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Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Admit strangers, please.

Order, please!

I would like to welcome all of my colleagues back to this House of Assembly, and while it's an unusual time of the year for us to be sitting, it certainly is a great opportunity for me to introduce a few key people who are joining us today.

First of all, to my right is a very new Page for us. She's been serving as a tour guide for us this summer in bilingual capacity. This is Claire Dowden, she's from St. John's. She's studying at Memorial University, completing an arts degree with a double major in Communication Studies and English Language and Literature.

Welcome Claire as our new Page.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Also, I'm well accompanied by Lauren and Elizabeth. Thanks to my Pages for showing up in the middle of the summer.

Special guests in the Speaker's gallery today; we have joining us for a Member's statement, first of all, Special Olympian Joshua Gardner, and joining him is Michelle Rye-Gardner.

Welcome to you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, colleagues.

Also joining us in the Speaker's gallery, no stranger to this province, Mr. Woodrow French. He's the former mayor of Conception Bay South, and he's here for a Member's statement. And he's joined by Wayne Miller, who's an Order of Newfoundland and Labrador recipient and a veteran of our Canadian Forces.

Welcome to you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: For Members' statements today we will hear from the Members for the Districts of St. George's - Humber; Mount Scio; Stephenville - Port au Port; Conception Bay South; and Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

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

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When Princess Anne made her royal visit to the grounds of Grenfell Campus of Memorial University in Corner Brook in 2016, she helped unveil the bronze sculpture of the infamous Danger Tree, the iconic symbol of the Battle of Beaumont-Hamel where hundreds of young men from the Royal Newfoundland Regiment were killed.

This past week additions to the Danger Tree site were unveiled. A statue of Private Hugh Walter McWhirter of Humbermouth, who was the first person from the province to be killed in World War I.

A bench was also unveiled to commemorate the contributions of the Newfoundland Forestry Corps in World War I and the Newfoundland Overseas Forestry Unit in World War II. Both these additions to the Danger Tree site were created by Corner Brook sculptor, Morgan McDonald.

I ask all Members of this House to join me in commending David Higgins and other members of the Forget-Me-Not Committee and the people of Grenfell Campus of Memorial University for the important work they're doing in recognizing the sacrifice of our war veterans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Mount Scio.

MS. STOODLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today, I'd like to recognize the Rabbittown Community Centre in my District of Mount Scio, which has amazing programming for children and families.

Earlier in July, both local residents and staff of the community centre were concerned about traffic speed. In consultation with stakeholders, the centre took a leadership role and engaged their summer camp students and local community in painting a colourful and majestic tree over a large area of the road. The artwork was designed to be visible to drivers and to slow traffic.

The tree is made up of big puzzle pieces, and students and local residents participated by painting a piece or leaving a handprint. Constituents I visited nearby were delighted to have been offered the opportunity to leave their mark.

In particular, I'd like to recognize the leading artist, Stephanie Poirier, who works at the centre and the hard work of Executive Director Lillian Lush who lends her leadership, energy and vision into the Rabbittown Community Centre every day. This community centre runs year-round programming for children and families and is an exemplary organization.

Please join me in congratulating the Rabbittown Community Centre for their creativity and ingenuity in leading such a thoughtful project which has proven to be effective in slowing traffic.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Stephenville Theatre Festival is now in its 41st year, the longest running professional theatre company in this province. This season opened on July 12 with a performance of Green Day's "American Idiot" and will conclude with

the Stephenville Theatre's Gala on August 11, 2019.

The festival's mission has always been to enrich the economic, artistic and cultural sectors of the Town of Stephenville, along with the whole province, and become an anchor event for tourism in and around the Bay St. George area.

The hard work and dedication of the cast, artistic director, volunteers and administration with this organization is second to none. The Stephenville Festival experience is unique, in that it offers a distinctive performance of works that entertain, engage and enlighten audiences young and old alike.

I ask all hon. Members of the House to join me in congratulating the Stephenville Theatre Festival in its 41st season.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge a very proud resident of my district and someone who fought hard to make a difference in the lives of many air travellers; his advocacy, determination and unwillingness to take no for an answer was very commendable.

I speak of none other than Mr. Woodrow French, former mayor of Conception Bay South, the driving force and the person responsible for the passenger Bill of Rights becoming a reality. Mr. Speaker, phase one of this new Bill of Rights was brought into effect on July 15, with phase two being implemented in December of this year.

This bill came as a result of hard lobbying by Woodrow to improve the lives of many travellers who experienced frustration with dealing with various airlines, as Woodrow seen and experienced himself.

Since 2006, Woodrow has been advocating for airline changes for consumers and, just recently,

the federal government passed this legislation in the House of Commons. This has led to the passenger Bill of Rights which will improve air travel and make sure people are treated with the respect they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join with me in congratulating Mr. Woodrow French on making this Bill of Rights a reality.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to pay tribute to Mr. Joshua Gardner. Joshua is a decorated Special Olympian of five years who competes in swimming, track and field and curling, where he and the rest of his team, the Exploits Hurricanes Hot Shots – Margaret McNeil, Gary Wicks, Kim O’Neil and Tony Krytsis – have won Team of the Year for Newfoundland and Labrador. Joshua has qualified to represent Team Newfoundland and Labrador as the skip for curling at the 2020 National Games in Thunder Bay.

Joshua has graduated high school and now attends College of the North Atlantic. From there, he hopes to mentor and advocate for Special Olympians throughout the province. This year, Joshua was named Male Athlete of the Year for Newfoundland and Labrador.

I had the pleasure of volunteering at this year’s Special Olympics in Grand Falls-Windsor. I have come to learn what the word special truly means. Special does not define these athletes’ inabilities. Instead, it defines their ability to overcome life’s greatest challenges and play for the love of the game and respect for their fellow athletes.

Please join me as we honour Mr. Joshua Gardner, Newfoundland and Labrador’s Male Athlete of the Year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Well done!

Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, today, with great sadness, we mark the passing of a man who was instrumental in the evolution of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary.

Retired Chief Robert Johnston was highly admired by all who knew him. Described by colleagues as a devoted officer and mentor, he embodied all the characteristics of a great officer; he was brave but gentle, kind but confident. He was a born leader who joined the RNC in 1979 and served as Chief between 2010 and 2014 after working his way through the ranks – testament to his hard work and the respect he garnered from all corners.

Mr. Johnston passed away July 8, 2019 after a courageous battle with brain cancer. As during his policing career, he lived with positivity and courage after his diagnosis, giving hope to survivors throughout his 22-month battle. He will be remembered for his strength and contribution to the province.

Mr. Speaker, today, together with all hon. Members of this House and on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, we send condolences to his wife Gloria, daughters Amanda and Sarah, his mother Inez and his extended family at the RNC. I hope that they can take comfort in knowing the profound impact that Mr. Johnston had on this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister. It is with great respect that I stand here

today and pay tribute to Mr. Johnston on behalf of the Official Opposition. Mr. Johnston served our province with dignity, courage, compassion and devotion. He exemplified these characteristics which we've come to expect from members of the RNC. Mr. Johnston was a truly remarkable and deserving choice to serve as Chief. As the minister recognized, Mr. Johnston passed away earlier this month.

On behalf of the Official Opposition, I extend my deepest sympathies to his wife Gloria, daughters Amanda and Sarah, his mother Inez, and his large circle of friends and family. Mr. Johnston had a tremendous impact on this province for which he will be fondly remembered and appreciated.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. I also want to add our condolences to the family of Robert Johnston. Chief Johnston was key in the ongoing growth of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, helping to mould it into the modern, professional organization it is today. He was a great officer who served the public well over his long career.

