the select committee on democratic reform more democratic. I believe

that that irony is lost on them. It's amazing. Because in fact, real democracy – when we look at select committees in other jurisdictions – many jurisdictions – they are appointed by the House, not appointed and controlled by government.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, what we have is government talking about democratic reform and saying that they want to be able to control that conversation, they want to be able to control how that work is done, which is probably the most undemocratic way of actually going forward and doing this work. I found it incredibly ironic, but again, because a government is majority here, they can defeat or pass any bill that they want.

I'd also like to bring to the attention – I believe if we looked at the true nature of real democratic reform as it relates to select committees – let's look at what happened with Bill 29. Bill 29, which was introduced to the House June 12, 2012, it was an Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm sure that government Members are really going to want to hear what I have to say about this. I'm sure that they do.

It was the Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. It was about openness and transparency. And the current Official Opposition was the government in power at the time – they also were a majority government – and they introduced that, again, June 12, 2012, and, Mr. Speaker, I believe it was one of the issues that brought that government down.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MS. ROGERS: It did. Mr. Speaker, how might that have worked differently?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: I believe, Mr. Speaker, that there's lots of time for other people to be able to get up and speak in this debate. I have the floor, and I appreciate that.

Let's talk about what happened there. If we had actually had true democratic reform in this House – Mr. Speaker, I'm having a hard time hearing myself here. If we had actual true democracy in our House of Assembly, that bill would have been sent to an all-party select committee, and that all-party select committee would have looked – it's a significant bill. We ended up filibustering on that. I can't remember for how many nights or how many hours, Mr. Speaker, but I do remember I was here for quite a while and spoke quite often to it.

We had a filibuster on that. If we had a valid, fully democratic process in this House where we had an all-party select committee, that bill would have come to the all-party select committee. We would have examined it. We would have brought in experts. We would have heard from the Office of the Privacy Commissioner. We would have heard from political scientists. We would have heard from average citizens who are concerned. I think that the government thought the people of the province aren't so much interested in this particular bill, they're going to kind of ignore what's going on with this.

Well, the government sure had a few surprises. The people of the province were very, very interested in how this was being handled. What we would have had, Mr. Speaker, is an all-party select committee who would have examined the bill, who would have strengthened the bill, and once the bill came to the House, it wouldn't have been as contentious because it would have been a process that all three parties had agreed on. Delivering the bill, there may still have been some objections to some of the bill, but there would have been a greater understanding. The legislation would have been stronger. We wouldn't have needed a filibuster, and we would have been able to move on.

Mr. Speaker, it probably wouldn't have brought that government down, but because of hubris, because of pride, because of a false sense – a misunderstanding about what democratic power is, I believe it was one of the issues that brought

down the government, and they're now sitting over here in Opposition.

Let's also look at Bill 60 and 61, Mr. Speaker. Now, Bills 60 and 61 were legislation that was enabling Muskrat Falls. What would have happened in that situation, Mr. Speaker, if in fact we had an all-party select committee in a true democratic form that was appointed by this House –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me get back to Bills 60 and 61, legislation that enabled Muskrat Falls. What would have happened, Mr. Speaker, if those bills were brought to an all-party select committee that was appointed by the House and that was answerable to the House? Would Muskrat Falls have gone ahead?

AN HON. MEMBER: No.

MS. ROGERS: No. Government is even saying that, Mr. Speaker. Listen to government Members across the way saying, no way, Muskrat Falls wouldn't have gone ahead as it had. That's why true democratic reform, real select committees that are appointed by the House, that are answerable to the House, are so important.

I believe that Muskrat Falls may not have gone ahead in the way that it had. I also believe that it would have affected government a little bit differently. Not only that, it would have saved the people of Newfoundland and Labrador billions of dollars, billions of hard-earned money by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. That's also one of the reasons why this is so important. Not only do we get better legislation, we get more careful legislation. We get legislation that we can all work on.

Every single person in this House has been elected by the constituents in their district. Why is it that government refuses to acknowledge that? Is it hubris? Is it a misunderstanding about what democratic power is? Is it a

misunderstanding about what control is? Is it about hyper-partisanship?

Mr. Speaker, we are 40 – well, 39 right now, but waiting to be 40. 40 Members in this House who are working on behalf of the people of the province – 520,000 people scattered throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. We need to work together. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador want us to work together, and they know that we do get better results when we do work together.

Let's look at the All-Party Committee on the fishery and the incredible work that they did. Let's look at the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions and the incredible work that was done by that Committee, and the incredible work that we continue to see being done; however, there were some drawbacks. That was a Committee that was appointed by government and controlled by government. That's not the best way to do it. We know there is a much better way of doing it.

