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Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

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MR. SPEAKER: Admit strangers, please.

Order, please!

Our very special guest that I'd like to introduce to the House of Assembly today is actually in Happy Valley-Goose Bay today celebrating her 90th birthday.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: And that is elder Jean Crane, who is a very dear friend of mine. She recently gave the opening prayer and led us in some great stories and a drum ceremony at the 36th annual Canadian Presiding Officers Conference in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

So to you, Jean Crane, a very happy birthday. She is watching from Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today for Members' statements, we will hear from the Members for the Districts of Lewisporte - Twillingate, Fogo Island - Cape Freels, Conception Bay East - Bell Island, Placentia West - Bellevue, and Windsor Lake.

The hon. the Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to recognize a well-known human rights advocate and native of Twillingate, Ms. Kim White.

On December 13 during a ceremony at Government House, Kim was presented with the 2018 Human Rights Award. The work that led to this honour has been in breaking down barriers for persons with disabilities, which Kim has done in both her professional and volunteer capacities.

Kim's life's work has been mainly in the non-profit sector and she is the former executive director of the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities. Kim has used every available platform – at work and in her personal life – to teach people how to shift their ways of thinking about accessibility.

Kim's message is that all existing barriers we face in society have been created and they can be removed and prevented if people choose to remove and prevent them; if people choose to change their attitudes, if they choose to work together and if they truly understand that in doing so, they are choosing to make the world better for themselves and everyone.

Please join me in congratulating Ms. Kim White, 2018 Human Rights Award recipient, and to thank her for her dedicated work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Fogo Island - Cape Freels.

MR. BRAGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, it's an honour to rise and highlight special people and moments from my District of Fogo Island - Cape Freels.

Today, I would like to bring attention to a young lady who was born to Baxter and Annie Burry. She was born on Newell's Island and later moved to Greenspond in 1946 to marry Samuel Woodland, who was fresh home from the war. Together, they raised a relatively small family of two daughters, three grandkids and three great-grandkids.

While raising their children, she volunteered in all activities of the Greenspond United Church. Sadly, her husband passed away almost 30 year ago. Luckily, she continued to live at home until well into her 90s. Unfortunately, Aunt Neat fell and broke her hip. Today, she lives at Bonnew's Lodge senior's home but is lucky enough to be visited daily by her family and friends. It's always a pleasure to chat with her and listen to her stories.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members to join me in extending belated birthday greetings to Mrs. Neta Woodland of Greenspond who celebrated her 100th birthday on December 7.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand today to recognize a community leader, mentor, volunteer, but most importantly an exceptional medical professional who retired recently after more than four decades of dedicated service to the people of this province.

I speak of Dr. Alexa Laurie who was honoured this past Saturday night with a retirement banquet on Bell Island. Dr. Laurie graduated London University's medical school in 1973, and after receiving a speciality in pediatrics she arrived in Newfoundland and Labrador in 1978 and worked at various health facilities, which included the Come by Chance Hospital, St. Clare's, the Janeway, the Dr. Walter Templeman Hospital and others. She has received numerous awards from the medical association which included the Best Community Teacher award from Memorial University medical school for her mentoring of medical students.

Alexa not only excels in the field of medicine, but has an exceptional track record as a community volunteer and leader, two terms as a town councillor, member of the ferry users committee, a volunteer in various sports organizations, president and sponsor of the 2410 Army Cadets, and many others. And just to add a little extra, an accomplished musician.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't note the theme of every health professional who spoke at Saturday night's tribute to Dr. Laurie, this being her mentoring as a caring, engaging, professional leader who put others ahead of herself.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating and thanking Dr. Laurie for her four decades of

service to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

MR. BROWNE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a young woman from English Harbour East, Ms. Lacey Simpson, for her perseverance and overcoming adversity.

At the age of 13, she lost her mother to cancer. As difficult as this was, Lacey resolved to focus on getting good grades, which is exactly what she did, placing on the honour roll each year of her high school career.

Attending the small school of St. Joseph's All Grade meant doing some online courses, further compounding her struggle because poor weather in her hometown of English Harbour East would make using the Internet next to impossible, but she wouldn't let this keep her down.

Her resolve to overcome obstacles laid before her has paid dividends. She was recently named one of 160 recipients in Canada of the Horatio Alger Scholarship, valued at \$5,000, after having been awarded the Joyce Foundation Bursary, valued at up to \$25,000. She has been pre-accepted into Memorial University, and her ambition is to become a veterinarian or a dentist. I am confident with her work ethic and demonstrated success to date, she can achieve or be anything she wants to be.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Lacey on her recent scholarships and thank her for being an example to other students, particularly in rural communities who rise to meet the challenges before them and overcome their personal struggles to better their lives and communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Windsor Lake.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this House to recognize the outstanding work of the MacMorran Community Centre.

I recently attended the centre's 3rd annual Dessert Dash fundraiser on February 7, and I can personally attest to the level of community spirit and dedication that is alive and well at the centre.

The MacMorran Community Centre is a non-profit, charitable organization that provides programs and services to 151 families in subsidized housing in the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood includes Brophy Place, Kelly Street, Hunts Lane, Blackwood Place and McGrath Place East.

The mandate of the centre is to provide social, recreational, educational, health and employment services to all residents of the community. The centre has been an asset to the community for 35 years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating the MacMorran Community Centre on its longevity, outreach and continued positive impact on the community they aim to serve.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to recognize what was a sombre anniversary in Newfoundland and Labrador. The crash of Cougar Flight 491 – a tragic event that continues to resonate with residents of our province, Mr. Speaker; it's hard to believe that was 10 years ago. It's the raw emotion we feel that serves as a heart-breaking reminder of the historical dangers associated with working on the ocean.

Today is about remembering and it's about reflecting. As we think and mark the 10th anniversary of Cougar Flight 491, I would like to take this moment to honour the lives of the 17

individuals who were tragically lost that day at sea, but also to pay tribute to Robert Decker, sole survivor.

Cougar Flight 491 has had a profound impact on the families, co-workers and friends of those we lost. It affected every nook and cranny of our province. Although a decade has passed, it's hard to not remember where we were upon hearing the news of the devastating crash. We're all closely knit. Coming together as a community in a time of sorrow is what we do as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Mr. Speaker, today, on behalf of all Newfoundland and Labrador, I offer my sincere condolences to the families, the friends and the co-workers of those that we lost that day. One such incident is one too many and I assure them that we will never take for granted the health and safety of those who work offshore Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, tonight there is an annual memorial service for Cougar 491 and will take place at the Elim Pentecostal Tabernacle on Kenmount Road in St. John's. The service will begin at 7 p.m. and is open to the public. I encourage all hon. Members to attend.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, the Cougar helicopter terminal at the airport is located in my district, Windsor Lake, where I attended early this morning to lay a wreath in memory of Cougar Flight 491.

Ten years ago, we received a stark reminder of the inherent risk that those who work in the offshore face. The 17 souls that we lost in the tragedy of Flight 491 were merely doing what so many of their colleagues continue to do daily, which is make a living from the sea and her resources.

Flight 491 went down due to inadequate attention to the maintenance of two titanium studs. It is vital that we do all that we can to

improve the safety of the offshore industry and ensure that similar events never happen again.

Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to join the Premier in paying tribute to Robert Decker, as well as to remember the families, friends and co-workers of Matthew Davis, John Pelley, Corey Eddy, Tim Lanouette, Thomas Anwyll, Peter Breen, Gary Corbett, Wade Drake, Wade Duggan, Colin Henley, Ken MacRae, Derrick Mullowney, Burch Nash, Paul Pike, Allison Maher, Keith Escott and Gregory Morris.

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

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

I thank the Premier for his statement and giving it to us in advance. It's an honour to join with him and the Leader of the Official Opposition in sending condolences to the families, friends and co-workers who lost so much just 10 short years ago. The Premier said we will never take for granted the health and safety of those who work offshore, and I believe him. I know he means it.

But I also say to the Premier, the best way to show this commitment is to work with his federal counterparts to establish a stand-alone safety regulator to help improve safety conditions in the industry, and to protect the interests of those relatively few offshore workers who bring so much wealth to our people, and this is something that the families today are still asking for.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

I wonder if I might invite all colleagues of this House to rise for a moment of silence.

(Moment of silence.)

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, on behalf of the families and friends.

Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this hon. House today to recognize March as Fraud Prevention Month in Newfoundland and Labrador.

This campaign, in its 15th year, is promoted throughout Canada to raise awareness of the dangers of all types of fraud, and to provide information that helps protect against fraudulent activity.

Recognizing the signs, rejecting suspicious claims and reporting them to the authorities will help us in fighting fraud. The Consumer Affairs Division of Service NL provides information and resources to help keep Newfoundlanders and Labradorians aware of risks, to protect the interests of consumers, and help them make informed selections in the marketplace.

Mr. Speaker, in November 2018, we launched a new Consumer Advisories and Alerts webpage that provides quick access to information on bad business practices, public advisories, consumer alerts and consumer product recalls. Fraud Prevention Month is an opportunity to make residents aware of this important tool and note that the webpage is reviewed and updated regularly to provide additional information and to ensure consumers have access to the most current notifications.

I encourage anyone who suspects this type of activity or has experienced fraud to contact our Consumer Affairs Division at consumeraffairs@gov.nl.ca.

During Fraud Prevention Month, Service NL will be sharing fraud prevention tips on social media. I ask all of my hon. colleagues to join me in helping raise awareness of this important issue.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. Mr. Speaker, we are also pleased to recognize March as Fraud Prevention Month. It is important to realize that no one is immune to fraud, and any of us can become a victim of a scam. It is critical to educate people regarding the tricks and deception that fraudsters use to steal money and even identities. The more equipped we are about the latest scams, the better equipped we will be to protect ourselves.

While it is important that people have the information to recognize and reject the latest frauds and scams, it is also very important to report such activities so that others are made aware and can protect themselves as well. We all can do our part to spread the word and help educate our families, friends, neighbours and hopefully prevent anyone else from becoming a victim of fraud.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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.

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement. I was glad to hear about the Consumer Advisories and Alerts webpage. I'm sure people are finding it useful, especially if it has timely information about scams and recalls that affect us locally.

I would point out to the minister, though, that seniors are a particular target of fraudsters and are most in need of information. Websites won't be enough for many of them, so outreach and personal contact will always be necessary.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Question Period I asked the Premier eight questions on the expiry of Hydro-Québec's tax exemption but received no information. Let's try again.

I'm not asking about the content of any legal opinion. I'm asking only whether the government has sought a legal opinion specific to the tax exemption, and when did the government seek it?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will say this to the Member opposite, and to the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, any revenue opportunity for Newfoundland and Labrador this government will vigorously pursue.

As you know, there have been a lot of – what I'm going to say – discussions around the Churchill Falls lease act and around whether or not there is a taxing opportunity here, and that is something that this government certainly will consider. It'll certainly – pursuing a lot around the Churchill Falls lease act, of course, because, of course, there is a declaratory judgment case before the courts in Quebec right now.

So I will remind the Member opposite, there is a declaratory judgment case concerning this act before the courts in Quebec today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, I understand by the minister's answer that they're beginning to consider the question of the expiry of the tax protection against exported power.

May I ask: When was she first briefed on the issue?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, there have been a lot of discussions around the Churchill Falls lease act going back in time, Mr. Speaker. I can tell the Member opposite that I know there have been repeated discussions within government, both the previous Progressive Conservative government, and, of course, this Liberal government on this lease act. And, as he knows, we did pursue a case to the Supreme Court of Canada concerning Hydro-Québec and the issue around Churchill Falls.

As he well knows, as the people of the province know, we are in court today in Quebec concerning the declaratory judgment case around which is this whole change in the lease that occurred in August of 2016. So, of course, I can tell the Member opposite, I've been fully briefed on all these matters.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: This issue became a live one as of the end of August 2016.

May I ask the minister: Was she engaged by that issue, specifically the expiry of the tax exemption leading up to that date?

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

MS. COADY: I will again say to the Member opposite and to the people of this province, that this government has been fully aware of the Churchill Falls lease act and the change in lease as of August of 2016, Mr. Speaker.

I would say that most governments and most Opposition leaders, and most Members of this

House of Assembly, are fully aware of the Churchill Falls lease act and its change of August of 2016. It had some pretty major effects on this province. We are currently before the courts in Quebec on a declaratory judgment case surrounding this lease act, and of course we are fully briefed on all those issues.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Following the tragedy which occurred in this province 10 years ago today, to which statements made earlier adverted, an inquiry led by Justice Robert Wells recommended to establish an independent safety regulator for the offshore industry. This recommendation has not been implemented.

I would ask the Premier: What is his position on establishing an independent offshore safety regulator?

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

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

Again, condolences to the family and friends of those lost in that tragedy. As the Premier said in his opening remarks, I think we all can remember that moment in time when we heard of this tragedy. It still hurts in our hearts, Mr. Speaker, to think that people who were going to work that day never made it and never made it home.

I will say to the Member opposite, recommendations that Judge Wells did ask for, 29 of them have been put in place, Mr. Speaker. There was a recommendation 29(a) and 29(b) – (b) was the interim step that asked for a separate and autonomous safety division, and that has been put in place. We have that today. We have an individual who is responsible for safety and is autonomous of the board of directors. That's an interim step.

As we grow our industry and we have more offshore installations, we'll certainly consider further developments.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: As the minister adverted to, as we grow our industry the province's planning around production much further offshore and in deeper water, safety must be paramount.

I would ask: What additional safety measures are being explored and considered for the Bay du Nord Project?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will say, I ran out of time on my last question. That 29(b), which was the autonomous safety advisor and autonomous budget, was supported by Judge Wells at the time. He agreed with recommendation 29(b) for implementation.

I will say to the Member opposite, that as we move forward towards Bay du Nord in a production capacity and as we continue to grow our industry, there is a lot of exploration that is going to happen over the next number of years. Consideration will be made as to what extra safety steps – we do have a safety officer, Mr. Speaker, who is considering the changes that may be required, but let's take this one step at a time. We have to get to sanction on the Bay du Nord Project first.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Committee, Bill 42, Oil and Gas Corporation, the Minister of Finance indicated there would be a one-time transfer of operational funds within Nalcor to the new corporation to cover its operations.

