



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

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Volume XLIX

FIRST SESSION

Number 17

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HANSARD

*Speaker: Honourable Scott Reid, MHA*

Wednesday

November 13, 2019

The House met at 10 a.m.

**MR. SPEAKER (Reid):** Admit strangers.

Are the House Leaders ready?

We're going to wait a few minutes to allow people to get seated in the gallery before we begin.

Order, please!

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

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

I'll carry on with where I was yesterday.

The issue in question, the conversation lasted about, at that meeting – that seems to be the centre of everything here – a grand total of a minute and a half, one minute and thirty seconds. In that the minister asked a person to retract and the person retracted, and even in the partial transcript that was provided, admitted to a poor choice of words. There was no laughter, except by the person who made the statement. If I had to guess, and I don't know, because that person realized the mistake he just made.

My words in that meeting speak for themselves, but my words are the ones that are being called into question and even a suggestion that there was a cover-up.

I cannot say why that person laughed or why the minister chose only to ask for a retraction. I can only speak to what was going through my mind, which was as a person who was not involved in that part of the conversation – there was a conversation going on between several members about the technical requirements of these meetings – this is not my part; this is in the hands of people better able to deal with it.

When this comment was made, it was everything I could do – it was shock – to distance myself from it, to distance the Salmonid Association of Eastern Newfoundland from it and to make sure that those in the room knew that the comments did not reflect my views or the views of the organization I was president of at the time. After that brief exchange, the meeting went on. It was almost banal, in many

ways, what happened. There was no demand for an apology, and we assumed the issue had been dealt with.

Now, the minister could have chosen, if he wished, to follow up with a phone call, upon more reflection; he could have written a formal letter of protest of some sort; he could have issued a press release; he could have gone to Twitter to voice his displeasure, and God knows the minister is not shy about going to Twitter on these issues. There was no further contact to discuss this issue. That's it.

Instead, the hon. the minister chose to wait a year and half later to express his umbrage and moral indignation about a comment not made by me, but made by someone else sitting in the meeting along with me, long before I was an MHA in this House of Assembly, but while the hon. Member was a Minister of the Crown at that time and was well able to deal with it if he so desired. I had no control over what the minister chose to do and I certainly had no control over what a member said, but I did have control over how I reacted.

There has been a concerted effort, of course, here to reframe, to mischaracterize the comments to fit in with a narrative designed to undermine my integrity and character, that somehow this was an example of marginalization and that this is proof that this pattern of behaviour is in the House. You can see it now, but I would challenge that and I will challenge that in a minute.

The minister referred to gaslighting, and I laugh at it because who is gaslighting whom in this one? I guess I shouldn't be surprised because when I was president of the Teachers' Association, it was a minister on the other side of the House that referred to me as a peddler of ignorance as well. It's not the first time.

So words do matter, language matters, and I've been careful about what I say and how I say it. I challenge the minister, and I challenge anyone in this House, to point to any language from *Hansard* of where I have marginalized Indigenous people, uttered racist comments, condoned it or otherwise. None, because I can guarantee you that if I had, I'm sure the Speaker

would've ruled me out of order and called me to task.

Yet, when I look at it, the minister, it's almost Machiavellian in its simplistic strategy to avoid answering questions about the company and the government – Mowi's and the government's complicity in the disaster that had occurred on the South Coast. Instead, chose to conflate two issues, and there has been a pattern of behaviour, as I said, of the red herring, the straw man – and I'm not sure if the minister even is aware that he's doing it.

When I challenge whether the Marine Institute, whether it was independent, it became I'm now attacking the independence of MUN and calling it a shill for industry. Climate change became equated with an attack on Indigenous knowledge and marginalization of Indigenous people and racism. Support for this point of order has been characterized then as an attack on Chief Mi'sel Joe.

Even when a Member on this side of the House raised concern about farmers and the loss of their crops to moose, it morphed into a personal attack on the Member's integrity and a suggestion that somehow he was a law breaker. This has always been about the minister.

I had the power at that time to accept the resignation and to take that action, and I did. I couldn't violate the privacy. I don't know what the minister is suggesting by this. I think of all the times I, as a teacher, I've chastised, corrected the behaviour of a student, but I certainly didn't go talking to other parents about what the punishment was or what happened. That's just simply good conduct, a respect for due process.

The comment was not made in the public sphere, yet the minister would have me inform the public, when he himself remained silent on this for a year and a half. He chose not to go public until now.

So I guess I should take some comfort in the knowledge, of course, in all of this, that our questions on this side of the House were so effective, our tenacity so annoying, our cause so righteous that the minister and this government felt the need to go to such extremes to avoid answering our questions.

I've come into this House after an inquiry has been done, an investigation and a report on bullying and harassment. Now, I don't feel necessarily bullied or harassed because, in the end, I do not answer to the minister or to this side of the House; I answer to my own conscience, I answer to the Members of this caucus and I answer to a duty to hold government to account.

While I support this motion, I'm not even seeking an apology. I'm not interested in the minister redoing sensitivity training because I think it would be meaningless, given the circumstances. I would have preferred that – I'll settle for a retraction, which is what the minister asked for in this meeting. I'll settle for that, and then let's get back to business. Let's get back to fulsome, engaged and, I will say, hard debate where we can debate the issues and not resort to personal attacks and to somehow undermining the integrity of Members on either side of the House.

I think that's where it needs to go because, at the end of it, we've all got to answer to the public of Newfoundland and Labrador, to the citizens who elected us, not just our parties but to the people. I answer to all the people in St. John's Centre, not just those who voted for me.

I think we need to have engaged debate. I think we need to respect the rules of decorum. I think we need to respect each other and then, at the end of it, let's walk out and have a beer together because, in the end, we're supposed to be working towards the common good.

That's what I believe in. I will not back down when this is done. I will still be going back to my questions on aquaculture and I will still be demanding answers. If this is an attempt to make me back off, it will not, but I will stick to that regardless of how it's characterized.

Thank you.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

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

**MR. PETTEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today and it's always a privilege to stand in your place in this House and I think we sometimes lose sight of it. There are 40 of us in this House. To stand in your position and say what you feel and say what you believe, you are always representing your district. When we all stand, sometimes we represent our district – most times I should say, but sometimes there are provincial issues too.

This is a difficult issue. Last year, during the harassment and bullying debate, I intentionally never stood. I had lots of opportunities. I was offered opportunities to stand and speak and I refused to stand because I felt that it was something that I didn't want to be part of. I didn't like it; I didn't feel good about being an MHA. I didn't like the fact what I was listening to and I just suffered through it. It was hard and I think it was hard on a lot of Members in this House, but we did it.