It would benefit all RNC officers, especially the new recruits, to reflect on Chief Johnston's career and model their career on his. Our hearts go out to his family and loved ones.

Thank you for your service, Robert Johnston.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Service.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House to congratulate Eastern Health and their CEO David Diamond on achieving communications excellence at the 2019 International Association of Business Communicators' Pinnacle Awards, held on June 26, at the Alt Hotel in St. John's.

Eastern Health received three awards, which include Awards of Merit for their 2018 influenza public awareness campaign, and a staff recognition video entitled *EZ Belong*. They also received an award of excellence for their Health Innovations Fair.

In addition to these awards, CEO David Diamond was recognized with the 2019 Award of Excellence for Organizational Leader. This award is presented annually to an individual who has demonstrated leadership, with a vision and commitment to communications excellence.

Mr. Diamond was nominated by communications staff, who say he has a solid and strong presence, which has permeated every fibre of the work carried out within Eastern Health.

To quote one media relations manager at the organization: Dave is committed to honest and open communication with staff, clients and residents Eastern Health serves. He leads by example and inspires everyone to give 100 per cent.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Eastern Health and their CEO David Diamond on receiving these prestigious awards.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I join with the minister to offer congratulations to Eastern Health and their CEO, David Diamond, on receiving three awards for communications excellence at the 2019

Association of Business Communicators' Pinnacle Awards.

The CEO, Mr. David Diamond, was the recipient of the 2019 Award of Excellence for Organizational Leader. Mr. Diamond was nominated by the communications staff at Eastern Health. He was praised for the high quality of work and commitment that he brings to the job each and every day.

Mr. Speaker, it always makes us so proud when members of our public service receive the recognition they rightfully deserve. On behalf of the Official Opposition, we extend our sincere congratulations and a sincere thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would also like to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Those of us with long memories will recall the communications disaster which was the 2007 ER/PR scandal. I'm delighted to stand here today and praise Eastern Health for how far they've come since those dark days. It is impressive to see Eastern Health move from a harsh review with a judicial inquiry to winning three awards of excellence in communications.

Congratulations to CEO Dave Diamond, his staff and the hard work of everyone at Eastern Health involved in winning this award.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

If I may, I would like to also chime in my congratulations and recognize that Mr. David Diamond, the CEO for Eastern Health, is here with us today. Thank you for coming, Sir.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the incredible achievement of our very own Shallaway Youth Choir.

Just recently, Shallaway became the first choir from the province to reach the final round of the prestigious Seghizzi Choral Competition Grand Prix in Italy. Competing against choirs of all ages and genres, Shallaway was awarded a third overall finish.

Mr. Speaker, on top of this significant achievement, Shallaway received two other noteworthy accolades at the Grand Prix – a gold medal in the gospel category, and a silver medal in contemporary music.

Congratulations to all the musicians in Shallaway's Camerata, as well as the artistic director Kellie Walsh, collaborative pianist Leslee Heys and associate director Jennifer Hart.

Shallaway is an internationally recognized and celebrated organization that is dedicated to exploring, developing and celebrating cultural expression through choral music. As ambassadors for our province, Shallaway has travelled the world sharing music from Newfoundland and Labrador. Currently, the choir is still in Italy, and will soon sing a full mass at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican.

Mr. Speaker, these young men and women are leaders of Newfoundland and Labrador, and I ask all hon. Members to join me in recognizing Shallaway Youth Choir on their incredible achievement.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Terra Nova.

MR. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. On behalf of the Official Opposition, I congratulate the Shallaway Youth Choir on their recent success at the Seghizzi Choral Competition Grand Prix in Italy.

Mr. Speaker, being awarded a third overall finish, a gold medal in the gospel category and a silver medal in contemporary music is an outstanding achievement and an accomplishment that the entire province should be proud of. The success of Shallaway is a testament to the dedication and talent of Shallaway's members, vocal coaches, musicians, volunteers and the staff who work tirelessly to share the talent of our youngest artists throughout the world.

I congratulate Shallaway on their recent success and wish them the best in their future. This province is full of talent and it's fantastic to see this talent recognized on the world stage.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for the District of Labrador West.

MR. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Congratulations to Shallaway Youth Choir on their award-winning performance and the importance of international competition.

These excellent singers and conductors have helped put Newfoundland and Labrador on the map of choral music. Shallaway gives youth of this province an opportunity to sing music from around the world, as well as traditional songs from this province. Many graduates go on to have successful music careers and lifelong choral memberships.

Thank you so much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. CROSBIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As you would well know, the House was brought back today to vote on the appointment of an Information and Privacy Commissioner. The report of the selection panel was received on June 24 before the House closed.

Is the Premier willing to explain why this appointment could not be made during the last session in June?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Leader of the Opposition is very much aware of the meeting, because he was actually in the room when the three leaders – the Leader of the Third Party, the Leader of the Opposition – were participating in a discussion that would normally occur based on this information.

Mr. Speaker, at the time, we were not in a position to actually bring the resolution to the House of Assembly. That is why we're here today doing the due diligence on the information that was provided to us July 23. Working with the speaker himself brought us back to where we are today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: At the Muskrat Falls inquiry, Mr. Speaker, the Premier said – quote – it was my intention to do wetland capping – unquote – but that the government unintentionally missed the deadline. The Premier also said he would investigate why the deadline was missed.

What is the result of this investigation?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, first of all, the inquiry, as we now know, was bringing forward some information that I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition would consider by now that, as well as working with his Members, if they had this information, probably we would not even be in this situation today.

Yes, I did testify. I spent two days there. A lot of information was shared, Mr. Speaker. Like I said, at the inquiry, it came to my attention that the pre-impoundment for wetland capping, when that came to Cabinet – this is all out there publicly, and I've spoken to this at great length during the inquiry. It came to our attention that it was approved in Cabinet. The resources and the appropriation to continue on with wetland capping, the direction was given in January. It was weeks after that we found that it could not be done, that the window had closed.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is asking us to believe that everyone in government knew he wanted wetland capping done and, somehow, it didn't get done.

In July 2018, Nalcor applied to the government to carry out wetland capping within the reservoir of Muskrat Falls. This must be the first time in history that Nalcor didn't get a permit it asked for.

Why did the government defy Nalcor on an issue so important to Labradorians?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, there was an amendment that came in. It would have been the fourth or fifth amendment to that permit. I would say to the Leader of the Opposition that it was very clear that that came

in, in July of 2018. It gave a deadline of December 1.

All of this – I've said this and mentioned this at the inquiry, so this is not news what we are saying today. This has been publicly discussed, and through the inquiry, which was one of the good things, I will say, that this information is now coming out. Unfortunately, we are finding out a lot of information that even the Leader of the Opposition is still protecting, I would say, Mr. Speaker.

So, with that said, the permit – I was not made aware of it, Mr. Speaker. This is not the correspondence that would have come to the Premier's office. I had many, many meetings that would have occurred during that time. This did not come up. Many meetings with Nalcor, it did not come up. As a matter of fact, Stan Marshall also said at the inquiry that he probably could have urged and asked on a more regular basis of where this was.

This was not intentional, Mr. Speaker. It was always my intention to do wetland capping.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Well, Mr. Speaker, in the context of methylmercury and the capping, the Government of Nunatsiavut said yesterday that the Premier has repeatedly betrayed their trust on reconciliation issues.