I ask the minister: After year one, where will the sources come for operational funding?

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

MR. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, I believe what I said yesterday is that the amount that it costs to operate oil co will be carved out from Nalcor. That will be on a year-by-year basis, Mr. Speaker.

There's no difference. It's net zero. What's costing now in Nalcor to operate the Oil and Gas division is what it will cost through oil co.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister said it is net zero that's going to be transferred.

So what is the actual amount that is being transferred?

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

MR. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, I don't have that number directly before me today, but I'll be more than happy to get that amount for the Member opposite.

This decision that's been announced by government to develop an oil and gas company, Mr. Speaker, is widely supported by industry. We know the potential that's out there, and the need to focus on this industry 100 per cent by our government is something that we recognized in order to develop the industry to its fullest potential.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Natural Resources has repeatedly said over the past number of days that there's no increased cost there; yet, the Minister of Finance is telling us he doesn't know the number that is being transferred to Nalcor to this new corporation.

I'll ask the minister: When will the new corporation be self-sufficient? Obviously, you're transferring funds in for a period of time. That new corporation at some point will start generating revenue.

When is your forecast for that corporation to be self-sufficient?

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We did indicate yesterday that once the new corporation starts to receive royalties from projects such as Bay du Nord or other projects, it will become self-sufficient.

I don't have the date circled on the calendar today as to when those royalties will start coming in, Mr. Speaker, but the project needs to be sanctioned. We've announced that the project is going ahead. Equinor, the proponent here, has announced that the project is going ahead and we're projecting revenues somewhere around the 2024-25 range.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Bull Arm will become a subsidiary of the new Oil and Gas Corporation based on what we discussed yesterday.

I ask: What are the amounts of annual funding which will be allocated to this new subsidiary, and when will Bull Arm again be financially self-sufficient to be able to operate on its own?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the Member opposite well knows, as the people of the province have been advised, we are in a request for proposals stage. There have been several interesting proposals brought forward to lease or develop the Bull Arm site. As that goes through its due process, Mr. Speaker, and there are other opportunities for Bull Arm, of course it will become self-sufficient.

In the meantime, there is an allocation to ensure operations and maintenance of the site is maintained. I don't have that figure off the top of my head; it is in the budgetary process at the moment, but I'd be happy to inform the Member.

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 her answer. Again, the indication is there's no new cost here, but the number that's required to transfer out of Nalcor into the new subsidiary we don't know, yet they're telling us there's no new cost.

With a separate subsidiary for the Bull Arm site, and you mentioned the fact of entertaining proposals, does this mean that a decision to divest of this important piece of public infrastructure has been made by your government through putting this piece of infrastructure into a subsidiary?

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

MS. COADY: No, Mr. Speaker, at all. In fact, we are moving out from underneath Nalcor and

moving this into a stand-alone division or stand-alone Crown corporation to develop our oil and gas industry. We've been out there for requests for proposals, we've had a number of proposals before the board to consider what opportunities there are in Bull Arm and, I can tell you, I've met with the communities in Bull Arm and they're quite excited about some of these opportunities, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, no doubt the Bull Arm site provides for our world-class skilled trades to develop and prosper in the oil and gas sector. With the removal of Bull Arm from Nalcor and no skilled jobs identified yet with the Equinor project, I ask the minister: What message are we sending to those very many skilled trades we have for this sector in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think this government has been sending an incredible message of strength and opportunity in the Newfoundland and Labrador economy. We've been able bring over the line the Husky Project, which 2,400 people are employed at today in Argentina. Mr. Speaker, we've been able to announce a framework agreement with Equinor. We've been able to develop an awful lot on our offshore oil and gas. We've got \$4 billion committed – \$4 billion committed in exploration.

So I think the message that this government has been saying – and even with making sure that oil and gas is now a stand-alone Crown corporation is saying that the future is very strong in the offshore oil and gas industry, and therefore the trades and those that support the trades, it's a promising future, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In creating the new corporation, non-renewable energy will be separated from renewable energies that now exist under the Nalcor structure.

So I ask the minister: Have you made any decision to stop using non-renewable resources to help fund investment in renewable energies?

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

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, as we said repeatedly, the current existing projects that we have equity in, in offshore Newfoundland and Labrador, that revenue stream is going to remain within Nalcor. That will actually help to develop non-renewable resources.

So I can tell the people of the province today and the Member opposite, in case he didn't hear yesterday, is that the four projects that we currently have investments in, that we're currently generating revenue in, that revenue is going to stay within Nalcor and it may be used to develop more non-renewable or help to defray the costs of non-renewable resources that we have in this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday the Premier confirmed what the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue revealed last week, that government will spend at least \$1.5 million to remediate the former Marystown Shipyard site so it can be sold to Paul Antle.

How can the minister justify spending taxpayers' money to help a former Liberal candidate?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well again, it's a situation where facts really matter. The Member opposite quite clearly made a mistake in naming the individual. This is a purchase that's been discussed publicly between two private entities. It's Marbase, and one of the owners of Marbase is Mr. Antle, as he just mentioned, but it is a group of people that brings considerable knowledge to this industry.

This is really about supporting the aquaculture industry in Newfoundland and Labrador. It's about creating jobs on the Burin Peninsula. The \$1.5 million that was mentioned about remediation is work that's in addition to the \$7.5 million that's already been spent on environmental cleanup that has existed in that shipyard for decades.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the Premier pointed out yesterday, this deal is between two private entities: Paul Antle and Kiewit. This is interesting given that these two parties had a deal in principle in December 2017 that fell through after Mr. Antle determined the site was not usable in its current form.

Will this remediation increase the value of this facility for the new owner?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, as has been mentioned already – and I think the politics is definitely at play again because we have worked with people and he's throwing out names of individuals. If I was to stand up in this House today and talk about a deal that was done with Leo Power, they'd be thumping their desks and they'd be looking over at us and saying you shouldn't do that, but that is exactly what we did with CFI. That is exactly what we did with Canada Fluorspar.

Mr. Speaker, this is about jobs for people on the Burin Peninsula.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: This is about supporting an industry with aquaculture, Mr. Speaker.

The environmental liability on the Marystown Shipyard has been with the province, that liability exists within the province for decades, Mr. Speaker. It was initially owned by a Crown corporation of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador back in the '60s.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's interesting what a difference a year makes. A year ago it wasn't feasible and now, all of a sudden, it is when the province steps in to help a well-known Liberal.

Yesterday, the Premier stated that workers cannot go onto the site until the lead and asbestos abatement has concluded. So, no owner can go in there and operate this site without the \$400,000 being spent. About another \$1.2 million will also have to be spent on soil removal.

Premier, when will this remediation work occur and will this be done before the sale?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, what the Member opposite is saying is that the government, who was the government of the day, the PC government, back in 2009 and 2010 who spent about \$2.5 million on remediation at that site, what he's saying was a mistake. He said that government should not have done that, based on the comments that he's just making, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, this is about creating jobs. This is not new risk. This has been around for decades, Mr. Speaker. All administrations that sat in this House of Assembly and other assemblies, for decades, have acknowledged this risk – two of which, in 2002 and another administration in

2009, actually did some cleanup. The cleanup is not completed, Mr. Speaker. There's still more work to be done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I remind the Premier I don't need him to speak for me, I can speak for myself.

Mr. Antle has stated he's shooting to have it closed by March 31. How confident are you that will happen?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, we're not negotiating there. We're not at that table. This is a transaction that is occurring between two private entities, examples where you would be occurring on many different companies, Mr. Speaker, throughout this province today.

He mentioned earlier what makes it interesting, why is it so important today that this is a potential sale that exists. The reason that is, is because we are growing as a government, the aquaculture industry in this province, working very closely with industry.

Mr. Speaker, this was predicted two years ago when we announced the industry sector plan on the aquaculture industry. Then, people knew that when we grew this to a critical mass we would need supply services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: It's interesting, the member for Placentia - Burin – get his district correct. The Member for Placentia West - Bellevue, the last year or so, it didn't seem like a private deal to me. He was pretty public on the announcements. He's been the leader on all these announcements, now the premier is passing it off as a private deal.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. PETTEN: Something's not right here, Mr. Speaker.

When the Minister Responsible for WorkplaceNL was asked last fall to provide some indication of when intake clinics might be set up to collect the medical history of former shipyard workers and the history of workplace toxic exposures, the minister said she would inform the House when she had more information.

With the pending sale of this facility, can the minister provide details concerning the intake clinic?

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

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, on April 13, 2017, WorkplaceNL received a letter from Patient Injury Law. On June 16, 2017, we received an email. On June 20, 2017, we responded to Patient Injury Law and indicated that we need further clarification on their question regarding intake clinics.

Mr. Speaker, intake clinics are community halls. WorkplaceNL agrees to form a medical committee made up of three oncologists.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the minister: Will this intake clinic be set up before the former shipyard is sold?

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

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, I don't think the Member opposite heard me, but I indicated that intake clinics are in fact community town halls. According to the act and WorkplaceNL, we have agreed to form a

medical committee consisting of three oncologists.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, late last week, approximately 80 children and parents were treated by Eastern Health as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning at Rogers Bussey Arena.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Ken LeDez described it as a tsunami, and indicated it could have been much more serious.

Can the minister tell this House if the arena had been properly inspected?

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

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can tell the House that the last inspection in fact was on September 18, and I do have the report here. Mr. Speaker, there were two directives at that time, both directives were closed.

Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the carbon monoxide issue and it was caused by a Zamboni. The inspectors of Service NL continue to investigate this, and we will take any information or anything under advisement as we move forward with this type of inspection.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: Mr. Speaker, given that arenas have hundreds of people in attendance on any given day with refrigeration equipment and Zambonis producing dangerous gases, does government require carbon monoxide detectors in these public buildings?

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

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Yes, Mr. Speaker, our legislation actually does require carbon monoxide detectors, but not in specific places. The employer determines where in the building the monoxide detector goes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Minister.

Can you inform us as well, Minister, if there is any air quality testing done at these public buildings?

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

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Yes, Mr. Speaker, ventilation testing is completed also.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MS. PERRY: Given that the employees at the arena were also exposed, has the minister's department opened up an occupational health and safety investigation yet?

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

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, the inspection continues. We are continuing to evaluate the situation, and as the information becomes available, the inspectors will inform the department.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: Mr. Speaker, Eastern Health can only treat two patients at a time in their hyperbaric chamber. During the recent incident four individuals needed treatment. A St. John's company, Sea-Force Hyperbaric, has indicated that they have more than 10 times the capacity of Eastern Health to deal with carbon monoxide poisoning.

Why has Eastern Health not entered into a service agreement with this company?

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

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to take this opportunity to give a shout out to Eastern Health.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HAGGIE: They did a stellar job. As always, these things never happen when the building is fully staffed. It's always later on in the evening or on a weekend. They rose to the occasion. They put their emergency command centre in place and dealt with the situation whilst dealing with everything else they have to deal with on a weekend.

The issue of hyperbaric oxygen is a very infrequent occurrence. We have been in discussions with Eastern Health about their requirements on a go-forward basis. Once they have finished their debrief I expect to be able to provide further information, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This government released an RFP for private operators to manage, develop or purchase Marble Mountain. The deadline for proposals was August 3. Previously, in this House, the minister had indicated that there were three applicants.

I ask the minister: Has one been chosen?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the question. Winter tourism is an important part of Newfoundland and Labrador's economy, when we look at everything from cross-country skiing to skating to the assets of Marble Mountain and the work that's being done.

We did issue an RFP to look at ways to provide further sustainability of that asset to unlock opportunities for the West Coast, and we did see that we did have expressions of interest come forward. There were three proponents. They are being evaluated, and when we are able to report something formally on that, we certainly will.

Thank you.

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, and thank you, Minister.

Will you commit, Minister, to tabling in this House the evaluation criteria which has been used to review the three applications, as well as the score of each individual application?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I was saying about Marble Mountain and how important that is for an asset on the West Coast when it comes to skiing and the investments that can happen, what we've done is we've taken steps where we're able to transfer land to make the base development a piece where further investment can happen at Marble Mountain. That's led people to put forward submissions. They are being reviewed, they are

being analyzed. There is a due diligence process that would take place, and that's ongoing.

So until that is complete, Mr. Speaker, I'm not able to make further comment on that matter.

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.

On the 10th anniversary of the Cougar helicopter crash, families are calling for an independent offshore safety agency as recommended by the Wells report. On February 28, the Premier and his minister flew to Ottawa to ask for more lenient environmental assessments for the oil industry.

I ask the Premier: Why is he not making an equally strong case to Ottawa for a safety authority independent of oil companies' interests?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can assure the Member opposite, as well as everyone in this province, that the Premier and I surely went to Ottawa not for lenient regulatory process for offshore. That is absolutely not correct.

What we did go to Ottawa to discuss was issues around C-69, a bill that looks at impact assessment. We wanted to make sure, for example, the province is consulted if there are any changes.

There is a section of the act that we felt needed to be changed, for example, that it was only unilaterally around what the federal minister would have to say. So we wanted to make sure that we had Newfoundland and Labrador in there. We wanted to make sure that well-known, established projects like exploratory drilling were no longer on the project list.

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.

I encourage the minister to realize that the time now is for a permanent authority, not an interim authority. It'll be too late once we're in that deep water doing the exploration she's talking about.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Natural Resources said Nalcor will siphon money from Nalcor to the new Oil and Gas Corporation until it generates revenue, and also that government is counting on Nalcor's equity assets to mitigate electricity rates.

So, I ask the minister: How can she be so sure if there will be enough money in Nalcor's assets in 2021 to cover both rate mitigation and the oil company's operations?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to say this again, that there is net zero – there is no net change for the development of the oil company that we're talking about, the separate Crown corporation. It's currently funded by Nalcor as part of the ongoing operations. Because we have equity investments, because we have interest in offshore, it's currently funded that way. When it comes out, it will be funded the same way, Mr. Speaker. So, no net change in the costing to this government.