Friday evening, at 5:35, we received a copy of Bill 37, which is a significant bill. It's a huge bill. There were over 50 pages to Bill 37. So we received that on Friday evening at 5:35. Then on Monday morning, mid Monday morning, we received a briefing by the department. And now the debate started Tuesday afternoon and it will continue tomorrow.

Again, if we had all all-party select committees, that bill would've gone to an all-party select committee before it was finished, because it is significant. It's a really important piece of legislation. Really, what should've happened, Mr. Speaker, is that should've gone to an all-party select committee because of the significant issues that it covers.

It would've been made better, probably. We would've all been on side, probably, and it would've been delivered to the House in a respectful way. Because one of the things that an all-party select committee can do is call witnesses, call in experts, have research done. Again, it's about doing our work in the best possible way we can for the best interest of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe, when we look at the previous government, they lost power because they did not use select committees. And I believe this government is doing the same thing.

Let's look at the issue of jobs in sustainable economic development in the province. Some very difficult decisions have to be made. Let's look also at the issue when this government took power. They should've struck an all-party committee on Muskrat Falls going forward, because some difficult decisions would have to be made. They could've shared that burden of the difficult decision making and we all could've worked together. It would've worked in their interest. I don't know why they don't do it. I really don't know why they don't do it.

So that's some of the work that needs to change inside the House. But democratic reform is not only about that, and we all know that. We look around at our province and we see some people are talking about, do we lower –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Do we lower the voting age? Well, already we see a significant proportion of young people are not voting. Why is that? So simply lowering the voting age, I doubt that more young people would vote because already young people have said they don't like the way our democracy is happening, that there is a better way to do it.

There's a better way of modernizing our democracy. There's a whole open government movement, and we can't talk about democratic reform, Mr. Speaker, unless we also talk about the open government movement that we see happening all over the world, and it's exciting. It includes things like citizens' assemblies, it includes things like all-party select committees where people get to come and speak to a committee, offer their advice, offer their expertise, so that any legislation we do is the best that it can be, is the most modern that it can be and is the most effective that it can be. So that, again, it's all about us working together.

Why would we not, in this present circumstance that we find our province, why would we not use every available brain cell in this House of Assembly, every available brain cell and expertise in our province to make the best decisions as we go forward? Again, because we're only 520,000 people, we can afford to be daring. We can afford to take bold steps. We can afford to be the most modern democracy in the world. We can afford to do that. We can take those risks. We can experiment, and there's no reason not to.

Mr. Speaker, when we see some of the things that you have done, and your previous colleague in the House, making some changes in the House, how great is that? And what a difference it makes in our House.

So let's look again a little about why are people opting out of political life, and what can we do about it? Those are some of the issues we need to look at through this all-party committee. We also have to look at, what is our democratic deficit and how do we improve that? And electoral reform, we have to look at that. The current system that we use, it would be so easy for us, Mr. Speaker – again, because we're such a small population. It would be so easy for us to develop a made-in Newfoundland plan for electoral reform.

I'd like to do a call out to CASE, where a group of really concerned citizens, a lot of younger people, who did a whole program, a whole project on presenting democratic reform for the City of St. John's, and they've done exceptional work. I can't wait, Mr. Speaker, until they sink their teeth into looking at what we can do on a provincial level.

Again, because we are a small population, because it's easy for us to communicate with each other, we can develop the most modern, the most progressive, the most democratically sound form of electoral reform in the world right here in Newfoundland and Labrador. We can do that.

We also have to look at, how can we ensure greater diversity in our political system? If you're hearing impaired, I don't know how you have access to what's happening here in our House of Assembly. Also, even the very issue of

physical accessibility to the House is problematic.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

It's difficult to hear the speaker.

Thank you.

MS. ROGERS: Also, Mr. Speaker, when we look at some of the major debates we have in our general elections, they're not interpreted for the hearing impaired. So people who are hearing impaired cannot fully participate in our democratic process. It's 2018, it's not acceptable. It simply is not acceptable, and if government – and if all of us are talking about an open democratic process, we have to make sure that we look at who's not at the table, who has been shut out. Because people have been shut out, maybe not intentionally but shut out by neglect, shut out by our refusal to really look at what we can do to make our democracy more inclusive. So we have these major debates with no interpretation for the hearing impaired. It's not okay, not okay at all.

What else can we do about diversity? Again, we are less than 25 per cent of women here elected in our House of Assembly. Up until a former member left in Windsor Lake, we were 25 per cent. Now we are 20 – we are less than that, we are nine women with 31 seats, or 30 right now.