Last week, when the MHA for Corner Brook stood up and made those comments, I was more disappointed than anything else. It was like, oh no, here we go again. I know there was a clip on the news and I had my head down, but it was more out of just, oh my, not again. We can't go back to this. I always said last year I don't think I could suffer through that again, but here we are.

Now, we're in a point of privilege. It's a necessary point of privilege, I think, because you can never lose sight of what we stand for in this House. You're elected and it's a huge privilege. The people who never sit in this House – and we get a lot of criticism from the public, but this is an honour and this is a privilege. It's more than a job. To be the Member that represents your given district – and most of us are representing their own towns. I represent my own town and I think most Members – I look around and I think the majority are and, if not, it's your adopted hometown. It's a very privileged role and it's something we should never lose sight of.

We're in the cut and thrust of the House of Assembly and I'll debate with the best of them. Me and the Minister of Transportation had many good debates, but I've tried and if I ever did get personal I think I'd be the first to apologize for it and likewise. I see that across the House all the

time. We have healthy debates and I think that's what we're here for.

When we cross the line of making personal comments and damaging people's reputations, that's the problem. That's provoked me to want to speak on this matter. I don't want to belabour it because we've had lots of debates since yesterday, but I felt it important that our party – our Opposition House Leader brought up this point of privilege. You, Mr. Speaker, ruled it was a prima facie breach of privilege and at first glance it appeared to be a breach of privilege against the Members for Mount Pearl North and St. John's Centre. It was made by the minister and Member for Corner Brook, which brings us to exactly why we're here.

The point that people need to realize – and I've sat and listened intently since yesterday – we're debating a breach of privilege. The Member opposite made a reference that the Member for Mount Pearl North was a criminal and the Member for St. John's Centre was a racist. That's what we're debating. We're not debating racism. We're not debating Indigenous rights and Indigenous people. Chief Mi'sel Joe is not the person that's under the microscope here. Nothing but respect for Chief Mi'sel Joe. I don't think anyone in this House is a racist. Everyone here are very respectful of Indigenous people and Indigenous rights. We have a Member in our own caucus. This is 2019, no one here feels that way.

I've heard a lot of debate go on about that, but that's not what we're debating that we're going to vote on. We're debating, and we're going to vote on, the behaviour of one Member in this House towards colleagues on the other side. Nothing to do with those other individuals; that's two separate issues. I know it's been clouded and the lines are getting blurred here. That's not where we need to be.

It's about a simple fact – nothing simple about it, but that point is very simple: The Member opposite made remarks that we have deemed to be in violation of his privilege against two Members on the Opposition side – simple. That's as simple as I can make it. It's nothing to do with all those other things. We're clouding the issue. So, when people vote, are you willing to accept that as acceptable behavior?

Ironically, this morning, before I came in, I spoke to a former Member of this House who served a long time, actually, in the House and we discussed this. I said, point blank: Would that behaviour be acceptable when you were in this House? He said: No. A lot has changed, which it has. Society has changed, which we know. A lot of things now are not acceptable, which used to be acceptable. You would not get away with those comments back then, and I'm going back 20-odd years.

You can't call someone those names in the House and expect – this House has always been honourable. That's what we're debating. It's not a personal slight; I have no issue with the Member opposite. I think all of us do that, a point of privilege comes up different times on all sides of the House and it's about self-awareness. It's about realizing what you say and correcting the wrongs.

Instead of doubling down and tripling down and doubling down again, just say I'm sorry. Maybe, in retrospect, I shouldn't have said it. That would have simplified all of this. We've spent two days – we're in our second day here now and the people's business is on hold. We're debating something that I really believe could have been resolved with a simple apology. I think anyone here can attest to that.

I went to the Remembrance Day ceremony up to the local legion and I was bombarded; everyone wanted to talk about this issue. That's when you get your real temperature, Mr. Speaker. I've spoke in this House before about it, it's a bubble, we exist in this bubble; but remove yourself from the bubble and people will express their views. I'll say that every opportunity I get in this House and Members opposite, I'm sure, have heard me say it many, many, many times, that's the reality we live in, and the public are not accepting of this.

May 16, they voted. They wanted us to do business differently. They wanted us to operate differently. They wanted us to function together. They wanted us to be united, collaborative – I know people in my caucus don't like that word too much, but it's collaborative. We need to have a collaborative approach. That's what people want. They don't want this. They don't want to see me up here, any of us up here today,

debating this issue. They don't want to listen to what they've listened to in the last two days in this House. We just listened to five, six weeks of that in the federal election.

They're divisive issues, Mr. Speaker, and I think everyone in this House heard and felt the same way when they listened to it in the federal campaign. Now we're bringing it to the House of Assembly. For what? Because you misspoke or you probably – well, we feel it was wrong comments and the privilege broke. That's what we're debating.

Now we've opened this all up into a broad range of issues. None of us will ever be elected long enough to debate the issues that we're talking about. They're very deep, divisive issues, but that's not what we're debating, Mr. Speaker. We're debating – the fact of the matter was a breach of privilege on a prima facie, on a first-glance basis felt that people's rights were violated. Full stop, that's it. None of these other things need to be brought into this argument.

Sometimes in the House of Assembly, I find – over time we've learned, that's what happens at times. That's exactly what happens. We get there sometimes and by the end of the debate you don't know what you started off debating because it's gone down so many different angles, and that should not be the case for this. I've given it a lot of thought, and even over last night after I left here yesterday, I started thinking, that's where we're missing the point. That's all people want.

Should you or should you not have said it? The House will make that decision; they'll make that vote. It's not about those other issues, it's not about them. It really frustrates me how these issues are brought to the forefront when that's not what we're trying to do. I guess it's a typical smoke and mirrors.

We should all rise above it. That may sound inspirational or righteous, but I'm not. I'm speaking what people want us to do. They told us on May 16 what they wanted. They don't want this. They didn't want this last year.

God help us, if we never learned nothing after last year and what happened. We went through sensitivity training, and the Member opposite

actually attended his training with me. He was a very active Member of our session. We had to learn something.

I know it's not a perfect world. You're not going to do four days and turn into a different person, but it's awareness, Mr. Speaker, it's self-awareness. Should you or should you not do it?

Trust me, people on this side will tell you, there are times I get in that caucus room and I get cranked up on something and when I come in this House, I turn it down ten decibels for sure because I realize this is not the place to do it. Behind closed doors, yeah, I do it.