As I did indicate to the Member opposite, there is revenue being generated by our investments in offshore NL, by our investments in these four projects, and that money may be able to be used for other things such as rate management.

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.

I hope at some point we're going to get some figures given to us here on this floor.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. MICHAEL: The minister says the new corporation will return significant value to the people and economy of the province; however, it seems clear there will be no new revenue to the corporation before 2025 when Bay du Nord starts production.

I ask the minister: What will be the significant value of this corporation to the lives of the people of the province before 2025?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will again reiterate why I think there are five good reasons to make this a stand-alone Crown corporation – one of which, of course, is the development of *Advance 2030*. Mr. Speaker, 150 stakeholders in this government has developed a plan to really help drive and encourage the development of our offshore oil and gas industries. It's a great opportunity for Newfoundland and Labrador, so we've put in place an expanded mandate for this Crown corporation to assist with driving the opportunities. This new corporation, again, will be looking at exploration, seismic and how do we ensure that we're getting maximum benefit of our offshore oil resources.

We're also having some expanded mandate. There's no extra cost. We're actually making sure that Nalcor is focused solely on the utility business.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I ask the Minister of Finance – he mentioned that we've lost \$70 million on royalties this fiscal year. I'm asking him: Have we met the oil price projected for this year or is Nalcor losing money in equity assets as well?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board for a quick response, please.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The \$70 million is not lost revenue, it's deferred. The oil is still in the ground –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We will receive that revenue at some point. We obviously would have preferred to have seen it in this year's budget but the oil price that we budgeted was \$63 a year; we are currently above \$70 on an annualized basis or above what we projected budget-wise.

Production, the value of a barrel of oil, it all plays into the final figure, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again I rise on a petition concerning the hospital in Corner Brook.

WHEREAS the successful proponents for the new hospital in Corner Brook are scheduled to be announced this spring and construction anticipated to begin this fall and, as this is estimated to be a four-year construction period, and there are experienced local tradespeople and labourers in the area;

THEREFORE we, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly as follows: We urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to encourage companies that are awarded the contracts for the new hospital to hire local tradespeople and labourers, at no extra cost to the taxpayers, so that they can work in their own area, support the local economy and be able to return home to their families every evening.

Mr. Speaker, again, I stand here and I just wanted to bring it forward to the government that this is a big issue. I was at a couple of firemen's balls last week, Mr. Speaker, and a lot of the people there missed out on the opportunity last year that we thought was going to be work for the local people, but it ended up not being work for the local people.

There was a deal struck with the company –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Some order, please, I'm having difficulty hearing the identified Member.

Thank you.

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, there was a deal struck so that they could hire local people at no extra cost. The ironworkers themselves were putting in \$100,000 to make sure there was no loss to the taxpayers and no loss to the company. So that's real commitment.

I hear the Minister of Transportation and Works and I'm encouraged by his comments that they are meeting with all the trade unions in the province, Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Association. That's very important.

So I'm glad that we're all going to work together to ensure this. I can say now, Mr. Speaker, if you need any help working with any of the unions and the local people in Corner Brook, I'm offering my services because I know a lot of these families. I know a lot of these people. I know a lot of the kids – a lot of the kids I coach in basketball.

Mr. Speaker, I'm encouraging the government to work with the companies themselves, to work with the companies to see what we can do to hire local people. I just want to make it quite clear, Mr. Speaker, this can be done with no extra cost to the taxpayers. I know the Construction Association and unions are onside. I know a lot of the companies are going to be working with it, and I know the Member for Corner Brook has heard it before and I know he's in agreement with this.

Again, the Minister of Transportation and Works has taken a proactive role in this and I thank him for that. I look forward to having a great hospital in Corner Brook, radiation unit, the next available PET scanner, or the next available technology that's available there and it would be so much nicer to have it built by local workers so people could see what they're going to be building from home with their families.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works for a response, please.

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

I thank the hon. Member for the question. Just this past Saturday evening, I had the pleasure to attend the closing banquet of the Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Association. That's an association that represents 700-member firms from around the province. This is the same group that last year organized with us a

business-to-business session in Corner Brook, where we took the two proponents who were selected to bid on the new acute-care facility in Corner Brook on the West Coast, match them up, and give them an opportunity to present their wares, their cases to the companies that are going to be building this new hospital – one which is long overdue.

Mr. Speaker, also last week I met with Trades NL and we discussed things like CBAs, and that's Community Benefits Agreements. We want to explore these opportunities because I can assure you we want to make sure that every single opportunity that's available to Newfoundland and Labrador companies and Newfoundland and Labrador workers is afforded to them.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further petitions?

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

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

There have been numerous concerns raised by family members of seniors in long-term care throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, particularly those suffering from dementia, Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive debilitating conditions, whereby loved ones have experienced injuries, have not been bathed regularly, not received proper nutrition and/or have been left lying in their own waste for extended periods of time. We believe this is directly related to government's failure to ensure adequate staffing at those facilities.

THEREFORE we, the petitioners, urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to instate legislation which includes the mandatory establishment of an adequate ratio of one staff to three residents in long-term care and all other applicable regional health facilities housing persons with dementia, Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive debilitating conditions in order to ensure appropriate safety, protection from injuries, proper hygiene care and all other

required care. This law would include the creation of a specific job position in these facilities for monitoring and intervention as required to ensure the safety of patients.

This petition, Mr. Speaker, has been signed by many people, I see mainly from the St. John's and CBS area, in response to the call by the group that has put out the petition, the advocates for senior citizens' rights. They are advocating for changes in the long-term care system to improve the current inadequate situation with personal care, health care and safety in those facilities.

Mr. Speaker, I'm finding it difficult to speak

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, that makes two of us.

Could I ask for some co-operation, please, during the reading of these petitions?

Thank you.

Please proceed.

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

In respect of the concern of people who are sending this petition to us here on the floor, I think we need to listen to what's being said and I appreciate the intervention.

I – as sure as other MHAs on this floor – am constantly receiving phone calls from families with parents, in particular, who are going through what's being described in this petition. I know it's not everybody. I know it's not happening all the time everywhere, but the very fact it's happening at all is something we should not want to have in our province. It's something we should be ashamed of.

I really call upon this House, I call upon the minister to listen to the experience of what's going on in the province right now for people who are suffering in the way that's been described in the petition.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

MR. LESTER: Mr. Speaker, the 15 per cent retail sales tax on insurance premiums that the provincial government imposed in 2016 has significantly increased the cost of insurance.

THEREFORE we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows:

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to eliminate the 15 per cent retail sales tax on insurance premiums.

Mr. Speaker, I know that this current government does have a plan to gradually minimally reduce the cost of sales tax on insurance and it's nothing more than an insult to the people who have to bear the initial 15 per cent cost on top of already the highest insurance premiums in Atlantic Canada.

As I've said many times, over the past three years, largely due to the increased taxes, fines and fees and general cost of living in this province, people do not have the money to pay. Their nest egg is gone; their rainy day fund is gone. People are losing their jobs. Insurance is basically a cost of living; a cost of going to work, a cost of going to the hospital, a cost of going to the – it's necessary. So why are we, as legislators, continuing to tax our people on something that's necessary to perform and live in this province?

We're calling on to remove 100 per cent of the insurance tax in this upcoming budget.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board for a response, please.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There are a couple of comments I'd like to make. I'd like to see the tax on automobile insurance gone as well, but if you looked at the policy of the –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. OSBORNE: If you looked at the policy of the PC Party, they would –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Gentlemen, you asked a question in a petition, we have a response. I'd look for some co-operation.

Thank you.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for calming down the PC Party.

They did ask a question. I am trying to provide an answer to them.

Their party's policy is they would cut spending to what provincial revenues are. That's over \$600 million this year. In 2015, the last year they were in office, it would've been \$2.2 million, two-thirds of health care spending. It's almost three times Education spending. On top of that, they want to eliminate the tax on insurance.

They stand every day asking for more money to be spent in petitions, sometimes in Question Period. I'd like to know where they're getting all of the money; probably out of the satchel from their uniforms.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Finance remembers his days better as a Tory than he does as a Liberal. It seems like he got a better knowledge of those days.

Caps on thresholds in automobile insurance would leave many people without adequate compensation when they are injured.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to adopt a policy against the imposition of caps on thresholds in automobile insurance.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague just presented one on the insurance tax, which we all know cripples the economy, but this one here on the caps has a more detrimental effect on people that are injured –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Please proceed.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you.

A more detrimental impact on people who are injured in a vehicle accident through no fault of their own.

There's been lots of debate. As recently as today, I was reading letters coming from both sides, and we've heard presentations from both sides. I've always been fixed on the fact of what's the benefit? If the rates are not going to decrease, why are we going to impose caps? There has to be some trade-off. It's like a negotiation, you can't give up everything and get nothing in return.

So if you're going to give up caps to protect injured people through no fault of their own – motor vehicle accident or what have you – well, you're going to have to give some reward and some payoff, and that would be reduced rates. We're not seeing that. Nobody from the industry and no one's telling us that's the way it is.

I know consultations have happened. I know government has been in receipt of that feedback, and we'll continue to lobby on their behalf because the general public need to be protected. They also have to be protected both ways, in their pocketbook and in the event they get injured. Right now, they're going to pay the same; yet, if these caps come in they'll be penalized because they'll be getting a very little amount of money for an injury that's going to last them the rest of their lives.

So we do call upon government to give this strong consideration because we believe there

has to be a fair and balanced trade off, and right now we're not seeing that.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further petitions?

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS many students within our province depend on school busing for transportation to and from school each day; and

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

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

And as in duty bound, your petitioner will every pray.

Mr. Speaker, we've had this debate and this discussion here in the House of Assembly, but we've definitely had it in the domain of public interest. Organizations on Facebook, people have Skyped, people have had public meetings. School councils have had discussions within their regions, and the main underlining thing is about safety.

We realize there's nobody in this House of Assembly who doesn't want to find the safest way to transport our children. We know there's a cost associated to every time we change a policy

in government. We understand and we accept that, but in some cases we got to do due diligence and find the most equitable intensive process to ensure that safety is our primary objective.

I've talked to a number of administrators who've said – because not all schools do the courtesy busing. Not all schools or parents have applied for courtesy stops. So there are a number of schools, when we look at the numbers and we've debated back and forth of what the real number would be for implementing such a process of eliminating the 1.6 kilometre policy, that not all schools implement the courtesy busing.

I've talked to two schools only recently who said if that was gone, we have enough empty seats on our buses now that we could do it without any hassle. There wouldn't be an administrative process to the whole – interceding with to make sure safety is there.

What is also happening in some other areas, rural areas, the seats are available. On a given day, every time we reassess it there are less and less children in some areas, unfortunately, because of the aging population, because of out-migration. In growth areas, particularly, where still the infrastructure is not there to be conducive for kids to travel in a safe manner, we need to find a mechanism that works.

It's a minimal investment for the long-term safety, a better quality of education and a stressor off the people who are engaged here. It's a mental health issue; it's a physical health issue.

Mr. Speaker, for a small investment, we think – and when I say we, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, think this is the best thing to do to keep our children safe and improve our education system.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call Orders of the Day.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day are called.

Orders of the Day

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

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

I would move, seconded by the hon. the Minister of Health, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to debate resolution and Bill 55 regarding Interim Supply.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to continue the bill on Interim Supply.

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.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (P. Parsons): Order, please!

We are now considering the related resolution and Bill 55, An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

Resolution

“That is it expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2020 the sum of \$2,864,878,600.”

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MS. PARSLEY: Good afternoon, it's a pleasure to stand in this hon. House today and represent the great District of Harbour Main. We can go to my district today and talk about the great things, but something I want to talk about, last Friday afternoon on International Women's Day I had the honour of attending an event in All Hallows Parish in North River. We had 180-plus women in a room and the electricity in that room that day was amazing.

We went there to celebrate a day of peace, a day of women and we actually left the politics out of it because it was no place for politics. It was a day to celebrate what we have achieved.

Before I go on, there was a lady in that room that day that we have to throw out a birthday wish. Mary Flynn of Clarke's Beach celebrates her 101st birthday today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. PARSLEY: I spoke to her niece earlier. We were going to have a little celebration, but no, she's too busy. She had cards last night and she's doing cards again tonight. So, at 101 years of age, we had a lot to celebrate, and during that time, during some of the speeches, we went back 101 years ago and thought about what our mothers, as strong women, went through, to keep our homes going while the father was out doing the breadwinning and, let me tell you, it must not have been an easy task.

Fathers and husbands went away to work, mothers were left with the children, and they had to do it all, but do you know what? From what I heard in that room that day, what an awesome thing, everybody has a mother or grandmother who's gone through this and to have survived it and brought the wonderful people that we have in this world today, the people who can stand up here today with freedom and be able to talk about it.

We looked at it. We had a guest speaker there; we had many people. But at the end of the day, it was a day to celebrate, and we celebrated wonderful things. I think sometimes we let things get caught up in politics and what went

wrong and what didn't go wrong. I tell you what went good that day, everybody had something nice to say and everybody celebrated each other's vision and a vision for tomorrow.

It's not like our young mothers today have it any easier. Years ago, everybody had chores, but today young mothers are getting up, they're at hockey rinks, they're at soccer arenas, everybody has something to do. So it's probably more stressful today on the young women than it was years ago, because years ago it was just an expected thing to do, and today with our social media and everything that's going on we kind of have to be in tune with it all.

Like I said, when you put 160-plus women in a room and there's a rose there for everyone and everybody is enjoying a luncheon, enjoying each other going from table to table just to say hello, and what an honour to think of the freedom that we have. And to think of the things that our government is doing right now to make things better, make things better not only for our mothers, our fathers, our children, our children who are going to be the breadwinners one day and to grow up in this world.

