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Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

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The House met at 10 a.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

I would like to catch up on some outstanding points of order. It's been a busy last few days and why not tackle that right off the bat today.

There were two points of order raised by the Member for St. John's Centre. At the start of proceedings on November 21, 2018, the Member for St. John's Centre, the Leader of the Third Party, rose on two points of order regarding comments made by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety during proceedings, the proceeding evening.

Point number one: The first point of order was raised by the Member under Standing Order 49 wherein she suggested that the minister had spoken of her in a tone that was uncondusive to the work that we do here. I have reviewed *Hansard* and viewed the archived broadcast and while the tone of the remarks was elevated, the words used by the minister were not unparliamentary in accordance with the relevant Standing Order. Therefore, I rule that there is no point of order; however, I would remind all of our Members to please be tempered in their remarks and respect each other in this hon. House.

Point number two: In the second point of order raised by the Member for St. John's Centre, the Member pointed out that in the previous evening's debate the Minister of Justice and Public Safety referred to the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi as "the former Leader of the Third Party." As with the previous point of order, I reviewed *Hansard* and viewed the archived broadcast. I find that the remarks by the minister were historically accurate; therefore, I rule that there is no point of order.

One further comment: I remind Members that a point of order must be raised at the earliest possible opportunity in the course of debate. The points of order raised by the Member for St. John's Centre were not raised at the earliest opportunity and, therefore, were not in order on that basis alone.

Point number three, raised by the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair: The Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair raised a point of order on November 21, 2018 respecting comments made by the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune. The point of order was raised under Standing Order 49 and alleged that the other Member used unparliamentarily language contrary to that Standing Order.

The word in question was "corruption." Again, I reviewed *Hansard* and the webcast of the matter in question. Bosc and Gagnon, at page 624, outlines the difficulty in characterizing unparliamentary language. It says: "In dealing with unparliamentary language, the Speaker takes into account the tone, manner and intention of the Member speaking; the person to whom the words at issue were directed; the degree of provocation; and, most importantly, whether or not the remarks created disorder in the Chamber. Thus, language deemed unparliamentary one day may not necessarily be deemed unparliamentary the following day."

In the current context, it is true that previous Speakers have made rulings respecting the use of the word "corruption." However, in this context, the intention of the Member was based on a generality and was not directed to a particular Member or government. I therefore rule that there is no point of order.

I thank the Members for their attention.

Orders of the Day

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

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

I call from the Order Paper, Order 2, third reading of Bill 41.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister for Health and Community Services that Bill 41, An Act To Amend The Canada-Newfoundland And Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation

Newfoundland And Labrador Act be now read a third time.

MR. SPEAKER: Wrong number.

MR. A. PARSONS: I got to say it again?

CLERK (Barnes): You got the wrong Order Paper.

MR. A. PARSONS: My apologies, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: No problem.

MR. A. PARSONS: I did fourth reading on that one.

I call, still Order 2, Bill 35, third reading.

MR. SPEAKER: Does that suffice?

CLERK: Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: I move, seconded by the Minister for Health and Community Services that Bill 35, An Act To Amend The Workplace Health, Safety And Compensation Act, be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against?

The motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Workplace Health, Safety And Compensation Act. (Bill 35)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Workplace Health, Safety And Compensation Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 35)

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I call Order 5, second reading of Bill 43.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, that Bill 43 be now read a second time.

On motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act Respecting The Provision Of Emergency Health And Paramedicine Services." (Bill 43)

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

Thank you.

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

I'm pleased to rise in this hon. House to open the debate on Bill 43, An Act Respecting the Provision of Emergency Health and Paramedicine Services. I think it's worthwhile to put this in the context of the legislative agenda from the Department of Health and Community Services going back to 2016. The first bill we had, which was enacted that session, was basically to redesign and rationalize the legislative framework around hospital insurance and MCP.

Subsequent to that, there has been a sequence of bills. We have had legislation around mental health and addictions, we have had secure detox and withdrawal, we have had legislation for a

prescription monitoring program and we have had legislation on public health.

What you see here is a pattern, whereby the foundations of the health care system in this province have been rejuvenated or rebooted for the next generation to take them from some of the disorder that had crept in over the years as the systems have changed and evolved, to bring them up to, I would argue, in many cases, a leading edge of Canadian jurisprudence.

This is the last of those, in many respects, and it is the first bill ever, dedicated legislation, for our province's ambulance program. We have referred to that, however, in a broader title of emergency health and paramedicine services, because that better describes the intent of the legislation. The definition itself recognizes that it's no longer around simply providing emergency road-side services, or picking up ill patients, but it also moves beyond ambulance transportation into the realm of what is now described as pre-hospital care and community paramedicine.

Currently, the program operates under various pieces of legislation, contracts, standards and policies. And this is an evolutionary thing, simply based on how the system evolved informally over the last several decades. At the initiation of our ambulance service many decades ago, it was primarily a grassroots initiative by communities that recognized the need to move sick and injured people to a hospital or a clinic for service.

In fact, funeral homes were in actual fact amongst the first operators, simply because they had the ability to transport patients lying down rather than sitting up. In time, these funeral homes purchased vehicles, communities fundraised and set up community ambulance services, and over the course of time in turn they then approached government and the department for funding to ensure viability and sustainability.

So today, Mr. Speaker, we have a system with 61 separate operators providing ambulance services across the province. Twenty-two of these are community groups or municipalities, 26 are operated by the private sector, and 13 are operated by our regional health authorities. Because of the nature of this evolution, the

government of the day sequentially never really stepped back and considered a strategic approach. They simply carried on with a piecemeal kind of activity.

In the background, of course, industry policies and standards continually evolved and progressed with no legislative authority or regulatory framework. This bill, however, the future of the sector becomes grounded in best practices and legislated mandate, and that past will be behind us. If you like, again, it is another example of bringing some significant order from relative chaos.

Our emergency health services, however, have also evolved from a simple transportation system, for a health profession of their own with highly trained practitioners with a whole sequence of advancing skills as they progress through their training and through their certification. They provide time dependent, life-saving care and are essential, a critical and essential component of our health care system. We, our families, our communities take comfort in knowing that that emergency medical service is there, that care is available, and literally care starts with the arrival of these highly trained individuals and an ambulance.

Our residents rightly have an expectation that that service will be there when they need it, and we agree with that. We wholeheartedly agree with that. However, if you look at the reviews that have been conducted in recent years, we do not seem to have a responsive, safe and high quality service that matches up to the Canadian best practices. We have had concerns identified in sequential reports with contract non-compliance, unacceptable response times, poor application of provincial policies and standards, and all of these impact adversely on quality and patient safety.

The Fitch report identified the need to legislate standards. In addition, a 2016 report by the Auditor General found ineffective oversight with the program and a lack of operator accountability. More recently, we've had the Grant Thornton report which showed significant fiscal challenges, shall we say, in money allocated to the program finding the home for which it was supposed to go. This non-compliance has the potential to significantly

affect every aspect of the emergency service response time, care and recruitment, retention and service delivery.

From a fiscal perspective, on a grand scale the budget has grown from \$14 million in fiscal 2001 to over \$60 million in fiscal 2016. We've managed to stabilize the budget at that level of funding while we examine how we can do things better, both from an improvement and quality perspective and sustainability.

It's clear that we need authority to conduct better monitoring and oversight. When I announced the findings of Grant Thornton's report, I committed to bringing forward legislation to govern that program. Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation honours that commitment today. It's a key tool that will bring tools to address the systemic concerns that plague our road ambulance program.

Firstly, the bill provides the necessary government oversight for the program. It sets out operator responsibilities, gives them the force of law and strengthens both government and operators accountability to support patient safety and program sustainability.

Second, it actually consolidates various pieces of legislation and provides authority to make policies, practices and standards related to the ambulance program.

Thirdly, it enables us to better make program improvements such as establishing a central medical dispatch centre, known as CMDC, a commitment we made in *The Way Forward*.

CMDC is a centralized communications and coordination office that takes all requests for emergency health services and dispatches the most appropriate emergency medical vehicle and paramedicine provider to the scene. Such a centre also has a role in collecting data that shows us, for example, where call volumes may be high at particular times of day. It allows us to gauge shoot times, it allows us to gauge response times. This information currently is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain accurately with independent dispatch services for each provider and currently a paper-base system. We need these tools for decision, support and management.

Fourthly, and for the future – maybe most importantly – it allows us to move into a modern emerging service with areas such as community paramedicine, whereby paramedics can use their skills in the communities outside of the traditional emergency response function; roles that they are now adequately trained and perfectly prepared to provide, yet our system doesn't recognize that ability or enable it be used to its full. It has mutual benefits for paramedics with the opportunity to maintain skills, and it has benefits for the communities, particularly rural communities that have a need for outreach and primary care services.

I'm going to just use this opportunity to illustrate some of the key components of the bill, but I'm not going to get down into the weeds because that's more of a role probably for the Committee stage. One of the proposed legislation, the PUB will no longer issue motor carrier certificates to operators under the *Motor Carrier Act*. Currently, it operates and issue certificates to an operator based on a particular region. We have a section in the bill which allows Health and Community Services, instead, to do that. We've heard from the PUB that this was an area they didn't want to be in, in first place, and they didn't feel was a good fit with their mandate.

We have another section, section 9, which outlines the requirements that operators will need both a licence and an agreement with government to provide emergency and paramedicine services. So this allows conditions to be placed around a licence in terms of the services which an operator will be authorized to provide emergency routing services and, ultimately, community paramedicine.

It matches the ability to put a service where there's a need, and it also enables us to ensure that that service meets acceptable quality standards. It does not change how a vehicle is used to provide health and paramedicine services. The licensing of the actual vehicle itself will remain under the *Highway Traffic Act* with Service NL's Motor Registration Division.

Section 10 outlines the operator responsibilities and requires, essentially, that the operators comply with the act, its regulations, the conditions of its licence and the agreement with

government. This includes managing human and material resources in conformity.

Sections 11 and 12 give the department authority to establish processes around issuing, renewing, suspending or revoking licences. These might be engaged under circumstances where the operators contravene the act, the agreement, or the standards and protocols; or, for other reasons, is simply unable to comply; or even where there are situations where the operator has just simply been negligent.

In the case of non-compliance, the department would require to give notice that they need to take corrective action before taking any action that would affect their licence. This time frame can be shortened however at the discretion of minister, should there be a clear issue of public safety. These kinds of tools, these levers, do not exist at the moment and we have heard very clearly that there is risk from their lack.

It provides the authority for government to establish standards for the management and operation of emergency and paramedicine services, including the vehicles, such as marking and mileage limits, as well as other features which fall outside the *Highway Traffic Act*.

It allows government then flexibility to designate in regulations other categories of emergency vehicles rather than the traditional ambulances. Several jurisdictions have different types of emergency response vehicles which are used to separate triage and treatment from transport and it improved response times. Rapid response vehicles such as an SUV actually exists, in theory, in Labrador West, for example, but can't be categorized strictly as emergency vehicles simply because the legislation is silent on that and it's a defect.

In an emergency, the most important factor is to get the best care to the patient in the best time possible. Most of the care paramedics provide actually occurs outside of the ambulance; it's in the ditch or in the patient's house. Rapid response vehicles are not designed or equipped to provide transport but they can get skill, equipment and knowledge on site quickly.

These vehicles are, in fact, emergency vehicles and must be permitted the scope provided

emergency vehicles, such as use of lights and sirens. Although after a particularly unfortunate episode on the Trans-Canada Highway when I witnessed no one except one vehicle out of eight prepared to pull over, I felt constrained to take to social media to chastise the public.

We are going to work closely with Service NL. There's obviously a level of integration here in drafting the regulations to ensure that we get the right vehicles for emergency response, as Service NL would then be responsible under the *Highway Traffic Act* for some of their mechanical kind of components. It also ensures that operators only use emergency vehicles that meet the specs and use them only for the purposes outlined in the regulations. They're not to be used to get ahead of the line at Tim Horton's.

In terms of clinical services, Mr. Speaker, section 6 requires the appointment of a provincial medical director to establish clinical protocols and guidelines for patient care. There's a position already existing in Eastern Health and its associated responsibilities will now have the force of legislation and regulation. It legislates an existing practice and simply safeguards that.

The director's responsibility would also include managing and providing a quality assurance program and monitoring of compliance. The operators will then be required to comply with quality measures as specified by the medical director. They will also be required to report and disclose to the patient and family any adverse event. That does not exist at the moment and that is inconsistent with any other health legislation and policy we have in place across the RHAs, for example.

The current processing for professional licensing of paramedics is through Eastern Health provincial medical oversight. That will remain unchanged in the short term for sure, and it's legislated in section 15; however, the licensing process is clarified in the bill to improve accountability and lessen uncertainty of a paramedic qualifications and classifications.

We're working with the Paramedic Association, however, because we feel and they feel the ultimate goal of that profession is self-regulation. This bill would allow that to happen

when everybody feels that's the right time. It also allows a paramedicine provider to enter premises by force, if necessary, if they believe a person inside requires emergency medical services. Often, we find situations of an elderly person with a locked door between the paramedic and the patient; this gives them some comfort in knowing that they're not at jeopardy or at fault legally if they have to use force to enter premises.

Section 27 also deals with another issue that we've had around advance health care directives. When a paramedic is aware that they are in effect, they become bound by the *Advance Health Care Directives Act*. In the event the witness or an injury leaves a patient unable to communicate, they can use the written documents as well. This clarifies their obligation. Their obligation is to the patient, the client and their wishes under the advance health care directive and not to any external pressure to deviate from their wishes, which has happened in the past.

Sections 17 to 21 deal with the issue of inspections which, for us, is a monitoring and oversight function which allows for an inspector to look at processes around the provision of service, compliance with records and equipment as far as the operation of this act and its regulations are concerned.

The inspector would have the authority to enter a premise where anything is being done related to paramedicine and emergency services to review records. The operator, owner or individual in charge of those premises is required to grant access. The exception to that, again, remains as with other legislation; if this is a private dwelling house then a warrant would be required under those circumstances, consistent with other legislation and the paramountcy of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the *Constitution Act*. The inspector would then be required to write reports for the minister with a copy to the operator to outline any defects or issues.

So this basically is a modern, comprehensive piece of legislation that takes best practices across the country and puts them in a codified way. There's been a wide variation across the country in how these programs are structured,

and we've done a lot of cross-jurisdictional work to try and find the best and craft a made-in-Newfoundland-and-Labrador solution. We consulted widely as part of process therefore with operators, community operators, private operators, regional health authorities, the Paramedic Association and the general public. We held six province-wide consultations: Labrador – Goose Bay, Corner Brook, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, Clarenville and St. John's. We heard support in every location from a wide constituency about the legislation and its approach, and we had some very valuable discussions about making the drafts better, and those are incorporated here.

The bill is subject to proclamation, and will not come into force straight away. I have directed on Royal Assent that that this would be a priority for our department, as we view this as something that these regulations would need to be in place. We think six months – I'm cautiously optimistic we could do it in five or four. We shared the bill with OIPC to ensure it appropriately allows for compliance with the *Personal Health Information Act*. We continue to consult with them on the crafting of regulations.

One of the initiatives we're currently involved in is a separate one, but related, in the procurement of ambulance services. This bill does not comment or state anything about procurement, but it's been structured in a manner that allows complete flexibility for that process on an ongoing basis.

I want to be clear: It won't change the current landscape. I think we've heard some tentative worries that that there may be changes coming. The arrangement of operators, the location of ambulances will not alter as a consequence of this bill.

When it comes into force, there will be little day-to-day change in the requirements for providers or operators of these services. What it does do is allows us oversight and accountability for monitoring. It provides provisions to exclude the act from applying to students and other first responders such as police, firefighters or lifeguards.

It also excludes specific situations where emergency services are provided under either

the *Emergency Medical Aid Act*, the good Samaritan act, the *Emergency Services Act* or the *Public Health Protection and Promotion Act* in the event of declaration of a public health emergency, and that allows for protection of people involved under those circumstances.

It does recognize the *Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Act* and that Nunatsiavut has the right to make its own legislation in this area, and in the event of any conflict with this act, LILCA will prevail.

There are a number of consequential amendments that will apply to the *Motor Carrier Act* and the *Highway Traffic Act*, primarily around definitions and the shifting of certain mandates around the licensing from the PUB, for example.

I'd like to take the opportunity, as I wrap up now, Mr. Speaker, to thank those individuals working in emergency health services across the province. In the days before paramedicine existed as a profession, I jumped into the odd ditch from time to time myself, and it's quite a stressful experience, and my hat's off to them.

The bill provides a foundation that will build a far better pre-hospital care service than we have currently and will better serve the people of this province. As I say, it's a milestone in the evolution of the health care system, and I would regard it as one of the final foundational pieces of my job as Minister of Health over the last three years.

I'd like to take my seat with a request that Members of this House support this bill.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for the District of Conception Bay East - Bell Island.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's indeed an honour to again stand in this House as we debate and redefine legislation and policy that are relevant to improving the lives of

the programs and services and those individuals who provide those services to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Today we will be debating and discussing the changes or the full formation of Bill 43, An Act Respecting the Provision of Emergency Health and Paramedicine Services.