Does the Premier think trust with Indigenous peoples can be restored, and how does he plan to do it?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, when you look at the IEAC and that formation, that was put in place simply because the previous administration ignored this. You cannot forget, I would say to the Leader of the Opposition, that it's the party that you now lead that missed this, missed the opportunity and dismissed all of this

prior to sanctioning. So let's not forget how we got to where we are. It was this –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Would you want to repeat that out loud, I say to the Leader of the Opposition? I'll give you the chance. Stand up and repeat what you just said.

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

MR. CROSBIE: I'm talking about now, not the past.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, lessons of the past are very important, and it's the reason why we're having this inquiry today. That is the reason why the Muskrat Falls Project, Mr. Speaker, is 30 per cent of the net debt of this province. That was not told to us by the previous administration, but I want to get back to where we are today. I appreciate that.

The Indigenous groups, Mr. Speaker, were brought to the table in October of 2016. They were participating. Since that time, there's a considerable amount of data that has been collected. All of this has been disclosed to the inquiry.

Mr. Speaker, today we've reached two agreements with the Innu, who are the constitutional rights holders to the land around the Muskrat Falls Project area. We cannot forget that. We've reached an agreement with the NunatuKavut council.

So two of the groups, Mr. Speaker, we've been working very closely with, and we want to work with the Nunatsiavut Government as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, I asked the Premier earlier what results his investigation into the fumbling of the permit for doing the wetland capping, what conclusion was reached.

Can I ask the Premier, which of his ministers failed to execute on this?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, when information comes to Cabinet in the form of a presentation – which was all made public through the inquiry. The presentation comes, the minister of the day brings that to the Cabinet table. That was January; I think it was the 9th of January that that presentation came to Cabinet.

At no point during that presentation was there any recognition that the opportunity for wetland capping had passed. That information wasn't disclosed. So at that point the presentation was given from the information that had been put together. There were five or six meetings of the deputy ministers, meetings that would have occurred on the Lower Churchill based in – that would have been in 2018. This was never disclosed at those meetings. It wasn't until about the third week in January, the information about pre-impoundment for wetland capping that that window had closed. That came out of a meeting with the deputy ministers.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: The acting minister of the day and the present Minister of Justice didn't get a chance at the inquiry to explain his role, and so I give him that opportunity now.

Can he explain to the House how the information that was missing from Cabinet presentations came to be missing?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, the information in to the ministers – ministers bring it to the Cabinet table. When the presentation

comes to the Cabinet table – thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the protection – so when it comes to the Cabinet table, the ministers do the presentation, they're supported by the deputy ministers of the day.

At that time there was no indication, based on the presentation which is all publicly available, none of that information about the window closing for pre-impoundment – as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, immediately after we found out that pre-impoundment wetland mitigation was no longer an option, I directed the deputy ministers and Nalcor to go and look for a new approach.

This all came out in the inquiry, Mr. Speaker. None of this is news today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Well, it remains the case, Mr. Speaker, that the opportunity to take preventative measures against methylmercury contamination in Lake Melville was blown during the watch of the Minister of Justice.

Will the Premier do his duty by reprimanding and dismissing this minister?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, 1,300 samples have been collected. So when you compare this to the Calder model in 2015, they set a 23-metre level of the reservoir. If you took what Calder was forecasting in 2015, it would've been a 50 per cent increase in methylmercury from where we are today.

So, Mr. Speaker, yeah, it was frustrating. It was disappointing to know we had missed the opportunity for wetland capping, I say that. But with the information that we now have available to us, that is not demonstrating or forecasting where they thought it would be at this particular point in time. That is the reason why we've reached out to the Indigenous groups.

We have two agreements that have been signed, Mr. Speaker, with \$30 million now available to be spent on issues that could bring benefits to the Indigenous communities. This was never about saving money.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MS. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, people in my district are speaking out against a missed window of time to cap the Muskrat Falls wetlands and mitigate against poisoning of their food chain by methylmercury.

Will the Premier agree to conduct an independent investigation into this important issue of trust between his government and Indigenous peoples and table the report in this House?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, the recommendations from the IEAC, the Independent Expert Advisory Committee that was put together, included three Indigenous groups, as well as some communities. There were recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, this Committee was put in place to find a consensus on recommendations, but also to use evidence-based information that was available to them. During the period of time the final report came in to government in April of 2018, we continued to collect samples. None of the samples right now that we've collected – 1,300 of them, compared to, I think it was some-48 that have been collected by Calder – are showing that it would lead to increased levels of methylmercury that will lead to health risks for Indigenous communities.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MS. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, Members on this side of the House, including myself, have asked questions repeatedly about this issue. Government should not have missed the deadline.

On December 25 the Premier said, and I quote: We are looking at options that we can actually have to mitigate methylmercury. And also, I say and quote: His intention to work with these three Indigenous groups. I suggest to the Premier that this answer actually misled many Indigenous leaders that capping was still possible.

So now I ask the Premier: Why didn't he tell us that the deadline had passed for capping?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, this information is all out there in the inquiry. We've continued to engage with our three Indigenous groups. I participated in a conference call with the NG just a few days ago. We've had the CEO, through the direction of government, he's met with all three Indigenous groups to see what the next steps would be.

We cannot forget that the evidence that's been created, the data that we've been able to collect over the 1,300 samples that are now publicly available, and we've offered to the Indigenous groups to bring in the experts that could actually share this information and the interpretation of what it means.

Mr. Speaker, in 2015, what we saw from the predictions of the Calder model is not what we're seeing today in the reservoir and both downstream at Lake Melville.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MS. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, since I've been elected I've been advocating for the people of Labrador on this issue. Also, on June 25 the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment said the health of the people trumps everything.

I ask the Premier: How are you going to protect against future risks of methylmercury to human health and to the food chain?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, one of the recommendations of the Independent Expert Advisory Committee was community-based ongoing monitoring. This is the reason why we wrote the Indigenous groups to put the implementation committee in place so that we can implement those recommendations from the IEAC. This is important for us.

Mr. Speaker, you would remember, even in times there was – we talked about before there was the environmental assessment. There were conditions put on the environmental assessment back in June of 2016 that, right now, we would take compensation measures around a food security fund and so on.

Mr. Speaker, it's important that we continue to work with our Indigenous groups. Mr. Marshall has worked and have met with and reached an agreement with NunatuKavut and with the Innu right now. But let's not forget the constitutional rights holders of the lands around the Muskrat Falls Project area are the Innu and we cannot just simply dismiss this.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MS. EVANS: Monitoring is not protection, Mr. Speaker. I'm just a little bit emotional right here right now.

A government is supposed to protect its people, its lands and its wildlife. That is why I ran. That's why I'm standing here speaking to you now. Due to the incompetence of this Liberal government, all three are now at risk.

I ask the Premier: How are you going to protect the people of my district?

My people are going to be poisoned, Mr. Speaker. It's my people, Nunatsiavut people in North West River, in Mud Lake and in Rigolet.

They are the ones that are going to be affected by methylmercury because we eat the food; we eat the organs that actually are in the food. Over time, Mr. Speaker, as a scientist yourself, you know that it accumulates, poisoning of my food chain.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, there's some extreme messaging out there that people will be poisoned. I say to the hon. Member, my fellow Labradorian: That is absolutely false.

We have a world-class water-monitoring system put in place. It was applauded by the Independent Expert Advisory Committee. What that does, Mr. Speaker – we've actually seen some flooding and thought, based on Calder, that we would see an increase in methylmercury, but we did not. We might have seen a bump in the reservoir, but not further down in Lake Melville where this is concerned with the food chain.