We have a by-election coming up again. What can we do? What is keeping women from running? What is keeping women from winning seats? Also, the political science – particularly, Professor Amanda Bittner at the political science department says that when women run they win, but why do more women not run? How do we reduce financial barriers to include the possibility of more women running? How do we build a habitat – this is interesting, Mr. Speaker – and a habit of civil participation? How do we ensure that our people feel that they have a way in to our democratic process, beyond just voting once every four years which is the average of what we do? How do we build a civic society that has the power, the mechanism and the tools to have input? How do we create open governance and an open government here in our

province? How do we ensure that our school does a better job preparing our youth for civic engagement?

Civic engagement is not only just about voting, it's about being fully engaged in our democratic process. I believe we can do this. I believe that we must do that. I'm concerned that here we are, only one year until the next full general election. Will we have the opportunity to make significant changes before that? I'm not so sure.

I am disappointed that government has dragged its heels on this; this was one of the promises they made. They've been in power for three years and here we are three years later and still only debating it.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's an honour to stand here at 7:13 on a Tuesday evening. I'm sure we have a lot of people watching at home. Someone asked – text your mom, tell her you're on. She's probably on her way to bingo; more interested in that than listening to me.

I want to get up today and say my few words and say that I support this all-party Committee on Democratic Reform. I think it's a long time coming. It's certainly a good thing, how we can get more engagement with the public.

I almost agreed with the NDP for once in my life. The first half of the Leader's speech was quite good, quite passionate and, then, kind of digressed and got into the weeds and talked about all-party committees and how it would be more effective – I think if you have an all-party committee come in here on every bill you'd be bogged down, you wouldn't get anything done.

We've got staff that does great briefs, Mr. Speaker, on all sides of government. The NDP

received their bill on Friday, got a brief yesterday, and we're still going to debate it tomorrow. From my understanding, with the previous government you'd get the bill the day before and be lucky to get a brief at all. That's what I've heard in certain cases. Now, I stand to be corrected.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. KING: So we have the NDP heckling again. That's shocking.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Speaking of democratic reform now, I'm no angel myself, Mr. Speaker, but I'm trying to make a point about the all-party committees and the briefs that we're getting for bills. In most cases, we're getting them days in advance. I know some time frames are tight but I respect the good work the departments do, the people they have working for them. I don't think anyone can come in this House and say they haven't got a good brief from department officials. To say that things are thrown at you last minute – I mean these people have come up with good briefs, there's lots of opportunity to ask questions there – I think that's a bit off.

Getting back to democratic reforms, I left the navy in October of 2014. I came home and I started my nomination campaign. At the time, there were five people seeking the Liberal nomination at the old Bonavista South district.

MR. BROWNE: More musical chairs.

MR. KING: Well, I'm getting to that, my friend for Placentia West - Bellevue.

I was out knocking on doors. I declared in the summer of 2014, started signing people up, knocking on doors, going to all public events so I could meet as many people as possible. I think I knocked on every door in the district twice; once during the nomination and once afterwards. I got to meet quite a few people.

That's one of the things I really enjoy about politics is getting out and meeting the people, the knocking on doors, but the public events as well. Certainly, to go to a festival now, it takes about a half an hour to get across a ball field from one side to the other because people are coming up and talking to you about the issues, which I think is really important and they feel comfortable. The same thing if you go to Foodland or Swyers or an Independent store anywhere around the District of Bonavista, you have to take a little extra time. If you have to get somewhere you have to make sure you have that little extra time to spend there.

Like my friend for Cape St. Francis said: The good people in his district. Certainly, I enjoy the good people in my district a whole lot. It's funny when you're going around the doors, I don't think there's any sociology course you can take at MUN to prepare you for what's going to be behind the door. You could have a good laugh or you could have a cry.

That's what I love about Newfoundland and Labrador. The constituents are very genuine, humble people. Some things you prepare yourself for at the door and the people just tell it like it is. That's voter engagement and I'm looking forward to next year and getting back at those doors. I've done a few so far but I look at getting back and get that engagement at the door level.

I want to talk a little bit about the Tory gerrymandering that they did in 2015. I don't know, it was one day in January the former premier, Davis, decided: Oh, we're going to take 10 seats out of the House of Assembly of 48 people. Mr. Speaker, I would contest that hurt rural Newfoundland more so than it did here on the Northeast Avalon.

I don't want to get into the weeds now about how many calls you get a day and all that; you've got a lot of different issues than you would here in the city, but having less representation, I certainly don't think was a good thing. They wanted to reduce the number of seats in the House down to 38. The only reason I could possibly think of that they wanted to do that was because they knew most of those seats would come from rural Newfoundland and our party was always a little bit stronger in rural

Newfoundland as opposed to the Northeast Avalon.