It's not an easy world with social media. Everything you look at today, everything is on a time limit, but we should feel honoured and privileged. And I will again – I never got the chance to wish our colleagues here, our females in the House, on women's international day. That's why I was so proud to be in that event and to be able to speak and say a few words. Let me tell you, when I looked at Ms. Mary Flynn at 101, it was just breathtaking to think, here she is, 101 years old and to be able to sit there with a group at a table. We had young people from all walks of life. And you know what? Everybody had the same thing to say. It's freedom, it's everything.

And another person that I should mention that day was Mayor Joanne Morrissey, the mayor of North River, who went out of her way to organize this event, and all proceeds went to O'Shaughnessy House for women and children.

AN HON. MEMBER: There is something burning. There is a burning smell.

MS. PARSLEY: I'm not on fire.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS. PARSLEY: I never get fired up, as you might notice in this House, so I'm certainly not the cause of whatever we smell burning here today. Hopefully, it's all okay.

But anyway, I was speaking about Mayor Joanne Morrissey, the mayor of North River, who put everything into this event and gathered all these women in the room to celebrate – sorry, I lost my train of thought on the burning issue.

We're talking about the funds raised for O'Shaughnessy House that afternoon. I think it was a \$25-admission fee and a little gift for mothers and children. But let me tell you, hats do go off to strong people like our mayors. We have Mayor Betty Moore over here in Clarke's Beach too.

I was a former mayor, Mayor Betty Parsley. We had Betty Fitzgerald. There are lots of Bettys (inaudible) and let me tell you they are doing awesome jobs in our small towns. It takes people like that to take the challenge, to go out there, run our towns and to do what they have to do.

Like I said, O'Shaughnessy House was the reward that day. We had the Presentation Sisters who donated their convent for the proceeds for a place for people to be.

I will tell you one thing, it was quite an honour. I'll revisit Ms. Mary Flynn later on today to help her celebrate her birthday but, at the moment, it was great. We had people from all over the district, from Southern Bay, Western, Carbonear, Harbour Grace and let me tell you it was a great time.

But getting back to the district, Holyrood just finished off their celebrations. They got a 50th anniversary for Come Home Year, the Town of Clarke's Beach is going on – most of the people in the district – the tourism in Town of Cupids is doing really, really well. Hopefully, by the time the spring comes now, we'll be at all the events and make sure that things are covered well.

I'm sorry; I'm a little bit distracted about the burning that happened here while I was trying to

talk. But, at the end of the day, hats do go off to Mayor Joanne Morrissey over in North River and her staff for organizing that day. It's events like that that we all need to attend and be a part of, and if we can do that as civilized people that's all a part of living.

I'm going to sit now and take my seat. I'm not going to take my full 10 minutes, the burning desire is making me sit down.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you.

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Madam Chair.

It's indeed an honour to stand as we talk about the great things that are happening in particular districts, but are particularly happening around certain areas. And, just noted by the Member for Harbour Main, the great things that were happening there and her dialogue between women on a leadership role and how important that is in our society.

Madam Chair, I could get into a point where we could criticize government or we could criticize policies and that, but my opportunity to speak to Address in Reply is not going to be about that. It's going to be about how we move this province forward, and how it's important for all of us to be on the same page when we look at what are the priorities that we're trying to do.

Every day we come in here and we talk about issues that are important to us. We do it sometimes through petitions, and it makes no difference which side of the House you're on. There's no doubt when we present petitions on this side of the House in the Opposition, they're relevant to the same issues that people in the government side face. Unfortunately, Members in the government side probably don't get the opportunity to get up and speak to them and support what we're putting forward. But I know in discussions, there are a lot of similarities in our own district. There are a lot of similarities in our priorities, a lot of similarities in how we'd

want to move things forward in the best interests.

I just want to go back – I'll note a couple of them over the next eight minutes or so, but the one that I just presented in the petition, the 1.6-busing policy. Again, this is not an attack on any administration; it's not an attack. It's about realizing that it's time that we modernize what we do and how we operate. In this case, it's about looking at the protection of our children, modernizing a policy that's outdated, and it was there for a reason at the time. It was a different society, it was a different mentality, we had a different understanding of what was accepted, there were different challenges than they are right now in Newfoundland and Labrador and in our communities as such.

So, we need to say let's modernize it. I know we've done small things along the way to alleviate the impacts it's had on families around courtesy busing, around courtesy stops, and they've had an impact and have been a benefit to a small number of people who had to avail of it, and people are no doubt happy that they've managed to do it. But I talk to people on both sides of it who managed to get a seat but feel bad that their neighbour didn't get one, or because one of their children are a bit older, couldn't avail of it. So the stresses on the family are still equally there.

I've talked to the other people who've said, you know what, we've come this far; why can't we see the light at the end of the tunnel and go to where we need to go? Is there a cost associated? Sure there is. I mean we have \$8-billion budgets in Newfoundland and Labrador and we have to make priority decisions along the way. No doubt every government does it, every administration does it, every department does it, in prioritizing exactly what is in the best interests, what is the best return on their investment and what has to be done in a primary time in the best interests of safety for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Safety comes in many forms. It could be in how many inspectors we get for making sure structural things are done properly in the construction industry. It could be around what we produce in the way of manufacturing the products there from a farming point of view or a

mining point of view and making sure that is in the best interest of safety for people.

It could be in our health care system in ensuring that our professionals and the equipment we have and the monies we invest in that gives us the best return to ensure people are safe in our society. And in our education system, on a daily basis, we look at that, from the structure of the buildings that our students go into, to the parking lots, to the lighting and all that but, particularly, when we talk about the safety of an individual, particularly some of our more vulnerable, younger children and the impact that has.

So it's an easy elimination when we spend hundreds of millions of dollars in education system, and rightfully so, and could spend hundreds of millions of dollars more, if we had it to be able to do it, to ensure we get a quality of education. Part of the quality of education is ensuing that our children make it to school safely, that the stresses and the mental health on families, the burdens are eliminated, and that we minimize any risk of any exposure to anything that's negative to a young person is eliminated.

The best way to do that is in an environment where they're on a secure bus that has all the safeguards in the world from a traffic point of view, that has qualified, certified individuals who know what they're doing in handling the children on the bus. Children are around their friends, so there's an opportunity for them people to also assess if there's a particular issue that a young kid on a bus may have and that could be from an allergy and all of a sudden they come in contact with something that causes a health risk.

So we have an ability to do that, but it does come at a cost. It's been a reality. We've been spending, you know, \$60 million to \$80 million over the last 25 years on busing, based on the principle of getting people to school, a proportion of people to school. Those who live in the 1.6-kilometre range have to do without that and have to go at a higher risk.

When we're picking and choosing the risk of children we have, that's not the right. That's not where you weigh off who's more important based on a distance. So we need to make some

decisions here and sometimes we have to carve out either one of two things: We have to reassess the investment we have to make sure we address the primary safety issues and then the resource issue; or we have to say, you know what, unfortunately there are other programs or services that are important – don't get me wrong – but not as important as providing a safety mechanism to ensure quality education.

They're decisions that have to be made, or we become more efficient in what we do. We sit down with all the parties involved and find a solution. I remember a number of years ago as a civil servant in 2004 budget cuts and I was responsible for 45 sites. There was a decision made by Cabinet of the day that I was to cut seven sites to meet the financial targets of the reductions by every department in every line area of government and every division.

I remember getting leeway, actually at one point getting to talk to members of the premier's office and saying if I can come up with a mechanism, or the people that I work with, that would achieve the same goal financially, but would still sustain the services that we have, would that be acceptable.

There was a bit of debate and there was about a week – I guess they talked in Cabinet and maybe Treasury Board spoke about it and maybe they looked at the policy implications, but it was outside entities that we were supporting and funding. And the decision was if I could find a way, or in working with the groups I had, to ensure that the quality in all of these sites wasn't diminished to a point where it wasn't effective for what it was set up to do, and not all these sites could still survive in the short term and have a long-term plan to be able to provide the same services, then they would entertain it.

We sat with people from Nain, Labrador, and I remember from Sheshatshiu, to Port aux Basques, and we had discussions around the issues from a financial point of view. And collaboratively, we worked together. You could see 40 people in a room come up with ideas that one would do something that would support 10 other sites, and that would cut their costing. Ten sites in the urban areas would do things to help the rural sites, and vice versa. We found a very effective way to do it. We said how can we also

collaborate and partner with other existing programs within government to still get the same supports and be able to meet our financial obligations.

So when you look at if every group had to do an audit, and you're doing 40 audits, and you go to 40 different auditing companies or accountants, you're only going to get a certain price. But if we put out an RFP for one company who'll do 40, now we've dramatically dropped our costing by 35 per cent. That gets equated based on the size of each of the sites. So there was a way of doing that – training was another way; supportive services was another way; buying in bulk.

The solutions are there when people want to look at the end result. The end result is providing the same service and finding a way to do that. What we did find when we met with the municipalities, and we've met with the Federation of Municipalities and said, here's our challenge. Now, we know we're only in 40 of your communities, but those 40 communities – or 40 sites probably take in 100 communities. They went out of their way to get their base community councils to support us.

Some of them gave free rent. Some provided snow clearing for a building that was there, to offset certain costs. But, at the end, of the day the primary objective here was to provide the same quality of service. Because that's what people expected, but more importantly, it's what people needed. These sites were developed for a purpose, the same way we have our education system. Our education system is built on the premise that we give a safe environment to prepare our young people for the next level of their education objectives. And we prepare them to go out into post-secondary of some level or out into the working world and be as best prepared as possible, and have all the same attributes as anybody, regardless of the economics that they come from or the geographic community they come from.

Part of that is making sure that they get to school safely, making sure their families are not under the stress, making sure that their families still have all the opportunities and not have to say we can't go to work today – Mom can't go to work

because she got to make sure me and my brother and sister get to school safely.

So there's a way of doing this. We need to have an open dialogue. I think the professionals that are involved, the school administrators, the school board, government officials, the providers of the bus service would find a solution that's equitable for everybody and provides a service that's needed.

We'll have an opportunity to talk about it again in Address in Reply.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: Order, please.

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair.

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

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): The hon. the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave and Deputy Chair of the Committee of Supply.

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

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

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

When shall the Committee have leave to sit again?

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

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

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting A Pension Plan For Employees Of The Government Of The Province And Others, Bill 56, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting A Pension Plan For Employees Of The Government Of The Province And Others, Bill 56, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a bill, "An Act Respecting A Pension Plan For Employees Of The Government Of The Province And Others," carried. (Bill 56)

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, An Act Respecting A Pension Plan For Employees Of The Government Of The Province And Others. (Bill 56)

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

When shall the bill be read a second time?

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

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

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 42.

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 Bill 42.

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.

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 42, An Act To Establish An Oil And Gas Corporation For The Province.

A bill, "An Act To Establish An Oil And Gas Corporation For The Province." (Bill 42)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to ask the minister in regard to the bill, section 9 lists the general powers of the corporation. In these subheadings, section (h) and (i) deals with guaranteeing the repayment of money and guaranteeing a deed, bond, et cetera.

I'm just wondering, it could be consistent with other corporate entities, but do these require the approval of the minister and/or Lieutenant-Governor in Council, and should things like interest require shareholder approval. I'm just wondering if you could give us some direction on that.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

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

I'm looking at my handy chart here. May I have a moment and I'll certainly answer – maybe we can go on to the second question. I have to get my notes ready for it.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the minister for that. We'll wait to get that information.

Section 10 specifically deals with the board of directors. So, in addition to directors that's outlined under that section the Lieutenant-Governor in Council can appoint a representative to be a non-voting member of the board. Just if the minister can comment on that –

why that specification of independent director actually exists in the bill to be a non-voting member.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Mr. Chair, independent directors are directors that are independent of other corporations. If an independent member – I’m sorry, it think what’s he’s referring to is the independence of – or the placement on the board of directors of a government employee, of a representative of the government. That would be non-voting. But, independent directors would be voting. That is not an unusual corporate practice to have to require independent directors.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I just wanted to look to, I believe it’s section 15, and that talks about the service agreement with the appointment of a CEO. I know we mentioned it before, but the minister at the time alluded to the fact that we would get to the section dealing with the CEO and severance and that type of issue.

Just if she could explain to us, the current leaders – a VP in place with the in-house division of Oil and Gas and with the new corporate entity that’s been established under this bill, that position, I’m sure, will be evaluated by some human resource entity to determine, based on roles and responsibility, based on the volume of funds that’s been administered by that CEO what the remuneration would be and what’s comparable in other positions like that.

So, what’s the process for determining what that CEO, what the remuneration will be? Is there an expectation that it be far more now than what’s available to the current VP – not that there’s any indication that position would get it. Maybe he would; maybe he wouldn’t. But how is an evaluation done on where that CEO salary is going to be set?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As I said yesterday, it is anticipated that all employees will transition from the existing corporation, the existing Nalcor Oil and Gas corporation to the new Crown corporation. So that transition and all their salaries will be maintained, Mr. Chair.

I will say that in this new legislation we have requested a change in normal practice that where the LGIC does have oversight on the CEO’s remuneration package. As I’ve said throughout the course of this bill, we’re trying to establish more oversight from the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. So with the shared-services arrangements, within this bill, the human resource component will be housed within government and the Human Resources Secretariat will be reviewing all positions, of course, and will be considering the job functions around those positions, will be advising the board of directors on that. The board of directors will then set what they believe to be adequate compensation, as well as contract, but that will have to have LGIC, Lieutenant-Governor in Council, oversight.

So I think that’s a good, positive effect, Mr. Chair, of making this new corporation is the fact that the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, the government, has oversight and ability to have eyes into what the contract says and what the remuneration is; and secondly, that the Human Resources Secretariat, under this new shared services, will be able to play a role in the human resource development within the organization.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the minister for that, but I guess the point I’m getting to – and this relates to what we’ve been told in regard to extra cost or no extra cost, or even maybe some less cost through some of the processes. When you’re setting salary structures, either the CEO or any other executive or non-bargaining positions that are being transferred and you’re not clearly indicating that those salaries are being frozen, including the CEO, how could we determine that there’s no extra cost?