When I'm in the truck by myself you can rest assured I'm full on, but when I'm in here there's a level that people expect of us. The people who elected me or voted for me do not want me to be that way. They want me to represent them. Because when I embarrass myself, I embarrass them. When I say something wrong, it's a slight on the people who voted for me.

Anyone can live here and think that that's not the case, trust me, it is the case. People are offended when their representative, whether it be federally, provincially or municipally, does something embarrassing, it embarrasses them. I'm not perfect. I can speak for me and I'm sure others can speak for themselves. I'm not a perfect person, by no stretch. I'm very flawed, but I've always had the ability to stand up and say: I'm sorry, I done wrong. I can do better.

We could do better. This House could do a lot better, and what really bothered me when I seen it last week was, here we go again. Put everything else aside; we got to vote on a point of privilege. We could sit now and we could have the vote. It's probably not going to make much different in numbers. That's what we're here for: Get back to the business of the House; get back to doing what's right. People elected us to do what they want us to do. There's a lot of legislation; there are lots of things they want us to produce, be productive.

We can't let these things go unnoticed. We can't just sit back and say this is normal because then you're accepting of it. See, if you don't say anything, you're accepting that to be normal behaviour. Normal, that's allowed. We can open

the doors. Let's call everyone racists; let's call everyone criminals. That's not where we need to be, Mr. Speaker. That needs to be called out and stopped for every Member in this House, not just a Member opposite, all of us. It's not right for me to say it either. It's not right for any of us to say it. So, it's not being righteous. I'm being honest and I'm being frank, and I think that's what people want us to be.

I certainly get it from my own people when I talk to them, Mr. Speaker. They want us to be real. They like the fact you're real. They like the fact you say things that you feel, but you have to be careful when you cross the line.

What people really want us to do is stand up, be accountable. If you make a mistake, accept it, move on and do what we're put here to do, because we weren't put here to do this. That's not what people elected us to do. We have a lot of serious issues in this province that need our attention in this House and outward in our offices and our districts. We don't need to be wasting our time with this.

It's an important issue; it needs to be debated, but I think, right now, from our side of it, the Opposition House Leader presented this point of privilege. We feel it's been debated and the issues have been thrown out there. It's a pretty straightforward issue, Mr. Speaker, on the two points with the Members. Nothing to do with all those other issues. I respectfully hope that the House makes its decision soon so we can move on and continue on with the business of the day.

Thank you very much.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What's before the House is important. I've been in this Legislature now, I'm soon going into my 25th year, this is the first time since I've been here that we've had a point of parliamentary privilege that was actually debated on the floor, Mr. Speaker, so it is important.

It's also important – I've also seen a tremendous change in this House. Are things perfect? I will say they're not. We have room to improve. I've seen instances where people called other Members drunk or half in the bag or gender slurs or other slurs in this House over the years. Does that make what's happening today or what we're debating today – does that erase that? No. We've come a long way; we still have a ways to go.

Mr. Speaker, I remember the debates we had here a year and a half or two years ago and the situation this Legislature went through. It was embarrassing because it reflects on all 40 of us. We have 40 Members of this Legislature and we are honoured – or we should be honoured – to be here. It's part of the reason we're called hon. Members. We have been selected by the people in our respective districts to represent the thoughts and opinions of our districts. We've been elected to represent the thoughts and opinions of our districts.

Whether or not the issues that transpired over the last couple of days are reflected accurately here, I think one of the things maybe we all need to do is some sensitivity training, Mr. Speaker, that allows us to better understand and better represent our Indigenous communities. I'd be up for that, just as we did sensitivity training on harassment and bullying.

As representatives, we should be held to a higher standard. When I sat in the chair that you're sitting in, Mr. Speaker, one of my cornerstones was on greater decorum and greater civility in the Legislature. I believe that's necessary. I believe it's something that as 40 honoured individuals representing the people of this province, we should hold ourselves to that standard.

Let's not have a greater-than-thou or holier-than-thou approach to this, because we've seen other statements such as calling for somebody's head on a platter, or saying that the government will have to struggle every week and every month for years, Mr. Speaker, in order to survive. Let's not have a greater-than-thou attitude in this Legislature.

When this whole thing that we experienced a year and a half or two years ago transpired, there's a Member on the other side – and I won't

embarrass that Member. I could've gone to the Commissioner for Legislative Standards on that as well. The Member knows who it is. I didn't do that, Mr. Speaker – I didn't do that. I'm not going to point out who it is. I have no desire to do that. But the reality is there were issues on both sides of the House. I chose not to go to the Commissioner for Legislative Standards. I chose not to go.

Now, be careful I say to some Members shaking your heads, because I chose that, I'll say, for two reasons: (a), I didn't want to embarrass the individual; and, (b), I've never been into that – I've never been into that. Yes, I called for decorum and I called for civility in the Legislature, but I've never been into nailing somebody to the cross, Mr. Speaker.

But the reality is we all have a responsibility not only to debate the issues, and sometimes it's going to get political, Mr. Speaker, and I don't mind a political jab. I've often said you attack the issue, you attack the policy but you don't attack the individual. Now, I'll commend the Member for St. John's Centre, because he stood a few moments ago and said he's not interested in having a crucifixion here, asked for the Member to apologize, and get on with business. So I commend him for that. As a new Member to the Legislature – look, as I said, I enjoy a political jab, I enjoy the thrust of debate and sometimes when you're thrown a curve ball in the Legislature you enjoy that, because you get a chance to throw it back.

But the reality is it's the issues that we have to put our greatest focus on. The issues that are at hand, the issues that are important to the people of this province. Whatever comes out of this today, one of the issues that I see needing a greater focus on is understanding our Aboriginal communities, understanding so that we can better represent them. Because we all have individuals living in our districts of an Aboriginal background. Some districts have Aboriginal communities. Nonetheless, all 40 Members of the Legislature – just as we did sensitivity training – I think it's incumbent upon all of us to have a greater understanding so that we can represent better some of the communities and some of the populations in this province.

So I'll put that out there just as a thought. Whether that goes into another debate, or whether it's accepted or not, I'm open for discussion on that, and I'm open to taking part in some level of training to better understand the people that we represent.

Back to the other issue, Mr. Speaker, as 40 individuals who represent the province, I'm very pleased that we've come the distance that we have. Because 20 years ago, the insults that were hurled back and forth across the floor was a normal part of business. Shouldn't have been normal, but it was a normal part of business, the accusations that were made back and forth across the floor.