Mr. Speaker, when the Member says monitoring is not protection, she's missing something. We monitor the water. If we see an increase in methylmercury that gets to a danger level, we go out then and we inform the people that right now you cannot eat your country food.

We are nowhere near that, Mr. Speaker. Most of the levels, of over 1,300 samples, are below what you can even detect.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MS. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, as one fellow scientist to another scientist, bioaccumulation in the food chain has been proven over time and time again. Right now, the monitoring is in partial impoundment, partial flooding. We know that when it's flooded, that's when the methylmercury will be released. That's when it's going to start to accumulate. Measuring water

samples right now is not really effective in forecasting the future.

I say to you that bioaccumulation in the food chain for Inuit Indigenous people that eat the food, it will cause methylmercury poisoning in their breast milk, in the organs of the children and in the parents, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, you will remember back in August of 2016, you and I attended a scientific workshop meeting on methylmercury. At that time, there was no clear consensus on what was the safe way to go forward. There are a full chronological number of events that happened after that, but the water monitoring plan was then born from that.

I say to the Member, right now there's no restriction on country food. As the impoundment happens and the water levels go up if there is a concern, it may be – and we're not talking salmon at all, we're talking smelts and seal and brook trout. If there is a concern, we may have to go out and say you cannot eat trout seven times a week, you can eat trout twice a week, Mr. Speaker, but that is the reason why we're monitoring. That is the reason why we have 13 monitoring stations –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. DEMPSTER: – set up, Mr. Speaker; 13, where we are monitoring every single week.

MR. SPEAKER: I remind the Members I will not tolerate interruptions.

The next Member, please.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On July 17, the Hibernia Management and Development Company reported an oil spill.

Can the minister please provide an update on the environmental cleanup efforts?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will say that this is not acceptable. It's unacceptable to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, it's unacceptable to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and it's unacceptable to industry. Safety and environmental protection is our primary concern.

I'm going to say that, Mr. Speaker, because I think it needs to be said. I will say that the recovery efforts are continuing. There are currently seven vessels, as the Members opposite know, as the people of the province know. Hibernia management has been keeping the people of the province aware that there are large efforts under way to ensure as much recovery as possible is done on the oil and water mixture.

There have been wildlife observers. Environment Canada is involved. The Canadian Coast Guard is involved, Mr. Speaker, and most of all, the regulator is involved.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Budget 2016 reads: "The Nalcor Board will be directed to review their operational structure to achieve efficiencies and develop a plan to bring their compensation, benefits, and gender equity policies more in line with similar positions in other public sector bodies."

I ask the minister: Has the compensation and benefits policy of Nalcor been reviewed?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That is an ongoing process. They have been engaged with Human Resource Secretariat of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to bring like-minded positions in line. That work is continuing and will be continuing.

As we have said in this House on many occasions, we want to ensure that the compensation of our entities are in line with the provincial government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In 2018, five Nalcor executives took home bonuses totalling \$312,000.

I ask the minister: Does she believe that these high bonus figures are in line with compensation across the public sector?

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

MS. COADY: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I wish he had asked that question when he was minister in the former administration, because that is where those bonuses were borne from and became part of the compensation packages of the Nalcor executives.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's contractual.

MS. COADY: And it is a contractual agreement, as my colleague had just indicated.

Mr. Speaker, we are concerned, as we continue to be concerned, with the costs and the compensation of Nalcor Energy. That is why we're working with the Human Resource Secretariat to bring like-minded positions in line with government.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

MR. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, on July 12 we also learned that former Liberal Premier Roger Grimes had been appointed to the Chair of the C-NLOPB. During the recent provincial election, Mr. Grimes was doing Liberal radio ads in Central Newfoundland.

Mr. Speaker, is Mr. Grimes's appointment, him being rewarded for his loyalty to the Liberal Party?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Grimes was appointed to the board of the C-NLOPB last year by the federal government. He was appointed interim chair of the C-NLOPB by his fellow board members. Then there was an extensive process from the province, an Independent Appointments Commission process, as well as by the federal government, and Mr. Grimes's name came to the top. He does have a depth of experience.

Political affiliations aside, it was an Independent Appointments Commission review and an independent appointments commission review federally as well. As I said, the board itself appointed him as interim chair. He's eminently qualified, and I'm sure he'll do a good job as Chair of C-NLOPB.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Terra Nova.

MR. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, given the government's failure in efforts on Bill C-69, how can the minister now support having such a partisan Liberal talking head in such an important position?

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

MS. COADY: I think, Mr. Speaker, that is quite disrespectful to the people that serve on the board of C-NLOPB.

As I said earlier, the people that serve on the board of C-NLOPB that were placed by the former administration, actually chose Mr. Grimes as their interim chair. Then the independent appointments process, both federally and provincially, chose him as the permanent chair, Mr. Speaker.

I will say that we do have a CEO, and I think it's very important that we talk about the governance of C-NLOPB. This government has, in working with the federal government, separated the role of chair and the role of CEO, Mr. Speaker, to ensure proper and effective governance and most modernized governance. So it is good that we have a part-time chair and a full-time CEO.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. WAKEHAM: Mr. Speaker, on Friday, July 12, the government announced Dean Brinton had been terminated without cause from The Rooms with a hefty, secret payout. Mr. Brinton had spent close to 15 years as the CEO of The Rooms. Rumors continue to swirl that his departure was related to his reluctance to accept the political appointment of Carla Foote to an unadvertised position, paying \$132,000.

I ask the minister: Did the political appointment of Carla Foote play a role in the departure of Mr. Brinton?

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

These are two completely different matters. Discussions with Mr. Brinton had been ongoing

regarding the decision that was made. There was no secretive payout. Government were very forthright and the fact that he received 11 months pay as compensation. That's been out there. It's known by everybody, Mr. Speaker.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, we respect the privacy of Mr. Brinton, which is something that was mutually agreed to. This is a HRS matter, and I think that all parties involved should respect the privacy of the individual that we're talking about.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MR. WAKEHAM: Mr. Speaker, it has been almost a year since defeated Liberal candidate George Joyce was appointed Acting Chair of the Public Service Commission without any competition and who now oversees all recruitment and hiring within the public service.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: When is he going to remove patronage from the Public Service Commission by properly advertising and filling this position?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Human Resource Secretariat.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think we have done a good job of removing patronage from the public sector.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, there have been over 500 positions appointed through the appointments process, a merit-based appointments process that was put in place by this government.

Prior to us coming to office, all 500 of those positions would have been appointed – hand selected by ministers. In fact, just prior to the election in 2015, I think one individual minister on one day appointed about 40 people.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, government has tasked departments and agencies with finding efficiencies to deal with our fiscal crises. They then turn around and bring the House back in the depths of summer at considerable expense to vote on a motion which could easily have been dealt with in last month's sitting.

I ask the Premier: Why the double standard?

MR. SPEAKER: I'm going to take that question myself because, as the Speaker, I was responsible for convening the selection committee. I can explain in further detail, but I don't see it as the purview of the administrative policy of this government, so I'll rule that out of order.

Next question, please.

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

MR. J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

During the hiring process for the Commissioner, many discussed the fact that the legislative process was not clear.

I ask the Premier: Will he commit to reviewing the legislation to make it more definitive?

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

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

I apologize; I never quite caught all of the question there. I think the question that was asked was about the appointment process for the Information and Privacy Commissioner, which would come under ATIPPA 2015, and again I

think there's actually a five-year review process on this.