In the evaluation of what is required for that new position related to this organization and, as well, related to the subsidiary, which is the Bull Arm site, which my understanding will need a CEO as well, that to me is new money and increases or new positions. So how are we still at the point where we're indicating that there's no new cost being incurred here?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am advising this hon. House that in the process of making this a stand-alone corporation – right now it's housed within Nalcor Oil and Gas, housed internal to Nalcor. Most of them are highly specialized technical positions, Mr. Chair. We are taking the view that most employees would be transitioning to the new corporation. So we're in the process of transitioning.

However, the policies allowed under the Human Resources Secretariat because of the shared services, we'll keep an eye on those positions, we'll do the analysis of those positions, we'll look at like-minded positions within government, within industry and we'll do a job evaluation around those positions to determine the path forward.

As I've said, we're protecting the salaries of existing employees. If they move on to other positions, there's going to be analysis of those positions to see if they are highly technical and highly specialized, they may need a different salary range than what they would have received within government. But like-minded positions would be like-minded to government. I think I've been quite clear on that.

So we aren't anticipating any more expenses, any new expenses. We're actually anticipating costs to be lower over time because of the shared-services model.

Thank you.

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

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

Just a couple of questions, Minister. Coming back to section 10 and the board of directors, during the Muskrat Falls Inquiry, to date, we heard some disturbing stuff in terms of members of board of directors not being really qualified when it came to what Muskrat Falls was all about, and maybe even some people hired not having qualifications that were needed.

I know that section 10 says that the board of directors will be appointed by the IAC, and I know that involves the Public Service Commission process; but, I'm sort of surprised that perhaps something could not have been put in here to indicate a desire to have, number one, very particular expertise on the board of directors and, number two, diversity on the board of directors.

We know that through the Public Service Commission process it is merit-based and it does not look at things like diversity on the board of directors. And there's nothing in the legislation to show some kind of concern for that, both in terms of expertise and in terms of diversity, in particular, women. I think we all know, and it's probably still the case, nearly every member of a board of directors involved in the whole Nalcor family were men. I mean, that's there; we know that. But there is nothing here to recognize the need for diversity and the need for the very particular expertise.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: I certainly appreciate the question because section 10 does speak to the requirements of the board of directors, and the number who should be on a board of directors. I will point out that we're talking about seven to 11 people, so seven being the minimum, 11 being the maximum, which I think is important to have a full board.

I am an Institute of Corporate Directors director and I think it's very important to have that expertise and the knowledge required on boards. I'm a supporter of the Independent Appointments Commission for that very purpose.

So what happens, for the Member opposite's view, is as you go forward to the Independent Appointments Commission you lay out the requirements of that board. You consider what the requirements of that board must be, what kind of expertise, what kind of mix of expertise, what examples of expertise that you may require. And I'll use, for example, a balanced board might have financial expertise, an oil and gas expertise, there's a variety of expertise that you would look so that each member of the board is able to contribute to that board in the fullest way possible.

I would say to the Member opposite, because of the Independent Appointments Commission process, where you actually go to the Independent Appointments Commission with the qualifications that you're considering, that you would need on that board, with your requirements around diversity, with your requirements around location, should there be any, I think that is all part of that independent appointments process and I think it's very, very important.

But I'll remind those watching today that in the act itself, it talks about the corporation. The requirements of the composition of the board of the directors will be between seven and 11 persons. In the *Corporations Act*, you only have to have one director. And I think this speaks to the point that the Member opposite was making; we are spelling out in legislation, so it's not easily changed or anything, the minimum numbers of boards of directors. I think that's a positive step forward. I also think it's a very positive step forward that we have an Independent Appointments Commission where you go and ask for the expertise and ensure the expertise is provided to that board.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

I have no problem with the IAC itself, I say to the minister. My concern has always been – and when we debated the legislation here in the House initially, I raised this as well – that the

IAC receives applications from the Public Service Commission. The Public Service Commission – so this is another issue, but it's absolutely related – hires based on merit alone. They do not have any other qualifiers with regard to hiring; it's merit alone.

Let's say the Public Service Commission puts forward all men's names – and I'm sure they'll be skilled. They'll have the skills that are required, because that will be easy to determine. It will be easy to say to the PSAC we want people who have experience in oil and gas, and aspects of exploration and production, et cetera, et cetera, but they're not going to be able to say to the Public Service Commission, we want diversity. So going to the IAC means nothing because if no women's names have come forward to them, then they have no women's names to pass on.

I agree with the minister. What's in legislation would be really important. So why doesn't the legislation recognize the need for diversity on the board of directors?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The point the Member opposite is making is an important one. Obviously, as a female and as a qualified director, I certainly appreciate the fact that more women directors are required. I do know the percentages within this particular administration have been quite good. I don't have today's latest numbers, but I think they're almost in the gender-balance range.

I can tell the Member opposite that when I go forward and ask for expertise for the board of directors, I also ask for gender parity or gender equality. I also think it's incumbent upon all of us in this House and, in particular, for those that are looking for particular boards to try and seek out as many qualified candidates as possible.

I say that in sincerity, because sometimes you don't have as many women applying for these positions, not because they're not qualified, Mr. Chair, but because they're very busy. They're busy in their lives and they may not think to apply for a particular position because of that,

but they may be interested in applying if you give them a call to remind them to consider the position.

So I think there are multitudes of things we can do. First of all, under the IAC you can request gender parity or consideration of gender on the board of directors, as well as skills and requirements of merits of the board of directors. We can encourage as many people as possible, as many females as possible, to put their names forward for boards.

I do spend a lot of my time encouraging people to put their name forward. We need good, qualified people on our boards, both male and female. We need good, qualified members. I encourage everyone to make that application because, of course, these boards of directors are incredibly important for the future positioning of these boards and the future positioning of this province. So, I encourage as many people as possible.

But to answer the Member's question directly, I think the Independent Appointments Commission does have the opportunity to ensure that diversity and merit are considered.

Thank you.

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

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

I leave it at that. I've made my points. I don't think the minister and I will agree but what I think, as a former minister responsible for the Status of Women and I'm sure she does have a concern with regard to gender diversity on the boards of directors, the government does need to look at the fact that the Public Service Commission does not take into consideration anything but merit in hiring. And that's the crux of the problem.

So why does that exist? Why is there not a change so that the Public Service Commission has other dimensions to the hiring, not just merit-based?

I'll move on to my next question; it may be my only one. I'm not sure if this is a question or an observation. I'm looking at section 13: "Subject to a directive, the directors shall (a) exercise the powers of the corporation directly or indirectly through the employees and agents of the corporation; and (b) direct the management of the business and affairs of the corporation."

Again, coming back to the Muskrat Falls Inquiry, which is informing a lot of stuff right now I think as we move forward, and it should, there certainly are questions with regard to – and I'm looking forward to the Commissioner's report, once he does all of the work that he has to do, to confirm whether or not this is accurate. But there seems to be indications of lack of full information on the board of directors with regard to Muskrat Falls, lack of full information flow between those running the corporation and those in the positions of being hired to run the corporation, including the CEO and the board of directors.

So this says the directors shall, subject to a directive, exercise the powers of the corporation directly or indirectly through the employees and agents and, more importantly, direct the management of the business and affairs. I'm thinking that this relates very strongly to section 28 where it says: "Where requested by the minister, the corporation or a subsidiary shall provide the minister with the records, reports and other documents he or she specifies in the request" and then there's an exception, of course, with regard to commercial, scientific and technical information.

The important thing is this section, section 28, is something that's not in the *Energy Corporation Act*. It seems to be in here, perhaps because of the experience of Muskrat Falls. So here it is saying: "Where requested by the minister, the corporation or a subsidiary shall provide the minister with records, reports and other documents he or she specifies"

I think connecting that back to section 13, there should also be a statement in here saying that the directors can request, because they need to know everything. They need to be aware of the fact that they are the ones, sometimes, who may have to ask for documents. They have to ask questions.

So it seems to me there are parts of the legislation which certainly show a concern for accountability. I just think that it could have been strengthened a bit here in 13 to match what's written in 28 where it comes to the minister's requests. Just observations – maybe the minister would like to make a comment on it.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: I think the Member opposite is correct that we've learned a lot from the Muskrat Falls Inquiry, and we've learned a lot through how the oversight of that project was managed, the information that was available and when it was available, and that the Lieutenant-Governor in Council needs more provisions that allow for oversight. Section 28, Mr. Chair, I think is an important one, actually. Section 28 is: Where requested by the minister, the corporation must provide additional information to the minister.

This provides an additional level of transparency and accountability, and the Member opposite has noted that. And it is information that's not part of the public reporting package. If, through the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, there was information that the government required that was not forthcoming, we can go seek it. I think that's absolutely important. The minister can obtain additional information to ensure adequate government oversight, but public disclosure is not mandated here due to confidentiality considerations, as we've noted earlier.

This is adopted from a similar section 20 of the Centre for Health Information Act that was put through this House in 2018, and adopted from section 5.2(2) of the *Energy Corporation Act*. As you know, we've made some amendments to that act to ensure that information will be forthcoming in the future. So I thank the Member for her observation. She is correct in that the Lieutenant-Governor in Council has more provisions within this act to ensure that clarity and oversight is there.

I would like to answer a question from the Member for Ferryland. He asked about 9(h), and the Lieutenant-Governor in Council approves any oil co guarantees where the board of oil co

would approve any Bull Arm Fabrication guarantees. So, the Lieutenant-Governor in Council would approve any guarantees of the corporation, where the board of directors would be the subsidiary.

So I just wanted to seek that clarity for him.

Thank you.

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Yesterday when we were in Committee talking about this bill, one of the questions I had asked had to relate to access to information, and we know the concerns that have been raised at Nalcor as it relates to the *Energy Corporation Act* and so on.

When I raised the question about ATIPPA and so on, the minister did respond and basically said that even Chief Justice Wells recognized the need to protect commercially sensitive information. I just want to say for the record, first of all, that for me, I totally understand that. I think everybody, I would hope anybody listening or not listening would understand the fact that we have this corporation, in order to do business, in order to be able to enter into contracts and negotiations and so on with third parties, that there is going to be information that's going to be commercially sensitive that must be protected.

And my line of questioning had nothing to do – I was not discounting that fact. I was not discounting what Chief Justice Wells said. I agree with what Chief Justice Wells said. I agree that commercially sensitive information does have to be protected. But the point I do want to make again, just for the record, and the concern I have, is that when we faced this same dilemma at Nalcor, the Privacy Commissioner, who is somebody who is appointed by the government of the day, who would go through the Independent Appointments Commission, who would be somebody who is qualified, probably a lawyer or whatever the case might be, and someone who has the credentials, the education, the background experience, and hopefully the good judgment to do this particular job that this

person would be an appropriate arbiter of such matters.

The Privacy Commissioner – in the case of Nalcor and the embedded contractors and so on – said that in his view there was no reason why Nalcor could not be the same as other entities of government, of core government, whereby if somebody goes to Nalcor, or in this case if somebody were to go to the Oil and Gas Corporation, and they were looking for information that was deemed commercially sensitive, and they were turned down, then they could go to the Privacy Commissioner and the Privacy Commissioner would be the arbiter of whether or not he or she felt that that was being turned down legitimately.

Because if it's going to work the same way as it does at Nalcor, what we found out in the past was that Nalcor could just simply say everything they asked them, oh, that's commercially sensitive. No requirement to give an explanation as to what made it commercially sensitive other than just to say listen, I couldn't be bothered with you, it's commercially sensitive, go away, end of story, and no mechanism of appeal other than going through the courts.

Whereby, if we had it under regular ATIPPA rules and they said – first of all, they'd have to give an explanation to explain to the person why they can't have it, not just simply say it's commercially sensitive as a catch-all phrase to turn down every request. They would have to say this is the reason why, an explanation as to why you can't have that particular information.

If the individual disagreed, the individual could go to the Privacy Commissioner. The Privacy Commissioner would look at that request and then that independent third party appointed by the Independent Appointments Commission, appointed by this House, would determine whether or not the information that was being sought was indeed commercially sensitive or if it could be released.

Then, if the Oil and Gas Corporation disagreed with that decision, they could go to court. Let them go to court and have a judge determine because they have the ability, the means, and the resources to do that; whereas an individual – unless you're somebody who has a lot of

resources personally or whatever the case might be, who is going to be able to take it to court? The bottom line is you're going to go to them and they're going to say no, you can't have it. If you don't like it, go to court. Then that's the end of the story. Information doesn't get out there. Again, these are not my words. These are the words of our former Privacy Commissioner, Donovan Molloy. He said it as it applied to Nalcor. I didn't say it; he said it.

For the record, I can't see why we can't have a little more openness and transparency in that regard and allow the Privacy Commissioner to be the one to determine, not the CEO of the new Oil and Gas Corporation, whoever he or she might be in the future.

The other thing I just wanted to raise – it's a question, and the minister can comment if she like. She's probably not going to on this one. I believe, as I think I said in second reading, that this is phase 1 of the dismantling of Nalcor, which I'm not against by the way – which I'm not against, but I believe this is phase 1.

Once Muskrat Falls clues up, we're going to find ourselves in a situation where we're not going to need to have Nalcor who all they're going to do, their board is going to govern Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro because there's nothing else left. All we're going to need is the Oil and Gas Corporation and Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and that will be the end of it. We won't need the CEO of Nalcor paying him \$650,000 a year and all the other staff and stuff associated with that. That will all be gone. It's a way to save money and it kind of makes sense to me, to be honest with you.

I'm just going to ask – the minister probably won't answer and I understand if she doesn't. But is this really the first step and is the intent really to do, as I'm saying, after this piece is done, is the intent then to consolidate, I'll use that word, Nalcor and Newfoundland Hydro into one entity as opposed to two entities, so to speak, or an entity with a subsidiary as we have now?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I understand the passion with which the Member is speaking about access to information and the requirements for openness and transparency. I will say to the Member opposite, one of the reasons why I think it is important that we have a stand-alone corporation reporting directly into government is for that clarity of information. I think that's very important, rather than having a board report to another board.