Part of the reputation this Legislature has gained – I'll say gained because earned is probably not the right word, but part of that reputation was because of the conduct of Members of the Legislature, how debate transpired. We've come a long way in respecting and having meaningful debate without the insults, without some of the language that was used.

I was here before we had TV cameras in the Legislature. Members would be somewhat behaved for the half hour of Question Period while media were in the media gallery and the minute the media left it almost became a circus. Times are different today and we've come a long way. My message, Mr. Speaker, is we still have a ways to go in how we treat each other in the Legislature, how we dialogue in the Legislature. If politicians, Members of this Legislature, want the respect of the general public, that's something we have to earn – that is something we have to earn.

Whether people in this Legislature look at what's happening today on the floor as maybe a little bit of politics or not, that's another debate and I'll leave that for people and their own consciences to decide whether or not there's a little bit of politics attached to this. But we all have a responsibility. Yes, have a little bit of fun. I said to a Member a couple of days ago, last week, if I'm asked a policy question, I'll give a policy answer. If I'm asked a political question, I'll give a political answer. I enjoy the political answers as much as the policy answers, Mr. Speaker. I think we all do. It's part of the back and forth.

But, at the end of the day, as the Member for St. John's Centre said, we should be able to punch the time clock and go and have a beer, because this is a small community. This province is a small community and, at the end of the day, we should all be here for the best interests of the people of this province. We should be here to serve the best interests of the people of the province. That doesn't mean we have to agree with each other because that's not going to happen. We have 40 Members from 40 different districts with 40 different sets of circumstances, 40 different sets of issues and, quite honestly, 40 different personalities in here.

I'm not going to say that everything I say is going to be met with absolute acceptance by Members of the other side of the Legislature. Heck, if we're all going to be completely honest about it, we have our own caucuses and there's debate within caucus because that's part of the democratic process. Not everything you say, even within your own caucus, Mr. Speaker, is always accepted. There's debate within caucuses and at the end of the day, regardless of the debate that happens within caucus, you come out as a caucus with a united front.

The reality is the issues that are raised on the floor of this House should be reflective of the concerns of the people of the province, the issues of the people of the province. Even when we make a decision in this Legislature, whether we all vote unanimously on an issue or not, it's not always met with acceptance by everybody in the province.

We could stand on the corner and pass out thousand-dollar bills, Mr. Speaker, and you're going to get three different reactions. Somebody is going to say that's awesome, excellent; somebody else is going to say you've given out too much; and somebody is going to say you didn't give out enough. One of the challenges we face as Members of the Legislature is no matter what decision you make, you're going to get those three different reactions: Yes, it's perfect; you didn't go far enough; or you went too far. That's something that we have to bear when we – you have to have a bit of a thick skin when you sit as a Member of this Legislature because no matter what decision you make, somebody is going to complain about it.



You can't satisfy everybody all the time. It's something you come to realize the longer you're here. If you act in good conscience, to the best of your ability and make decisions that you believe, with the best of your ability and the best of your intentions are for the greater good of the greatest number of people in the province, that is all we can ask for.

What I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, is similar to what the Member for St. John's Centre said – again, I commend him because we should be able to deal with the business of the people – whether we agree or whether we disagree, we should be able to deal with the business of the people. No matter how harshly we may disagree on policy, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, we should go out here all knowing that we're here for a similar purpose.

I believe that every single individual in this House ran to represent their constituents and ran with good intentions. Every single individual that I've sat with over the years – I did a quick count the other day, I've actually sat, believe it or not, with 170-something different individuals in this Legislature. So I've come to know a number of different individuals. Every single one of them, I would subscribe, ran with the best of intentions.

Do people make mistakes? Obviously. After all, we are human. People make mistakes. If I wanted to be a little bit cute about it today, Mr. Speaker, I made a mistake on Muskrat Falls because I believed what I was told, as did the Member for Mount Pearl North. The reality is you make a decision based on the best advice that's provided to you at the time, and that's the best we can hope for.

Mr. Speaker, should we have a better understanding of our Aboriginal communities? Yes. Should we have greater tolerance for each other in this Legislature as we debate? Yes. Should we have a little bit of fun and a little bit of banter? Absolutely. It creates a little bit of levity in here. But, Mr. Speaker, what we need to focus on is the people's business. That's the reason we've been put here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

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

**MS. COFFIN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, one of the first phone calls I received after our election was from one of my colleagues, and that colleague commented on the negativity, the mudslinging, the smearing and the nastiness that had just taken place in the provincial election. My response to that individual was: Well, it's up to us to rise above that. It is up to us to change that. What we have seen so far is we've not done a particularly good job of that. I would like to address some of the things that have led us to today.

My caucus and I are taking three distinct approaches to addressing this issue. You have just heard from the Member for St. John's Centre, who described the events precipitating the situation we are in right now. Later, you will hear the Member for Labrador West talk about his own personal perspectives on racism. Today, I am going to focus on the motion at hand.

I do want to speak briefly about the situation that got us here. I will point out that on November 6 the hon. Member for St. John's Centre asked a question, very concerned about the die-off of 2.6 million salmon and wondering if there was a plan in place that would have addressed such an eventuality. In response, we found that the minister, instead of answering the question or even using the word plan, took a different tangent. Now, I have some serious concerns about how many other recordings the Member may have in anticipation of other questions that may come up that he might not want to answer. So that would be my first concern in this situation.

Looking at the motion at hand, as I believe the hon. Member for St. John's Centre has addressed this issue. I think he has been very clear in what he would see as a resolution to this. However, this has continued and has been exacerbated for the last week, and prior to that. I'd like to point out that yourself, the Speaker, has found the motion at hand was *prima facie*, or apparent on its face, so we have met the initial criteria that the motion is valid and is deserving of debate.

I'd like to move specifically to that motion. In particular – and I think we've had ample speakers to this part: "... the behaviour of the Member ... has damaged the reputations of two members of this House and thereby breached their privileges ..." – and I think we have seen ample evidence that that is the case.

I think the second part of this motion points out that the Member: "... is contemptuous of this House and of its Members and disobedient of the higher standard of conduct ..." This is where I would like to focus my attention this morning.

What we have found – and I have looked at a great many pieces of documentation here. I did find in the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Assembly, number 10: "Relationships between Members and government employees should be professional and based upon mutual respect and should have regard to the duty of those employees to remain politically impartial." I think that perhaps we have breached that particular rule.

I would also like to point out that harassment – according to the Harassment-Free Workplace Policy – can be defined as: "Verbal abuse, yelling, and/or making threats." That one might be a little bit questionable.