So what I would suggest is that's due for a review within a year. However the process established, which was voted on unanimously in this House, called for a committee that was appointed outside of this House containing membership from Memorial University, from the chief judge, Clerk of the Executive Council and Clerk of this House of Assembly, so it's a process that, again, was voted on in this House by everybody.

But when it comes to changing processes to make them better, we're always willing to look and examine those.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

MR. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, last year the former MHA for my district put forward a successful private Member's motion asking the House to support consultations on how to avoid protracted work stoppages.

I ask the Premier: Fourteen months later, what is the status of this work?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There was a private Member's resolution that was brought forward in the House that, unfortunately, passed on the Order Paper and didn't get debated.

At the end of the day, the protracted labour disputes, 97 per cent of those disputes that come to conciliation end in a negotiated settlement, which is exactly what we want. We encourage both parties to work together to come to agreements. That's when the best agreements are had, when both parties sit down together and weigh the balances on both sides and come to an agreement together.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

MR. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: Why doesn't he just simply abide by the recommendations made seven years ago by the industrial inquiry into the lengthy Voisey's Bay strike?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

MR. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, as I said before, 97 per cent of these protracted labour disputes don't actually get to that point any longer than six months.

So it's an important piece that we deal with and ensure that both parties, we support them with conciliation officers, we support them through the process, encourage them to get back to the table. Our Premier and the former minister in this role did that exactly, encouraged both parties to get back to the table in a dispute in the Gander area.

We encourage those parties, when that happens – and it doesn't happen very often. So we encourage them to both work together to find a solution that's the best approach. That's the best approach we found in governments right across this country, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. J. DINN: Mr. Speaker, last week the CEO of The Rooms was fired and the remaining year of his contract paid out. This CEO did not publicly support the government's hiring of the Liberal staffer for an executive position at The Rooms, after the CEO had already signed a contract to hire someone else through the normal process.

Can the Premier say that the dismissal of The Rooms CEO had nothing to do with the appointment of Carla Foote as executive director of marketing and development?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Human Resource Secretariat.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I'd indicated earlier in Question Period, these are two completely separate matters.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The time for questions has ended.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

MR. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I introduce the following private Member's motion, seconded by my colleague for Mount Scio:

WHEREAS the Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes and the Education Action Plan both recommended developing a phased-in implementation plan for junior kindergarten; and

WHEREAS Ontario, the Northwest Territories and Nova Scotia have implemented or are in the process of implementing province-wide junior kindergarten; and

WHEREAS play-based learning promotes children's natural sense of curiosity and discovery through hands-on exploration of the world around them;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House supports the Government of

Newfoundland and Labrador in taking necessary steps towards establishing a junior kindergarten program.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act, Bill 5.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

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

Firstly, pursuant to Standing Order 63(3), the motion just entered by the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune shall be the private Member's resolution debated this week.

Secondly, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting The Supreme Court In The Province, Bill 7.

Further, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting Disclosure Of Information Under An Interpersonal Violence Disclosure Protocol, Bill 6.

Further, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move the following motion:

WHEREAS in accordance with subsection 38(1) of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, the Commissioner for Legislative Standards has submitted a report respecting his opinion on a matter referred to him under the authority of subsection 36(1) of that act.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House of Assembly concur in the Parsons report of June 25, 2019.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I give notice of the following resolution:

WHEREAS section 85 of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015* provides that the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner shall be filled by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council on a resolution of the House of Assembly;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Michael Harvey be appointed as the Information and Privacy Commissioner effective August 5, 2019.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

MR. FORSEY: Mr. Speaker, the residents of Exploits District have a great concern from the result of the 24-hour emergency service cut to the Dr. Hugh Twomey Health Care Centre in Botwood.

All residents feel that the 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. service does not adequately and efficiently address the emergency requirements of this district, affecting both patients and residents of receiving adequate care when needed.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to restore the 24-hour emergency service to the Dr. Hugh Twomey Centre immediately.

Mr. Speaker, during the campaign, and even since we've been home going through the

district, the Dr. Hugh Twomey Centre keeps coming up. This facility is very crucial to our rural area, including the Botwood residents and the outlying area as well.

Some of the residents feel that the one-hour drive to the Dr. Hugh Twomey Centre – and if it's after 8 p.m. they have to drive another 40 minutes into Grand Falls-Windsor, which is usually blocked to capacity by this time, and in the winter months adds more stress and unnecessary stress to the patient, and even the facility at Grand Falls-Windsor.

Twomey Drive is located in Botwood, appropriately where the hospital is located. This drive and the hospital is named after the man who put it there himself, Dr. Hugh Twomey.

Mr. Speaker, during the election the Premier was there. He knows where Twomey Drive is, he knows where the hospital is, he was there four days before the polls closed and he promised to reinstate the 24-hour emergency service in 2021. People want to see it now, not in a couple of years. That's why the seniors moved to the seniors' homes and apartments on Twomey Drive, because it's located right next to the hospital there in Botwood.

Besides, Mr. Speaker, the previous government spent millions of dollars, including X-ray labs, beds, kitchens, updated the blood facilities in that facility. Nothing has changed, Mr. Speaker. All the facilities are still there, yet the 24-hour emergency service has been cut. People of the Exploits District are not satisfied with it and would like to have it reinstated right away.

Mr. Speaker, I have 52 pages here, and that's only a week petition, a week-long having it out. I have lots more pages to come and I know there will be more coming in the near future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

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

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

WHEREAS the policy cannot override the safety of our children.

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 1.6 kilometre policy for all elementary schools in the province and in junior and senior high schools where safety is a primary concern.

Again, this is not a new petition to this House. It's been presented on many occasions. We're at midsummer now. I would say the retail ads will be going in on schools, at the school displays and so on. This is a time when we really have to start looking at this policy before the fall opening of the schools.

The 1.6 kilometre, especially in the winter season, has created safety concerns. I personally, and I'm sure anyone in this House, do not want to see someone hurt, injured or killed trying to go to school.

So I really would call upon and urge the House of Assembly, on behalf of these petitioners here, to address the 1.6 kilometre policy and eliminate it.

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

MR. WARR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I certainly appreciate the comments from the Member. Again, I'll repeat that it's paramount on behalf of this government, Mr. Speaker, about the safety of our school children. We've taken action to address the concerns, and the current policy is comparable.

Can we make it better? Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. We'll do that over time, but in most cases our policy right now is favourable to most provinces.

We are consistently collaborating with the district to address the concerns, and to date, Mr. Speaker, 649 additional courtesy stops have been implemented within the 1.6 kilometre zone. We'll continue to work with the department.

Again, I want to go back to the policy, and the fact that it is working and it's prudent to consider thoroughly. If, for example, additional funds were to be put into education, Mr. Speaker, would this be the best use or should they be placed in other areas such as teaching resources?

Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for his petition and certainly we're prepared to work together.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further petitions?

The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask leave to debate and move the resolution to appoint the Privacy Commissioner. I understand that we do have leave to appoint a Privacy Commissioner.

MR. SPEAKER: Leave is confirmed?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Please proceed.

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

Do you want (inaudible)?

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

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

We're here today, and the resolution was just – notice provided for today, and I appreciate my colleagues on the other side giving confirmation that we can move forward with the disposition of this matter.

So, essentially, this is a – sorry again – moved and seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources. Thank you to the Clerk, who again is going to be mentioned in my comments now shortly because she was a part of the process to help select the new Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Perhaps what we can do is – I'll try my best to provide some background on the process and how we've come about going through this. The Information and Privacy Commissioner is a fairly important position, one that's been in this province now for some time, and I wouldn't be able to give you a full comprehensive list off the top of my head. I can remember dealing with Mr. Ed Ring when he was in the position for some time, and then Donovan Molloy was put in the position.