You look at the folks on the opposite side there, our friends in Opposition. Most of them from here are from the Northeast Avalon, except for the Member for Cape St. Francis and metro. By proposing to take away those eight seats – or excuse me, 10 seats, and then they were going to take away some from Labrador as well – it kind of backed the Opposition into a corner where you had to come up with a deal to try to save a few seats so that people get the proper representation.

I think it was Labrador kept all their seats; the smaller districts, isolated districts, kept the size of their own. But rural Newfoundland lost nine seats, Mr. Speaker, and I think that the representation was hurt. There was less voice for the people of rural Newfoundland. It's all right for them to go over and laugh at it now because most of them were there when it happened; they were the leaders behind it. But when you take away nine seats from rural issues – I get about 10 phone calls in my office in Bonavista before 9 o'clock, and I'm sure another 30 or 40 throughout the day. You have anecdotal, people talking about four or five phone calls a week here in the city. That's not right.

Rural Newfoundland took a hit because the PCs want to gerrymander the seats to keep most of them on the Northeast Avalon to save their skin. They didn't save their skin but they were pretty smart about it – but they still did it anyway – where they try to form government a little bit quicker than they normally would. They looked at the trends.

When we get to the all-party committee, I hope this is something we revisit. I hope we get out to many communities in rural Newfoundland so we can actually get the voice of the people that they took away. You have some districts – my own district, Mr. Speaker, to get one end to the other it takes an hour and 45 minutes. You have some districts where it takes three hours to get from one end of the district to the other. The Premier's district, I think, is four hours.

To do justice for the people in your district having less seats, it's not possible. You're representing more people in a larger area and it's

not often possible to get out and see people in a timely manner. This is what they did. People are used to having a small, compressed district where they get appropriate representation. In the old Bonavista South district it took 45 minutes to drive from one end of the district to the other. Imagine the work you could get done representing those people.

I love my district as it is, the District of Bonavista, and its great people. But if you had more representation, Mr. Speaker, how much better served would the people be? And this is what they did, tried to save their skin, tried to take representation away from rural Newfoundland. Seven seats, that's what they took away from rural Newfoundland – seven seats. It's disgraceful.

But I've talked enough about that, I've got half my time left. What I'd like to see come out of this Committee as well, is get out to those rural communities, get off the TCH. Oftentimes, you'll see a lot of government stops: Clarenville, Gander, Grand Falls and the TCH. We want to see you go up to places like Twillingate and Bonavista, Botwood, places like that, places where they never see public engagement. I think we'd be just –

MS. P. PARSONS: Harbour Grace - Port de Grave. Coley's Point.

MR. KING: We have a lot of suggestions here. People here are excited about getting off the TCH, Mr. Speaker, and this is where we want to get public feedback from. We want to get people engaged in politics. People are very cynical right now about politics. Let's get out there and have people come out to a public meeting; tell us what they want to see in our government. Don't let the PC Party tell you that we're taking away 10 seats.

Luckily it turned out – well, fortunately, we kept two of those 10. But the PC Party shouldn't be telling the people of rural Newfoundland we're taking seats away from you, we're taking representation from you. Let the public tell you. You didn't do any consultation on that. I think they went so far as Clarenville, maybe Gander, Corner Brook, St. John's. Maybe Goose Bay, Lab City – I don't know even if they've went there on that. It's shameful.

Bring this Committee to the public; get the voter interest up. I think the voting participation rate now is a little better than 50 per cent. Just think of that. One out of every two people does not vote, and there's a reason why they don't vote, Mr. Speaker. They're disengaged from it. They say: Why should I get involved? Why should I go vote? It's wasting my time. Am I getting good representation? They just took seven seats away from rural Newfoundland. They don't care about us. It's shameful. Let's get that voter engagement back; let's get out to the rural areas; let's bring curriculum – let's bring civics back to the classrooms. This is what I would like to see.

I remember in school very briefly touching on it, and I think it was in grade 10, 1996. I was excited because I had law and democracy, and I was big-time into politics; I love politics. It's the nerd in me, I guess, but I love politics. I was so excited to do that course, because we haven't done it before, and they got into the political discussion on the structure of government. Most people don't understand the structure of government.

A lot of people have a difficult understanding of what's municipal, what's provincial and what's federal. Let's teach that at an early age. We heard from my friend from Placentia West - Bellevue, and he's our youngest Member ever elected in the House of Assembly. He talked about getting the voter age down to the age of 16, and I don't see anything wrong with that. If you can drive a car at age 16, you can get informed – get out and vote.