The second one: "Making degrading or offensive comments, gestures, or jokes; Spreading malicious gossip or rumours; Inappropriate communication through social media, e-mail, or instant messaging; ... Bullying or intimidation."

So, in fact, harassment takes a myriad of forms, and I think we have ample evidence that many of these criteria have been met. For example, if one was to look up the hon. Member's Twitter feed we will find numerous, numerous incidents where the Member for St. John's Centre has been called out. I would like to point out that several of these tweets were actually written while the House was in session on Thursday evening – Thursday afternoon, sorry. So I think that certainly speaks to inappropriate communication.

In terms of harassment, the fact that this issue has continued – ad nauseam, I might add –

where we now have to debate how we are actually interacting with one another as Members of an elected Legislature, as adults, as smart individuals, we are now debating how we interact. I think that has great cause for concern, and certainly speaks to the need for the final report on the House of Assembly and the development of a Legislature specific, Harassment-Free Workplace Policy.

We see the need of this has been exemplified. In fact, I was considering amending this motion to include an adoption of a policy, but I have chosen to separate that. But I would like to see government move that almost immediately after we finish the conclusion of this proceedings.

To continue, when we talk about harassment, bullying or intimidation, Mr. Speaker, I think it's very important to recognize that harassment and intimidation are not only words, they are actions, they are gestures, they are behaviour and they are posturing.

If we reflect back on *Hansard* we see that both on Wednesday and Thursday the hon. Member not only spoke inappropriately, the tone was very derogatory. In fact, we all witnessed the Member leaning over the desk, posturing, speaking loudly and in tones that were very inappropriate and very demeaning. That is not acceptable, Sir, so I think that we need to capture that as well. It is not about words, it is about behaviour. We see that there is a consistent pattern of this. Again, I go back to the motion. This is not a single incident, this is a repeated pattern of behaviour that is unacceptable in the place in which we do our business.

The pattern of behaviour that I would like to concentrate on is on Wednesday and on Thursday of last week we saw an inappropriate exchange by that particular Member. Throughout the weekend, and continuing on until right now, we are seeing a social media campaign that is directed at our Member, at the Member from the Official Opposition, as well as anyone else who might be caught up in this drama. That is unfortunate but it does represent a pattern of behaviour.

I would like to point out another thing. If we look at the *Members' Parliamentary Guide* –

and this is wonderful. This is not, of course, the Standing Orders, yet a guide to which we should hold ourselves to a higher standard. I will note that under the Rules of Debate/Decorum, when speaking in debate Members address the remarks to the Speaker, Sir, as I am doing, but we have seen that the Member opposite did not. Also, while there is occasion for incidental disruptions or heckling, it might be tolerated but excessive interruptions ought not occur.

If I want to go on with our guide, I would like to point out I did raise – although it wasn't accepted as a point of order – that in that same Parliamentary Guide, specifically associated under the Breaches of Privilege, section 4 on page 46 says: "Once the Motion is proposed, the debate is on the question of referring the matter to the Committee" – which we have not done – "... of the facts, breach, and remedy is undertaken."

However, "If the Motion touches on the conduct of a Member" – and it does – then "they may make a statement" – which the Member has – "but should then withdraw from the Chamber."

Now, I point out that this is simply a guide, but it is convention. As I am new to the House of Assembly I am learning what is convention and what are the rules and what might be appropriate; however, when we saw that the Member recognized the ruling, the Member deliberately chose to defy that convention and instead chose to stay in the House.

Not only does that suggest a lack of respect for the House of Assembly, it also goes to the pattern of behaviour, but it also shows us the need for the Member's additional 20 hours of training. Because it seems that the Member is unaware, or maybe is aware, of the fact that as they remain in the House of Assembly, you are intimidating. The very presence of a harasser is intimidating to an individual who feels that they are harassed. So, just being in the same room as an individual who feels slighted is inappropriate.

In addition to that, their behaviour, while in the House, also is suggestive of how they are behaving and how they recognize how they have affected the other individual, the perceived victim in the case. That person can also speak out and, those incidental interruptions, that

person is still able to do that. So we can still see that happening. Sir, we have already seen that happen this morning in the entrance of the Member and his lack of respect and decorum for what is happening right now.

Sir, I strongly suggest that the two criteria that have been proposed in the motion, the damage to the reputation of two Members of the House and their breach of privilege and the contempt of the House and the disobedience of the higher standard, have been met.

I do believe that might be all my points I have right now. I would like call for a free vote on this issue. I made an inquiry earlier. Given the nature of this and the past history of our concerns about harassment-free workplaces, I would like the opportunity to provide a secret vote but, unfortunately, that doesn't seem to be available for us at this time. So, in that case, I would like to recommend that the House enable a free vote. That Members can vote as they see appropriate for the decorum in the House of Assembly.

I would like to encourage individuals to do that. At the same time, I would also like to suggest that perhaps – this is about harassment and behaviour in our workplace but, in addition to that, we've also seen that there are some concerns about how we perceive marginalized individuals. I would like to suggest that perhaps the House voluntarily undertake training in racial issues and in how to appropriately address situations that might exist in that manner.

For now, Sir, I would like to stand in support of this motion. I would like to point out that the criteria upon which the motion has been based, I think, has been met quite firmly and I do believe that we should move this motion.

Thank you very much, Sir, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this very important issue.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

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

**MR. WARR:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a privilege to stand in my place today and speak to the prima facie breach of privilege. I have to say, Mr. Speaker, I'm a person who takes great pride in what I do and I think most Members will know me for that.

I've had the opportunity before to engage myself in debate here within the House of Assembly. I've sat in your chair, Mr. Speaker, and presided over the debate on the floor. I have to say, Mr. Speaker, I have not always condoned what has gone on, on the floor of the House of Assembly.

I'm surprised, actually, how we got here and I've been struggling with this the whole evening, last evening. I'm a person – and most of my colleagues know here – who enjoys sleep. I enjoy sleep because I want to be sharp. It's exactly who I am. I struggled last night. I had a coffee with my hon. colleague this morning discussing the same thing, and it was quite early. I've struggled over this matter. I've struggled over how we got here.

Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, a Member rose on a point of order, changed to a point of privilege. You heard the debate, and I'm certainly not questioning the Chair, but in your final submission you had said it was a disagreement between hon. Members. That's what I took it to be then, because that was your ruling.

So here we are today debating this motion that says: "BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Assembly finds the behaviour of the Member for Corner Brook has damaged the reputations of two Members of the House and has thereby breached their privileges, and is contemptuous of this House and of its Members and disobedient of the higher standards of conduct that the House commands all Members through its deliberations in 2018.