Then, of course, Mr. Molloy ended up being appointed to the Provincial Court bench in Northwest Territories. It's a position that, I would remind people out there, it's not appointed by government per se. It's an independent statutory office of the House of Assembly, similar to the Child and Youth Advocate, similar to the chair of elections, the Commissioner for Electoral Standards, similar to the Seniors' Advocate.

These are positions that are appointed by the House, through a resolution of the House. Now, I'll point out one – so this is all done under the auspices of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act 2015* which, I believe it's under section 85, lays out how this position is appointed.

It's interesting, because I've had people want to discuss this, and I explained that as Government House Leader, essentially, I'm the vessel through which this resolution would enter into

the House. It's not the same as me putting forward a motion, to call a motion when we talk about legislation under the Department of Justice and Public Safety. This is a resolution that comes from the House.

In fact, when Commissioner Molloy took leave of the position to move to the Northwest Territories, in fact it was the Management Commission of the House that appointed the interim Commissioner, Ms. Victoria Woodworth-Lynas. So I wanted to provide that context here. This is an individual whose position comes to us, again, by Members of this House voting. Now, I would also submit that the process through which this person goes is different than what's happened in the past, or even different than what happens under the Independent Appointments Commission.

Now, to provide some background on this – and I believe there was a question asked by my colleague from the Third Party about the process. Well, back previously, this position was appointed by government. Government appointed who they wanted. When Mr. Ring was appointed there might've been a resolution in the House, but at the end of the day there was no process per se. This was a position that was appointed by government; who do you want to put in that position?

Now, I'm not taking any shots at that commissioner. Mr. Ring, who I dealt with when I was in Opposition, did his job, did it very well, and I can certainly say that whenever you had any questions he was more than willing to answer. What happened then, and without getting into the whole ordeal that was the Access to Information Act and what went on between 2012 and 2015, but in 2015 there was a new act brought in that was voted on – someone can correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm willing to say that that was voted on unanimously in favour of by all Members of the House, no matter which party stripe they wore.

So part of that process brought in this new act, and under section 85 it talks about the process to appoint the Information and Privacy Commissioner. I don't have the act specifically in front of me now, and I might have an opportunity again when we close debate on this resolution, to get into it if necessary, but what I

would refer people to is section 85 of the act where it talks about the process. Again, it's the Speaker that actually plays a significant role in this process; whereas there's a committee appointed that will do the work, the due diligence in appointing this individual.

It's made up of, I believe, the chancellor of Memorial University or their designate, the president, and in this case I believe it was actually Mr. Kent Decker that played a role on that. Having done work with Mr. Decker, I have nothing but good and kind words to say about him. He's truly a public servant beyond reproach.

It also has Chief Judge Pamela Goulding, someone who's had a long and significant history with the public service, dating back to her time in the department of – back then it was just the Department of Justice. She was elevated to the bench, served in a multitude of roles, and right now is the chief judge of our Provincial Court. So Chief Judge Goulding sits on this Committee, which I believe, I will point out, was involved in the appointment of Mr. Molloy to this.

Now, the third part is it actually involves the Clerk of the House of Assembly, who's sitting here in the House with us. She plays a role in this and certainly has, again, a wide background in public service through multiple departments, but has been in the House of Assembly with us for some time, and we appreciate her guidance as we move through these processes and through the legislative debate.

Finally, it contains the Clerk of the Executive Council, which right now is Ms. Elizabeth Day.

So that Committee is tasked, with the Speaker, to take the information that comes in, the different applications. This is something that's publicly posted, people have a chance to apply. I believe they work with the Public Service Commission as well. Again, at the end of the day, after the process is done candidates are churned out, and it's the Speaker's job to work with these candidates.

It specifically states in the legislation to work with the leader of the governing party, which would be the Premier, the Leader of the Official

Opposition, the leader – and it doesn't specifically say NDP or Third Party, it just says any third party or party. I forget the exact wording, but this would refer to any other, basically, party that has standing in this House, and they have a consultation on what should we do.

Now, I can remember a consultation of this nature happening with the previous appointment of Mr. Molloy. There was a debate and, for some reason, I can remember having conversations with the former Leader of the Official Opposition, former premier, Mr. Davis played a role at that time. I remember having conversations on the different candidates at that time, how this was going to work. Then we eventually had the decision and a resolution brought forward for Mr. Molloy to be appointed to this role.

Similar to this, there was a consultation, there's a discussion. There are multiple candidates brought forward. At the end of the day, we have a process whereby we here in the House – again, as House Leader, I am the vessel through which it travels. My job on any number of resolutions is just to put it out there on the floor of the House for it to be debated and voted on by Members. What we have here is we have Mr. Michael Harvey, who the resolution is stating be appointed as the Commissioner, be appointed to this statutory office effective August 5 of 2019.

Now, what I can say about Mr. Harvey is – and I don't have his résumé here in front of me, but I've had the experience of having had an opportunity to work with him at various times here in government in various roles. I've also seen his work back – he's been in the civil service for some time, in fact. He's been working in multiple departments, most recently in the Department of Health.

The involvement I had with him was when we were dealing with cannabis and with the legalization of cannabis. He played a significant role in that. It's funny now, how when we talk about cannabis and the biggest issue seems to be we can't get a big enough supply of cannabis. Well, I can tell you that from the time we got in in 2016 up until the actual legalization, there was a significant level of anxiety and stress over this. There were significant questions.

I can remember a lot of people talking about the implementation and how we wouldn't be ready and how things were – you know, all these fears which were fine and dandy, but behind the scenes – again, I won't take any of the credit here. Behind the scenes there were a number of people working on this from multiple departments. Mr. Harvey was one of the leads on that. What I can say is he did a tremendous job with that part of public policy, which was a huge shift in this province and in this country.

It's not just taking what you want to do in Newfoundland and Labrador and making it apply. You also have to deal with the feds and look at other provinces. It took a lot of collaboration. It took a lot of working with others. It was a significant grind that he was a part of.

That's not without looking at all the other things that he's worked at in his time within government. Right now, I believe he is an assistant deputy minister in the Department of Health. So I'm sure if my colleague, the Minister of Health and Community Services, was to talk about him, he could talk more intimately about the background he held in Health; however, what I would say is he has excerpts on his résumé that make him qualified and suitable for this position.

Really, when you think about this commission, when we think about the access to information, one thing we always talk about is just the access to information. A lot of times we overlook the protection of privacy, which I can tell you is something that probably has a lot of concern for me now. More and more when we think about it, when we look at it, everyone in this House can talk about our constituents. In fact, when we talk about our data, our information and its release in an unauthorized fashion from going out there, whether it's through government departments or through whatever, it's something that I have significant concern. On the other side of that is the access to information where citizens have a right to information.

Now, obviously, there are levels to this. There are limits to this, and that is something that is contemplated without rehashing the entire piece of legislation that was debated here back in this House. What I can say is it's a pretty

comprehensive, significant piece of legislation that was formulated by three individuals over a significant period of time. There is a statutory review that will come in in five years, which means in 2020 we're going to have another review of the legislation. It's something that as the minister responsible, whether you're talking to citizens, whether you talk to journalists, whether you talk to ATIPP coordinators, there are certainly things we can look at.

One of the questions asked today during Question Period was about the process itself. Well, when we do the statutory review and the committee is appointed, these are all things that can be looked at to make sure that the act is the best that it can be. But the reason we are here today is because we need a commissioner, and the legislation also states that we must do so sooner rather later, which is why we are here today.