I enjoy watching some of the US elections. They got the attack ads and all of that; that's not very good. But you see, watching it, families out to vote, where they take their small kids with them and they make a day of it. But it's instilling a democratic duty to our young people. So I look forward to that, and I encouraged people at the doors last time to bring your family. No one is going to turn kids away at the polling station. If you instill it in someone at an early age, Mr. Speaker, they're likely to do it for life. And, right now, we have a lot of younger voter apathy, and that's probably part of the reason you see the low voter turnout as well.

We need more women and minorities involved in government. It gives you a different

perspective. It's all right to have a young, bald-headed fellow like myself here, and I think you might know a thing or two about that yourself, but it's nice to have a different perspective of women and minorities, the issues that are important to them. You're able to get a broader scope of issues that are important to all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, new Canadians as well.

I know one of the biggest challenges that we're faced with federally is their attempt at democratic reform. They went through the processes and didn't get anywhere. I like the fact that we're giving it a chance. I think a smaller Legislature like we have here, you get up, you got your representatives from all parties, and we've seen how well – and that's one of the things I do agree with the Leader of the Opposition; it did work very well on the Northern shrimp fishery and the All-Party Committee on Mental Health.

Right now, you can see the Waterford replacement just go out for RFQ or RFP. I'm not sure what it was but –

AN HON. MEMBER: RFQ.

MR. KING: RFQ. That came from the All-Party Committee on Mental Health. That's what you can do if you can work together. So, I'm looking forward, very much, to this Committee.

I think, coming from Green report, we need to take a look at the MCRC and look at the composition of that group. Right now we have a couple of lawyers, business people, but put in a former politician to give the political lens on it. It's something that's important because there are a lot of things right now that we could have in place to do our job that kind of get overlooked from the people who are not necessarily experienced in the world of politics.

That's not saying that we go out and have all these incentives back; it could be something as simple as an opportunity to have a satellite office somewhere. The rural Newfoundlanders, who were robbed of seven seats, get an opportunity to have a couple of offices in your district to give better representation, instead of going from one end of the district to another to

go to an office and get some paperwork filled out.

I try to split up my district as much as I can, rent out office space, but if you had something permanently set up there where you could have people at the other end of the district go in and get the same service as you do at one end of your district. That's true for larger districts, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we have to do with this All-Party Committee – and I look forward to seeing it come to fruition. We got to get that voter interest up. We got to get more women and minorities involved in politics. We got to make this House a better place where people want to come to work, where people respect the work that goes on here, how they're not cynical of what we do.

It's on us to make those changes that improve the Legislature. Like the Member for Cape St. Francis said – he's a bit of a heckler, and I'm not angel myself – that's part of the parliamentary system, ebb and flow. I think you and the former Speaker have done a good job with toning that down.

I had a conversation with someone – the Member for CBS said you couldn't hear yourself in previous sessions where people would be heckling, yelling other people down. They're listening very intently here tonight, Mr. Speaker. They're riveted by what I have to say. I think they're having second thoughts about getting rid of those seven rural seats. You know, I'd be ashamed of that, too.

Decorum here in the House of Assembly I think is something we need to strive to improve. I need to do that as well, but make it a place that people want to come to. When they go up in the gallery they say, well, this a place where there's work getting done. And the people tuning in at home saying, wow, let's watch the House of Assembly channel to see what's being debated.

There is a lot of good legislation going through here today. I think the first session we put through 70-odd pieces of legislation. The last session was 60 or 50. Right now, we're up to Bill 38 or 39. So that's a lot of work that a lot of

people are doing, and we're taking the time to research, to debate, to speak to.

Mr. Speaker, with that said, again, I will support this motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Thank God.

MR. KING: The boys said thank God. I don't know if they think they were –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: They weren't sure if I was going to support it, but I certainly support it.

One of the things I'll be bringing forward to this Committee is let's take a look at the electoral boundaries again. Let's get that rural representation back. Let's take that long drive away from an MHA to go from one end of a district to another to help someone with some sort of issue, a bit of paperwork; reduce the number of calls coming into a constituency office, maybe have a second office; get the extra rural Members back.

Mr. Speaker, I know my friend, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment is calling for leave, but we're getting pretty late this evening. So I just want to thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'm sure everyone in this hon. House will be voting for this very important All-Party Committee on Democratic Reform, and thank you for listening to me for 20 minutes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LESTER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think I'd be remiss not to get up and speak on democratic reform on the eve of my one-year anniversary being elected to the House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LESTER: Now, while I realize I have a tough act to follow, I learned a lot about ABCs and 123s listening to the previous speaker, but the reality is democracy, to my best of knowledge, is government for the people, of the people, by the people of equal representation.

Demographics shift, and so do boundaries, as our population changes. So I can't say I agree with his analogy of giving one particular portion of the Island, or demographic area more clout than another.