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Member for Corner Brook shall withdraw it completely and without equivocation his offensive statements with respect to the Member for Mount Pearl North and the Member for St. John's Centre.

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Member for Corner Brook shall apologize verbally and in writing to these two Members and to the House collectively for engaging in

behaviour that was of a bullying and harassing nature in contempt of this House.

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Member for Corner Brook shall be required to take an additional 20 hours of anti-harassment sensitivity training, which shall be arranged and scheduled by staff of the House of Assembly and which shall be paid for by the salary of the Member for Corner Brook."

Again, Mr. Speaker, I go back to the bullying, harassment and intimidation training we took as a result of incidents that happened here in 2018. I accepted that because I am part of this precinct, and when it's demanded of us to do that I will take part and I will do my best to ensure that I abide by the rules and regulations. Certainly, I want to be part of a family of Members.

Again, as the Member had mentioned earlier on – actually, the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board had mentioned, we all are here for a reason. We've been elected by our constituents to come here and represent them in this hon. House.

He also mentioned – and I have to give the former Speaker, Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, Speaker, who's now a Member for Lake Melville, I have to give them credit for the way they presided over this House of Assembly.

I visited here, Mr. Speaker, several years ago. I actually had two daughters that at different times in their education here at Memorial had the opportunity and the privilege to be a Page in this House of Assembly.

To the hon. minister's comments, he talked about decorum in the House then and he talked about – he actually described it very well. It was a circus, for the most part. There was work that got done, but I sat here and watched what had happened on the floor of the House of Assembly. I have to be honest, Mr. Speaker, I was disgusted, to say the least.

I was so happy when I was elected in 2015, Mr. Speaker, to represent the good people of Baie Verte - Green Bay. The one thing that I promised myself, the one thing that I promised my family, the one thing I promised my

constituents was I was going to act in an honourable way. I was going to be truthful and I wanted to engage not only with my own caucus, I wanted to engage with my colleagues from across the floor. I think I've done that. I've done that and I'm proud that I have.

I have to disagree with the Leader of the Third Party on her comments with regard to when she had mentioned that almost a feeling of the floor changed when the hon. Member came in today. Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. Member for Corner Brook actually spoke here yesterday. With regard to the Member for Mount Pearl North, I think he had no trouble withdrawing some of the comments that he had made, and he did and I stand to be corrected. I've gone through *Hansard* and he has withdrawn a portion of his comments to that hon. Member.

I'm going by memory, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member, a farmer in his own right, had talked about the issues surrounding hunting at night, and it is law, Mr. Speaker. It is law, and the hon. minister pointed that out.

I'm not about to put a suggestion in anybody's mouth here, but through the debate there was a statement that was made by the hon. Member that the peace officers had come there and explained to the farmer that they came there and they weren't armed. They came there and they left again. There was an indication from the hon. Member that they hid away until an act – the law probably was broken, I'm suggesting that it was, and they hid away and they came back to make an arrest, to make a charge.

Mr. Speaker, somewhere along the line, I'm sure – I come from a police background – I'm sure there was a conversation that happened between those wildlife officers and that farmer as to what you can and cannot do. I'm sure it happened. I'm not positive, but I would suggest that it did. To suggest they went and hid away, waiting for this person to break the law, I have trouble with that, Mr. Speaker, and he challenged the minister at the time as if to say that's not good enough.

I'm sure the minister, although he's looking after his department, he's the leader of that department, in no way suggested that that would happen. That was a choice that was made by the

wildlife officers that night, to the hon. Member's complaint, and they did what they thought they should do. Having said that, again, Mr. Speaker, I want to leave that part of the debate because the hon. minister did withdraw, and I appreciate that.

Like the Minister of Finance, I, too, want to commend the hon. Member for St. John's Centre, who has asked for an apology and was very sincere in his remarks today. He has stated to this House, unequivocally, that he is not a racist, and I believe that, Mr. Speaker. I believe that. He has admitted to be part of a conversation where things went off sides, and he asked for that to be retracted or an apology, which I assume he's got.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to the audio that was discussed by the two hon. Members, I have not heard that. I have not heard the audio. I didn't take the opportunity, as of yet, to listen to it, but here's where I want to go with this. If it happened, leaders, not only in this province, but leaders throughout this country, have spent a lifetime apologizing for things that they didn't play a part in whatsoever. They've spent a lifetime apologizing. Truth and Reconciliation, Mr. Speaker, is what I'm talking about.

I'm sure we've all had the opportunity to be a part of a process whereby someone has said something or someone has done something and you're guilty by association. I'm not suggesting anything here, Mr. Speaker, other than I want to refer to a piece of legislation that we brought in here last year. It was brought in by the hon. the Minister of Justice, and I spoke to it. It talked about restorative justice. To restore means that we can actually rebuild.

Maybe the delivery may not have been me, the way that I would have delivered a message, but what I see – I've had the opportunity to meet and speak with Chief Mi'sel Joe, and if he had knowledge that an incident had happened – perhaps he did. He says he does and I certainly have no problems believing that.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I'll go back to the point that I made earlier: Leaders who have had no involvement in issues from years gone by have apologized. And that's probably what Chief Mi'sel Joe is looking for. Maybe that should

have come out that way. Again, I'm talking about a restorative process. That if it happened, there's an opportunity here, Mr. Speaker, to sit down and discuss issues of concern.

Not many shots have been taken here at me in the House of Assembly, but I got a shot taken at me this week as well, and I'm not going to mention the Member either, but I was disappointed. I made the Member aware of the fact that I was disappointed.

Mr. Speaker, I take that as being just you're heightened, you're in debate and things are sometimes said. When you look at what's been said, you say: Oh my, I hope I didn't say that. I mean, you have an opportunity here because you can go back through *Hansard*, which I have.

I have no problems in forgetting some of these things, no problems whatsoever. Again, the hon. Member had mentioned the fact that he'd like for this House to continue doing the good work that we do. I commend him for that. Perhaps, may I suggest, even a phone call to discuss the issues that supposedly had happened. Maybe just an opportunity to enact some restorative process here.

I want to refer, Mr. Speaker, to my mandate letter from the Premier. It's public. There are only a couple of lines that I want to discuss, or actually I want to acknowledge. One is: "I expect you to continue to be collaborative, open, accountable and transparent as you implement your duties...."

"In fulfilling your responsibility as Minister, I expect you to continue to show collaboration in a positive and constructive manner with your Cabinet colleagues and our peers in the House of Assembly." Mr. Speaker, I've read that mandate letter several times, but I wanted to go back and highlight those two statements that were made to me by the Premier of this province, who I'm very proud to call the leader of our government.