Mr. Speaker, I must thank the staff for the briefing that we had last week, or a little over a week ago, and the outline itself, specifically around particular changes that were there. We had some unique questions, because we were coming from some totally different angles that may not have been first thought of or may not be directly included in this but was food for thought.

We wanted some clarification around the structure of licensing, the structure of taking away licences, the key role here that the health providers, the paramedics and the ambulance service employees play, not only when they respond as a personal health technician on an ambulance, but the other roles that they can play in our paramedicine. There was a great open discussion, and we went from the regulatory outlines to some generic hypothetical situations about what it is that we're doing and how we can make this more efficient.

The minister outlined, and I go back a few years on some of the things here. We talked about the Fitch report, and we talked about Grant Thornton, but particularly we talked about, and he had noted, and it was a major concern for me, the Auditor General's review of the ambulance service and the providing of the services and the legislative regulatory processes that, in principle, didn't exist to control and ensure that we get the best return on the investment and that everybody involved would understand each role they have and have the proper mechanism, the proper tools and the proper understanding of how you're going best deliver that service.

I have the privilege as the Chair of Public Accounts to be able to work with my colleagues on Public Accounts to outline if there's a concern from the public's point of view on the efficiency of a program that we're funding or the efficiency to the outcomes of a program that we're funding to ensure it's done properly. We have the ability to call the witnesses, as we call

them, the entity who provides those services, to come to the House and have that discussion. We try to do it in an open concept so we ensure that the viability and the information being shared is to be used for the betterment of providing the particular service.

Sometimes it does get a little bit confrontational, because there may be a differencing of what we, as the representatives for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, the elected representatives, and the provider may feel are adequate levels of service, or the adequate process they use to ensure that they're meeting their obligations.

We had the privilege of calling in the department and the providers of the ambulance service, or the contractors, as such, on the bigger picture from a regional health authority point of view and, from the department, with the contractees here, the providers, have a full-fledged discussion about how the monies are being invested, are they meeting not only the particular needs, because there may be a bigger picture here that the services are not being provided with the adequate resources, from a multitude of ways, and it could be in recruitment; it could be in training; it could be in the amounts of monies that are needed for the actual physical asset, the ambulances and these types of things; it could be in the partnering that's being done.

So we spent a whole day, and myself and my six colleagues asked – I think at one point I noted 94 different questions relevant to what would be the best approach or the best ways that we could continue providing public and private and community-based ambulance services but maximizing the return, from a health care provider perspective, and from a community-based confidence by the general public, that what we're providing is in the most timely fashion with the most skilled people possible, who are themselves not overburdened with long shifts or, for a multitude of reasons, are not happy in the environment because the pay scales or being reimbursed for extra time. It becomes a hindrance to them.

These are professionals, and so are the companies that run them, but the professionals who provide the actual health services have to

feel confident that, when they go to work, all the amenities that they need are provided for them and, when they do their service, that in return they should be remunerated accordingly.

I know their first objective is to go and provide the best health possible, but to be able to do that, you must have the confidence that your shifts are limited to those that don't take away your physical ability to be able to provide the best service, that you're being rewarded based on what you had agreed to sign up for and that you have the actual equipment to be able to provide the best service possible, not ambulances that you're worried about whether or not a battery is going to go dead. You're not worrying about whether or not there are going to be problems with getting up a steep hill because the tires are not up to standards.

All things like that play havoc when you're trying to provide proper health care, and there's stuff that we can very easily eliminate by having the regulatory process and a checks and balance process that's in the best interest of everybody.

I would think and hope, and I'm confident, that everybody who's in the process of providing health care want to be able to do it in the most efficient way possible, want to be able to do it in the most timely way possible and also want to be able to do it in the most financially viable way possible.

Now, have no qualms, the private ambulance providers are business people. They, at the end of the day, want to be able to provide the service that they're contracted to provide and also sustain some type of profitability in what they're providing.

So we understand that and we've got to be cognizant when we do legislation on that. But, primary, we've got to be cognizant of the people providing the health care and the patients who are going to be acquiring that health care are given the opportunity to (1) provide the health care and receive the health care in the best modicum possible.

What we need to do here is look at exactly what are some of the challenges. This is probably one of the better examples over the last five to six years where we have a multitude of different

perspectives on how we provide this service, and how – more importantly – we put legislation in play so that everybody knows from the start, from the get go, as they say, exactly what their roles and responsibilities are, what they can expect from it, what their privileges are, what the monitoring process would be, what the checks and balances would be, and in some cases – and the minister mentioned this and I'm glad he mentioned this, I think it was in the press conference itself – about self-policing to a certain degree.

I'm a real believer, as somebody who's worked in the civil service and somebody who was a first responder and somebody who's worked from a business point of view in the private sector also, that every industry, if you're a committed industry to providing the services that you're contracted to do, or you're the provider itself, the professional, you want to be able to have a certain degree of self-policing because it's more accountability to that function, or to that organization, or to that entity if your peers and those who represent that particular entity have a certain set of standards that are acceptable. So that everybody understands how those standards are achieved and how, if you start to slip, before it gets too out of hand and it's detrimental to the service you're providing, particularly this case, the health providing services, that you have an ability to stop it there and then move it back up to where it's an acceptable level. Those discussions, to me, would move it in the right direction.

We have a number of agencies and organizations that are connected directly here. The Paramedic Association, a professional group of individuals, who themselves would know where there may be some gaps in services they need; that could be around training. It could be in the time frames of how the system is done. It could be in the geographic locations of how we do certain things. It could be in dispatching. Having that input there and having that ability for the collective partners to come together and discuss how we best find a solution here.

Self-policing to me, in certain categories here, that goes hand in hand with the legislation. We've obviously got to have legislation because that becomes the law and that becomes the standard, the minimal standard. I have no

qualms with organizations. I know a couple who, here's legislation, here's what you must do from a minimal point of view, but they've added two or three more layers that really make accountability and the importance of delivering a particular service, or the ability to provide the best possible care, for example in this case, or best possible product in some other cases to the people who would avail of that particular product or service.

As was noted here, this here really brings together three or four other components, some were contracts, some were bills, some were policy, and puts it in a neat package where at least now we have the particular sections and categories that would outline roles, responsibilities and particular approaches to, if something goes in a direction that's not acceptable and how you can stop it in midstream and bring it back to where it needs to go.

Again, we talked about the Fitch report that outlined a number of the challenges that were taking place in Newfoundland and Labrador. And if you read that it's cognizant of some of the unique challenge (inaudible) from geographics, to our weather conditions, to the ambulance providers themselves – some of it is about the culture – to the training components that we have, to our funding sources. So there was a whole cognizant process there that we need to improve on. We need to have something that fits neatly in a process so there's no confusion.

And you want to eliminate a battle between providers, the business entity, the regional health authorities, the service organizations that may represent particular sectors in our society, be it seniors groups, be it health councils, whatever it may be, and the Paramedic Association, the first responders who are working on the ambulances. You want to have all of them, you want a cohesive organization there.

They're not always going to agree and there are debates about contracts and there are debates about time frames and that but that's part of our collective bargaining process. But this would be about everybody on the same page of how we provide the best service.

To do that, you first got to have a regulatory process so that there's no confusion, there's no misinterpretation of definitions, there's nobody having hidden agendas that can be delayed on implementation of the positive things that we're trying to do here by their interpretation, or their legal definition of something here.

So, as we have debate, as the discussion is taking place, and I do compliment the department and the minister with outlining the dialogue that they've had with the particular stakeholders, it's always healthy. I've always said, in government, it's a better process if you, unfortunately, have to delay a bill for a month or two to get all the stakeholders because there's no doubt, 99 per cent of the time you're going to go back and change that bill so it reflects the best way that legislation can provide the best service for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In this case, and the minister has noted he's been at it a few years, it's been discussed before that, I know the former minister of Health had discussions and was very diligently reading some of these reports as they were developed in the 2012, '13, '14 discussions there around how do we improve the service.

Unfortunately, the service had been provided for decades in a similar manner that, as it evolved, bad habits, unfortunately, became bad practices and became bad outcomes, and particularly around some of the services being provided. We needed to modernize it, we needed to ensure that we had the best ability from a holistic point of view to be able to provide those services. This gives us the framework.

We've been doing a lot of good work. I have no illusion. I gave a scrum one time and talked about: We have a good health care system. We have a multitude of glitches in it. We have some problems and there are some holes there that people fall through the cracks. But in a general context, my concept there was we have very highly skilled professionals. We have organizations that have, as their mandate, to be able to provide the best service possible. We have, even the private sector people, who have their understanding, their commitment to be able to provide it, while they're making a profit on providing those particular services.

What we didn't have, and we need to get to, and this is the next step towards it, was a fluent system where all of those who were in play would understand the roles that need to be done. And if it meant some had to come back a step to providing a better service, and if that was the providers, the ambulance providers themselves, about how things have to be done, or redirect their investments to ensure it's done. The role of the regional health authorities, if it was around how they provide certain services, or a training mechanism, if it means talking to our college systems, if it's also in conclusion of talking to our organizations, our paramedic organizations, about what are the specific skill sets that are needed, or the different levels of para-medicine that we will have on a particular call on a given night, what are the skill sets that are needed at what levels?

Do we keep a standard and everybody's at this level? Sometimes there's over skill set, particularly – I don't have a problem with an over skill set, I never see that as an overabundance. It's like doing due diligence. You can never do too much due diligence. But somewhere along the way you have to have a system in play that makes sense and works and provides the service that you particularly want to be able to provide.

So, this here, as we look at it, gets to at least putting the framework in play. I mean, as anybody knows, we have debate in this House of Assembly. The devil's in the detail. The regulatory processes, the direct policies that are going to be implemented themselves, have as much as an impact as the legislation does. The difference is the legislation makes it law, so that once regulations and policy are done, it's much easier for the regulatory body, be it in this case it could be the minister, it could be the Department of Health, it could be a regional health authority, it could be a collaborative organization made up of all the entities who come together as an advisory component, who would oversee the assurance that the act itself is being followed. And, as I said earlier, it's not only self-policing – that's important, and I would hope self-policing would be that you would raise the bar to another level.

But under legislative regulatory processes, the policing is not self-policing, it's regulatory

policing; meaning if you do not follow the steps and the commitments and the obligations, then there's a recourse, and there are processes outlined here as to who or what entity has the ability to determine what that recourse is.

In most cases, it's about bringing you back to where you're supposed to be. If you've strayed too far, or if you've strayed too far for particular reasons or it becomes a continuous culture, then there's a real problem. Then the entity involved here, be it the minister or the regulatory agency or, in some cases, here it could be the chief medical authority for the province itself, that individual or that entity would have the powers to cancel the providing of the service; but based on a principle that you'll still be able to provide the adequate service that was expected by everybody when this legislation was put in play.

So we've had an opportunity to discuss exactly the intent of why we're trying to do this. As I normally say when I stand in this House, I will start – and I've gone nearly 20 minutes into my starting point, but I want to start the way I will finish it again by saying that I wholeheartedly and, on this side of the House, we support this piece of legislation. We're particularly looking forward to the regulatory part of it in the definitions in certain areas, so that providers would have a clear understanding of how they can take their skill set or take the service they provide and move it to the next level. And the next level, obviously, for everybody in Newfoundland and Labrador – and I know these providers – is up. So how do we do that? How do we do that through the skill set and the supports that we give?

The minister talked about our investment into paramedicine and the ambulance services over the last number of decades has quadrupled, and rightfully so. There's an expectation of the skills that are needed for those first responders who arrive at a situation or at somebody's home, the equipment that needs to be used, the training, and the overall process to ensure timely fashion and the best quality of care is there.

We've had discussions with a number of providers and even some discussion and a briefing around things like central dispatch and that. I know that's not exactly where we're going with this piece of legislation, but it's all

tied. The minister today talked in the press conference, and so did his officials, there are a multitude of pieces of legislation that need to fall in play, because one supports the other, which in turn supports the other, which in turn makes a continuum that gets us to our end result: Better outcomes for the service we're providing.

For those at home who may not understand the process here, somebody might say: Well, why can't you just come in and change it? It makes no sense why you provide a service this way or why contracts are this way; or why we don't do more training in this component or why a particular health professional can't offer this type of service in our community. Because there has to be regulatory processes there.

I know it's frustrating and it's no more frustrating for somebody like myself who came from the civil service, who would make recommendations and it would be three years later before you'd get a call and say oh, we need this input. No more for people in this House of Assembly who sit back and when bills are brought forward, they shake their head and say this has been around eight years; we're only now getting to it. And no more for a minister – and I've been there as a minister and I can understand the minister's frustration of trying to get a piece of legislation to where you need it to be so that, at the end of the day, you know you got the best piece of legislation that provides the best service and protects the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, taking into account every particular nuance that may be necessary to make that successful.

Now, when you do it at the end of that, it's a living entity. It doesn't end the day you proclaim it or we pass it in this House and become law. Because in that short period of time, things evolve differently and you realize, in a definition, we need to add another section or something we didn't think about because now that we've brought attention to it, those providing a service or those availing of the services have outlined to us other unique situations that we never thought of and we didn't experience.

As the evolution of our society changes and it could be the road network, it could be communications, it could be the types of

ailments that we're facing, it could be the better use of technology that people don't have to be escorted in an ambulance constantly or it could be end-of-life processes. The world has changed on how we do things, so how do we provide those types of services?

So, the benefit of legislation that is specific to certain clauses and definitions, but it's still open to readily being able to be changed to meet the growing needs. Once you got a piece of legislation, when you've got the act in, it's very easy to amend certain parts of it as you come back, particularly if you got the crux or the meat of the piece of legislation itself.

For anybody who's not in the health profession, it's very encompassing when you get all the definitions and the responsibilities for people. The minister has taken people through most of it, so I'm not going to reiterate that again but I do want to talk about some of the particular challenges that are around moving this piece of legislation forward.

Because, at the end of the day, we talk about paramedicine, what a great opportunity we have now. We have skilled professionals who are now in a partnership, as employees, with providers of an ambulance service who are, in turn, then in a partnership with a regional health authority, who, in turn, are in partnership with the Department of Health. So collaboratively, just look at all the professionals you have there, all the information that you have at your fingertips, all the ability to address new ways of providing health care.

In some cases, and I know in my own district, we have health professionals, the paramedics who for hours of the day are on call, are waiting, who have a skill set that could be doing a multitude of other things. They've been trained; they've taken it upon themselves to read new approaches to providing medicine and these types of things, who could be used in particular areas to deal with certain situations.

Also, looking at, when there's a certain call, being able to assess the calls in advance of responding, to what degree do you need to respond. Can the paramedicine providers then at the end of the day in a particular household provide a service that's a bit different than

putting somebody on a stretcher, taking them in an ambulance and then bringing them to some kind of health centre? What are the types of services that can be provided there with the skill set that these people already have?

So it's better utilizing the skill sets that we have and ensuring that the people who want to provide those skill sets would have all the training necessary and all the supports that would be part and parcel of it.

We've talked about trying to keep, as much as possible, services within rural communities, isolated communities as possible while, at the same time, being able to provide the best services that we can. So we have an opportunity here, once we pass this legislation, to take it to the next level.

With all due respect, this is a good piece of legislation, but it's not the be-all and end-all. There are a number of things here that will need to be added over the coming months and over the coming years that will give a better opportunity for the providers to move it to the next level and, as the evolution happens, provide exactly what it is that's needed here for us.

I just want to talk about some of the things here that we've talked about. We get beat up internally and externally when we're the last, normally, to come onside with some of these things. I understand that and, as we all say, sometimes you try to defend it and sometimes you look at it that there's a process here that's a bit unique. I accept the uniqueness of our great province here, but I also accept the reality that we should not be the last to come on board on things that are important to our society, and our residents here as part of it.

We're getting to this point. We need to find a better way because this is only one part of how we provide health care in Newfoundland and Labrador. We need to find a better way that we can be leaders. We have the skill set second to none. We have our own modes of research here that are second to none. We have now, through communications, access to information and data that's equal to any other jurisdiction anywhere in this world.

The days of us having to catch up, we should try to find a way to put them behind. So if it means we concentrate on getting our processes, our legislation, our delivery of services to the acceptable standard, and then let's take them to the Newfoundland and Labrador standards, which is beyond that, providing the best services to the people in our province.

We need to change our mindset also. Let's bring it up to the standard that Alberta has, or BC has or Ontario may have. In some cases we even feel we don't need to go to those levels because we're not in the same realm financially. Let's bring them to Atlantic Canada. My argument to that is look, if you go back on other things, we don't tout enough of the things we excel in, that we're the trendsetter and that we're the leaders.

Health care is another one where we could be. I've got full respect for those who provide health care. I look at sometimes the level of care that's provided in some of the dilapidated buildings we have, in some of the lack of new pieces of equipment and that; yet, how our health care system, because of those who are providing it, no matter what level they're at, are providing the best care, equal to anything in this world.

So if we can get to the next level, if we can get a more equitable, a more efficient way of providing these services, then the monies we have to invest there can be done in such a manner that we can provide additional training, other resources. So that the bar we're trying to acquire to on some other jurisdiction, is not the bar we aspire to. We set our own bars at a little bit higher. So there's nothing stopping us from doing that, other than getting, as the old cliché goes, our ducks in line. I do want to note again, this takes us to the next level of being able to do that.