Thinking back to a year ago when I was knocking on doors, there were a couple of things that really stick out in my mind that people said to me. Well, I expected to hear a lot about the Muskrat Falls issue, but I actually heard more about the conduct of Members in the House of Assembly. Also, I heard, what are you getting involved in politics for? You're too good of a fella.

Well, anyway, I, like almost everybody else – I would hope in this Chamber – got involved in politics because you wanted to make a difference, you wanted to make things better for the people and for future generations down the road. We need more people that stay true to that vision.

My focus of getting up to speak was, I kind of took exception to a comment made by my colleague from Mount Pearl – Southlands when he referred to business people getting involved in politics; talking about Chinese walls and blind trust. If we are truly to have a representation of all parts of society, we have to –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. LESTER: – make it easier for people in business to get involved in politics.

Now, after being in politics for a year, I realize that I would probably have to get a salary of about \$3 million a year to compensate for what my business and my family has lost by being involved in politics. I quickly found that I'm no longer eligible for a lot of the support programs and funding programs that as a farm we relied on, and as – the agricultural industry, all farmers rely on. Of course, I've seen certain – now that I'm a certain political flavour, well, that also carries weight. That will make business people think twice about getting involved in politics.

So I think that business people are needed in politics. We, as business people, know how to

run businesses. The province is basically a business and it needs to be run efficiently and properly, and also manage our resources just like I do on my farm and just like other business people would manage their assets. We really have to make it easier for a wider diversity of, I guess career backgrounds to get involved.

All of us, I'm sure, can say – and I've said from time to time that, gosh, it's not for the pay. And you're damn right it's not – excuse my language, I apologize.

Why we get involved in politics and why I'm involved in politics is, again, back to that fundamental desire to make things better, to see a generation ahead of us that will have an easier life, a less stressful life living in this province. That's something that needs to originate from democratic reform. We need to take the partisanship out of, I guess, decisions when it comes to allocating money for business or extending monies through government programs. We really need to restore faith in the public.

Do you know what? While it's not the ideal first step that I'd like to see happen, because I believe our motion would have really firmed up the foundation for it, I do believe that democratic reform and the proposals we have going forward are definitely a step in the right direction.

With that, I'll take my seat.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I'll stand up and speak to this resolution. It's my presumption that when I take my seat, that'll be the conclusion of speeches to this.

I want to thank all my colleagues on both sides for their commentary on this. I'm presuming I will have unanimous support to this motion. I appreciate the fact that there were thoughts along the way. There was differences of opinion, there were amendments, but, overall, I think

there's no disagreement amongst Members that there is a need for an all-party committee to look at democratic reform.

Again, I'm not going to get into too much of the suggestions and the back and forth, but I feel it's necessary – we brought this to the floor in May and everybody has had their say since then. I've sat back and listened very patiently. I've let everybody – anybody – that wanted to have their say speak to it.

So I do want to address a few things that I think are interesting, or at least get a chance to speak to those.

It's interesting that the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands stands up. He, perhaps, of everybody, had the most to say about things that are not being done and should be done and not done right. I will say I never heard those points at any point during my time as his colleague on either side of the House.

It's funny, there are a number of comments that he made: We need to do this, we need to do that. One thing I never heard him say was that maybe there should be a look at floor crossing. You talk about recall legislation. Maybe we should look at the ability to cross, cross, cross, cross. At some point that's a worthy discussion that needs to happen and I would point out the Member discussed everything but that.

The other thing he talked about was all-party committees on legislation. What I will say is this: I'd love to have those meetings, but the Member needs to show up – the Member needs to show up. I scheduled a meeting last week – and this really irritates me. The reason it irritates me is we had a debate. We talk about everything that goes wrong, everything that's not done right. I've taken great pains in three years to work with my colleagues on all sides of this House to try to make things a little bit better.

There are things I saw when I was in the Opposition that I didn't like and we've tried to make changes. Now, you know what, can there be more change? Of course. Of course we can make things better. That's what we all want. I've worked with my colleagues on all sides of this House in the last three years to make Standing Orders changes.

The Member talks about how bad everything is. He stood up in the House during the debate on the Assessment Act and said: I'm not comfortable voting on this. I would love to have a meeting with the Municipal Assessment Agency to ask them questions. I'm not sure if I fully understand or fully agree with them, I'd like to have that. I said: You know what? We will refrain from a vote on third reading of that bill until the meeting is arranged, until everybody has a chance to ask questions and then we'll come back.