Mr. Speaker, I'll end by saying I'm honoured to stand here. I'm honoured to engage in this debate. Really, I don't know if it's a debate or not. I see it as you did, two hon. Members in a disagreement. As I said earlier, I don't condone everything that happens in this House of Assembly, but in saying that as well, I certainly

wish to hear the remaining speakers today and I'll be engaged in that process as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

**MR. LANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to say it's an honour to stand in this House today and speak to this, but it's really not. It is an honour to be in this House, but it's not an honour to be talking about this stuff. It's very disappointing.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to start out by saying, first of all, that none of us in this House of Assembly are perfect and I'm not going to stand up here on a soapbox and suggest that I am. I have history of my own; particularly in my first couple of years when I was elected originally back in 2011 where I was dubbed Dunderdale's attack dog.

I lived up to that moniker pretty good in this House of Assembly. It's something I'm not really proud of now, in reflection – definitely not – but at the time there's no doubt that whenever, in particular, the NDP would get up in the House and they would be asking for different things and challenging the government, I'd get the tap on the shoulder and say, okay, get up there and blast them. That was the way it was. I'd talk about money trees and everything else, and the former Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi would get all upset and she would start waving her finger at me like she used to do. Those who were around would know what I'm talking about; but, it was part of the game, if you will. It was part of the game.

Now, I can say upon reflection, I've tried really, really hard over the last number of years to tone it down and to stick to business and to give up that old foolishness. I think it's pretty fair to say – I think most Members can say, if they're honest about it, and I know they are – that by and large, 99 per cent of the time, I'm paying attention, I'm engaged in debate. I speak to every single issue in debate and I try to keep down the rhetoric and stick to the issues.

I've agreed with the government on things when the Opposition didn't. I've agreed with the NDP when the Opposition and the government didn't. I've agreed with the Official Opposition when the government didn't. I've voted all ways trying to do better, because the people of our district expect better, and we all know that and we all heard that loud and clear.

I'm not coming from this from a perspective of someone who doesn't understand the thrust and parry of debate, someone who has never engaged in any foolishness ever. I'm not trying to suggest that I am any less or any more infallible than anybody else in this House. We've all said things in this House, from time to time, perhaps that you're saying, gee whiz, I wish I never said that. A lot of times it's in the heat of the moment, the heat of debate and so on.

From time to time, everyone might heckle a little bit. I have to say, I agree with the Minister of Finance, it really has changed. The last few years, it really has improved tremendously, but it still happens from time to time. It still happens from time to time, and we're all guilty of it.

I know last Wednesday, we were here in Question Period, and I asked a question of the Premier to which I didn't really get the answer I wanted, other than to say: Oh, you voted for Muskrat Falls. I was frustrated and I balled out: Yeah, so did your Minister of Finance, b'y. That was unparliamentarily, but at the heat of the moment it was frustrating and I said it. That type of thing happens.

That's not what we're here to talk about now. What we're here to talk about now is two comments by our colleague, the minister of Forestry and land use, or whatever it's called – Fisheries, Forestry. Anyway, you know what I mean. We know who it is – and a couple of comments that were made.

Now, we all know in this House of Assembly – we all know – you get that sort of punch, that little punch in the gut when somebody says something. Everyone here knows what I'm talking about. When somebody says something that – people can say something in fun, in debate, make a jab, and we all sort of appreciate

that to a certain degree. We all understand there's some politics, there's some rhetoric.

There is always a bit of frustration about getting questions answered and so on, but we also know there is a line, and while it's not totally defined, we all know after a while with experience, we all kind of know where that line is. When someone steps over that line, I think collectively, everybody kind of makes that little, geez, he probably shouldn't have said that; or she shouldn't have said that. Everyone here knows what I mean.

When those comments were made in Question Period, that was exactly the reaction I had was, geez, I wish he hadn't have said that. There's going to be a point of order or something on this for sure. I knew it immediately. I think he probably might have known it himself at the time when he said it. Of course, it's gone beyond a point of order and now we're into a point of privilege.

Mr. Speaker, of course, you'll rule that, on first blush, because you are not suggesting that there actually was a breach. What your ruling said was that on first blush it appears there could be a breach or there's some question in your mind. Because based on the parliamentary procedure, it also says that if the Speaker is unsure, if there's a doubt in the Speaker's mind that maybe it could be, then it's to be referred to the House of Assembly for all the Members to decide if indeed there was a breach or not. That was the position you took. It was certainly a position that I supported and still support.

Now we have to decide whether or not there was a breach; whether or not we feel what was said crossed that line and how far over that line. Because talking about a point of order is one thing, a point of privilege is a little more serious. This is where it gets even greyer again as to which one was it.

I have no problem – now, I'm going to take the two issues. First, with the Member for Mount Pearl North, I would have no problem if the minister had addressed you, the Speaker, and called the Member or questioned the Member for Mount Pearl North to suggest that somehow it sounds like you're endorsing this type of activity where someone could be hunting at

night or you think it's wrong, even though technically now it's against the law. I could see him pushing that point – I really could – because it is a debatable point, there's no doubt about it. I see both sides.

I believe that when the Member said – and this was the point for me – “Then again, maybe this hon. Member is not always on the side of the law himself,” that is taking it a step further. That is suggesting, inferring that the Member could be involved in some sort of criminal activity or breaking the law. I don't think it's a stretch to see that, because he even says: the law himself – maybe he's not always on the side of the law himself.

He didn't say the Member is not always on the side – and there is a distinction in this. It's not like he said, he is not on the side of the law, but he said maybe he's not on the side of the law. This is where all this gets pretty tangly and grey, no doubt. Do I feel that the comment was absolutely inappropriate? Do I think it's offensive? Do I think it should be retracted unequivocally? Absolutely, I do. One hundred per cent he should retract that comment.

On the issue with the Member for St. John's Centre, I was totally confused, actually. At least for the Member for St. John's North, I understood the context of what he was talking about and where the minister was kind of going. For the Member for St. John's Centre, I sat here and I'm like: What the heck does this have to do with salmon farming? You're suggesting – and I'm going to read what it says here: “What I've constantly found from this hon. Member” – meaning the Member for St. John's Centre – “and it is a pattern of behaviour ....”

It's certainly not a pattern of behaviour that I'm aware of. It's not a pattern of behaviour that I have ever seen in this House of Assembly. It's not a pattern of behaviour I've ever seen from this Member through social media or in the news. I don't know where this pattern of behaviour is coming from, I honestly don't. I was sitting there totally confused. What is this all about?