I want to look at some of the things here that we're talking about. We're talking about four-tier paramedicine professionals here. We know, the EMRs are here, the PCPs plus the CCPs, all health professionals who have a different level of skill set and a different ability to be able to respond and intervene in a particular health situation.

What we need to do now is to best maximize their skill sets in particular geographic regions,

or particular types of response calls or in a particular regional process. And part of it could be one or all of these groups of professionals go out and do particular training components within our society. It could be at seniors' homes, for example. It could be with a group of school children. It could be a group of athletes in some way of being able to identify or treat or access certain things that may be more important or more fluent and more beneficial in assessing particular ailments or interventions that may be necessary. So we have that ability to do that.

We're looking at authorities to create a central medical dispatch. I've met with the Paramedic Association and I've met with the ambulance providers, and I get no pushback from either one of those organizations. I met with two of the health authorities who see this as a benefit, and even in the discussion with the officials from the department, see it as a positive.

The unfortunate thing, we've talked about this and we've talked about it and talked about it, somewhere along the way somebody has got to take it and say okay, let's sit down. Let's figure out what a central dispatch is and how it's going to work. And if it's going to cost money, how if we invest money here we save in the back end or we provide a better service.

We had the same debate yesterday in a piece of legislation around PTSD. There are certain monies you've got to invest. They're prudent investments, if you invest them in the front end and you're going to save on the back end, because you're providing better health care, or you're providing better piece of mind, or our society's better off, or it encourages a better economic concurrency in our society.

There's a reason and a rationale why we do certain things. We can't be afraid that it may cost money, and I know that becomes the first thing, but we need to look at if it's going to cost us money, how do we still benefit? I know there's a reality in life, you're restricted on X-number of dollars. There's no money tree, as we used to talk about in the House of Assembly one time, that we can just pick when we need. That would be great in a Utopia society, but it isn't.

The reality is there are budget lines you have follow, but through the proper dialogue and a

proper discussion with those stakeholders –and there are a multitude here – there’s nothing that can’t be achieved. It’s just a matter of determining how much you want to invest upfront, and what’s the long-term benefits down the road so that you can still sustain whatever restrictions you have from a financial point of view.

I gave the example yesterday when we talked about the pensions here, the teachers’ pension plan and the process we had used in the past and how relevant that is. That when all the stakeholders sat down and said, what is it that you need us to provide for you? That could be the same mechanism here.

From a paramedicine point of view and the health professionals provided, to the providers of the ambulance services themselves, to the regional health authorities and any other service organization that may want to or may need to have input: what is it that you want us to be able to provide?

When we have those discussions, and it could be the regional health authorities with clinics they have or cottage hospitals or further larger tertiary care facilities, what is it that you want us to provide? Now, let’s talk about what that’s going to look like. Then let’s talk about what it’s going to cost. Now, let’s talk about everybody’s role. How do you fit within that costing and model to be able to provide those services?

As we found with the pension plans for all of our civil service here in Newfoundland and Labrador, we came up with something that worked, that made it sustainable. And that’s no different than what we’re trying to do here. We’re trying to make health care sustainable and equitable and accessible by all across the province, and there’s nothing restricting us from being able to do that if we follow the right mechanism.

As we adopt our piece of legislation, and as the bill itself, Bill 43, becomes law, then if you don’t have a particular entity come voluntarily, now they’re coming by legal jurisdiction. Once you get them in a room and say this is not a particular attack on any one agency or organization or group to say you’re not doing your job in the right manner or the service

you’ve been contracted to provide is not being provided in the right manner, it’s the opposite – pure opposite.

This, I see, comes – and we’ve had a discussion, and I’ve challenged the minister to a certain degree when he said there’s a blank sheet. That may be more about the procurement of the ambulance service. Again, I say in this province blank sheets are not where we need to go. Too many good things have happened.

Are there some shaded areas on the sheet that need to be cleared up? Without a doubt. Are there some things that need to be erased on the sheets? Without a doubt. But we’ve done too many good things to erase them and not look at what has worked, but, more importantly, what hasn’t worked. So we ensure when we do it now we get it right.

So there’s an opportunity to do that. The definitions that we’ve talked about here, it clearly outlines what roles each of the entities would play here. I do like the fact that paramedicine is given a much bigger role, and it’s very fluent with the whole process here. I think that’s a very positive step forward. I think it’s very progressive. It’s thinking outside the normal box in Newfoundland and Labrador.

It may be the standard somewhere else, or it may be acceptable, but because of some of the challenges in Newfoundland and Labrador, it probably wasn’t the way most would have thought of it. But now that we’re thinking that way and there’s an openness to evolve that through some pilot projects – and I understand there’s at least one and maybe a couple of more in the works that will start in the very near future that will give us an understanding of how we adjust and continue the process forward.

The fact that the open dialogue here talks about the inclusion of the major stakeholders, it particularly talks about the definition so there’s no confusion around if a union group are included here or involved here. They would know exactly what the regulatory process would be if they’re negotiating, if there’s a particular grievance, if there’s a particular set of public account issues they want to bring forward. That could mean coming to the point where they may want to, themselves, have public forums on how

health care is provided but, in this case, how the ambulance services and the services that are provided by the ambulance providers themselves are done in a particular area.

It also gives an opportunity for the other stakeholders, and we forget sometimes – and I've talked about community groups – about the municipalities. Now municipalities would have an understanding of – sometimes it's a bit confusing between we talk about the public providers and the community providers and the health providers themselves when it comes to the ambulance service. Somewhere along the way, we've got to find the medium where everybody gets the same level of training; the same level of service; the same response times, being cognizant of geography and a few of the other things; but the same level of acceptance on how we access our health care here.

There are a multitude of definitions here. Three key things I noted when going through the briefing. One was that paramedicine is elevated to a higher standard here in the sense of acceptance, support and definition on how this can expand and become a holistic avenue and an alternative avenue or another process to providing health care in regions for our people. The second was that the regulatory process ensures now that every part of the group are accountable, but particularly, and this is not to pick on them right now, but 90 per cent of the last three reports we've had have been around the ambulance providers and the standard there.

We know in every scenario and every avenue of life, or every provider of whatever service, there are certain ones that fall down on the standard, but in this case, the accountability is there, the accountability for self-policing but, particularly, the accountability for an authoritarian control mechanism here that makes people accountable. The minister has that from his perspective. The health authorities would also have that. The department would have it. The chief medical officer would have it. We have various mechanisms there that would put in play the reliability and accountability to ensure that we move this to what's an acceptable level.

One of the other things that needs to be noted, too, and we had this discussion on how you would provide a service if you revoked a licence

from a particular entity, and we've already had experiences around that. It's happened recently in another part of the province, where the department had to step in, or the regional health authority, and cancel a contract with a provider and then look at providing another service.

I know they already have a protocol in play, but here I would see, as we define some of the regulatory processes here, and the policies themselves and the definitions, it would be more explicitly spelled out, so there wouldn't be let's look through 50 things and understand this definition, that definition. Here would be the protocol is already written, I would assume, and I'm fairly confident it does, in the regional health authorities and with the department, but now every definition related to that would be part and parcel of what happens here.

The other thing, and there have been some questions, and we even had the same question because, as you know, there's been a lot of discussion about the Public Utilities Board, and they're the umbrella to oversee and represent society in a larger point when it comes to accountability around procurement, to a degree, and licensing and these types of things in providing particular services. Very few people in the general public, other than, I guess, the ambulance providers, would've known that the Public Utilities Board are the ones who give them the licence to be able to operate as part of that.

A year or so ago, when I was made aware that that was the case, I shook my head, too, in saying is that really the best mechanism to use from a holistic health point of view. When it was proposed in this piece of legislation that they would be taken out of equation, and there's no disrespect to them, but if you want to have a fluent process, the providers themselves should know all of the regulatory things should be all in line, so if they're in a meeting to talk about the equipment on a particular ambulance, or the training, then that should also be part and parcel of their licensing regulatory process; whereas the PUB would do one part of it, and then there would be another section, and another section, or another group of individuals separate from that.

Working in isolation of two entities that really don't have a day-to-day collaborative, cohesive

working relationship, to me, didn't make a lot of sense, and it makes sense to put it here so that the full licensing is part of this piece of legislation that falls under the Department of Health and becomes part of what we do in this House of Assembly as part of that.

Some of the other things that I do remember having some discussion around was the emergency health services and how we could change the approach by better utilizing the ambulance services and the professionals that we have there. That led into the whole discussion about thinking outside the box and providing services in particular rural areas that might be in the best interests of using the service that we have, keeping in mind a lot of cases may not have an ambulance service or may not have a facility, be it a hospital or clinic, that can provide certain services, but they still have those skill sets with those individuals who work on the ambulance services themselves. Being able to better utilize that itself will be something that's in the best interest of everybody else.

The other thing that I note, it streamlines the whole ambulatory services as required to action in current request for proposals. It makes it more efficient when there's a call for proposals to the general public for the providing of services. This makes it a more efficient way of doing it.

In certain cases here, we could be gone for expression of interest, request for proposals; we could be going to direct procurement, depending on what the process was. This here makes the existing legislation or bills that we used, which sometimes got confusing and, in some cases, as it was explained to me, the left hand didn't know what the right hand was doing, because there were two entities that are on different sides of the fence for various reasons would not know, so that cohesive, fluent, timely process here wasn't met in a lot of cases.

We have the ability to do that now with the new process, and we know there are going to be big changes coming in 2020. Most contracts are up then. Obviously, and the minister noted, this is not about the procurement of the ambulance service, this piece of legislation, but in my opinion, and I would think most, this does have a major impact on the procurement of the ambulance service as the contracts come

forward, and it should, because it should set the tone and the regulatory process for what would be expected when we come for the procurement of ambulance services, what's that going to look like. We have a little over a year to frame out, from this piece of legislation and the positive things that we'll learn from this, and probably some of the nuances that we haven't addressed yet in this particular legislation, to move forward to ensure that the procurement process gives us the best entity, or the best structure, to be able to provide the services with the health professionals that we have.

Again, I noted there about the Public Utilities Board here, one of the things – and I checked into this after the statement, and I spoke to somebody at the board. Unfortunately – and this was their words – and realistically, and I think it probably would have been the consensus, they just rubber-stamped it in a lot of cases. They weren't particularly skilled, or that wasn't particularly a priority, while it was a responsibility. It's a big difference between a responsibility and a priority in a particular entity, and we all know that from whatever we work at, but I know that as a former civil servant and as a former minister.

The difference between what you're responsible for and your priorities, two different things. And if it's a priority, well, it's going to go front and centre; you're going to put everything into account as much as possible; you're going to be able to do what you can. But if it's not a priority and it's just a responsibility, then it probably doesn't move to the next level, as part of what you need to do.

So, that process there, I think, cleans that up, moves that, puts it in the framework that it should be, that it could now be cohesive with what the legislation itself is noting here as we talk about that.

Ambulatory services, too, I mean, defining the terms of that, another positive in this piece of legislation. It brings the services here from a negative light because that's all we've been hearing, it's unfortunate but it's a reality. Media are not going to pick up on the positive things we're doing in providing services and that's, I suppose, maybe it's not their job. I would think it would be part of their job but they only have

so many stories, they're going to get stories that at least give more attention to it and brings it to the general public.

In this case here, now what this act does and the discussion we're having here and the collaborative approach and the dialogue that's happened with the stakeholders, now everybody is aware of exactly what the intent is, what we're trying to achieve. Nobody is hidden behind the fact that, or hidden the fact that there have been some challenges, some major challenges.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this, there have been three major reports that have said we're not going in the right direction and if we continue to do this, it's going to be detrimental financially and, unfortunately, it's going to have an effect on the delivery of health and maybe to an extreme situation that nobody wants to face at this point. From this perspective, just having that dialogue now has improved where we are in the next little period of time.

As we move this forward, I am looking very closely at the definitions and outlining exactly what the policy would be in the future. Again, there's a number of things here that – we're not suspicious of anything, that's not what this is about. It's about clarification though, because it would be better if, when we get into the regulatory process, the definitions are responsive and understanding of what the stakeholders and the providers understand so that we're not delaying anything in advance.

So, as we have those definitions, I do encourage the minister and his officials and all the other key players to ensure that as definitions are being defined and the policies are being rolled out, that there is a full-fledge inclusion with the other providers here who've gotten you to this point. I mean, the invaluable information and dialogue that they've had and statistical information has been the framework for putting together this piece of legislation.

Now, we need to continue it because the legislation itself just becomes the law in the House of Assembly. The actual operational, the bricks and mortar, the rubber to the road, is in the legislative definitions, the regulatory definitions. So we may need to ensure that if we're going to define that, and they're the

regulatory processes, that they reflect exactly what it is that we're trying to do here, and that we're going to get the best response and the best return from doing that.

Again, I was very much educated when I met with a number of the key stakeholders involved here, particularly the paramedics, about some of the challenges that they faced, some of the things that they could provide that I would've never ever thought of. I suspect those who are not directly in the health care profession and, all due respect, some who are in the health care profession, didn't understand or didn't accept that this could be a role for the paramedics, particularly around paramedicine.

So, it gave me a different perspective, and I even backed off a little bit from some of my perspectives of what I thought was the best way to move forward, and started to re-read some of the reports, and got a better understanding and saw a better approach by using that skill set.

Again, I come from somebody who operated a business for a period of time, so I do understand the business model, too, has to be workable if we're going to provide a service by individuals because we have a very unique setup here. Unless we change the full structure, which is, again, that's an open dialogue as we move forward on this process. But a key message here now is that the dialogue we've started, that got us to a good place with a good piece of legislation, it's not the end of the legislation because the regulatory outlines and the implementation of the policies have to be defined, and I would hope in an open and transparent manner so that everybody's aware of it in advance.

If we're going to be able to implement this by the end of the fiscal year, then over the next three months all those involved would know because some may have to invest, from a business point of view, financially, up front, some may have to invest from a training point of view, be it the professionals providing them. The regional health authorities may have to invest from a human resource point of view, or from a structural point of view, or from an accountability point of view. The department itself, we may have to look at again how this is going to be done from a financial point of view.

Are there going to be resources that are necessary in the regional health authorities to monitor this, to put the regulatory things in play from an inspection point of view, for example?

We talked about the PUB is not going to be looking at the licensing. Well then what process is going to be engaged there with Service NL, for example, on inspecting ambulances as part of that? Who, within the health care system, would be looking at the equipment that's on the ambulances themselves? Who will be looking at the licensing part for the paramedics who are there?

Then as we move to one of the other key components here, the key (inaudible) components, how we're going to do the paramedicine in particular areas, how do we monitor it? How do we look at the success of that? How do we make a determination whether or not that has worked and how do we continue it? More importantly, how do we expand it? Once we find something that's working how do we expand it to other parts of the province?

There's a multitude of things there that need to be looked at, that need to be defined but I don't say that in any negative way. I say that holistically in a positive way that we're moving this in the right direction. It's just in a three-month period, is that ambitious? I don't know because, again, I'm not privy to exactly all the information that has been shared, all the dialogue that has gone on, but I do know the door is open for all the stakeholders to have that dialogue and to continue it.

So, there should be no restrictions or no major barriers in defining what the regulations are going to be, how they are going to be enacted and, particularly, what resources or what entity is going to be responsible for the oversight in those particular areas. We have that ability to move that to the next level.

After this, too, we looked at some of the definitions and I've said it before, I used to be a big proponent of not wanting to give the minister holistic control in a lot of cases because I always felt there are other entities out there that should be consulted in advance before a decision is made. Now, I know, at the end of the day, somebody has to make a final decision.

But the last couple of bills, I've looked at it and maybe I'm just reading, maybe there's a difference in the type of bills, but what I've read in the last number of ones, while the minister still has particular authorities, and rightfully so, that they're tempered, not taken away from them but they're tempered to the point where there's a bigger engagement process before the final decision is made, or the information is gathered in advance before it gets to that point, or there's another entity that advises.

I see that as a positive. I see that you want to be able to ensure every perspective has been looked at before you make a decision that's going to be detrimental to a particular region, or to a provider, or to a group of staff when you implement something.

I looked at that and I saw that as a positive. I thought automatically – I remember a piece of legislation we had a year ago, I spent most of my discussion – for want of a better phrase – attacking the minister on having too much control and too much influence over this, but the couple of bills I've seen as being very positive and moving towards looking at how that works.

I do know there are a number of other departments that would have to be engaged here. Obviously, we're talking contracts, and one of the issues here is about accountability and if you pull back a contract from somebody what does that mean from a legal point of view? Because you've got to have all your i's dotted and your t's crossed to ensure you're not spending money that is going to be good money after bad, or that you're not punishing somebody and you didn't do due diligence.

You'd want to ensure that you have the regulatory process in play, but you also have the legal advice that would ensure, at the end of the day, you have provided the service, and you've done it; the person or the group who wasn't providing the service were accountable. If their accountability is seen to be shrouded in controversy or unacceptance of their responsibilities, then you have the right to remove them from the equation and put in somebody who's willing to provide that service based on the regulatory process you have. So I like that.

If you read it, some would say it could be even – it's a little stern on some cases, but we need to have more of that. I said that when I was minister in Transportation and Works. Government needs to have more authority.

When people are not living up to their commitments, be it staffing, be it particularly outside entities that we contract with, that we would have a fluent process that's not time restraining. That we could eliminate that barrier and move in someone or some group or some other entity that can provide the service at the level we need. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador deserve that. The taxpayers deserve to ensure the money being spent is being spent in the way it was contracted.