I will say this, Justice Wells, in his deliberations around ATIPPA and around the *Energy Corporation Act*, did recognize commercial sensitivity, as the Member opposite has said. He talked a lot about the commercial risks and the risks around public disclosure and the fact that if there is a risk of disclosure that perhaps we won't get the information that we require from our commercial partners. The commercial partners would be reluctant to give information in case it ever became public and disclosed.

The Privacy Commissioner, under the ATIPPA legislation, is required to be as open and transparent as they possibly can. That is a good thing for the province.

I will say to the Member opposite that, of course, the Privacy Commissioner will pass comment and pass judgment. I will give him an incident. In the last 10 years, I understand – I'll say that – there's been once that the oil and gas corporation within Nalcor had to go to the CEO and make a determination. They couldn't release information once in that 10-year period, and the Privacy Commissioner agreed. The Privacy Commissioner can weigh in on the fact and could actually go to court if they thought it should be released.

So, I'll say it's an element of risk, Mr. Chair, an element of ensuring that the information is able to flow between the Crown corporation and its private sector partners. Most of them, I think almost all of them, are publicly traded. There are a lot of rules around publicly traded information, Mr. Chair. I would think that there is a requirement and an understanding of commercial sensitivity risk. I'm sure if there is anything that is required to be released, that the Privacy Commissioner can weigh into that and can go to court, if required.

On the second point that he was making as to the future plans of any organization or corporation, of course, he wants me to pontificate, I guess, a little bit and I can't do that at this point in time, Mr. Chair, and I'll leave it at that.

Thank you.

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

MR. LANE: I thank the minister for her response. I didn't think you could answer, but I thought I'd throw it out there anyway. Why not? I believe that's where it's going. We'll see what happens.

The only other point I wanted to make and I suppose it's more of a statement than it is a question, but to the minister, as you're developing regulations, policy and so on that's going to be governing this new entity, given the fact that we have sort of a clean slate, I would certainly recommend that one of the things in terms of more openness, transparency and so on, is to establish right from the get-go, if we can, more proactive disclosure. Whatever we can possibly put out there online, whatever, of that corporation so that people don't need to go looking for information, that would make it even better.

So, proactive disclosure is certainly – we should be doing it in government anywhere we possibly can but with this new entity I think that would be what we should do, given the fact that we do have a clean slate and we want to build trust and faith in this new organization, which has been lost in the current one I believe. I think that would be certainly a positive step.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to reference section 21 of the bill deals with subsidiaries of the corporation and just ask the minister, section 21(3) and (5) if we compare it to the *Energy Corporation Act*, it's not contained. That indicates that the Lieutenant-Governor in Council's approval is required to set up a subsidiary.

I'm just wondering: Is there a change there and do you expect to do the same with the *Energy Corporation Act*?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Well, first of all, to the Member for Mount Pearl – Southlands, I appreciate his recommendations and certainly we will endeavour to impress him with our openness and really trying to be as transparent I think of the new corporation. This is a great opportunity. We all want to see oil and gas developed and we all want to see that proactive disclosure. I think he's made a very valid point.

To the Member for Ferryland's point, 21(3), LGIC, Lieutenant-Governor in Council, government approval is needed for any shared transactions involving the subsidiary. It's the same as section 14.1(1) of the *Energy Corporation Act*. Consolidated all provisions on subsidiaries into one section for ease of reference. So, it's the same as.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. HUTCHINGS: So it's been reassigned, but it's the same the minister is saying – the approvals are the same for setting up of a subsidiary under the *Energy Corporation Act* as it is under this current bill. Is that correct?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: I understood that he was talking about 21(3)? I'm just checking with the Member opposite. He referenced 21(3) which is on shared transactions and I just want to make sure it's not a different section that he's thinking about, but 21(3), the LGIC approval is needed for any shared transactions involving a subsidiary. So, if you have a subsidiary and you're going to sell your shares or move your shares or change your shares, the government has to make that approval process and that is the same as what's in the *Energy Corporation Act* under 14.1(1).

Section 21(4): "The objects of the subsidiary shall be some or all of the objects of the corporation." That's just so that there's no need

for a subsidiary to have separate objects in the legislation. And again, that's the same as 14.1(2) of the *Energy Corporation Act*.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I was also referring to 21(3), but as well 21(5). Mr. Chair, 21(3) says: "Except with the prior approval of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, the corporation shall not organize or maintain a subsidiary or purchase" Then it goes on to talk about to dispose or deal in shares.

Section 21(5) says: "A subsidiary shall not engage in an activity that, were it to be undertaken by the corporation, would require the prior approval of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, including the creation of a subsidiary, without the prior approval of the corporation."

So my question was: Is both 21(3) and (5) in this Bill 42 the same as what exists in the *Energy Corporation Act*, and is there any difference?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: So 21(5) ensures that a corporation can't create a subsidiary to do something that it's not permitted to do, the same as section 14.1(3) of the *Energy Corporation Act*. Section number 21(3) of this legislation is the same of 14.1(1) of the *Energy Corporation Act*, and 21(5) is the same as 14.1(3) of the *Energy Corporation Act*.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Okay, I thank the minister for that, and the clarity on that.

I just wanted to ask, section 26 deals with the budgets of the corporation. I mentioned this in debate, second reading, the Oil and Gas Corporation is defined here – the budget must be provided to the minister by September 30 – the Minister of Finance, I assume. However, Nalcor's budget, through the *Energy Corporation Act* is not due until November 30. I'm just wondering why the difference, or are you planning to align the two at some point in the future.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: It's about receiving the financial information in a timely manner to incorporate it into the budget process. So when you're having two different year-ends, this new corporation, as with Nalcor Energy, has a fiscal year-end, Mr. Chair, the end of December, like most businesses would. But government, of course, operates on a different calendar year – sorry, a different year, meaning their year-end is in March.

So while it's not the same fiscal year as government, this does ensure that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador receives the fiscal information in a timely manner.

It's similar to the *Energy Corporation Act* section 30, but it's moved up to September from November to ensure the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador receives the information in a timely manner.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Yes, and just a further point to that. I asked because the new Oil and Gas Corporation will manage current assets of Nalcor Energy. So just wondering why, based on that, Nalcor wouldn't have to provide the same data on September 30 to make that change so all that data's available to the government at a point in time for budget preparations, whether you look at dividends, whether you look at equity or all of those things.

Why would you just not partner or pair those two events at the same time at the same date?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

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

It's a valid point. What we're doing in this legislation is making that change to ensure we have it by September, but we would certainly endeavour to get that information as early as possible from Nalcor oil and gas holding company, because the holdings of the holding

corporation will be managed by this new corporation. So, I don't say there'd be any challenges at that point in time.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just had a question on intergovernmental agreements in section 22, which deals with an agreement of the corporation or a subsidiary and talks about an agent of the Crown in right of Canada, or of the Crown in right of another province, or of another sovereign government.

Just had a question in regard to Canadian Free Trade Agreement and some of the intergovernmental agreements that are made from this corporation in terms of agreements they may make with another jurisdiction, may make with another sovereign nation; i.e., I guess, Canada.

Are there any changes or anything different in regard to those intergovernmental agreements in this particular bill or this new corporation that would be any different from what you would see today under the Nalcor and the legislation that governs that?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Thank you.

I will also say there will be likely amendments coming to the *Energy Corporation Act*, and so that change that you suggested to align when information might be forthcoming might be something that we'll take under that consideration, so I'll say that.

Section 22(1), which is the intergovernmental agreements, is directed agreements among and between governments. It permits the corporation to enter into agreements with other state-owned oil and gas companies such as Equinor, which is 67 per cent state-owned. It's the same as 17.2(1) of the *Energy Corporation Act*, and 22(2) is the same as section 17.2(3) of the *Energy Corporation Act*.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll move to section – I think it's 32 to 39, but there's reference here related to – deals with the corporation's ability to borrow funds, and my understanding is the language here is the same as the *Energy Corporation Act*.

However, in the *Energy Corporation Act* contains a section which allows the Government of Newfoundland to lend the corporation funds; I think it's 26 of the *Energy Corporation Act*. A similar section is not contained in the Oil and Gas Corporation bill that we're looking at here. I'm just wondering why. And in the new Oil and Gas Corporation that's set up, if there's equity required or there's investment required on a go-forward basis that will be managed by this corporation, how will that actually transpire? Will there be allowance for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to transfer funds in for equity as an example?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Mr. Chair, in these sections, they're very similar to the *Energy Corporation Act* so if the Member opposite has a specific section, I can tell you that I'm looking here – the same as 18(1) and (2) of the *Energy Corporation Act*, same as 19 of the *Energy Corporation Act*, same as 20 of the *Energy Corporation Act*, 21 of the *Energy Corporation Act*, 22, so I'm seeing almost exactly what's in the *Energy Corporation Act* so I need to have a specific reference. If there's a question there that's a little different, I'd have to have that change noted because I'm not quite sure. If there's a specific section that he's looking at that he's not seeing, that would be helpful.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Rather than delay it, at a future date I can certainly make it – it's between section 32 and 39 I identified. I can't see the exact section here, but it is related to the borrowing of funds so I

can certainly pass that on to the minister and we can take a look. I thank her for that.

The final question I have is related to, I think it's section 54, but it's more of a general question in regard to this act coming into force, proclamation by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, give an overview – maybe the minister could in next steps and a target date of when the new Oil and Gas Corporation will be set up, how you foresee that happening from an operation's point of view.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As for the go-forward, obviously we're working with the employees of the corporation in transition. I believe everybody – but I should state this. Everyone perhaps realizes in this House, but maybe not across the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The actual Nalcor's oil and gas corporation is actually housed in a separate facility from Nalcor. They have a whole separate set-up, Mr. Chair.

So, there will be no moving of desks or moving of people, it's more of a flow of transition, I'm going to call it. The next steps, I think, in all of this will be once we have the legislation approved and through the House of Assembly and through third reading, we'll move forward with starting the transition of employees. We have to make sure that we have arrangements made for the provision of human resources, finance and IT services. The shared services that I'm speaking of, that's going to take a bit of a transition period as well, Mr. Chair. But if I could say this, the operations of the four investments that Newfoundland and Labrador has, and offshore Newfoundland and Labrador, those continue. The work that's being done on the geological surveys and the seismic surveys, all that's still carrying on.

All those things are still carrying on, but there will be a bit of a transition period so that we can ensure a smooth transition for employees from one corporation to another corporation to establish, as I said, the shared-services model, to ensure we have a trading name.

As I said in this House, it's not going to be a big process to get a trading name. We just have to choose a trading name and ensure that we have a smooth transition to a board of directors. We will have the transitory board for the new corporation as we go through the IAC process. That will have to be undertaken.

So, those are few of the steps and the naming of the CEO will have to take place, but they'll take place over the next number of months as we move forward to set setting up the corporation.

I don't anticipate this being a long transition, but it will take a number of months to make sure that we're doing a smooth transition.

CHAIR: Thank you.

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 54 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 54 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 54 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Establish An Oil And Gas Corporation For The Province.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill 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 42.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 42.

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 Baie Verte - Green Bay and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

MR. WARR: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 42 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 42 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?

MR. A. PARSONS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

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

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 4, third reading of Bill 42.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I moved, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that Bill 42, An Act To Establish An Oil And Gas Corporation For The Province, 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, 'nay.'

The motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Establish An Oil And Gas Corporation For The Province. (Bill 42)

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 To Establish An Oil And Gas Corporation For The Province," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 42)

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I moved, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Ways and Means to consider resolution 2(a), a resolution relating to the advancing or guaranteeing of certain loans made under *The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957*, Bill 53.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Ways and Means.

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.

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're now debating the related resolution and Bill 53.

Resolution

"That it is expedient to bring in a measure further to amend *The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957*, to provide for the advance of loans to and the guarantee of the repayment of bonds or debentures issued by or loans advanced to certain corporations."

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I was just preoccupied thinking about the words of wisdom I want to share with my colleagues in the House of Assembly as we debate this piece of important legislation or amendment that will be beneficial to the people of the Stephenville community.

Fortunate enough, in a previous life, I had the privilege of doing a fair bit of work with the airport authority in Stephenville over the years, and looking at those days, the benefit and the asset that the Stephenville Airport authority and the airport itself was for the West Coast, and still is. Just unfortunately due to the uptake with the airlines not being what it was 20 years ago – and I remember flying in on planes, 300-seaters, for conventions and conferences and training at the college, and it was a hub for training for people from all Atlantic Canada would come in there and stop.

The airport authority were then, after taking over from the air force base at the time, started to do some renovations to the building, and it became fairly attractive for a small entity at the time. But I knew as the times went on, as I went back year after year as part of my responsibility as a civil servant, you could see the downgrade, not necessarily in the facility because the people

took pride in it and kept it up, but in the amount of traffic. You could see having three rental cars down to two, then down to one, then to none as part of the process. So you could see the impact it was having.

In some cases, one person's loss is another person's gain, or another entity's gain, and Deer Lake started to take off. As the highways got improved, the distance between people travelling on highways now, from a safety point of view, dictated that the amount of volume of traffic went somewhere else, and it ended up going to Deer Lake, and that may be for the geographic location. An investment there obviously made the amenity a little bit more attractive at the time. But I give credit to the people of Stephenville and surrounding area and the airport authority who have never given up on it, and I'm glad they haven't because it's a great asset for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I'm hoping we can continue to move that in the right direction, and hopefully, as our economy picks up, and who knows in what trade or where we may go from a production point of view, that the port in Stephenville, and obviously the adjacent airport, would be a massive asset when it comes to engaging and creating a new workforce in the West Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I mean, we have so many entities down there, so many assets when you talk about the Codroy Valley and what can be offered around there from a farming point of view; what we have in the potential out there from the ports point of view; what we have, obviously, it becomes the gateway to Port aux Basques which is our gateway to the Mainland, how you use those amenities to support that.

Even from a tourism point of view, that part of Newfoundland and Labrador has as many attractions as does any other part of this great province of ours. So we need to be able to use that and keeping that amenity there, keeping that asset is very important. I know it becomes a challenge when you're balancing dollars and cents around. The benefit used to be here – and I would hope that it will still be able to continue; I know it's going to be more of a struggle – was the investment, was a line of credit investment

that the airport authority would take that and invest in it to improve its attractiveness to do marketing, to find ways to ensure that the airlines and other industries, homegrown businesses could use the airport to generate enough revenue to pay that off and still sustain the employment that was necessary.