It's funny, because once upon a time I can remember when we were in this House and people would say, my God, the House doesn't sit very often. Then when the House comes back unexpectedly, now people complain and say, well, why are you here in the House? So sometimes you can't win for losing.

The fact is we are here via legislation today. That's the reason we are here today, to comply with legislation. Any day that we can sit in the House and debate and talk, I think is actually a good day, and it's something that our constituents often like to see us do.

The reason we are here, as I stated, is to appoint Mr. Michael Harvey to this role. In closing my comments to this and deferring to my colleagues across the way, what I can say is my colleagues on the government side look forward to supporting Mr. Harvey, who many of us have had a chance to work with. We look forward to supporting Mr. Harvey in this role.

What we would also like to do at this time is to thank Ms. Victoria Woodworth-Lynas for the work she has done in an interim fashion. She came in fairly quickly, fairly rapidly, because the resignation of Mr. Molloy was not something that there was a significant period of notice on. She came in and she did a fantastic job, and we'd like to thank her for that. She is

also someone who has done yeoman's work when it comes to the public service and service to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We want to thank her for that.

We wish Mr. Harvey the best in this new role, pending confirmation of the resolution here today.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for his remarks, and I echo his congratulations to the successful candidate, Mr. Harvey, and as well thank the interim commissioner for her service.

This process is worth some more context than the minister has provided, and I'll start at the beginning.

On March 18, 2014, Premier Tom Marshall appointed three individuals with expertise in law, privacy legislation and journalism to conduct an independent, statutory review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, often known as ATIPPA.

These three individuals were former Premier and Chief Justice Clyde Wells, former Privacy Commissioner of Canada, Jennifer Stoddart, and former CBC journalist, Doug Letto – highly regarded individuals with a great deal of expertise.

Their report was received in March 2015. It included a draft bill to complete the overhaul of the ATIPP legislation, including the process for appointing a new Information and Privacy Commissioner. Members of the House passed these reforms into law.

In 2016, this new process was used for the first time to appoint Donovan Molloy to become the new Commissioner. Our caucus wants to thank Mr. Molloy for doing a stellar job in that role.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSBIE: He pulled no punches and told it as he saw it. This is what we need in the role in order to make sure the office works and strikes the right balance between information disclosure and privacy protection – fundamental rights in our society.

Effective February 20, 2019, Mr. Molloy was appointed to the bench of the Territorial Court of the Northwest Territories. This left a vacancy at the Commissioner's office and triggered the process for finding a replacement. The House was not in session at the time.

The first step, following the recommendation of the Wells-Stoddart-Letto report, was to appoint an Acting Commissioner. This was done by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council – the Cabinet, of course – on the recommendation of the House of Assembly Management Commission. This has been adverted to by my colleague, the Minister of Justice.

In a news release dated March 22 of this year, the Speaker announced the appointment of Ms. Victoria Woodworth-Lynas, effective March 21, 2019, as the Acting Information and Privacy Commissioner until such time as the position would be permanently filled in accordance with the act. And again, we commend her for stepping into the gap.

Subsection 89(2) of the act states that in this particular circumstance “the term of the acting commissioner shall not extend beyond the end of the next sitting of the House of Assembly.” Things are a little more complicated here because the House sat from March 4 to April 2 to conclude the 2018-2019 session, then it sat from April 4 to April 17 to begin the 2019 session. But then the election was called. The House returned for the post-election session from June 10-26 and then adjourned. And now we're back. Even though it's late July, I suppose it may still be spring from a House perspective.

Back on March 11, prior to the appointment of the Acting Commissioner, another section of the act was triggered. This section, 85, also reflected the recommendation of Wells, Stoddart, Letto. Section 85 states: “The office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner is continued.” Then

by subsection (2): “The office shall be filled by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council on a resolution of the House of Assembly.

“(3) Before an appointment is made, the Speaker shall establish a selection committee comprising” and I won’t go through all of it because my colleague, the Minister of Justice, has already told us about the blue ribbon and eminent and expert panel which is convened pursuant to the legislation to make the selection.

Sub (4) goes on to explain that: “The selection committee shall develop a roster of qualified candidates and in doing so may publicly invite expressions of interest for the position of commissioner.

“(5) The selection committee shall submit the roster to the Speaker of the House of Assembly.

“(6) The Speaker shall

“(a) consult with the Premier, the Leader of the Official Opposition and the leader or member of a registered political party that is represented on the House of Assembly Management Commission” – this turned out to be the Leader of the NDP in this instance – and “(b) cause to be placed before the House of Assembly a resolution to appoint as commissioner one of the individuals named on the roster.”

So that’s the process, which was passed into law and recommended originally by Wells, Stoddart, Letto. To determine how the legislation ought to be interpreted, we need to look at the committee that drafted it and their report. With due respect to the Office of the Speaker, the report does offer some additional insight into the process and the interpretation of the legislation, and is useful as an interpretive aid to how the legislation ought to be understood. This is a common thing in courts of law when approaching the interpretation of statute.

With respect, in the Speaker’s letter, he stated: I have discharged my duties as required by the act. The Speaker stated he has established the selection committee which has done its work and developed a roster of candidates and has consulted – this is in quotes – with the Premier, the Leader of the Official Opposition and the

Leader of the Third Party respecting the roster as required by the legislation.

The Speaker then writes to the Government House Leader – quote – as these requirements are complete, I therefore request that in your role as Government House Leader, you now proceed to introduce a resolution to the House of Assembly so that it may consider the matter. This request is in accordance with paragraph 85(6)(b) of the act which states: The Speaker shall cause to be placed before the House of Assembly a resolution to appoint as commissioner one of the individuals named on the roster.

The Speaker then concludes the letter writing: As you know, the role of Speaker of the House is to interpret parliamentary rules, to maintain order and to defend the rights and privileges of Members. The Speaker never participates in debate. Based upon these long-held traditions and the language of subsection 85(6) of the act, I therefore request that you introduce a resolution respecting this appointment. By way of this request, I am therefore fulfilling my final duty outlined in the act that is to cause a resolution to be introduced into the House respecting this matter.

Again, with great respect – and this is really for the benefit of posterity because we have the process before us or the resolution before us by the process that was, in all good faith, no doubt followed. It is a fact that Wells-Stoddart-Letto report says something – I submit different and I would refer you to Volume 1 of the report of the 2014 Statutory Review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, page 36 top of the second column. It states, “After consulting with the party leaders in the House, including the Premier and the leaders of opposition parties, the Speaker would present the name of a candidate for the House to consider.” Again, “the Speaker would present the name of a candidate for the House to consider.”

Again, this is not to take issue with the process that has to be followed to get us to this point, but really to place on the record some considerations for future process to be followed.

There are seven statutory offices of the House: Legislative Standards, Office of the Auditor General, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, Office of the Citizens' Representative, Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and Office of the Seniors' Advocate. All these offices must be clearly independent of the Executive Branch of government. That separation must be clear and distinct in reality and in perception.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner, which is the Officer we have before us for our consideration, or the office before us, is answerable not to the government but to the House and this, again, would be consistent with it being the duty of the Speaker to lay a name from the roster before the House.

Again, to come back to the composition of the selection committee, it was composed of people who understand the workings of government, the rule of law, the principles of justice, the importance of the roles of Officers of the House and the importance of choosing the best person for the job while accounting for every other factor relevant to the hiring. Such an imminent selection committee is not brought together every day but when it is, it is the position of the Official Opposition that its advice ought to be followed.