We need to send a message that while we're open for business, we're open for business for those who will follow the processes, follow the intent of their contracts and live up to their obligations. That's fairly simple. And if those obligations mean staff are to be paid at a certain level in a timely fashion and additional staffing that are necessary are paid, or the hours that are put in by staffing are reimbursed at the levels that are comparable in the industry, wherever they may be.

We can't say at one point we want to bring legislation to here, but how we treat the people who provide the service we keep it at here. That can't work. You're destined to have failure. You're destined to have confusion and you're destined to have revolt, and we don't want that. That shouldn't be that. We should be able to come up with systems that continuously move forward and meet the goals that we want, improving our health care.

So we've got an opportunity to do this. We've got an opportunity with how we've outlined this piece of legislation, how we've seriously included the industry into what needs to be done, how we've also talked about expanding the type of services that are being provided out there, but also how we talked about resourcing whatever may be needed.

In 2020, when we look at the whole atmosphere of this, there may be a whole different picture on how that's provided. Maybe there are built-in mechanisms for additional training monies for

the providers, or maybe they're not part of that process. Maybe it's the Paramedic Association or the regional health authorities or another entity that's given that ability to provide particular training, if there's a new type of intervention we're going to use or new approach to it.

So we have an opportunity here because this is stage – probably stage three or four, because I think there are two or three pieces of legislation that's come into play that have started to move forward that are very positive. This is another one. As we get to the procurement of the ambulance services here and some of the services that will be provided through that or some of the pieces of legislation that may have to be changed, that will have a major impact on what happens there.

As we continue to move towards that process, I just wanted to note one of the last key components of support here and that's particularly around the regional health authorities having a more influential stake in providing the direction to the services that need to be here. I know the minister, obviously, has the umbrella in charge of the regional health authorities, but, again, the particular differences in Newfoundland and Labrador – and you don't want to segregate how we do things, but you want to be cognizant of being able to be flexible on providing the service in a particular area that may have some particular challenges.

In here, the health authorities, through the dialogue with the minister, has the ability to be able to do that. That's why we talk about some of the paramedicine pilot projects and how they can be either farmed out to other parts of the province or new ones can be developed that are unique to that particular area.

So, at the end of the day, I think this is a very positive step forward. We joke sometimes when we say it is housekeeping. It's housekeeping, but not in the same manner that we talk about in some of the other bills here that it's just a change of a sentence or a word or a definition. It's housekeeping by bringing everything together under one neat package, defining exactly the process and then setting the tone for setting the regulations that are going to be very important to make sure all the stakeholders have

the ability, the understanding, the commitment and the resources to provide the best health care that we can in Newfoundland and Labrador, particularly around our ambulance services.

Mr. Speaker, on that note, I will sit by saying that I will be supporting this bill when we get to that and I will be asking some questions in Committee, maybe a multitude of those. I probably gave a number of them to the minister already in the conversation because I know he was taking notes, day in and day out. So he'll probably be able to answer when he speaks again.

Anyway, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

The hon. the Member for the District of St. John's Centre and Leader of the Third Party.

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

I'm very happy; I really am very, very happy to stand and speak to Bill 43, the *Emergency Health and Paramedicine Services Act*.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bill that is 20 years in the making. It's about time, and I think that I would like to applaud the minister and his staff for doing this work. I'd also like to thank those who were involved in developing this legislation. I understand there has been much consultation.

Mr. Speaker, have we ever heard throughout the past – I don't know – six years since the Fitch report was done, and prior to the Fitch report, we have heard from so many people in the province. We have heard from individuals. We've heard from town councils. We have heard from service providers. We've heard from people in the medical field. We've heard from people in emergency services and paramedicine. We've heard from everybody. Then this government has done that all over again by doing their consultations.

What we know, Mr. Speaker, is this is so necessary and this is so welcome. Of course, we'll see how it rolls out and how it works on a day-to-day level and on a community-to-community level. That's yet to be worked out.

Some of the regulations are yet to be worked out, but I would like to thank those who gave a very thorough briefing. The briefing was about an hour and a half. So I'd like to thank those who took the time to do that.

Then I'd also like to thank all those folks who all over the province have provided ambulance services, paramedicine services, the public providers, the private providers, the community providers for oftentimes doing work under really, really tough circumstances. The work they provide and the service they provide are often sometimes life and death situations.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Just a little bit more quiet, please.

Thank you.

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

I do appreciate that.

So they often provide services that might mean life or death. We've heard from paramedicine workers, from paramedics, all the categories of those who provide this kind of emergency services, about PTSD and how difficult it is at times for first responders. Imagine, Mr. Speaker, doing that work, that in and of itself is so difficult, and then often under a system that they know is not working well. That it has been a real patchwork system.

So we have challenges. We have absolute challenges around this area of service provision in the province because of our geography, because of our aging population, because of our fiscal situation, because of the patchwork kind of system that we've had. That includes public, private, community, not-for-profit, for-profit, well-educated and at times not educated enough to provide the services. So imagine the people who do provide these services, which are so crucial and so critical, and at times very difficult, under a system that really wasn't working really well.

So again, this has been 20 years in the making, and thank goodness that we have this here today,

as we begin to wrap up this session of the House, to know that this piece of legislation has come before us and is so necessary. One of the officials in the briefing said: To move to more modern systems of emergency care, you need more modern legislation, and I believe that that's what this legislation reflects.

The ambulance system, the delivery of emergency and paramedicine services, has needed these changes for a very, very long time, and hopefully what we will see is a more – it's not just about efficiencies. Sometimes government or political watchers talk about how do we make our systems more efficient, and they're often talking about how you cut costs. I'd like to say, really, the question we need to be asking is how we make it more effective, because that's really what we want.

We want the best bang we can for our dollar, we want the best service possible we can get from our people who are engaged, so how do we make it more effective? And hopefully, Mr. Speaker, that's what this bill will do. It will make our emergency health and paramedicine services more effective and serve the people of the province more effectively and more securely because, again, it's such an important service.

So our challenge is, again, our geography. In a number of provinces, the challenges they have comes with having such a large population. Our challenge to provide a real effective service is because of our small population in relation to our geographic mass. When we look at different parts of Labrador, when we look down on the southern coast, when we look in Central, when we look at Eastern, the West Coast, the Northern Peninsula, the real geographic challenges that we face, but also because our population is so small and so spread out, and because we have an aging population. It is my hope that it will address some of those challenges.

We, in the NDP, our party has been calling consistently for a high-quality service across the province, and perhaps this bill is a step in the right direction. The name of the bill reflects the fact that we do, in this province, have emergency responders who are also, at times, not paramedics, and that proves its challenges as well. So we will be supporting this bill, Mr. Speaker. We do have some questions, and I look

forward to Committee where we can ask – we just a few questions, really.

The Fitch report came out in 2013. After a real, extensive study, looking at the provision of emergency health and paramedicine services in the province, it came up with some very solid recommendations that really sat on a shelf somewhere. We didn't see them implemented, and some of them were really solid and really supported by communities, because this involves municipalities, it involves town, it involves service providers, the medical field.

We've all heard stories of inappropriate use of our medical transportation service. Sometimes not because of ill intent, but because the services just weren't provided in a way that really met the different level of services that they needed to provide. For instance, someone needing to come into St. John's for eye surgery, who would walk from their house to the ambulance and then lay down because that was their only transportation in.

Also what's reflected is our lack of a really good overall public transportation system, and so sometimes some of the services were used inappropriately, again not necessarily for ill intent, but basically because, again, the challenge we face with a small population spread over a huge geographic area and an aging population; perhaps people who cannot drive or do not have family members here because family members are in Fort McMurray and so they don't have the community supports they need in order to be able to avail of medical services.

Fitch had 10 recommendations and the very critical recommendation that they had was calling for the immediate creation of one central medical dispatch system which can track where all of the province's ambulances are to ensure the nearest available one responds to a call. Really, nothing has been done about that.

In section 5(1)(c) of the bill says: "establish one or more communication centres for the dispatch of paramedicine providers and emergency medical vehicles throughout the province." So, hopefully this is pointing to a real, strong, robust central dispatch system which will make the whole system more effective.

It's critical that people can rely on a high-performance, reliable ambulance system and this is a service where response time can literally save lives. We don't know how much it's going to cost. In 2014, the cost to implement the central dispatch had been pegged at \$5 million by industry observers. So, it will be interesting. I look forward to asking the minister about that, what he thinks it might provide and asking him for a little more description on how he sees central dispatch.

Then Grant Thornton, in September 28, pointed to some real challenges again in the whole system. They weren't able to get all the information they needed around the spending, so that would be also a matter of efficiency but, again, what we're looking for is effectiveness.

So, the bill really puts everything under the control and the authority of the minister. That's where our health services belong. They really do belong under the ministry of Health and Community Services.

We know that a number of the contracts are up in 2020. The minister said that this particular act is not dealing with procurement, but there are some concerns about really what's going to happen. Will there be a change in providers and operators? We know that different communities and different businesses have a lot invested in providing these services. It's a time of uncertainty right now in what this might mean. We will see, Mr. Speaker.

There are rumours floating around about the possibility, as in the rest of the Atlantic provinces, of a Medavie Blue Cross providing these services to the provinces. Will that happen? Is that the direction that government is going in? We don't know, but we know that that is a concern. Medavie is supposedly a non-profit organization that provides these kinds of services across the country, primarily in the Atlantic provinces, so we'll see what government's plans are in that area.

I'm happy that the government has done such an extensive form of consultation, both in the community and with service providers, and that, as the minister said in his opening statements, they are looking at providing the best possible

care at the best possible time. That's what we all want. That's what effective services will be.

The appointment of a provincial medical director with broad powers looks like a really good thing. Again, we need that expertise in directing any kind of change. The provision to have a mandatory five-year review – we see the field of medicine is changing so rapidly, also the demographics in the province are changing quite rapidly, so I would even like to see that review done a little bit earlier than five years.

Also, looking at the areas of the expansion of the scope of practice for emergency health workers and for paramedicine workers, we've seen that happening in a number of jurisdictions, where they do a number of different kinds of services, and we have to look at that. Our paramedicine personnel, what kinds of services can they provide? How can we, again, make their jobs more effective in the delivery of a health care system? For instance, in some places they do house calls to do blood work and take blood pressure measurements, et cetera, so maybe we will see the expansion of services, the expansion of the scope of practice in that way. Again, to be able to use the best of our people in the best way and deliver the most effective services is really what we all hope for.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have no more to say to that. I do have some questions that I will be asking in Committee. Again, I would like to thank the minister and his staff for this robust piece of legislation. I feel hopeful – we have to feel hopeful – that we will see some of the changes that we have so desperately – desperately – needed to make our emergency health and paramedicine services more effective.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to stand just for a couple of minutes and offer my support for Bill 43, An Act Respecting the Provision of Emergency Health and Paramedicine Services and, really,

what we're referring to as ambulance services in the province.

We've seen a number of issues over the years arise when it comes to provincial ambulance services, problems when it relates to a number of the providers in different parts of our province and issues that have arisen in terms of possibly inappropriate use of ambulances at times, service that was supposed to be provided, staffing levels that were supposed to be provided that actually didn't happen and so on. We saw the issues that were uncovered by the Auditor General.

I think it's in the best interest of the province as a whole that all these matters be addressed and that we have an ambulance service that's going to be appropriate, that's going to be appropriately staffed and resourced, the appropriate training, providing the services that are required for the people when they need it, different levels of service and so on. It's also important that it's done in not just an effective way, but we have to bear in mind costs and so on as well. Really what we have here is a piece of legislation that's sort of bringing all the pieces together under one umbrella. It's adding a lot of accountability, which is very, very important, and oversight to ensure that our people actually receive those services they require and they receive them in a timely manner.

From that perspective, I certainly support this bill. The only thing I would say is that, as I said to the other bill we had here in the House not too long ago around public health and so on, we can write all the legislation we want and put it here on paper, we can pass it and so on, but at the end of the day, the devil will be in the details. It will flow not just from the legislation, but really the details will come out in the regulations and in the policies. Of course, the regulations and the policies are things that nobody in this House of Assembly has control over, so to speak, other than the minister, so we have to trust the minister of the day, whoever that might be, that those regulations and those policies are going to be appropriate and that they're going to be effective and so on.

We won't really know until all this rolls out. We can only trust that it will be done. As this rolls

out over time, if we see issues that arise from said regulations and policies, then obviously it would be up to us as Members of the House, particularly on the Opposition side, to bring those issues forward in this hon. House and any other way we can to make sure that the issue is brought to the public light and that it gets addressed.

With that said, in terms of this actual bill itself and what's contained within it and the overarching guidelines and so on that are contained in this – as I indicated, the accountability mechanisms and so on that are contained within this, I certainly do support that in principle. As I said, hopefully, as all this rolls out, it will go the way that we all hope that it will. Again, it will come down to policies; it will come down to regulations, and it will come down to resources.

One of the complaints that we've heard over the years when we've seen issues arise with private ambulance services, and so on, that were contracted out through the procurement process – and we've seen issues where services weren't provided as they were supposed to. What we hear from ambulance operators – at least their side of the story, and I know that's just one side of the story – is the fact that quite often it's with the public procurement process.

No different than the school buses, by the way. School bus operators would argue it all comes down to the low bidder. As a result, ambulance operators – no different than school operators – would argue it's certainly hard to maintain the appropriate levels of staffing and equipment and training and everything else if the only thing the government is going to be interested in is who can provide the absolute lowest bid, as opposed to looking at who can provide the best service and the most reasonable service.

I would certainly hope that, as this unfolds, the whole concept around ensuring that any operators, whoever they may be, that are going to be providing the service and who are going to be ultimately expected to be in compliance with this piece of legislation and the powers vested in certain individuals under this legislation, I would hope that whoever those organizations are, that as government decides to contract that work out, that they bear in mind that it should be about

who can provide appropriate service. While cost obviously has to be a factor, because all of us as taxpayers have to pay for it, it can't just simply be about cost and cost alone.

If companies are bidding on things and the bids are obviously unreasonable, then someone is going to do the due diligence to figure out, well, how do you intend on doing this? Are you going to be cutting corners? Are you going to have equipment that's going to be up to spec? Are your operators going to be trained and so on? What are the response times going to be like? That would be the only thing which is sort of related to this bill but not contained directly in this bill.

I would say to the minister, that as all this rolls out, we got to make sure we get the appropriate services. This bill provides a guideline for that, but this written on paper means nothing, so to speak, in terms of if someone is in some part of Newfoundland and they call for an ambulance, whether they get it or not, whether they show up on time, whether the appropriate staff are on that ambulance, whether they're trained, whether the vehicle they show up in is fit to be on the road and so on. Those things, while in a general sense flow from this, the devil will be in the details. And the details in many cases, will come from that procurement contract.

So doing this is great, but the other pieces that will follow after this are probably the most important, and I certainly encourage the minister to keep that in mind.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

MR. LESTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak to Bill 43, An Act Respecting the Provision of Emergency Health and Paramedicine Services.

This is a great bill. As my colleagues from both Mount Pearl - Southlands had said and the Leader of the NDP, it's a bill that's been a long time in the making and definitely a necessity that we need to put in play as the demographics

change within our province to a more elderly population and a population that will require more immediate services.

In efforts to keep people in their homes, we also have a responsibility to make sure they have access to basic and emergency medical care. The intent of this act is to provide those parameters that will enable government and service providers to have a document and a mandate to do that. It also provides an element of front-line efficiency.

Our emergency departments, everybody is hearing the long waits at the Health Sciences' department and other emergency departments throughout the province. Yes, there are severe emergencies at times, but a lot of the issues that are showing up at our emergency departments are issues that could be dealt with at home if they were acted on appropriately or monitored appropriately.

These in particular, the ambulance staff are highly-trained, skilled and quite capable of administering some pre-emptive medical care and some pre-emptive medical observation. I always say, well, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. So every time we can prevent those people, especially the elderly or those who may be of compromised health, from having to go actually to the emergency department, that goes a long way to reducing the burden upon our health system and upon the provincial Treasury, of course.

This bill also puts in protocols and parameters of the oversight that is necessary to operate a system such as the paramedicine services. Everything from outlining the powers of what the minister can do and can condone and also can condemn. That is very important, because in bureaucracy it's often a question of, okay, well whose job is it to do this? It very clearly outlines that the minister is the one with the ultimate say and ultimate power. That is very important, because you really do need the go-to when there's a crisis or when there is a situation where a decision has to be made. It's very, very clear within the act that the minister is the one with the ultimate power.

Another thing we should really look at, too, is the non-application of the act. "This Act does

not apply to (a) a person providing emergency medical services or first aid assistance in circumstances to which the *Emergency Medical Aid Act* applies;” – sorry, does not apply – is “(b) a person based outside the province providing a service for the interprovincial transportation of patients; (c) police, firefighters, lifeguards and other persons prescribed in the regulations who are not paramedicine providers; (d) a person providing an emergency service during (i) an emergency declared under the *Emergency Services Act*, or ...” *Emergency Health and Paramedicine Services Act*.