I know they struggled. Before the change of the last government, Mr. Chair, I was out on the West Coast and had an opportunity to meet with a number of councils and the airport authority and have a discussion around the additional monies they needed for their line of credit, to ensure their sustainability and some of the project proposals and some of the long-term plans that they had for the airport itself. It showed that they were – it wasn't pie-in-the-sky, it was realistic, yet it was the same process of ensuring that this wasn't about competing against any other airport that we have here in Newfoundland and Labrador; it was about them carving off their part and looking further than just the traffic in Newfoundland and Labrador. How could they get Mainland traffic? How could they engage large aircrafts because they have the ability to land larger aircrafts there than in most of our other facilities in Newfoundland and Labrador?

So they started to look for a different market, and I give them credit for that. Obviously, to do that, you need to have some flexibility on your line of credit. From a marketing point of view, if it means that you're going to send a delegation somewhere to meet with a company or an airline, or some type of a manufacturing entity that could use your site and using that ability to transport goods and services and individuals to and from the particular site.

They have a great facility out there. I think we're at the crossroads now of being able to find a way to stimulate our economy from a provincial point of view, but carve off a piece that the Stephenville Airport and all the amenities in the Stephenville area would be an added attraction so that it doesn't become a financial burden – not that it is a financial burden, but it's becoming a financial discussion that we need to guarantee that there's money there, but it would become a financial contributor, not only from a job creation point of view but they're making enough money that

they reinvest monies. They then try to open up other markets or other types of services that would be beneficial to the community.

The mainstay of any community is your transportation link. The highway bypasses it, but there's a connection to it. The airport itself and, for want of a better phrase, if you go back to the '50s, '60s and '70s that's what the airport was based on.

The establishment of the college back a number of decades ago put Stephenville back on the map, but that was part and parcel – I think there was a collaborative approach there to show, do you know what, having a college of the magnitude out there that not only addresses the needs of students on the West Coast but all over Newfoundland and Labrador, and even those from other provinces, having the airport there was an easy fit, people coming in and out, particularly West Coast students as part of that.

One of the things a number of decades ago, before Memorial University did a massive outreach to be more inclusive to Newfoundland and Labrador students, even before the international students, and from an attractive point of view and a financial point of view, on the West Coast you would find the higher than average than on the Central or East Coast of students who would leave and go to another university, particularly in Eastern Canada, in the Maritime provinces.

So, the airport was an integral part of their ability, from a transportation point of view, to come back to their homes, to go to their post-secondary institutions. Unfortunately for that part of it, but fortunately for us, the majority of our students are staying in Newfoundland and Labrador and are being educated in our college system and our university system through our two campuses in the university, obviously, and our multitude of the public and private colleges that we have here.

So, that became a struggle, something that was an automatic changed and it was the demographics that the people of Stephenville and that region couldn't control. Things were made, policy decisions were made, what was more of an open process to include more people and keep people at home from an educated point

of view and we had risen to a point where our education system, we always knew it was as good as anywhere else but it was now accepted.

It wasn't Mainland is an easier sell than an education from here. Now we know our education system is second to none. That's why we get so many international students coming here, that's why we produce the best of best in every field, if its medicine, if its engineering, if its manufacturing, and any of the trades that we have, if it's the sciences, if it's in education – so we've been very fluent on that and, unfortunately, sometimes when you do something with one hand, it has an effect on the other. And what we took from one benefited some of the others but, obviously, had an impact.

So, we have an ability and a responsibility to ensure that we give every opportunity to those people, particularly in a lot of cases out here they are volunteers, they're businesspeople, some are employed within the ranks of the airport authority itself, to find a way to sustain that asset, find a way to develop it and find a way to promote it, and more importantly find a way to make it sustainable.

The few things we do in government – we do a multitude of policies, every administration have done it; but, in this case, this is not an entity looking for a handout, it's a hand up, ensuring that they still have some sustainability. For us not to support that, I think, would be, for want of a better phrase, a backward thinking process here. This is about going forward, it's about a community that hasn't given up on it, it's about an organization that see the value of what they have, it's about us in Newfoundland and Labrador ensuring that we have another asset; because we look at it here, and we know we have some challenges financially, but with the resources we have here, with the ingenuity we have here, with the skill set we have here, we're this close to something – a magnitude that we've never seen in our life here before around industries that can be developed.

Your industries are only as good as the transportation links that you're going to have, and your industries can't be always based in one region. We get the disparity then, we get out-migration and we get loss of infrastructure

within communities. So to do that, we need to find businesses that work and industries that can be productive. To do that we need to have draws, and we have draws, we have many draws in this great province of ours. We have great ports, we have great attractions, we have great infrastructure but our airport processes are very important. We're getting to a point now, we're no longer dealing with just somebody on the Northern Peninsula can drive down, or somebody from Central or Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador, we're in an international market now.

With changes to global trade agreements, we're opened up to – somebody from Europe can very easily come to Newfoundland and Labrador, a company that set up shop and develop things. They want to be able to manoeuvre in and out with their staff, with their expertise, with their training, or vice versa, that they can come access the qualified staffing individuals we have here or the products that we produce here, and move them to their own jurisdictions and make things work. We've got the North American market next door to us. We're that much closer to it and we have the asset to be able to do it.

There's a cost to maintaining things, and sometimes we all have it. Everybody who has some piece of equipment, some something that they may never use, always thinking they want to have it and it may be useable down the road, but we always put a few dollars in it to keep it afloat to make sure it's there, because we know one day there's going to be a value for that. And the day we dismiss it, the day we throw it away, is the day you realize: Now I have a use for it. It can be a contributor. It's no longer a hindrance because it's in my yard; it's in the way. So we need to be able to keep the things that have gotten us to where we are.

It's unfortunate that society has changed somewhat and that we can only pick and choose things that are more valuable to us from a financial point of view and we can't spread things too thin. But while we're doing that, we still need to be cognizant of the fact that we have so many things here that we've done in the past, that worked in the past, that we need to say, you know what, let's sustain them and let's not get rid of them. I look at the Come By Chance oil refinery and I can remember the days when it

was built. I was only a kid. I can remember what hope that was and from some people from my own district what role they played in that.

I also remember the dark days, when it was mothballed and it was about to be destroyed. Fortunate enough, there were people who pushed and pushed not to let it go; don't let it go yet, don't let it go, keep pushing. There is an asset, there is a value to this and there will be a benefit.

Then we had an American company come by and said let's look at it. It is still in half decent shape. It's been kept up enough that maybe we can start something. They invested, as we know at the time, nearly \$100 million to move it to the next level. Then invested hundreds of millions more to get it. Now we have a state-of-the-art facility that is one of the cornerstones for why our offshore industry is so attractive. Who knows, maybe that'll spur on some other company to come and look at something similar, only in a new, modern facility?

I say that just as part of the history. We need to support things that may now not have the same value they had at one point or the same uses they had at one point, but we can't dismiss them that they don't have value to what we have. We've got to be forward thinking that, at the end of the day, something that was of value before can still be a value down the road. It may just have to take a lull because we've moved to another direction or there's emphasis on another area. And that's fine, you don't dismiss those areas. They need to have growth areas. Those assets need to be developed also.

But we want to make sure that the things that we had, even when we looked at some of the mills and that down the road – and I know the world has changed, and maybe the world will change differently when it comes to the value of the mills that we had in Newfoundland and Labrador. We may regret and say, had we kept that structure in play and put in a million dollars a year to keep it up to grade, now all of a sudden the world has changed.

I know we're going with technology and newsprint and that is secondary, but maybe there would be other uses for that. I would hope one day that we don't regret that, but we should

learn from certain things that there may be an industry change and we'd have the asset to use that.

I'm convinced keeping that asset and keeping it at a standard that's useable and accessible is a benefit to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Because somewhere along the way, if it's in the next five years, the next five generations, they'll be a use for that in Newfoundland and Labrador on the West Coast and what that had contributed will be seen as a benefit and we'll be able to draw something that economically benefits everybody in Newfoundland and Labrador because we were smart enough to invest a few dollars to a group of individuals who are taking the lead to ensure that, not only the history of it stays, but it's in good enough shape that the minute we're ready to move forward it can be done.

Mr. Chair, I'll be supporting this very much.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to take just a few minutes and I want to talk about – this afternoon, around lunchtime actually, I made a visit down, outside of Her Majesty's Penitentiary. I spoke to some of the people, former inmates and families of inmates who are down there protesting and have concerns about Her Majesty's Penitentiary. I think it's important that, from time to time, whenever we can, we raise this issue.

I will say, you know, in fairness, as I said to the people down there, that this is an issue – people may feel it's something that never gets discussed in the House of Assembly, that nobody ever gives it a thought or a second thought, but that's not the case, it does.

To the credit of the Minister of Justice, I know that he has answered questions and spoken to this issue a number of times and I believe he's actually visited the penitentiary, what they call the shoe and all this stuff, which I haven't done, but he has. I think we all recognize the fact that

the infrastructure there is crumbling, conditions are extremely poor – that’s putting it mildly.

I think we all recognize as well the need for appropriate programs and services at Her Majesty’s Penitentiary. And while I think we recognize that bricks and mortar are definitely needed, if a decision was made tomorrow to proceed with that, by the time you got into the studies, the plans and the consultations and everything else and then to actually construct it and so on, we’d still be talking probably four or five years down the road. That’s if a decision was made tomorrow to actually take any solid action.

It’s not going to happen overnight, as I explained to people down there. I think most people recognize and understand that. Certainly, when it comes to the services that are there, that is something that can be tackled now. Albeit, it may not be the ideal conditions, for sure, but there are things I think we can do to improve the programs and services that are being offered at Her Majesty’s Penitentiary.

One gentleman I spoke to told me that he had a long history of being an offender and a reoffender, and it wasn’t until he actually ended up going to the Mainland that he actually received the treatment that he needed for substance abuse and so on. Since that time he’s been clean, I think he said, for like seven years, which is great. But he had to go to a federal facility outside of Newfoundland and Labrador to make that happen.

I know that this topic comes up from time to time and it never gets any traction. And I understand, and I told the people down there – I felt I was quite candid with them about the reality of how things work. We all know that it is a budgetary matter, there’s no doubt about it, and we know that when we talk about expending funds and prioritizing the expenditure of funds I think it’s fair to say that if each one of us were to go to our district and say we’ve got X amount of money to spend, now do you want a new school or a new library, or a new recreational centre and so on, or do you want us to build a new penitentiary, I think we all know that 99.9 per cent of the people in every district is going to give the same answer, that they want a school or they want a recreational centre and the

penitentiary is not a priority. That’s a cold, hard fact and a reality that it will never be the popular thing to do.

You’re not going to get a whole lot of votes no matter who the government is, it doesn’t matter, from building a penitentiary. That is reality. People want the things in their community and a lot of people view it as you do the crime, you do the time.

I think, as legislators here in this House, sometimes we have to look beyond on certain issues as to what would be the popular thing in that case and look at the picture, the bigger picture, of what is needed. I think we have to realize that as a civilized society and a democratic society, the importance of the rule of law and the importance of corrections and the importance of having a correctional system and a justice system that is punitive, for sure, compassionate when need be, but also receptive, and receptive to the needs of the victims, receptive to the needs of the offenders, and receptive to the needs of society as a whole. I think we also realize that everybody who walks into Her Majesty’s Penitentiary, at some point in time are getting out. That is a reality. They go in, they’re getting out, and we don’t want them walking out worse than when they went in. There’s no benefit to society whatsoever for someone to go into the system and to come out of the system worse than when they went in.

It’s also important to note, I believe, that people with mental health issues, they require medical treatment, not incarceration. If you have a mental health issue, it’s medical treatment that’s required. That’s what’s required for mental health issues. If you have an addiction, then those addiction issues have to be dealt with, and many of the crimes that we see in our society – the armed robberies, the break-ins and all that stuff that you see in the news – the vast majority of those are people who are addicted to one substance or another.

In a lot of cases, I’ve had people come through my office, I’m sure other Members may have had the same experience, but I’ve had people come through my office with addictions, and their addictions started on the family doctor’s prescription pad. That’s where it started, because they may have had some sort of an injury and so

on and they were prescribed OxyContin or Percocet or whatever the case might be, and it led to an addiction.

I've had situations where there were people who got hooked on opioids and then the doctor dropped them as a patient, and then they can't get a new doctor. You pick up the phone and call – well, if you can find a doctor at all, but if you do find someone who's taking a patient and you say I have an opioid prescription, they won't take you. These are serious issues that have to be addressed. People going into Her Majesty's Penitentiary, if the reason why they're going there – which is not in all cases; we know there are, I'll call them, hardened criminals as well. But a lot of people going in there, if they have addictions, then addictions need to be addressed.

Now, I have heard the minister and the Minister of Health, I think, talk about a shift – I don't remember exactly everything that was said, but sort of a shift of moving some of these programs from Justice over to Health and Community Services and so on, and that's a good thing. I think it's a step in the right direction if that's what's happening. I'm not sure how far we've progressed in that and exactly what programs are currently in place and at what stages we are with those programs. But if that's something that is happening – and I believe there is, like I said some move towards that, then that's a good thing. I think it needs to happen sooner rather than later to deal with those issues around addictions.

Again, as I said, people with mental health issues need medical treatment. That's what they need. They don't need incarceration; they need medical treatment. So those are the issues that really need to be tackled outside of the brick and mortar. Those are the issues that can be tackled to a degree, given the fact that you still, ideally, need a new place to do it, to do it properly and do it the way you would like. But we have to work with what we have, and I certainly encourage the government to do so.