I think it is worth noting, that three of the people in these most senior roles of our province are women. They did not come into these roles because they were women. They were appointed because they were the most qualified people for these jobs, and they are shining role models for younger women throughout the province who need to know that the glass ceilings that may have served as unfair impediments to progress are, indeed, being shattered.

In the particular case before us, the selection committee, after examining all potential candidates, found one candidate who was exceptionally qualified and warranted their top recommendation. In the documentation provided to us the phrase is, and I quote: is the top-ranked candidate for this position. This was used to describe one specific candidate, the candidate now put forward. When such a distinguished

committee makes such a recommendation it should be followed.

So, Mr. Speaker – and I apologize for not having given you the benefit of these submissions on a prior occasion to today. It's by way of saying that we do believe that the Speaker is the officer who should bring forward the resolution, not the Government House Leader, but since the resolution does name the candidate ranked first by the selection committee, we'll be supporting that candidate's nomination. This only occurs because the legislation requires consultation, but consultation should not involve an attempt to second guess the distinguished selection process just because the Premier does not get his way.

The suggestion was made that the Speaker and the three statutory consultees interview the roster of people put forward. In other words, second guess the selection process, and I would simply at this point reiterate the position I took in writing on that suggestion. I stated: I express my advice to go with the top-rank candidate, so I am not inclined to engage in an interview process which is not required by the act. A very thorough interview and assessment using a point system has already been conducted by eminent people, and in my opinion I should not be second guessing the interview committee by duplicating their work in a less thorough way. We would be replacing a process which strives for objectivity with our own subjectivity.

Further, I stated: This additional layer of process at the political level is proposed to happen because the Premier wants the less-ranked candidate. I must inform you, that I decline to attend the Wednesday interview and maintain my consultative advice to you that the Speaker should recommend the higher-ranked candidate for consideration by the House. I understand that the Leader of the Third Party is of the same opinion. So, Mr. Speaker, that was the position.

Here we are today with the government having, at long length, followed the better practice, the practice of good governance and – the better practice of good governance, which is to choose the highest-ranked candidate who has emerged from a rigorous selection process conducted by distinguished officials whose duty it was to recommend the highest-ranked candidate.

We believe the individual being put forward will be a formidable Commissioner and will serve the people of the province diligently in this essential role, and I congratulate, on behalf of the Official Opposition, the candidate.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to congratulate Mr. Michael Harvey on his new position. I understand that he is a stellar candidate, chosen by an exemplary and well-respected group of individuals who deemed that his long-standing career, his considerable depth of experience and the breadth of his knowledge, he is the top-ranked candidate. I have no qualms in strongly supporting the recommendation of the selection committee in putting forth the name of Mr. Michael Harvey.

So I really support his appointment and I do look forward to working with him in the future and seeing how he can craft Newfoundland and Labrador as perhaps being an exemplar in privacy and information. As we know, that is an emerging field and I'm sure he will be able to protect the privacy and information of people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

As for the selection process, I am not going to belabour that. Certainly, it would have been lovely if we could have concluded that before the House rose back in June; however I'm delighted to be able to say that we have finally reached a consensus and that everyone agrees that Mr. Harvey is the appropriate individual for this position, and we all do look forward to working with him in the future.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, I want to congratulate Mr. Harvey. I will say upfront that as the legislation that's been referenced by the minister – and the Leader of the Official Opposition went through it in great detail, and I thank him for that – as is indicated in that legislation, when we talk about consulting with the Official Opposition, consulting with the leader of a registered party, that inherently would leave myself out and, of course, the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands, because we're not with a registered party. So, there was zero consultation with me. I understand, because of the legislation, as it is written, but I do want to point it out.

I am going to support it, obviously, but I never saw the résumé. I never saw the résumé of anybody else. There was no discussion about any of the other candidates with me, or the ranking system, if there was a ranking system, and who ranked ahead of who and so on. Some information was sort of being alluded to by the Leader of the Official Opposition that I certainly was not party to. So I guess I have to support it on good faith, but I do so in recognition of the fact that the people who made the selection – again, I'm not going to repeat who they all were, but as the Leader of the Official Opposition said, I believe he called them a blue ribbon selection committee or something to that effect. Obviously, a very qualified, competent, unbiased people who made that selection.

I know that the minister and the government, I know they're really glad about that. I know they are thrilled with the fact that that was such an unbiased process, and that's why they are doing the right thing. I know they certainly wanted to do the right thing and are doing the right thing by bringing forth the name of the most qualified person because we all know that's the right thing to do. We know that's what the people want us to do. We know the government campaigned on being open and transparent and putting an end – political patronage, as we've seen with the Independent Appointments Commission, where all those appointments have been done in an unbiased manner.

I'm sure when the list of three names go, they always go with the best person. I'm sure that always happens, and I'm glad to see that happened in this process as well. That there was no temptation to go with anybody, only the best.

Apparently that's what has happened, so I've been told. I'm very, very, very pleased to see that.

So I commend the government for doing the right thing, for picking the best person, not trying to do anything political or sneaky or underhanded, not trying to give the job to anybody only the best person. Good job, I support it 100 per cent.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader, to close the debate.

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

I appreciate the comments from my colleagues across the way and look forward to unanimous support of the candidate.

I do want to take this opportunity in closing to point out a few interesting things I gleaned from the comments I heard across the way. The first thing I would say to my colleague across the way, the Leader of the Opposition, who said – he talked a bit about second-guessing a process and how he would never second-guess it; however, at the same time he questioned the process here and how it shouldn't be the Government House Leader that enters the motion, it should be the Speaker.

Well, if we're going to talk about second-guessing, what I will say is that it was Members of his caucus that drafted that legislation, that put the legislation here in the House and that voted on the legislation. You know what? I wouldn't second-guess them, I got a lot of respect for them. But the fact is you can't stand up on one side and say you're not going to second-guess it, when the fact is you second-guessed the legislation that your colleagues sitting next to you put here in the House of Assembly. So I'd need to point out that irony there, maybe that little difference there.

To my colleague, the Leader of the Third Party, thank you for your comments to this, and to my colleague, the independent, I want to point out a couple of things. It's interesting because he's

had an opportunity to be a part of a number of debates as it relates to access to information and privacy. He will remember his full-fledged support for Bill 29, and then his full-fledged support for access to information 2015. I cannot remember at that point, at which point he was a Member of a caucus, I can never remember any concerns expressed about independence – never expressed –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. A. PARSONS: Those concerns were only borne of now; they are not long-seeded concerns that he's carried with him for some time. What I would suggest is again, I know where he was going later on. The fact is we have two good individuals that I know that were interviewed, both who were appointed by a previous PC administration. I will put that out there.

I know that the Member opposite, now that he sits as an independent, wants to have some consultation in this. What I would say is that the résumés and curriculum vitae for each individual could've been asked for and would've possibly been provided to those if they had asked; I don't know if they asked for or not.

So again, it's interesting to hear that concern about independence when that concern was not there in 2012 or in 2015.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Is the House ready for the question?

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

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against?

The motion is carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, given the time of the day and that I have certain colleagues in the House that were not interested in being here, I would move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that the House do adjourn to the call of the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you to the Government House Leader.

I do, first of all, remind all Members of the Management Commission that we will convene in this room in 30 minutes from now – I'm sorry, upstairs in the committee room, our beautiful committee room.

And with that, this House does stand adjourned until the call of the Chair.

Thank you.

On motion, the House adjourned to the call of the Chair.