Actually, just to speak to that, it was only last week that I received a text message as part of our provincial alert system as it pertains to the *Emergency Services Act*. It’s great to see we’re testing these systems and we do have those in place, because as our world evolves and we become more of a transient population, we’re basically exposed to all health concerns throughout our globe. We need to be able to react to that.

Once upon a time we were a sheltered population and were largely immune from global effects, but because our population is so movable and can get from places so quick via air travel or whatever it may be, even a terrorist threat could show up in a priority post or a courier package. You have a huge issue show up, and it’s wonderful to see this service act is in place and we’re prepared for it.

Some of the powers of the minister that we’d like to speak to are the establishment of standards for the management, operation and use of emergency vehicles. Obviously, the vehicles are the conduit of the personnel and the patient. It’s very important that those vehicles are, at all times, kept in the highest level of maintenance, routine maintenances done and inspections are carried out, not periodically but mandatorily on a frequent basis.

It doesn’t take long for a vehicle to deteriorate, especially – I know on my farm I always say, well, a vehicle sitting idle is almost worse than a vehicle working every day because that’s when the issues manifest themselves. As the vehicles are sitting up they become a little bit stiff and we have issues with transmissions, issues with engines and even issues with doors.

When somebody shows up to deliver paramedicine services in the form of an ambulance in an emergency situation, you don’t want to have to be comprised on delivery of service because the vehicle is not maintained properly.

Mr. Speaker, as our population does become more centralized, it’s going to be impossible to keep primary health care facilities in everybody’s town, in everybody’s neighbourhood. We’re going to see more of a centralization of services because, number one, it’s obviously becoming very costly and skilled professionals are going to increase their rate of pay. Unfortunately, we can’t have a hospital or an emergency department in all locations throughout our province. I’m sure we all would love to have that, but we only have so many dollars and it’s becoming more of a burden on the taxpayers’ contribution to deliver those services. And so we will see more of a role for paramedicine as we have no choice but to streamline our health care system.

These paramedicine providers will be the liaison between the patient and a more advanced health authority. And not only will they provide immediate physical medical care – but especially in the case of our elderly or people who live alone, often things are overlooked or gradually build up over a course of time and quickly develop into an emergency situation. By having a regular focused visit by the paramedicine providers, a lot of these issues will be able to be mitigated before they get to the crisis point. But when it does get to that crisis point, we do want to have the service there and it has to be reliable. The people of the province have to be confident that when they are faced with an emergency medical situation that there is someone on the way.

As I said, that’s going to have to evolve into more of a focus, because as we centralize our, I guess, emergency centres and emergency care and advanced care, it’s going to be more on the shoulders of the people and the services outlined in this act. Other jurisdictions have already started centralizing their health and, I guess, while our situation is far different, I would like to refer to the model in Australia where, of course, the air ambulance is a big component of the paramedicine services. You have far out

cattle ranches, sheep ranches or mining installations. Obviously, we can't have emergency facilities out in those areas. But instead of providing those services there, they have focused on a very, very efficient, well-maintained air ambulance service that can get people to the services that they need in their time of crisis. Not only that, they also do provide regular checkups and some primary care and pre-emptive care to those individuals in outlying areas.

So that facility of paramedicine services works quite well in such a large geographic area as Australia. Australia is basically the size of Quebec and Ontario doubled, so Newfoundland and Labrador would be a very, very small portion of that. So if that type of facility and that type of service is attainable in such a large continent, well I'm sure that the virtue of this act will enable us to provide the same type of care to our citizens as that of Australia and anywhere else that does operate a more centralized care system with fantastic paramedicine services.

Something that we also have to address, of course, is when an operator does deviate from the standards of what we have outlined, as a government within this bill, as acceptable and standard practices, there has to be facility there to move in and suspend the licence or provide a probationary period. But that also has to be outlined, because one of the worst actions when a problem occurs, in any situation, is no action. We have to be able to have a clear directive as to what we can and cannot do.

This is also outlined in the act in section 12(1), and under the authority of the minister, it may vary, but basically the minister can suspend or cancel an operator licence. It's clearly identified in such a case where "the operator contravenes this Act, the regulations, any other Act or regulations of the province or of Canada" So this goes beyond our provincial regulations; it also refers to federal regulations.

I can only imagine what kind of bureaucratic nightmare that must have created for the producers of this document to coordinate between provincial and federal regulations and jurisdictions. That's something that we have to take more of an aggressive approach to because so often not only do we see it in this service, but

we also see it in our fishery, our offshore where there is a convoluted line whether we have federal or provincial jurisdiction. So it's great to see that issue has been addressed and it's outlined how we will deal with that.

The minister basically has the final say. When the minister is satisfied that the operator is unable to comply with the terms and conditions of the operator licence, the minister has the complete and utter authority to cancel that licence. And so should it be, because the minister and, of course, the government is responsible for the health of our people. If someone is committed to providing a service and they are not providing the service that they agreed to, we as stewards of the taxpayers' dollars have to be able to step in there and act quickly and make sure that the true intent of this service and contract is fulfilled. Yes, there will, no doubt, be legal challenges at times. But our ultimate goal and directive and mandate is to provide this service in the respect that is outlined in this document to the people of our province.

While I look and read this, I can see that it's not only just a primary paramedicine services act, it's also about improving our general health in our province. That is about taking care of ourselves, taking care of our elderly, taking care of those who are unable to get back and forth on a regular basis to their doctors because of geographic or personal situations. So this is really a major step forward in looking after the overall health of the people of our province. And for that reason, I will personally be supporting this bill and I thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to it.

MR. SPEAKER: Any further speakers to the bill?

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

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

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

I was delighted to hear such loquacious praise for the bill and I look forward to the Committee

stage. I would just highlight two things: one, it's not just about ambulances, it's far bigger than that; and, the second thing is that the passage of this bill will considerably reduce uncertainty within the sphere of operators in paramedicine.

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

The motion is that Bill 43 be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting The Provision Of Emergency Health And Paramedicine Services. (Bill 43)

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

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act Respecting The Provision Of Emergency Health And Paramedicine Services," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 43)

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 43.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to

resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the said bill.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Warr): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 43, An Act Respecting The Provision Of Emergency Health And Paramedicine Services.

A bill, "An Act Respecting The Provision Of Emergency Health And Paramedicine Services." (Bill 43)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just a couple of questions here for clarification and to further the process.

I just ask the minister: Will there be further consultation in the development of the regulations over the next couple of months?

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

MR. HAGGIE: Yes.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island.

MR. BRAZIL: Mr. Chair, that's good hear. We're moving in the right direction.

Can the minister outline just some of the paramedicine services that he sees on a go-forward basis that would be positive for the province?

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

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much.

Currently paramedicine is defined by protocols and algorithms developed by the Provincial Medical Oversight office. The possibilities around scopes of practice for paramedicine would really depend on whether or not they went down the route of self-regulation, but certainly they run from community paramedicine, traditional first responder roles, and right through to advance care paramedicine and critical care transport paramedicine, any and all of those. So, the scope is quite wide.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

That's good hear that there's an opportunity here, as we talked about earlier, to think outside the box and provide better health care in particular areas.

The appeals process for an ambulance provider whose licence may be revoked or there may be some restrictions on that, can you just outline exactly the process there for that individual or group of companies to be able to appeal, or is there an appeal process on being able to either reinstate or have an operational process where there are some regulatory conditions attached to it?

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

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

The idea in the act that when an issue is identified, currently, there is a built-in, 60-day period during which the operator would have

time to put in place corrective or remedial activities. What happens after that, really would rather depend on the nature of the defect and how egregious it may or may not have been.

We can certainly look at putting in an appeal mechanism other than that, but our prime concern around enshrining these time limits in the act was concerned with patient safety and rapidity of action.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the minister for that answer. I only have one last question here: Does the minister anticipate any additional revenues being needed by the regional health authorities or particular branch of his department or another entity outside, maybe Service NL or some other contracting or partnering entity there when it comes to implementing the legislation and particularly the regulatory process afterwards?

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

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

Short term the answer is no. This simply enshrines practices that we currently have. As we go forward with program development through the newly revamped paramedicine services, then obviously that would feed into a regular budgetary process.

CHAIR: Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 37 inclusive.

CHAIR: Clauses 2 through 37 inclusive, shall they carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 37 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act Respecting The Provision Of Emergency Health And Paramedicine Services.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: I move, Mr. Chair, that the Committee rise and report Bill 43.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 43.

Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): The hon. the Member for the District of Baie Verte - Green Bay and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House.

MR. WARR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 43 without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 43 without amendment.

When shall the report be received? Now?

MR. A. PARSONS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the said bill be read a third time?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave of my colleagues to proceed to third reading on this bill today.

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

MR. SPEAKER: You have leave, Sir.

MR. A. PARSONS: I thank my colleagues for providing leave.

Mr. Speaker, I would call from the Order Paper, Order 5, third reading of Bill 43.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that Bill 43, An Act Respecting The Provision Of Emergency Health And Paramedicine Services, be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against?

The motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting The Provision Of Emergency Health And Paramedicine Services. (Bill 43)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act Respecting The Provision Of Emergency Health And Paramedicine Services," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 43)

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 3, third reading of Bill 45.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that Bill 45, An Act Respecting A Pension Plan For Teachers, be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against?

The motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting A Pension Plan For Teachers. (Bill 45)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act Respecting A Pension Plan For Teachers," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 45)

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, given the hour, I would move that we recess until 2 p.m. today.

MR. SPEAKER: This House stands in recess until 2 p.m.

Recess

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

We have some special guests in the House of Assembly today that I'd like to introduce to the Members.

Today, I am very pleased to welcome a friend of mine from the United States Consulate General, Ms. Marcia Seitz-Ehler. She has brought with her the Book of Condolences for the 41st President of the United States, George H. W. Bush, whose funeral is occurring as I speak. I would invite all Members of this House, and the public, to please sign the book established in the main lobby – as this man was a good friend to our country and truly loved our province.

Welcome to you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Also in the Speaker's gallery today, I would like to welcome representatives from the Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Association: Rhonda Neary, Susan Casey and James Loder, as well as Paul Rose, Dave Pike and Bill Smith from the Mazol Shriners. They will be mentioned in a Ministerial Statement this afternoon.

Welcome to you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: In the public gallery today, I would like to welcome Dr. Donna Hardy Cox, Dean of the Memorial University School of Social Work, and Dr. Sherry McConnell from the Memorial University School of Social Work. They are joined by representatives from the CSSD Regional Operations and Provincial Office and are here for a Ministerial Statement.

Welcome to you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Also joining us in the public gallery are representatives from the Canadian Federation of Students-NL: Chairperson Sofia Descalzi and organizer Alyse Stuart.

A great welcome to you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: And one more, I would also like to welcome to this House of Assembly Mr. Tony Keats, who's President of Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador and Mayor of the Town of Dover.

Welcome to you, Sir.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: For Members' statements today we will hear from the Members for the Districts of Conception Bay South, St. Georges - Humber, St. John's Centre, Stephenville - Port au Port, Exploits, and Waterford Valley.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Recently, I had the privilege of attending the 45th anniversary of the Conception Bay South Fire Department.

At the time the CBS Fire Department was formed in 1973, it was totally a volunteer service. Over the years the department continued to expand and has become a composite service, operating with a combination of career and volunteer firefighters.

During the Firefighters' Ball, several firefighters were recognized for their outstanding work and dedication. The Provincial Long Service Awards for 20 or more years of service were awarded to: firefighters Sean Nugent, David Smith, Wayne Courage, Fred Kennedy, Albert Butler, Kevin Whelan, Trevor Fagan and Chad Murphy.

In addition to the Firefighters' Ball, the department also unveiled the newly redesigned Vincent H. Fowler Memorial Wall at Station 1. Local artist Morgan MacDonald of the Newfoundland Bronze Foundry helped recreate this focal point at Station 1 by honouring members who are no longer with us.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating and extending best wishes to each and every member of the Conception Bay

South Fire Department and thank them for their dedication, hard work and commitment to ensuring the safety for all residents of Conception Bay South.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for the District of St. George's - Humber.

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to congratulate Mrs. Freda Gillis who is celebrating her 108th birthday today. She is amongst the oldest, if not the oldest citizen of our province.

Freda was born in Cartyville on the West Coast and has seen many changes in her life, and she's seen many major events as well. She remembers veterans returning from both the First and Second World War. As well, she has memories of the Great Depression.

Mrs. Gillis had many wonderful events in her own life. She married Tommy Gillis in 1931 and they had five children. They lived in the Highlands where they owned their own farm and made or grew everything they required.

In the 1950s, her and her husband started a business which employed many people in the area and supplied pulpwood to the Bowater's Mill in Corner Brook. Freda carried out all the administrative work with the business.

Mrs. Freda Gillis is still very active, she cooks, knits, does crossword puzzles and reads the newspaper to follow what we're doing here in the House of Assembly.

I ask all Members of the House to join with me in wishing Mrs. Freda Gillis a very happy 108th birthday.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The St. John's Status of Women Council is making a difference again. This time it's their Domestic Violence at Work survey project, a critically important survey on the impact of domestic violence on workers and workplaces in Newfoundland and Labrador. Their theme is: what we don't know is hurting us!

They received a much coveted grant to allow them to partner with University of Western Ontario's Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children. This is very innovative and groundbreaking work and makes them leaders in this country on this issue.

Already thousands have made their voices heard, as staff travelled the province to engage women and community groups. All workers over the age of 15 are invited to respond to the survey.

The survey is online at sjwomenscentre.ca until January 2019.

Bravo to Jenny Wright and her amazing team of fierce feminists, and good work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for the District of Stephenville - Port au Port.

MR. FINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today is International Volunteer Day. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, as we know, are community minded and filled with pride. Each year, over 200,000 people within our province volunteer. I stand today to recognize and congratulate one absolutely incredible volunteer from Kippens.

Rosie Ryan has been a volunteer coach to hundreds of young athletes across the province for the past 35 years. In fact, 10 years ago she co-founded the Bay St. George Special

Olympics chapter. Over the last decade she has taken our Special Olympians all across the province and country.

Last Thursday night, in Toronto, she was acknowledged for her remarkable dedication and contribution to the Special Olympics community and was formally recognized as the 2018 Special Olympics Canada Female Coach of the Year.

I've known Rosie since childhood, and having had her as a coach, I can attest to the inspiration, sportsmanship and passion she has instilled in young athletes and in the Special Olympics Newfoundland and Labrador organization.

We look forward to hearing more about her upcoming travels to Abu Dhabi, as she is an association coach with Team Canada at the 2019 Special Olympics World Summer Games.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Rosie on this prestigious achievement and award.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for the District of Exploits.

MR. DEAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today in this hon. House to recognize the recent induction of four Grand Falls-Windsor natives into the Newfoundland and Labrador Baseball Hall of Fame.

Rob Finn competed at the national championships with his Dartmouth, Nova Scotia team, currently residing in Halifax. Rob won many awards as an outstanding pitcher and was a member of the Newfoundland Terra Novas.

Gary Furlong, a member of the Newfoundland Terra Novas, now resides in Halifax as well. Gary is one of the very best baseball players ever produced in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Robert "Wattsie" Goulding, an outstanding outfielder, also a member of the Newfoundland Terra Novas.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, the current Mayor of Grand Falls-Windsor, Barry Manuel. Barry was a star athlete who excelled at multiple sports, but was brilliant on the baseball field. Barry has coached on many levels and continues to do so with the Grand Falls-Windsor Minor Baseball Association.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all hon. Members join with me in congratulating these four exceptional baseball players and gentlemen, Rob Finn, Gary Furlong, Robert Goulding and Barry Manuel, on their induction into the Newfoundland and Labrador Baseball Hall of Fame.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Waterford Valley, who will seek consent before he speaks.

MR. OSBORNE: Yes, I'm looking to present a statement, by leave of the House.

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Please proceed.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today, I pay homage to Hal Barrett who passed peacefully away on Tuesday, December 4.

Mr. Barrett served as MHA for the constituents of St. John's West for three consecutive terms from June of 1979 to April of 1989.

After serving as Parliamentary Assistant to the Premier in 1984, Mr. Barrett was named to Cabinet in 1985 accepting a number of different portfolios, including Minister of Finance and Minister of Development.

Before entering politics, Hal worked as an RCMP officer. He then transitioned into the insurance business where he spent decades

employed in many different executive roles including: Manager of Adjusters & Appraisers Limited, Managing Director of R. C. Anthony Insurance, Partner at Bar-Wood Insurance Limited and former President of Crosbie Reed Stenhouse Limited.

Hal was also very generous with his personal time and served his community in many different capacities including: former Chairman of the Newfoundland Dockyard Association, Regional Director and Commissioner of Boy Scouts Canada, past Commodore of the Newfoundland Yacht Club, past Commodore of the Newfoundland & Labrador Sailing Association and past Commodore of the Newfoundland Cruising Club.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to pass on condolences to the family of Mr. Hal Barrett and to celebrate his life.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Before we proceed with Ministerial Statements, I would like to recognize I overlooked someone in the Speaker's gallery. I'd also like to welcome today Ms. Holly Hicks, who is here joining us today.

Welcome to you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Ministerial Statements.

Statements by Ministers

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to acknowledge the Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Association for their tremendous contributions to our province.