I will say this: I don't believe I would have been given that opportunity by the House Leaders of the previous administration at that time. I don't think I would have been given that opportunity but we afforded that. The Municipal Assessment Agency came here, they showed up and they had a meeting. The Members from the Official Opposition went; Members from the NDP did not ask for the meeting, I'm not faulting them one way, shape or form. But the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, who asked for the meeting and said he should have the meeting, didn't show up.

AN HON. MEMBER: What?

MR. A. PARSONS: Didn't show up.

So if you're going to ask for something, don't just stand up and ask for it. There are people that went out of their way to have this meeting and he shows up and says: You don't do this and you don't do that, and when we give it to him doesn't even show up and take advantage of it. I say it must be hard to speak out of both sides of your mouth – it must be hard.

I'll put that out there because we're talking about change. The Member talks about change but when it's time – and I look forward to seeing how he's going to vote on this resolution tonight. I look forward to seeing how he's going to vote on the resolution tonight because I can guarantee you we're calling Division on this – we're calling Division on this.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. A. PARSONS: Going to stand up and see how he votes then. That really irritates me. Can things be better? Yeah, you know what, they

can. But if you're going to say it, stand up for it, too.

What I will say to the Members for the NDP, and in some ways to the Official Opposition, we talked about the amendment to make this a House of Assembly all-party committee, rather than what we said, a Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Leader of the NDP said there was fine work done by the all-party committee on – I think it was Fishing that went to Ottawa, that was in the last session, it was struck by the previous administration; the All-Party Committee on Mental Health, struck by the previous administration, all-party committee representation. In fact, it went over to this administration, continued through.

This, what we're proposing, is the exact same model. It was a government-led committee. To suggest that it's not going to work because it's not House of Assembly is contradictory by the fact that it's been done. Members participated, we've all participated and they work. I think the All-Party Committee on Mental Health worked pretty good. The fact is it spanned administrations, went from one political stripe to the other.

What I say is I get that. One of the big things I've said about democratic reform is that sometimes this debate proved exactly what I was saying; sometimes it's political by nature. No matter what you do, there will be opposition to it just by the very nature of it. Certainly, I saw that coming from the NDP tonight, talking about the government dragging its heels.

When I got my mandate latter – usually mandates are four years. We're in the third year of that mandate and we're about to strike the resolution. I know it's not quick enough, but you know what – and they talked about standing committees. I'm actually working with the former leader of the NDP on Standing Orders to put in legislative committees. That's something I'd like to see but these things take time.

I've had three years' worth of meetings with the former leader of the NDP, Members of the other side and Members of this side. We're getting there. It's amazing. It really irritates me when

the Member talks about democracy; we're not a true democracy. How do you say that? And reference something; I want people to get the full story because it's not the same as it was.

There were times with previous House Leaders and previous administration where, depending on whether they were frustrated with us or not, an Opposition might say: You're not getting a briefing – you're not getting it. That wasn't the practice but it happened sometimes; the previous House leaders would get mad.

The same thing with petitions, actually. There were some days where if Question Period was rowdy enough – and I agree completely with the Member for CBS. Question Periods now are nothing like they were in the previous four years – nothing like it. There's not a lot of institutional knowledge that's left, over talking. Yeah, it still gets heated here. That's the very nature of what we do, we're talking about ideas and contrasts, but I tell you it's not close to what it was.

Depending on how heated it would get, we didn't get petitions. That's the Government House Leader's choice. The government would say: We're calling Order of the Day. I don't blame that on my colleagues across the way because none of them were the House Leader. But that House Leader said: Nope, not going to happen.

That doesn't happen anymore – it does not happen. In fact, we've changed it so that we have petitions now and we have responses to a petition. We're actually increasing the amount of debate when it comes to these important issues.

Sometimes they don't always see it. The Member for Mount Pearl North brought forward a petition yesterday on the *Petty Trespass Act*. Now, you wouldn't realize that – because it's not something I deal with all the time – I'm actually looking at it within my department because I said: That's interesting. I don't know if I can do something about it. I don't know if we can or can't but I'm looking at it. That's the nature of it. That's why petitions are so important. I loved them when I was over there and they are a necessary part.

Again, coming back to the comment about the *Public Health Act*, I want to provide some

context to what the Leader of the NDP said because I've been dealing with the former Leader of the NDP. We put forward that bill to the Opposition late on Friday. Then, what happened was usually we always allow for a briefing and then debate will happen the next day. That's usually what happens. In this case the legislation was there Friday evening, Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

Going by what we usually do, that would be –

MS. ROGERS: (Inaudible.)

MR. A. PARSONS: I say to the Leader of the NDP: I didn't heckle you, let me talk.

You know what? It is funny how we talk about hyper-partisanship and sometimes democracy is only if you get your way. When we heckle over here it's terrible, but when the Member heckles me I didn't say a word when she spoke – didn't say a word, and now I'm getting heckled because I'm saying something she doesn't agree with. We want to talk about making things better? You know what? We all have to be a part of this.