I certainly acknowledge the minister raising these issues in the past, as I've told the people down there, but it's important, I think, that we keep this conversation alive in the House of Assembly. I think it's important that we realize that at some point in time some government,

whoever that government is, are going to have to bite the bullet and address the bricks-and-mortar issue as well. I certainly think that's something we should be having serious discussions on.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

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

MR. FINN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the Member for Corner Brook for the kind words of encouragement. He and I just actually had a great conversation about the importance of Bill 53, which is An Act to Amend the Loan and Guarantee Act.

Mr. Chair, as noted throughout discussion – and I want to say thank you to the Members opposite for their support. Understanding this is a finance bill and we can certainly speak to other issues that are pressing in the province, but this particular piece of legislation is a guarantee for a line of credit to the Stephenville Airport Corporation.

It is extremely, extremely important that this entity continues to grow and have success. It's extremely important to Stephenville, it's extremely important to the West Coast, it's extremely important to the Southwest Coast and the entire province, Mr. Chair.

I noted last week and I think some figures – figures don't lie and I'm a figures firm believe that we need to share some numbers. I quoted last week that when it comes to alternate designations for airports, if an aircraft takes off anywhere in Atlantic Canada – we see a lot of aircraft that fly over Newfoundland on a daily basis. When an aircraft takes off, it needs to have what's called an achievable alternate landing. An achievable alternate needs to be somewhere that it can be within 30 minutes.

Over a 20-month period, we had some 15,000 flights that used Stephenville Airport as an alternate designation – 15,000 in a 20-month span. That's 783 flights per month, and approximately 26 different flights a day. If, for example, Stephenville Airport was not available,

then we would not see traffic that comes into St. John's, that comes into Goose Bay and that comes into Deer Lake. It is there as a contingency for these folks as an alternate. I think that speaks volumes to the importance of the airport in this province as a tremendous asset.

With exception to alternate designations, the airport is seeing growth. I can confirm for you that the traffic, the passenger movements have increased 10 per cent year over year. We have seen a significant increase in our military traffic – a number of C-17s and C-130s. We've also had some tremendous success with even our Canadian military, actually, most recently.

A lot of times we see American military aircraft stopped there, due to the size of the runway, and due to the extremely good weather conditions. But with the Canadian military we actually just reached a deal where now for the next five years we will have some 130 troops – that's Newfoundland and New Brunswick soldiers – from the 37 Canadian Brigade, and they are using Stephenville as a winter training exercise destination.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FINN: So we had 130 troops just a couple of weekends ago. The reason they're choosing Stephenville is this: The winter conditions are favourable; we have access to the Lewis Hills and to the mountains; the troops can physically land; they can leave the airport and be training within less than 50 minutes from the point in time in which they land. What we've also done is provide them space for an operations and command centre. So they came in recently, they're doing this now over the next five years.

We're seeing significant increase in stopovers from folks from Canadian Forces Base in Greenwood, Nova Scotia as well – CFB Greenwood. In fact, what they're doing, they're using Stephenville as a training ground but then they go to Labrador to practice their training, to see what they've learned. So we know the weather conditions in Labrador, certainly favourable in the wintertime if you're snowmobiling, backcountry, rescue missions and these types of things. But they'll come to Stephenville to complete the training, then

they'll leave here and they'll go up to Goose Bay and then they'll practise their training up there. So if it wasn't for that, we wouldn't see some of those movements throughout the province. So I think that's extremely important.

The other important piece and one of the things that we were fortunate to do as a government is support the Marine Institute's SERT training.

MR. BYRNE: Talking about me.

MR. FINN: The Member for Corner Brook was instrumental at the time as the minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, and he successfully negotiated a five-year agreement with the Marine Institute to remain in Stephenville to provide this training.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FINN: And he successfully negotiated a five-year renewal and this negotiation resulted in a net increase in cost to the Stephenville Airport Corporation, that provincially/federally we have recently negotiated a contract with NAV Canada.

Mr. Chair, NAV Canada doesn't just come in and say we're going to increase our expenditures to Stephenville Airport Corporation and continue on for another three years without seeing the tremendous importance of the Stephenville Airport Corporation and facility.

In addition, Mr. Chair, we are now embarking with the town in partnership with the airport board in terms of an exploratory committee that is meeting with other airlines to see if we can attract some more passenger movements. The passenger movements are important to the area. We've had some success with Porter Airlines over the last number of years who've just about doubled, just over doubled their passenger intakes and they go directly from Stephenville to Halifax and return.

The benefit to the residents of the Southwest Coast of this province is that they do not have to forego just over an hour-and-a-half drive from Stephenville and surrounding areas to Deer Lake. And the weather again tends to be more favourable so if you can avoid the driving

conditions in the wintertime, then we have that direct route there to Halifax.

But, in fact, it sparked a few other conversations with other airlines because they see if the capacity is there and the passengers are there, and the passenger loads are in excess of 70 per cent and it's profitable, well then maybe other airlines need to start looking at this as a way to come in and out of the province as well.

The amount of jobs that we're talking about here – the Stephenville Airport Corporation directly employs 19 individuals; that's the Airport Corporation directly. However, the tenants on site make up 58 jobs, so we're talking well over 60, 70, 80 jobs here that are directly impacted and have spin-off effects all around. That's folks from our security folks, from our NAV Canada, our Marine Institutes, the car rental companies, the restaurants and it just goes on and on.

So, the impact it has on a local economy, an economy of scale in Stephenville is significant. The Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island referenced certain assets that we need to protect and I believe he referenced Come By Chance. I would be safe to say that this asset is, in the same sense, extremely important to Stephenville and surrounding area.

Mr. Chair, the other extreme important piece of the Stephenville Airport is with respect to our health care services. As we know, we have the regional hospital in Corner Brook, we have a beautiful acute-care facility in Stephenville as well but, oftentimes, folks need to travel for health care. And they travel in here into St. John's.

We are seeing our air ambulance movement increase. This is as a direct result of our aging demographics and aging population. But to take someone who needs the immediate cardiac care and can go directly to Stephenville and leave from there and be here within St. John's within just an hour is something that's extremely important, and we've seen lives saved as a direct result of that.

Mr. Chair, there's so much more I could say. I'm extremely proud of our government. I'm extremely proud of my colleagues for supporting the Stephenville Airport Corporation. I'm also

very pleased to see that we have unanimous support here in the House of Assembly.

This is something that began a number of years ago and continued under successive governments, under the PC administration, but, just recently, seeing the need, our government was able to increase this line of credit for an additional \$300,000 – something that's extremely important to the Airport Corporation. With respect to their movements and the sales they achieve from refueling stops, it allows them some flexibility. Mr. Chair, plowing a 10,000-foot runway, when you have consistent days of 25 centimetres of snow, is certainly a challenge. It's maintenance on the vehicles and it's cost involved, so this bit of flexibility has allowed the airport to put money into some of its own capital expenditures with respect to equipment and upgrades to the facility itself and then, in turn, they have some flexibility to keep operations going.

Mr. Chair, I am extremely proud; thank you to all the Members of the House of Assembly for their support. Unless we have someone else to hear from this afternoon, I want to say a sincere thank you for all the help for the Stephenville Airport Corporation.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: Thank you very much.

To the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port, yes, we all do support it. I was up earlier and I think some of my colleagues on both sides of this House and in all parties are in support of the investment that we do make in the Stephenville area. It's an important investment and it's an investment that we have to continue to do, and I agree with it.

Mr. Chair, this is an opportunity – this is a money bill – for us to get up and be able to talk about different things. Today, we had a real good announcement in our fishery. We've been asking questions for the last year and a half

basically about Grand Bank and the importance of the surf clams to the people in Grand Bank.

Today, after a lot of hard work I would say from people in politics and from people in the area, I'd like to congratulate the mayor because he stood up, right off the bat, when this announcement came a little while ago that 25 per cent were going to be transferred to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and, today, we got a good announcement that all are still going to be produced in Grand Bank and there's an agreement between Clearwater and 14 different Indigenous groups. So, it's a good announcement for the whole area.

I have to make special recognition. I've met with the Fisheries critic for the Conservative Party of Canada, Todd Doherty, and he did ask a lot of questions in the House of Commons to the minister of Fisheries at the time, Minister LeBlanc. I think due to the hard work from him and the persistence of the people in the area, persistence from our party, and I'm sure from the party across the way, that a wrong was made a right and this is a good announcement for the people on the whole Burin Peninsula, I'm sure, today. It's especially a good announcement for Grand Bank, and it's a good announcement for our fishery.

Our fishery is in a time in this province right now where there's so much uncertainty, it's unbelievable. When you talk to harvesters, you talk to plant workers and everybody in the province, we're seeing some scary numbers when it comes to different species.

I know, Mr. Chair, in your area that there's a huge concern. Tomorrow there's a big meeting in Grand Falls. People are concerned about quotas and whatnot and we need to be at that table to ensure that DFO are doing the proper analysis and have the proper people at the table also.

I noticed that lately – I asked a question earlier this week when it came to the fishery about consultations that are done by DFO and I'd like to see more involved harvesters, people who are on the water, people who have been there for years and years and seen the different trends. We've seen the fishery in this province, especially the crab fishery – I talked to a

gentleman this morning and he explained to me in the '80s we had this big low and in the '90s the same thing, but it did bounce back.

Now, there are concerns about how we're getting our data these days. We saw last year DFO came out and they talked about the male crab were so small. That's a huge issue for them too, so we need a lot of science and we need a lot of work done on our fishery.

I just wanted to get up today for a couple of minutes that I'm going to get up and I just wanted to congratulate, like I said, the mayor of Grand Bank, Rex Matthews. He was out front in this in the crab and when we talked surf clams. I also have to mention Todd Doherty who was the fishery critic that asked a lot of questions. Because these questions were asked – we met with our federal counterparts as a caucus and it was done deal a year ago but, due to persistence of a lot of people, this deal got reversed.

This is a great announcement for Newfoundland and Labrador today. It's a good announcement for our fishery and it's something that we need because there are a lot of downs right now in our fishery and this is something that will hopefully bring people up and give a bit of optimism in, especially the Burin Peninsula area.

Like I said, it's a good announcement today and I'd like to congratulate these people that went to bat, and their word, they got out there and got change. So what was wrong a year-and-a-half ago hopefully is a right today, and the people in Grand Bank can be assured that the work will be there. These are great jobs in that community. They're not seasonal jobs; they're year-round jobs.

Any time you create jobs in rural Newfoundland, anywhere at all, it's great for the whole area. These jobs, I'm sure, will create other jobs in the area also. So, people were looking at probably getting laid off and not getting enough time, and having to go on unemployment, but I think after today, what I've read so far, is that they're assured that these jobs will stay there.

So it's a good day, and like I said, congratulations go out to these people that stood

up and were counted and made this decision change.

Thank you very much.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BROWNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I certainly just want to lend a few words. I thank my colleague from Cape St. Francis for his interest in the Burin Peninsula, and I certainly echo his statements in thanking the communities of the Burin Peninsula for making their voices heard on this subject.

He thanked a wide range of people, but he did omit the Member for Burin - Grand Bank, and I feel compelled to ensure that her voice is heard in this, as she is unable to do it today. But I can tell you, with absolute certainty, that the Member for Burin - Grand Bank worked very hard on this issue; in fact, convened a meeting with the federal Fisheries minister at that time when the announcement was learned of in September of 2017, I believe it would be, or '18.

It was something that she worked on very closely with the mayor of Grand Bank. I know this is an issue for all of us, something that the Minister of Fisheries and the Premier worked very hard on to raise with the federal government. We always don't rant and roar at our friends in Ottawa; we work collectively and collaboratively to get results. So that's what's happened in Grand Bank today.

I certainly commend all the people involved. This is good news for the Burin Peninsula; it's good news for the people of Grand Bank and all of the communities. I certainly believe firmly that Grand Bank is doing well, Marystown is doing well, and St. Lawrence is doing well, Burin is doing well. A high tide floats all boats, so I certainly echo the sentiments of the Member opposite, and I thank everyone for their efforts on this file.

It's very important to have this fish plant, because of we all know the stories of the Marystown and Burin fish plants that were

closed under the former administration's watch, something that is a black eye on the former administration, Mr. Chair, and it's very unfortunate that happened.

This government has stood up for the people of Grand Bank and stood up for the people of the Burin Peninsula. It was just today, Mr. Chair, we heard more aspersions being cast by Members opposite about Marystown, but we won't go there today.

I do want to congratulate my colleague, though, from Stephenville - Port au Port for all of his work on this file with the Stephenville Airport, which is the topic that we are debating here today, Mr. Chair. I know this file well. When I worked for the former MP, Stephenville was part of the riding. I know this is a file that the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port has been very passionate about, has advocated for time and time again to ensure that this service continues to the people of the West and Southwest Coast. So, I congratulate the Member.

Again, Mr. Chair, I thank everyone for their comments today and I look forward to continuing working with everyone on all sides of the House to promote economic growth in all parts of the province, but particularly in the area that I represent on the Burin Peninsula.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

On motion, resolution carried.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957." (Bill 53)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report Bill 53 carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 53.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

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

MR. WARR: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Ways and Means have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of Ways and Means reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

When shall the report be received?

Now?

MR. A. PARSONS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I moved, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that the resolution be now read a first time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

CLERK: "That it is expedient to bring in a measure further to amend the *Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957*, to provide for the advance of loans to and the guarantee of the repayment of bonds or debentures issued by or loans advanced to certain corporations."

On motion, resolution read a first time.

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

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

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

CLERK: Second reading of the resolution.

"That it is expedient to bring in a measure further to amend the *Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957*, to provide for the advance of loans to and the guarantee of the repayment of bonds or

debentures issued by or loans advanced to certain corporations."

On motion, resolution read a second time.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957, Bill 53, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 53, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957 be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957," carried. (Bill 53)

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957. (Bill 53)

On motion, Bill 53 read a first time.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. the Minister of Natural Resources that Bill 53, An Act To Amend The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957 be now read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 53, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957, 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 To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957. (Bill 53)

On motion, Bill 53 read a second time.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources that Bill 53, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957 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, 'nay.'

The motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957. (Bill 53)

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 To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 53)

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde, that the House do now adjourn.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow, at 10 o'clock in the morning.

Thank you.

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