In my time as Minister of Transportation and Works, I've certainly had an opportunity to acknowledge the association for its role in our construction industry. For more than 50 years,

the association has made substantial contributions for the benefits of the industry, our provincial economy and to the residents of our communities. The work of the association members provides critical infrastructure, generates employment and drives the industry forward, all of which make for very real differences in the lives of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

But today I rise to commend the association on yet another of its important contributions.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to all the industry association does to move this province forward economically and socially, the association also dedicates considerable time and resources for charity. The association has contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to charitable organizations over the years. In fact, over the past 12 years the association has contributed close to \$400,000 to the Mazol Shriners children's transportation fund, which has gone towards helping children and their families connect with life-changing care for a range of conditions and injuries such as severe burns, bone and muscle issues to spinal injuries and other significant challenges.

Mr. Speaker, we are tremendously grateful for the contribution that organizations such as Mazol Shriners make to our province.

As the holiday season approaches, I encourage all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to reflect on what is most important in life, and to find it in their hearts to be inspired by such examples of giving throughout 2019 and beyond.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to recognize the Newfoundland and Labrador Construction

Association for the many contributions it makes throughout our province. The contributions to charitable organizations that is being recognized today is perhaps one of the many that people are unaware of, but it certainly does not go unnoticed in organizations such as the Mazol Shriners, who depend on this funding to carry out its very important work.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the construction association for its charitable contributions, and I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the many other wonderful organizations for the tremendous work they do to benefit the residents and communities throughout the province each and every day.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, offer my congratulations to the construction association.

The people of the province have a reputation for giving to charity, and StatsCan has proof of that. When companies such as the construction association and individuals give money and their time, they allow charities such as the Mazol Shriners to do so much more of the important work that they do.

I join with the minister and encourage anyone thinking about helping out a charity to do so, and what better time to do it than during this holiday season.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. HALEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on Friday, November 23, I joined with community partners to launch the annual Purple Ribbon campaign to increase awareness and responsiveness to violence against women. As part of the launch, we raised the Purple Ribbon flag, which will remain in place until December 10, Mr. Speaker, coinciding with the International 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

In the last year, our government has implemented a number of legislative changes aimed to help women and girls who are facing violence, including changing the definition of family violence in the *Family Violence Protection Act*, implementing a new Harassment Free Workplace Policy for those working in the public service, amending the *Labour Standards Act* to include family violence leave and passing legislation on the protection of intimate images, Mr. Speaker.

We are now looking at how to continue with violence prevention in Newfoundland and Labrador. In the coming months we will be working with stakeholders and partners to hear their perspectives on violence prevention and the needs of the community. I look forward to those discussions and moving to the next phase of the initiative.

We all have a responsibility to address this issue, Mr. Speaker. We must all work to end violence so that all women and girls can live, work and play in a society where they feel safe and can pursue their full potential.

I ask everyone in our province to not only continue the conversation, Mr. Speaker, but to take action against violence.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for the District of Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement.

On behalf of the Official Opposition, I join with the minister in recognizing the Purple Ribbon campaign and the International 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

Mr. Speaker, gender-based violence is not acceptable and we must all do our part in creating a safer society. While the changes to the *Family Violence Protection Act*, the new Harassment Free Workplace Policy and the amendments to the *Labour Standards Act* help, much more work still needs to be done.

Mr. Speaker, we must consult with community partners and organizers who work each and every day to prevent gender-based violence and who help provide support to victims of violence. These community partners have first-hand knowledge and experience which we can all benefit from.

I look forward to having more conversations in the future as we all work to eliminate gender-based violence.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre and Leader of the Third Party.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister. I thank all those working to eradicate gender-based violence against women and girls, especially those in the community who work with such expertise, passion and compassion.

Gender-based violence does not happen in a vacuum but is a result of systemic inequalities and the intersection of misogyny, poverty, racism and more. It is time this government took concrete actions to eradicate poverty among women by implementing a minimum wage of \$15 an hour working towards a living wage, and applying a real gender-based analysis to all budgets and programs. To do less is to perpetuate this inequality.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate Memorial University's School of Social Work on 50 years of professional social work education in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The School of Social Work plays a critical role in preparing social workers for this challenging, yet fulfilling profession, through education and personal development.

I am also proud to say that the provincial government has been an integral partner in the evolution of social work education in our province.

Just recently, several provincial government departments received awards from the School of Social Work for our long-term commitment to the field education of social work students.

Recognizing that social workers in child welfare require a complex skill set that includes practical experience, my department's offices throughout the province are pleased to serve as teaching facilities for social work students.

This would not be possible without the commitment of many of our professional social work staff to be field instructors.

In fact, through this commitment and our partnership with the School of Social Work, students will be able to complete their field placements in Indigenous communities in Labrador beginning in January 2019.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to share that Lenora Barry, Clinical Program Supervisor in our Labrador City office, has been recognized as one of the first six field instructors in our province to be designated as a Professional Associate of Memorial University's School of Social Work.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. DEMPSTER: The Irish poet William Butler Yeats said: "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

I wish to express my appreciation to the Memorial University School of Social Work and all the social work field instructors who, like Lenora, help light that fire.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Official Opposition I join the minister in acknowledging the valuable work of Memorial University's School of Social Work. Through their ongoing research, teaching, skill development and community development of the school, our future social workers are being prepared to carry out their often challenging roles with the compassion and professionalism which the role requires.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to congratulate Lenora Barry on her designation as a professional associate of the school. Field instructors such as Lenora play a vital role in helping to prepare social work students for their careers. I also wish to remark on and congratulate the School of Social Work on their field placements in Indigenous communities.

I look forward to hearing success stories from this program in the future as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

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

Thanks to the minister for the advance copy. Congratulations to the School of Social Work for 50 years of excellent training of professionals. Now that field placements will extend to Indigenous Labrador communities, I look forward to seeing more Indigenous students seeing social work as a way to go in their profession.

I also commend the School of Social Work for its role in research and public education on the issues of poverty and social determinants of health. The school has been a valuable resource to the university, the government and communities, and I wish them all the best for the next 50 years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Order, please!

I understand that there may be a rumour we could conclude our session today, and the Member for Humber Bay of Islands has asked to have leave to speak to a Member's statement.

Does he have leave?

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Please, the hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank all Members for the leave, and I think it's going to be worth listening to.

I have the privilege today to rise in this hon. House to recognize Mrs. Lillian Mae Wells of Cox's Cove who will be celebrating her 106th birthday tomorrow.

Mrs. Wells was born at Gillams in the Bay of Islands in 1912 and was the oldest of five children born to Edmund and Margaret Blanchard. In her younger years, she worked in

the woods with her father, cutting wood and bringing it out by oxen, and helped out with whatever else needed to be done. She also worked in the herring store, operated her own convenience store and also took boarders in every winter.

In 1949, as a young widow, she moved to Cox's Cove with her five daughters to work as a housekeeper for Benjamin Wells; a widower with four children. In 1953, they married and had two more children. She has 23 grandchildren, 33 great-grandchildren, 20 great-great-grandchildren and one great-great-great-grandchild.

Mrs. Wells still resides in her home and loves for company to drop by and have a chat. She still loves to have a little dance in her kitchen and enjoys going for a drive. What a milestone to reach and what life experiences and memories she has shared with all her family and friends.

On her 100th birthday we had a waltz; on her 105th she did a little jig for me. I asked her what she's going to do for her 106th and she told me I'd have to wait and see.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members to join me in wishing Mrs. Wells a very happy 106th birthday and I look forward to seeing her this weekend.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through Access to Information two copies of a staffing action to place Carla Foote in the role have been made public. The first copy did not contain a reason for staffing.

I ask the minister: Why did you feel it appropriate to sign a staffing action without all of the details?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can assure the Member opposite that the appropriate hiring practices were followed when it came to the appointment of Carla Foote and the appointment of Anne Chafe to these executive level positions at The Rooms. Both of these women are highly talented, highly capable, and have the experience to be in these leadership roles. And, I certainly support both of them having these positions and the work that they do to support the strategic plan and the direction of The Rooms, and I had no issue with signing the request for staffing action to have these people in those roles.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: The date on the second staffing action was the end of October, after questions were raised publicly about her hiring.

Minister, was the revised action a result of public backlash?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that the appropriate hiring practices were followed when it came to the appointments of both Carla Foote at The Rooms – this is a lateral move, she was in an executive position prior to working in government for three years holding the top position for communications –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me.

Order, please!

Can I have some quiet please?

Thank you.

Please continue.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, she was in the top communications position and responsible for marketing and brand, and was transferred to The Rooms to deliver on their strategic plan. This was all done in the appropriate process and means.

What the Members opposite have been doing, they have been playing politics with this particular matter, no different than what they've been playing with our framework for the cannabis industry where they're picking out one particular deal on Canopy but not wanting to discuss the benefits as well of Biome. These are good deals and they make sense for the people of the province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: We're not playing politics, Mr. Speaker, we're trying to get accountability for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. PERRY: Minister: If this position needed to be filled so quickly, why didn't you temporarily assign Ms. Foote to the job, then do a legitimate public competition so that she, as well as the 77 people that applied previously, could apply and you could be assured of a fair and transparent process?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This position that she's referring to is not the same as a director position, it's an executive position. The person who was elevated from Director of Museums and Archives was serving in that role, Anne Chafe, and has been elevated to the Executive Director of Museums and Art Gallery as well, because she is quite capable and competent to do that and determined based on the scope of work.

Ms. Foote, as well, had a significant role in government in being able to transform, through *The Way Forward* and through the Marketing and Brand Division, to be able to do communications and marketing. So this is a transfer of a position to an executive role.

What the Member opposite is doing, she's being very selective and being very partisan in her approach.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Well, we know from the public record there are at least 77 other people that may very well be just as qualified.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. PERRY: In June, the Finance Minister said: "Government probably are not the best managers of a ski hill," as he released an RFP for private investment into Marble Mountain, which closed on August 3.

I ask the minister: What is the status of this RFP process, and how many applicants were there?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to go back to the question that was asked previously as well by the Member opposite, because when this question first came to the House of Assembly and it was raised by the Leader of the Official Opposition about the hiring of Ms. Foote, I had read a commentary and quote from his father's book, John Crosbie, *No Holds Barred*. It talked about how somebody in the Opposition had asked questions and how he had his own sons, one who failed law school twice, and how this was brought up and how he was being charged with partisanship for giving them a role here in this, and that this was the most hurtful, vindictive and vile aspect to his whole career. This is very unfortunate that the

Member opposite is taking the same approach that is damaging to people's professional careers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister evaded answering that question, so I will answer it again – ask it again, sorry.

In June, the Finance Minister said they would be releasing an RFP, and actually it closed on August 3.

So I ask the minister: Can you tell us the status of this RFP process, and can you tell us how many applicants there were?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy to report that when it comes to the Marble Mountain Development Corporation – and we've highlighted that, for quite some time, there have been some financial challenges at Marble Mountain. The Members opposite know that as well, because when they had run the operation they had seen that lightning had struck the ski hill and that they were uninsured, costing the taxpayers \$4.6 million for the replacement of the lift.

What we have done is we've worked very closely, we've engaged with the public. We've done stakeholder consultation to get feedback, to improve the service and delivery of Marble Mountain. We issued an RFP. There were multiple applicants. There were three applicants that came forward, and those are being reviewed. When we have more information on that, we will do so publicly.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: Minister, will you disclose the shareholders of any business who is a part of a successful proposal for this RFP? Because we are hearing that it's once again an anonymous numbered company.

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker.

When the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador does business with an individual or a client – and Members opposite would know this, some of them are former ministers of the department of which I sit. When we enter into contracts we would release those details that we have that will be available, because we could find out that information.

The politics that has been put forward when it comes to Canopy, and what the Members opposite have tried to state, we have no relationship with this numbered company. Government does not have a contract with them. So we have no ability to go out and request or ask for that information of a company we're not doing business with. If we are doing business with a particular company, we can get that information and we can make it public.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On November 20, the Premier indicated that his understanding now, as early as the following Tuesday, there would be an arbitration that would allow for some of the transfer of funds related to Astaldi.

So I ask the Premier: Can you please provide an update on the arbitration, if Astaldi workers will receive the payments that they are indeed owed?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is indeed difficult for Astaldi workers, and we empathize that they are going through such a difficult time. It's my understanding that this has gone now to a court process. Astaldi filed a court process November 14. It has gone to that process. It is before the courts. My understanding is it won't be concluded until – perhaps even as late as after Christmas.

We can say that we know they are – all wages were paid for all workers up until October 20, both union and non-union workers. There were some non-union that did stay after the 20th, and that's the period of time in which we're speaking.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The information given by the Premier at the time, on November 20, that that Tuesday there would be arrangements made. Some indication was given to these workers that they would be paid. I understand the information is now available to Nalcor.

So I ask the minister or Premier: Why aren't actions being taken now so that the monies outstanding for these individuals will be paid to them before the Christmas season?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, we empathize with Astaldi workers, all of them. Non-union are also owed some benefits, as well as pension. That is before the courts. We know these non-unionized workers are looking for post-October 20 wages, as well as bonuses and payments as well.

I can say that it is before the courts. There is an ongoing court process that is happening, and we have to await that because the funds that Nalcor was using on the lines of credit are being held in that court process.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The federal Minister of Natural Resources, upon learning about the SeaRose FPSO oil spill, asked how the oil rig could start production in the large waves and adverse conditions. We asked the same question here in the House.

Given these comments, I ask the minister: Has she reached out to the federal minister to discuss the C-NLOPB powers in making stop-start decisions as it relates to restarting production in what is believed to be horrific sea conditions?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I indeed have had a conversation with Minister Sohi around the whole issue of the oil spill. We had been in communication, it's very important that we were. So we are awaiting the results of the investigation into this unfortunate oil spill that did occur. It's very difficult that it did occur.

We're going to monitor what occurs in that investigation and make any changes that are required to ensure that safety and environmental protection remain paramount for our offshore oil.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for that.

I'm asking the minister, based on what the federal minister indicated in regard to changes to the C-NLOPB authority, does she support such a direction?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I indeed support the investigation. I think it's very important that we await the outcome of the investigation to determine the facts that occurred, what happened during this very difficult and unfortunate incident.

We have to ensure that the responsibility and accountability and the liability remains with the operator in these instances, Mr. Speaker, and we want to make sure that what we see and what has happened and occurred, we make whatever changes are required to ensure just that.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

MR. LESTER: Mr. Speaker, the minister issued two five-year commercial cutting permits to Timberlands International. The mayor of Roddickton is fearful that her town and others on the Northern Peninsula will shut down, and I quote: "Our main industry is forestry and without that, it's just as well to cut the road off at Plum Point."

I ask the minister: If an operator wishes to start up the Roddickton plant, will they be given the same access to timber?

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

MR. BYRNE: A single tree, Mr. Speaker, cannot be cut twice. A single fish cannot be taken twice out of the ocean. We have commercial forestry permits that have now been issued to AEG, along with seven incumbent, existing sawmill operators. What the Alternative Energy Group company has indicated publicly is

that they foresee a sawmill in Roddickton; they're prepared to work with interests to put a sawmill in and operate a sawmill in Roddickton. That's very, very good news.

But the real, the real great news about this is that instead of putting \$12 million into a \$20 million project and seeing it fail, as the previous administration did, this government has seen a project and seen it through with no government money (inaudible) –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

MR. LESTER: I ask the minister for economic development and the MHA for the area: Can you confirm for this House that without timber allocations you're shutting the door to the industry and the pellet plant in Roddickton and surrounding area?

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

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, that's the very same kind of thinking that got Roddickton into a whole lot of trouble a long time ago. When there was a decision taken by that government, by the PC Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, to take a \$20-million project and to give \$12 million cash, with a shortfall of \$8 million, to complete it, and go: Jeez, I can't figure out why that didn't work.

Well, do you know what? We now have a project. We have a project that's on the Northern Peninsula. We've put permits in place to harvest resources. There's not one dime of government money going into it. The company has already indicated that they see Roddickton as having a very, very significant footprint in future in that operation.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LESTER: Once again, the minister shows extreme passion. I would wonder how come he didn't exhibit that passion for the people of Central Newfoundland when projects were at his door then.

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

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, I wonder where the Member was when there was confusion when harvesters from the Bonavista Peninsula wanted to operate on the Bonavista Peninsula and he was filing petitions. I have a letter on file that asks a question of me to ask to that hon. Member. Does he support the harvesters of the Bonavista Peninsula? Does he support the projects of harvesting forest fibre on the Bonavista Peninsula?

He has stood up repeatedly and said, along with his henchmen, Mr. Collins, to suggest: You know what, really, we should end the forestry practices of Newfoundland and Labrador, and we really should take into consideration other values first.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, over three weeks ago I asked the Minister of Transportation and Works if he would table a list of all surplus real property that his department had disposed of since December 1, 2015. The minister responded: I have no problem with tabling, he's quoted as saying.

So, Minister, it's been over three weeks. Are you going to table that document today?

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have no problem tabling the document, Mr. Speaker. We're a busy department in TW and

sometimes we have to prioritize the work we get done, the safety of motorists and making sure our roads are clear. But we have been able to put that document together.