What I'm going to say is normally in that course of business – and going by what the previous administration practiced – if you got the briefing on Monday, you debated the bill Tuesday. That has never, not been the case in this administration – never.

The former leader of the NDP mentioned to me yesterday and said it's a substantial bill. I don't know what your plans are, but I don't think we've had enough time to debate it or to examine it and we're not prepared to move forward. I said, you know what, fair ball. How about we're going to do our part on Tuesday, we're going to do our second reading, which is not affected, but we're not going to move forward into Committee stage until you've had further opportunity to study it.

The NDP didn't speak to the bill today because that's exactly what we agreed upon. The NDP will speak to the bill Wednesday. We'll see if we get into the Committee stage on Wednesday or Thursday.

But for the Member to stand up and reference that piece of legislation, as if we'd done something wrong, that's exactly an example of something that we're doing right. We're working together. I don't want to force debate in this House. I haven't forced; I've been part of forced debates before in the past.

Again, the Members over here hear it all the time, ad nauseam, ad nauseam, and Bill 29 and Muskrat Falls. We've talked about the no notice; we've changed that. We've talked about the filibusters. We've worked together to change filibusters; we've done that. The NDP were apart of that and supported that.

So things are not the same; things are changing, and I'd like to think that as we move forward all parties will work together to make it better. Because what reflects good or bad on one of us, reflects good or bad on 40 of us. We all do the same job. We all like to argue, we like to debate, we like to have differing points of view, but anybody who has sat in this Chamber before knows that's the nature of it.

So, again, some of the points that have been put forward, I think I've laid out exactly the reason why I don't think that the amendment was necessary because this practice has worked in the past. In fact, the previous administration allowed for it. In one of those parties that the NDP called for, the All-Party Committee on Mental Health, they called for it. It got formed with the same structure as this; that worked fine. So to suggest that this is not going to work fine, I think is look at it with a very pessimistic, critical point of view that's not warranted, I think, in this particular occasion.

One of the other issues, the Member talked about some of the issues about democratic reform. I can remember when we first got elected in 2011, one of the things that came up – and we talked about how Bill 29 was the end of it. One of things, I think a nail was struck right off the top, not by any Member opposite, but by previous Members – and, again, we all have this – the former premier said: I don't think there's any need to go in the House. Do you remember after the election of 2011, the premier at the time said: I don't think there's any need to go in the House. We're not going to have a good enough debate.

Now, that is hubris that is. Do you know what? I don't think the Members over there would've had a say in that; they certainly wouldn't have said it, but they're a part of a group that the leader at the time said that. Do you know what? We're not going to call the House back into session. We're not going to debate Muskrat because I don't think the debate is going to be good enough. Well, look where that's got us.

I can tell you this, I can remember standing on that side during the last night of the Muskrat debate saying: I hope it works; I hope to God that it works because it's my kids and my grandkids that are going to deal with it. We are where we are. But what I'd like to think is that, while I'm here, I'm going to be apart of a process that will help all of us to hopefully avoid these situations. Sometimes they won't be.

We're all going to wake up – as we joked earlier about *Hansard*. *Hansard* records everything, *Hansard* is very unforgiving. I'm sure somebody in five years time is going to come back and look at something I'd say and say: Don't you sound foolish. Well, that's unavoidable. But the fact is I'd like to think we're taking steps to make it better because that's what helps me sleep, knowing that we're trying to make it better.

On that point I say, we're all on the same page there. We all want to make the decisions that help us sleep at night. On that note I look forward to the vote on this.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion, Motion 1?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

AN HON. MEMBER: Division.

MR. SPEAKER: Division has been called.

I ask the Whips to call in your Members, please.

Division

MR. SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion, Motion 1?

All those in favour, please rise.

CLERK (Barnes): Mr. Ball, Mr. Andrew Parsons, Ms. Coady, Mr. Haggie, Ms. Dempster, Mr. Crocker, Mr. Osborne, Mr. Warr, Mr. Davis, Mr. Edmunds, Ms. Haley, Mr. Letto, Mr. Browne, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Bragg, Mr. Finn, Mr. Holloway, Mr. King, Ms. Pam Parsons, Mr. Dean, Mr. Reid, Mr. Hutchings, Mr. Brazil, Ms. Perry, Mr. Kevin Parsons, Mr. Petten, Mr. Lester, Ms. Rogers.

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

CLERK: Mr. Speaker, the ayes 28, the nays zero.

MR. SPEAKER: I declare the motion carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that the House do now adjourn.

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

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 House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 o'clock.

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