I can add for the Member opposite, that we've done a little bit of extra work for him. We went back to 2003, Mr. Speaker, and what he is going to find is that throughout the last 15 years there have been numerous transactions in this province with land sales. That's something that the province has long been doing, and some of them have been to numbered companies, and not on our watch. So, Mr. Speaker, yes, I have no problem tabling that list today in this House.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for the District of Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When I asked the Minister of TW if he or the Premier's office had given direction to officials in the Department of Transportation and Works to sell land on Mews Place in St. John's to the numbered company 80521, the minister responded: Absolutely, positively not.

I ask the Premier: Did anyone in your office direct Transportation and Works officials to sell that parcel of land on Mews Place?

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

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member is back at it again today, I guess. I'll just go back to *Hansard* from yesterday, and it's from the Leader of the Opposition, and he says: "... we know that Canopy is leasing land and did not purchase land." That was yesterday in Question Period, Mr. Speaker.

The reality is if myself or somebody in the Department of Transportation gave a direction to sell land, it would be sold. The Member can go down on 59 Elizabeth Avenue and see that the land on Mews Place is government inventory.

That being said, if he is aware or if anybody is aware of a business that wants to come to our province, set up shop, employ Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, add to our economy, our department is open for business and we will sell excess land if we have the opportunity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I remind the minister, my question is: Did someone direct officials? I never said the sale happened. I'm asking: Did you or someone in the Premier's office direct the sale? Because we're hearing someone did. So come clean with the House.

MR. SPEAKER: I remind the Member to direct your questions to the Speaker, please.

Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, the unparliamentarily language continues and I'll address that after QP.

But, Mr. Speaker, the reality here is if the direction to sell land was done, the land would be sold. I'll go back to *Hansard* again from yesterday: "... we know that Canopy is leasing land and did not purchase land." Mr. Speaker, I don't know what we need to tell the hon. Member. But in my department, if I would have asked officials to sell land, we would've sold the land. There was no deal, Mr. Speaker. I'm lost where he's going again today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for the District of Cape St. Francis.

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

Three weeks ago the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment said a consultant's report on environmental assessment for the Marystown Shipyard was due in a few days. Can the minister confirm whether he received this report and, if so, what's the cost of the cleanup and who will assign the liabilities for the site?

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

MR. LETTO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's an issue that we're dealing with very seriously. We have received some reports. We're assessing what we have received and a decision will be made on the Marystown Shipyard very soon.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LETTO: But, Mr. Speaker, we will make sure that our due diligence is done and due diligence is done right so that we are not in a place that they were with Abitibi.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: I'll ask the minister again: Have you received the final report and who will assume the liabilities on the site?

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

MR. LETTO: Mr. Speaker, we have received the report and we are reviewing the report. But I can tell the hon. Member that no decision has been made on who is accepting any responsibility for this project. Again, I will say, Mr. Speaker, this is a very important project for the people of Marystown and the Burin Peninsula.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LETTO: We will do our due diligence and the right decision will be made, Mr. Speaker, in the end, in the best interest of the people of Burin Peninsula, for the people of this province and our government.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

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

Has the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment authorized the Town of Marystown to borrow for the purchase of the shipyard and how much was it?

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

MR. LETTO: Mr. Speaker, again, I have to say we have received a lot of information on this transaction that's in the works. We have not made any decision on anything at this point. But as soon as the decisions are made they will be made public for everybody to see, but they won't be made – again, I will say, they won't be made without doing our due diligence and we make sure that we make the right decision.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: I'd like to remind the minister that the Member sat on the side of him said the deal was done.

Minister, the province is provided – will the province be providing a loan guarantee to the Town of Marystown for the purchase of the shipyard?

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

MR. LETTO: I will say, to address the preamble, Mr. Speaker, that this project is very

important to both MHAs that represent the Burin Peninsula, because it a very important economic driver for the area.

Again, I will say, Mr. Speaker, we have not made any decisions on the Marystown Shipyard at this point regarding environment, regarding loans, regarding anything. No decision has been made, but we are doing our due diligence, and in the end, the right decision will be made.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: Marbase, the company looking to lease the former Marystown Shipyard, is advertising for a general manager with a background in aquaculture and ship repair. Is the proposed aquacultural hub going to be a ship repair business as well?

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

MR. LETTO: Mr. Speaker.

We received the business plan from Marbase, and we are looking at it. Again, no decision has been made, and we are taking the information, and we are reviewing it very carefully.

I'm not in a position to say what Marbase is doing or not doing at this point, but we will make our decisions for the Marystown Shipyard – again, I will say – based on doing our due diligence and making sure that we have the right decision going forward.

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 very much.

The Minister of Fisheries recently, the last couple of days, had the opportunity to meet with the federal minister on many occasions. I'm wondering if he had a commitment that there will be no surf-clam quota taken from the people in Grand Bank?

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

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker.

There were many, many discussions that we held with the federal minister. It's an opportunity that we enjoy, on this side, that was never, ever enjoyed by my Members on the other side. The relationship between the federal government and the provincial government of the day was pretty sour – pretty sour, indeed.

While we have many disagreements, we have many, many things to celebrate. One of those, Mr. Speaker, was an \$18-million announcement just a few short moments ago. The Premier and I announced, with our federal colleagues, \$18 million to support our fisheries and aquaculture sector, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BYRNE: This is the kind of things that we're bringing to the table, and the benefit is for Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There have been issues raised in the media in the past few days regarding patients in the Western Memorial Regional Hospital who are waiting to be transferred to St. John's for cardiac testing and treatment.

I want to thank the minister and the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay for their help in bringing this to the attention and helping solve the problem.

I ask the Minister of Health and Community Services: Will you continue to work with the

regional health authorities to ensure that patients on the West Coast will be seen at their earliest possible time and ensure all patient information will be communicated properly to Eastern Health to ensure timely treatment and testing?

Thank you.

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

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

It's an important question and very topical. I'd just like to start off by congratulating the staff at Western Health. They received a 98 per cent mark from Accreditation Canada, literally the highest in the province. Hats off to them.

To address the specifics of the Member's question, we have been working both with Western and Eastern Health. As of the last two months, we have introduced a fourth team to the cath lab; we've seen a 20 per cent increase in the number of patients going through on a daily basis and a 50 per cent reduction in the number of people waiting for cardiac catheter. I have a meeting scheduled with the cardiac care team and the cath lab to discuss how we can make this even better and particularly address the concerns of the Member opposite.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Canadian Federation of Students NL is concerned about the staggering rates of sexual assault and harassment at our post-secondary institutions. One in five women at North American post-secondary institutions is sexually assaulted, and it's no different in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Women need to be safe when going to school. Five provinces have legislation, and one has an MOU requiring post-secondary institutions to have stand-alone sexual assault policies.

Memorial does have one, a policy, but the colleges do not.

I ask the Minister of AESL: Will he commit to legislation requiring all post-secondary institutions, both public and private, to have stand-alone sexual assault policies?

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

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

Thank you for the question. It's certainly a very important one, and I know there's a number of Members on this side that would like to stand and answer it.

I had a very informative, positive meeting with the Canadian Federation of Students yesterday, and in fact, we have their presentation here. What I've committed to them is that we'll continue working with our colleagues in Advanced Education, in Justice, with the Status of Women and across government and with agencies.

We need to look at this. I appreciate the fact that they came very prepared and brought forward a jurisdictional scan showing that this is happening in other provinces, and without giving any commitment here today, I'd like to think that we can continue to work together to move this issue forward, as we've shown that we are able to do in the past.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, it's commitments that will protect women. These six provinces require their institutions to report on the number of sexual assaults, to train faculty and staff to be supportive, set up complaints procedures and provide resources for prevention and support. The policies create safer environments for students and must be available.

I ask the minister: Will he ensure that all post-secondary institutions in this province have

sexual assault policies with mandatory reporting, training, complaints procedures, prevention and support and commit – they're looking for a commitment, Mr. Speaker. We're all looking for a commitment – to supply the necessary funding for this.

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

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

Again, happy to stand and speak about this because this stems directly from a meeting that I had with this same group yesterday. In fact, I know the Minister of Advanced Education has one scheduled in the next week or so, and it's something that he looks forward to.

Again, what I would like to first say is that I've made a number of commitments in this House when it comes to ending sexual violence, when it comes to ending violence and harassment, not just within our institutions but across this province. I think we've shown that we're not only willing to make the commitment but we're willing to work together to make this happen.

This is something that we just had this discussion on, literally 24 hours ago. What I'm committing to right here now is to working with Members of this House, members of government departments and members of these groups to try to end this issue.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

In order for women to be safe they need economic security. Women in this province earn on average 63 cents for every dollar earned by men. This government promised pay equity legislation, but we have seen nothing as yet.

I ask the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women: Is she committed to pay equity

legislation in this province and when will she deliver?

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, an important question by the Member opposite. This is an issue that government is working on. We've got a number of individuals from a number of departments, a committee put together. It's something that's being examined, Mr. Speaker, and we await the results of the working they're doing.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Women make up 57 per cent of minimum-wage workers and 66 per cent of part-time workers. The number of women over 25 earning minimum wage is increasing. Women's financial insecurity is a huge barrier to leaving situations of intimate-partner – leading to situations of intimate-partner violence.

I ask the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. Will she support an increase in the minimum wage to \$15 an hour as supported by 87 per cent of the population to ensure that women earn a better wage in this province?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm pleased to stand up and address the question from the hon. Member. As we've mentioned before, we're very committed to providing increases to minimum wage and it's tied to an economic indicator. Through reaching out to the people of the province, through consultations, we've been able to establish that we are tying it to an economic indicator, the Canadian Price

Index, to allow openness and transparency. Obviously, we're going to be looking at ways we can improve on this over time as well.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi for a very quick question, please.

MS. MICHAEL: Given the precarious economic status of many women in this province, I ask the Minister: What gender-based analytical tool is she using for the 2019 budget process?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources for a quick response, please.

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

I'll take the question because, indeed, I've been following along and, as you know, last year I was responsible for the gender-based analysis of the budget, and the new minister is equally informed and concerned about this issue.

I did table in this House of Assembly last year the tool kit that we used to analyze all documentation. I can assure this House that every single budget submission goes through a gender lens and will continue to do so, and continue to use the tools that are available to us to ensure equality for women in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Questions has ended.

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

MR. CROCKER: A point of order, Mr. Speaker, section 49.

Mr. Speaker, during Question Period, and for the second time in the last number of weeks, the Member for Conception Bay South has actually

looked at me and said come clean with this House.

I take great pride in my integrity, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask you to review what the hon. Member said because it is unparliamentarily, in my opinion. I take great pride in the job that I do for the department that I work in and for the people that I represent, Mr. Speaker, and for my family.

What we've been through here in the last six weeks, for that Member to stand up here and challenge me to come clean is unacceptable.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

In the interest of time, I will review the point of order. I need to proceed, if I can.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

MR. SPEAKER: As required under section 51 of the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act, I am pleased today to table the 2017-2018 annual report of the House of Assembly Management Commission. This report includes audited financial information of the House of Assembly service and statutory offices, as well as a report of the activities of the Commission during the reporting period.

Further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

This being Wednesday, and it's 3 o'clock, I look to the Government House Leader for direction.

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

Normally at 3 o'clock on Wednesdays, we would move to the private Member's resolution,

but there are a few circumstances here that I think warrant my request to my colleagues for leave to dispense with the private Member's resolution and to move forward with a different agenda, which would include a visit by the Lieutenant-Governor to grant Royal Assent, as well as some comments by my colleagues as it relates to the coming holiday season.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay, thank you.

Please proceed, Sir.

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

What I would note is it's a bit of an unusual request but it's one that was warranted, I think, given the fact that through our – we put in an extra two weeks this session prior to the commencement of the House which allowed for us to get some work done. We've had, I think, a very productive legislative session, and through our co-operation we managed to finish the work that had to be done, that was on our agenda, and my colleagues were gracious enough to give leave to do third reading.

By coming back here tomorrow to do one third reading is not an issue for us as legislators, none of us have a problem being here, but I would note we have four Pages who have exams that start tomorrow. That was one issue that I think – I know they're all willing to study and wanting to study and to get good marks, and I think we all encourage that.

The other thing I would note is that winter is upon us. Winter is coming, as they say in *Game of Thrones*, and the fact is we have a lot of Members stretched out across this province who will hopefully be able to get moving earlier and have a safer travel than going through the anticipated storm.

Again, what I would note is we will move forward without the private Member's resolution. I know Her Honour has been contacted to grant Royal Assent to our legislation. Perhaps what we can do while we

are waiting for that is – usually, I think it's customary for the Leaders and the House Leaders to say a few words. So maybe we can move forward with that and anticipate the arrival of Her Honour.

In closing, as Government House Leader, in my remarks I would just like to thank my colleagues for their co-operation in doing this today and for helping us get the legislative agenda moving.

So thank you very much, I really do appreciate it.

Thank you.

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm glad to rise in response to the Government House Leader, recognizing the time of the year and the drawing and conclusion of this particular session of the fall sitting.

I just want to take an opportunity on behalf of the Official Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Windsor Lake –he and his family are dealing with a particular issue right now and we certainly wish him, his wife and daughters best wishes with that. But on his behalf, I'm certainly privileged to stand and make a few comments at the end of the session.

As always has been said in this Legislature, there are a lot of people that put a lot of time and energy in to making sure we can do what we do here as parliamentarians in this legislative environment. I want to recognize all of my colleagues, certainly my colleagues on this side of the House, my Third Party colleagues, as well as the independent Members and the Members of government on the other side.

While at times we have debate, and oftentimes at various levels and extremes, but at the end of the day we're here to serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in our individual districts in making sure that everything we do here is in the best interest of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians today, and certainly in the future and for future generations. I think that's

extremely important, and it's important that we recognize that.

I specifically, as well, would like to thank the staff of the House of Assembly. You, Mr. Speaker, as well, for your oversight and dialogue in terms of running the Chamber here. Your interaction back and forth at times, I certainly appreciate it as Opposition House Leader. At times we don't always agree, but we do come to conclusion and we do collaboratively move along to have this House run, and run the way it is. I thank you for your participation.

For the Table Officers, for our Pages, for all those that are associated with the running of the House, we say thank you very much. For those that are involved with the communications and the broadcasting as well, we say thank you for your time and efforts and all that you do.

We're into December month, and as the days move toward the Christmas season, certainly on behalf of us and our caucus, I want to thank all for everything people have done. I ask people to take time over the coming days and the Christmas season to enjoy that time with family and friends. It is a time to slow down somewhat of a hectic pace and be able to take that special time to share with those people that are special to us, recharge the batteries a little bit and look forward to the coming year of 2019.

So with that – I will mention, too, as well, a very – we passed yesterday a motion related to the Privileges and Elections Committee on some of the work that was done. I just want to highlight that experience and what it's been like for me to be part of that, and with the Members of the House of Assembly here. It was somewhat of a new initiative in terms of that involvement of a legislative Committee and the type of work that's been done and the future work that's going to be done.

So I congratulate my colleagues with that, and those in the House for that, and I look forward to similar processes in the future. I think it would help the Legislature here in the operations and how we do it. So I think that was a very positive initiative.

I certainly look forward to 2019 and seeing everybody back here in 2019. My last comment

to everybody here is enjoy the holidays. As I said, take time with family and friends to share those special moments, build memories. What we do is important. There's nothing more important than family and friends and that time to take with one another and to appreciate this great province and the great country of Canada we live in. Sometimes I don't know if we really take that, give it the highest praise that we should, but it is a privilege to live here and we should remember that and certainly enjoy the holidays. From our side, the very best to everybody and we'll certainly see you in 2019.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre and Leader of the Third Party.

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

I'm very happy to stand and to say basically how lucky are we. How incredibly lucky are we to be able to be in this House and do the work of the people. And how lucky are we to have such incredible support in the work that we have been asked to do.

I'd like particularly to thank you, Mr. Speaker, and your office. I'd like to thank the Table Officers, particularly nights when we work late, particularly at times, too, when things were really hot and heated in this House. I'd like to thank them for their work as well. Then all the work that is involved in the Committee work. We've done extraordinary Committee work in this sitting, particularly when you think of some of the very difficult issues that we all worked on together.

I'd like to thank the security people. They're everywhere, in all shapes, sizes and backgrounds. I'd like to thank them, whether it be the Commissioners or the current, active police force, or the retired police officers, I'd like to thank them. They stand a lot, they watch, they listen and I'd like to thank them. The Pages, some of you are new and it's been so good to have you. Good luck on your exams. I know you'll all be real rock stars; you'll do it. I hope that this has been a learning experience for you,

and you will learn how to do it and maybe also you will learn how not to do it. That you will, hopefully, come up with better ways of doing it.

The people in the Broadcast Centre who work so hard to try and make us look good and make sure that people all over Newfoundland and Labrador can hear every word we say, see our faces and make sure that our democracy and what happens in this House is available to everyone. I know that there are a lot of seniors, particularly, who watch the House of Assembly.

I would like to thank as well Hansard. I don't know how those folks do it, Mr. Speaker. It's one thing to listen, but it's another thing to listen with the real intent to hear and then write it all down. Hopefully, we all listen as much as we can, but we don't always listen with the real intent to hear. So, those folks up in Hansard, they deserve chocolate, they absolutely do.

The cleaning staff who make sure that everything is working, that we have a pleasant environment to work in. There's a lot of work that happens behind the scene when legislation comes to us, and it's all the folks in the various government departments who work so hard and so painstakingly to make sure to get the legislation right and to make sure that the legislation reflects what the people of the province need.

Sometimes the legislation doesn't quite get there but that's not their fault, I'll blame that on the ministers across the floor here. Also all our staff in the caucus offices who do research, who write reports, who connect with the community. I'd like to thank as well the community activists all over the province in different associations who push us and push us and push us to do the best that we can and to always keep in mind the needs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I speak, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi. We feel very lucky to be able to do this work on behalf of the people. Then, all of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, who care as passionately about our province as all of us in this House do. Because that's why we're here: We care so passionately.

We've done a lot of important work, just the bills recently that we've had: Bill 32, the *Labour Standards Act* to introduce leave for employees or a person to whom an employee is a parent or a caregiver who has been subjected to domestic violence; really important legislation. We are a little bit of leaders in that area and we can be proud of that legislation.

The *Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act* that was amended to include presumptive post-traumatic stress disorder coverage for all our workers; again really important work. The Provision of Emergency Health and Paramedicine Services Act, 20 years – 20 years – in the making; great work that we did here today.

I'm disappointed, Mr. Speaker, that we still haven't gotten anywhere on the motion for democratic reform because that, in fact, will be a key area in how we change the way we do our democracy in our province and it's time to do something about that. I'm disappointed we didn't get to that, but I believe that we will.

Of our roles and particularly my colleague for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi, we always talk about how important it is to keep a lens on everything we do that that lens is about the benefit of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the need for jobs and economic prosperity and also collaborative work and finding different ways of doing politics.

I also want to acknowledge all my colleagues here in House, some who drive six, seven, eight, in some cases, almost 10 hours one way to get back to their districts and then to get back to this House of Assembly to do the people's work. I can walk to my district; it's so much easier for me. Then when I look around this room, how many of you spend so much time away from your families because of the great distances? That takes such love and such commitment to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. And I have to say, Mr. Speaker, I am in awe of those Members here in this House and their staff who travel like that, again because they care so much, and because it matters. What we do in this House matters.

So we've dealt with some really difficult issues; we've dealt with some extraordinary issues. I am

so looking forward to this holiday season that is about light, it's about peace, it's about connecting with people, it's about renewal and rebirth, and I can hardly wait to chow down on a good turkey dinner, but also to spend more time with people that we love and to spend more time with the people in our districts. I can't wait to spend more time in pyjamas, and I look forward to seeing everybody again in March. I'm sure many of us will bump into each other throughout the province during these next few months.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to reiterate, how lucky are we to have the honour to do this work on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We keep reflecting on where this year has went and we had a trip to Labrador last week, as you would know, and as you speak to many of the community groups it is really the time of the year to reflect, not just on the last session of the House of Assembly but really indeed the last year.

A lot of us, I think, as MHAs, and I know as Premier of this province, this is really the time of the year to reflect on what the past year has looked like. I would say, Mr. Speaker, as a government, we have seen much progress in our province. As you go around the province, you would actually see a lot more enthusiasm and energy in people looking forward to the future that they see in front of them. But, I think it is short term. In the next few weeks, there are a lot of people looking forward Christmas in 2018.

Speaking about this session, it's been a very productive session. As the Table Officers, as they usually do, keep track of this, told me that we are upwards to 20 pieces of legislation. Mr. Speaker, it's just not about the numbers of pieces of legislation, it's really about the impact of people in our province on the legislation that, as a government, we are bringing forward.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, when I look at things like the health care changes that we are making to improve health care in our province, and in Labrador just last week and on the Burin Peninsula and places around the province, as you know, one of the things that we've been working very closely with is that indeed of mental illness.

There's no other time of the year when people that suffer in silence for so many years around mental illness, that it's the Christmastime of the year when we often see people that are troubled the most. It's really the time of the year when people find themselves gathered around with family and friends; there are others that are even close to those families that suffer in silence.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed. I'm sure every Member in this House of Assembly is committed to making those changes. Some pieces of legislation that we brought in in this session will make a difference.

When I think of yesterday's announcement of PTSD for all workers, Mr. Speaker, it's important when you see the testimonies and the stories of people that have been impacted by workplace trauma and it's led to PTSD, it's important for us, as we try and deal with the economic issues that we have to deal with in Newfoundland and Labrador, we must never forget that there are a of social issues out there that we must continue to deal with as well. And we look forward to doing more of that in 2019.

Mr. Speaker, when I reflect on this session I think of the staff – and many people have mentioned this already – the people that sit at those tables. In the fury of debate that occurs in this House for many, many hours these are the people that just sit there stoically, just looking and listening to every word that is being said. So I thank our staff once again.

It has been mentioned already, the people that put this all together, in Hansard, of words that we sometimes – as we read and we go back and reflect in years in the past of the messages that have been sent, and I do it a bit, when you look at what you said basically back in 2011, '12 and so on, that is what Hansard can do.

The Pages, some of which will have exams tomorrow as has been mentioned already by the House Leader – I get the opportunity to see many past Pages as I travel around the province, and get a chance to write letters on their behalf from time to time as well. I will tell you, it's always a privilege for me because we have created some long-term relationships of people who have sat in your chairs. And sometimes, they go from these chairs to these chairs. I could speak to our Member there from Bellevue - Placentia West, Mr. Speaker. So, these are the things that would happen with young parliamentarians. Who knows what the future of those Pages will be?

Mr. Speaker, I also want to mention the Broadcast Centre. I get messages every day from viewers across this province: Boy, you gave it to them today, or they gave it you today. These are the kind of messages that we get sometimes, but it shows that what we are saying and doing in this room, people are indeed watching every action of our MHAs. We encourage them to do so, because that's the level of scrutiny and so on that can actually influence decisions that we make in our future.

Now, as most people would know, I work in this building, I have a district of people, the constituents of Humber - Gros Morne, that give me the privilege to sit in the chair that I do. So I do spend a lot of time away from my district, simply because of the role that I play. But it's the security that's been mentioned already that they are there. I never leave or come into this building without there's not someone there to say good morning or good night to when I leave. The security – I think we should never forget that they are the ones that put in the early mornings and the late hours as well.

For the House Leader, for his remarks on behalf of his Leader of the Opposition, I can tell you our thoughts are with the Leader of the Opposition as, from time to time, we have faced challenges in our life, and all of us here in the roles that we play, we think of families that are impacted. So, to the House Leader, please pass on our thoughts today, and thank him for his remarks that he would've made.

As we go through sessions like this, as we work together on the legislation that we've been able

to deal with. To the Leader of the Third Party and to the independent Members, I want to thank them, too, for the debate that we've had here and their engagement into what we've done. It's been mentioned already. This has been a really an unprecedented session. We've dealt with things in this session for the first time in the history of Newfoundland and Labrador. As legislators that sat here, we have dealt with issues that are unprecedented and in unprecedented ways, I would say, Mr. Speaker, so I thank everyone for their input.

Mr. Speaker, before I sit down, I want to thank the caucus that we have here. This is a group of people, I would tell you, that has stood behind me and have brought the message from people in their districts, and I want to thank them for their support – unwavering support that we've seen in the last few weeks from Members of this caucus.

Mr. Speaker, to you, yourself, who've had to deal with some trying times as well, as you sit in the chair and make decisions. And it's true, it's been said already that your job is when you try and find that balance. If you're always right for one side, you know that there's someone else that will be upset. So, I thank you for the job that you do.

The public sector workers – it goes without saying, we see questions in this House of Assembly related to health care, education, the conditions of our roads. As the Leader of the Third Party has mentioned, while we get the opportunity on Christmas Day to sit and enjoy the people that we associate with, our friends and family, there will be public sector workers – it is never lost on me; they work 24 hours a day, and we hear the stories of services from people that avail of the workers that work so hard on behalf of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. So I want to thank them and wish them a very Merry Christmas over the coming season.

So to everyone here and those that are watching, I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas, take some time to spend with family and friends, and let's get ready to go for 2019. I am looking forward to it and continue to make improvements for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier, the Opposition House Leader and the Leader of the Third Party.

I also wanted to pass along some remarks. As you say, Sir – I am reflecting back – it seems like just a few weeks ago I was standing here in 2017 and reflecting back on my first four months as Speaker.

I think we are tired. As the Government House Leader said, we did start two weeks early. My staff, I can feel it, and for the first time in my three years and four days, I locked myself out of my office yesterday. I was here at 7 in the morning and it's interesting, because there is a division between the Executive and the judiciary and this Legislature because no one else had a key except for Kala. That was the only way I could get in to my office at 7 in the morning yesterday. So, yeah, we are a little bit tired.

But it has been an interesting year, and I did want to reflect back on just a few things that have gone on this year, from the perspective of the Legislature. Again, I want to thank all of you for the support you endorsed with myself to be an emissary of the province to go to Turkey and work with the Turkish government towards the caribou monument at Gallipoli. As you know, we've had great success and making great progress, and I now look to the government and wish them all the best as they go to implement this and finally achieve something we've all been waiting for, for some 100-plus years.

I felt another great accomplishment in terms of reaching out on the diplomatic circle this year – it was reaching out to Quebec. And for the first time ever, we now have a bilateral arrangement between our legislatures. It was a great honour to lead multi-party group of you, the Members, to Quebec City in June where we walked into the Assemblée nationale du Québec to a standing ovation. I really feel that this is so important and a great role for our office to support that diplomacy to help keep those doors open. Get them open, maybe, in the first place, but help keep them open while governments work together on policy and other issues.

Certainly the challenge of the harassment and the Code of Conduct allegations have really been an interesting test for all of us, and I'd just like to share with you just a couple of snippets from the perspective of the office. Some of the things that we encountered, some of the decisions we had to make as we went along that way were without precedent. I look to the fine people in front of me who reached out to their networks around the world as we sought guidance on just how does one bring a stranger onto the floor and ask them questions. We had some pretty funny looks from the rest of our colleagues in this amazing, international Westminster system.

As the Leader of the Third Party – and I heard the Opposition House Leader also say – I look forward to – and I think it was indicated yesterday that this really is a game changer. The interim report from the Privileges and Elections Committee is going to change the way that we engage ourselves and look to our own behaviour into the future. We'll look back on this, and I think that's all a very good thing.

I mentioned, just recently, we now have a constitution for the press gallery of this Legislature. I enjoy that rapport and that enhanced level of professionalism that we enjoy with all the members of the press; perhaps there are some here now, but they're certainly always watching, and it's great to have that.

We had some special ceremonies here: the installation of a new Lieutenant Governor. We had the Moose Hide Campaign, and I hope to again initiate us back into the House in March with a recurring theme on that. That was a great day back in early March of this year. We also had the hanging of the 43rd Speaker, and it was great to oversee that. I often look to my right to make sure he's there guiding us all along the House as well as the other 42 that are up on the wall.

In terms of looking ahead to the future, I'm not sure if most of you are aware, but this province will be hosting the Canadian Parliamentary Association, the presiding officers, so the Speakers of the country are coming to this province in January and February, and I am going to be hosting them in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. I'm very proud to do that. Working

with our staff, we're going to show them some interesting times, including some snowmobiling and some other events. I'm looking forward to that amazing honour.

We also will be hosting a reciprocal visit, and I look to my Francophone-influenced friends to join me and others when we welcome our colleagues from the Assemblée nationale, probably next June. We'll confirm a date.

I hear there's a provincial election sometime next year. I'm sure we'll have a few things to do around that.

I did want to thank the staff. I'm so fortunate to be inside – and I look to number 43. He knows what it's like to sit in this office and just continue to respect the wisdom, the guidance, the knowledge and the professionalism that exists here. I get to see it everyday, and I feel very honoured. Sandra Barnes, I'm sure she's out working. I think she's outside. Elizabeth Murphy, Kim Hawley-George, Wayne Harnum, the Sergeant-at-Arms sitting in the back, who keeps a good eye on us.

I also want to mention some folks behind the scenes: Bobbi Russell, Kim Hammond, Wanda Lee Mercer, Yvonne Power, Maureen Dooley and many others. The Pages that are around us, we have Katelyn, Jeremy, Ben and Alden here with us today, but we also have Frankie and Tamsyn, who do just a great job. As the Premier said, it is very exciting to see this next generation getting ready to show us leadership in our province.

I also need to think back in to Labrador and my own executive assistant – first of all, she's here – Kala Noel, who is a great baker and cook and keeps us all organized, as well as my constituency assistant, Bonnie Learning. I'd like to thank you all. It's just a great rush to have this opportunity to serve as your Speaker.

Finally, and on behalf of my wife, I would like to thank all the Members, my colleagues here in the House of Assembly, staff, people of the province, including my District of Lake Melville. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy new year. And a final note to my wife: I'm on my way home to help her move around that two-plus, three metres of snow.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I understand that Her Honour is en route and will be arriving shortly, so I suggest we recess until her arrival.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you.

MS. COADY: Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: This House stands in recess until the sound of the chimes.

Recess

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Mr. Speaker, Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, has arrived.

MR. SPEAKER: Please admit Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador.

All rise.

(Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor takes the Chair.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: It is the wish of Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, that all present be seated.

MR. SPEAKER: May it please Your Honour, the General Assembly of the province has at its present session passed certain bills, to which, in the name and on behalf of the General Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 2." (Bill 9)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Arts Council Act." (Bill 28)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Forestry Act." (Bill 29)

A bill, "An Act to Amend The Private Investigation And Security Services Act." (Bill 30)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The House Of Assembly Accountability, Integrity And Administration Act." (Bill 31)

A bill, "An Act To Amend the Labour Standards Act." (Bill 32)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act." (Bill 33)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Assessment Act, 2006." (Bill 34)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Workplace Health, Safety And Compensation Act." (Bill 35)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Workplace Health, Safety And Compensation Act No. 2." (Bill 36)

A bill, "An Act Respecting The Protection And Promotion Of Public Health." (Bill 37)

A bill, "An Act Respecting The Reporting Requirements Of Public Bodies." (Bill 38)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act No. 2." (Bill 39)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Housing Corporation Act." (Bill 40)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Newfoundland and Labrador Act." (Bill 41)

A bill, "An Act Respecting The Provision Of Emergency Health And Paramedicine Services." (Bill 43)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Management Of Greenhouse Gas Act And The Revenue Administration Act." (Bill 44)

A bill, "An Act Respecting A Pension Plan For Teachers." (Bill 45)

HER HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR (Judy May Foote PC, ONL): In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these bills.

You've been busy; 19 pieces of legislation passed in the fall sitting. Congratulations to each and every one of you.

For those of you who don't know, one of the first things I did when I went to the Government House was to ask that there be a TV put in the office, because, you see, I like following legislation, I like the debates. I have to tell you that in watching all of the debates – not quite all of them, but most of them – and the back and forth, I was particularly taken with the Protection of Intimate Images Act, and the work that you did on that, congratulations to each and every one of you; An Act to Amend the Labour Standards Act, An Act to Amend the Workplace, Health, Safety and Compensation Act and the *Public Health Protection and Promotion Act*.

What really struck me about that was that it enables the province to address gaps in legislation enacted 50 years ago. The fact that you worked together to see this come to fruition and pass this particular piece of legislation was really important, but what was also interesting was how you talked about looking at practices in other provinces and in other countries.

I think we all need to be aware of how important it is to learn from each other, that we don't always have to be reinventing the wheel. There are good things happening in other parts of the country and other parts of the world. So I was delighted when I saw that with respect to the health act.

I was also delighted, of course, to see that we now have a standalone portfolio for the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. That, for me, was really important, being the first woman Lieutenant Governor, to see that particular piece of legislation, to know that we now have someone who has total responsibility for making sure that everything pertaining to the women in our province is front and centre and gets the attention that it needs. Congratulations, Premier, on that appointment, it was really important.

I know you're all going off for Christmas break. I remember when the opportunity came to go

back to the riding or to the district and how important it is to take the time to listen to those who you are representing. You're all so really busy, you do that every time you return to your districts and every time you return anywhere in the province, particularly if you're a Minister of the Crown, or if you're a parliamentary secretary, or if you're a critic, you go back and you listen to what's being said by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and you bring that forward. I think the fact that you're able to use that in your debates, speaks volumes of how comprehensive the legislation can be.

I want to say to each and every one of you, though, take time for yourselves, because we don't always do that. Sometimes the consequences are less than what we'd like them to be. So spend time with your families, spend time with your friends; take some down time. You're going to have a busy new year so make sure that you come back, you come back refreshed, you come back full of new ideas, come back wanting to do even more than you've done in the fall sitting but, at the same time, take care of yourselves. It's so easy to forget that.

To each and every one of you, His Honour and I wish you all the very best. Thank you for your hard work. We wish you a Merry Christmas, we wish you happy holidays and we wish you all the best in the new year.

Thank you so much for all that you do on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise.

(Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor leaves the Chamber. Mr. Speaker returns to the Chair.)

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: The words everyone has been waiting for.

First of all, thank you to all of you for all your hard work, your diligence, your friendship, your camaraderie throughout this very busy season. I want to wish you all a very Merry Christmas on

behalf of myself, my family and my family in this room as well.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women – proud to say we have a standalone one as well – that this House do now adjourn until Monday, March 4, 2019.

Thank you.

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

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

This House does stand adjourned until tomorrow, 1:30 o’clock on Monday, the 4th day of March in the year of 2019.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Monday, March 4, 2019.