He says “it is a pattern of behaviour ... A pattern of behaviour of marginalization of Indigenous ....” What he said, he asked a question about

salmon farming and the 2.6 million salmon – I believe that was the question or he was probing into that, and where is the plan to deal with it and why didn't you let the public know when you knew and that questioning that had been going on for a few days, which is this Member's right to do. It's his job to do, actually. It's not his right to do, it's his job to do. How we got from there to a pattern of behaviour of marginalization of Indigenous people blew my mind. What is he talking about?

I didn't even know what he was talking about. I had to ask people. I had to flick on the news, look in social media to see if I could find something. For the first while, I didn't have any clue what he was talking about.

So now we find out that we're talking about an incident that allegedly happened – I'm saying allegedly. I know there's a tape out there, but I haven't listened to the tape, per se, and I wasn't there. I'm going to use the word allegedly. Happened a year and a half ago where this Member, not in his capacity as an MHA, is at a meeting for a group he was involved with and another person, not even him, makes a comment for which this Member says: This is an unacceptable comment. It does not reflect me. It does not reflect the views of our association. How this can somehow be all tied together in the House of Assembly on a question about salmon farming is ludicrous. It really is ludicrous.

It makes no sense. How are the two connected? The only thing I can think that it could be connected, in my mind at least, the only connection I can seem to make as to why that would be said was it was a way of deflecting from answering the question, it was a way of shooting down the Member for asking the question, because he had been pretty persistent in asking this question day after day, and in the media, so it was kind of a way of shutting him down. This will shut him up. That's all I can think.

Now, I'm not saying that's what it was. I'm not inside that Member's mind. I don't know what he was thinking, but that's the only thing I can come up with that makes any logical sense to me is that's why it was said. Once again, the comment is totally inappropriate – totally inappropriate.



To suggest that someone – and I know we can stretch this because someone is saying he said that this Member is a criminal and this Member is a racist. No, he never used those words. He didn't say you are a criminal, you are a racist, but he did say, the Member for Mount Pearl North, maybe this Member is not the side of the law himself. For the Member for St. John's Centre, a pattern of behaviour of marginalizing Indigenous people. So you can draw from that what you want. To me, it's pretty clear what was being inferred, if not outright said, and I don't think it's appropriate – I don't think it's appropriate.

Now, we have this motion before us. Do I think the punishment, so to speak, fits the crime? Well, one thing I want to add – and this has been said – I don't seem to feel any sense of remorse. That's one thing that's really bothering me with this. Because I know if I said something, it would be gnawing at me and I would say, at some point in time, I shouldn't have said it. I've stood in this House of Assembly and criticized myself for past things I've supported. I criticized myself for voting for Muskrat Falls – I went off on a tangent, but I have, because I wish I hadn't had done it, and I've given my reasons.

I can't understand for the life of me why the Member can't simply stand up in the House and say: Mr. Speaker, what I said was wrong. It is unacceptable, it goes against the Members' Code of Conduct, it goes against the rules of the House, it goes against being an hon. Member, it goes against decorum and it's simply wrong. I withdraw my comments unequivocally – unequivocally. I apologize to the House. It won't happen again. I can do better. We can do better. For me, that's all he has to do.

I don't care about this whole – I mean, let's do another, what, 20 hours of sensitivity training or something. We all did the sensitivity training. Sure, what did it change? Is it really going to change a whole lot if he did it again? I don't know. You can't just go and sit down in a classroom and do a few exercises that they give you and talk about stuff like that and all of a sudden you change. That's something that you have to change from within you, your own attitude. That's not going to change because you went to a course.

So, look, he has to do better. And he needs to be called out on it. So I do support it in the sense that the man needs to be called out on it, because it's not good enough. We've already been through all this.

I want to tell you, over the last day or so – and I don't know if other Members have been following social media or got any emails from your constituents or whatever. I don't know. I speak for myself. But I can tell you something – shouldn't be news to anybody – the general public are not happy about this. They're not happy about this.

We're almost \$15 billion in the hole. We have a deficit that's been growing by about a billion dollars a year. We have issues with family doctors, we have issues in our school system, we have unemployment that's way too high, food bank lineups have been growing and we're here spending our time talking about this stuff – really. Our gallery is full here today because there are people who have concerns that are more important to them than this. They really are.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. LANE:** Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to put it out there. For me, let's put an end to this now.

The Member has been called out publicly. If the idea was public shaming, guess what, it's happened. His face has been all over the news the last two days; it will be on the news again tonight. I know what that's like. Other Members in this House know what it's like. It's horrible and it's horrible on your family.

**MR. JOYCE:** Ask me about it.

**MR. LANE:** Yes, the Member next to me says ask me about it. It is horrible.

If there was any attempt to call him out publicly, it's been done. We need to bring this to an end. For me as one Member, and I don't know in terms of procedure if it's even possible at this point, but if the Member were to stand up, stop the old doubling down and tripling down – cut out that nonsense, you're only making yourself look worse. You're digging a hole.

If the Member would stand up in the House of Assembly and simply say I withdraw these comments and apologize to the Member for Mount Pearl North and St. John's Centre unequivocally – I don't want to hear any justification or any of that BS – then I, for one, am satisfied to bring an end to this. If the Member is going to continue to double down and he's not going to acknowledge what is done, because it's not okay, then I'm not going to have any choice but to support this.

That's all I have to say, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

**MR. TRIMPER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I guess in recognition of the people that are in the gallery and everyone that are in this hon. House, and having just spent 2017 to 2019 sitting in that amazing chair, it is important to be relevant. I'm going to do that with my remarks, but I'm going to do it from my perspective and I want to speak to that. So I would ask for everyone's indulgence while I go through what's been going on with myself for the last couple of months.

I want to go back, there are a bunch of things in my mind. The Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay always speaks with great passion and conviction, and that's exactly how I approached this political adventure, which, for me, started in 2015. Every day I'm in the House, every day I represent the people of Lake Melville, I have found to be amazing, very rewarding, through the highs and the lows.

With that background, there is an undercurrent that unfortunately we are all dealing with, this house is dealing with, this province is dealing with and this country is dealing with. Just by way of background, it's interesting that in 2013 there was a world survey of some 80 countries and Canada placed amongst the highest; the highest rank in terms of their racial tolerance of others in the world. What an amazing accolade to receive.

Anyway, as I was preparing for my remarks today, I started diving down through and I starting looking and seeing many things that I suspected I would see in there. It was great challenges to that assertion, to our own feeling that we are somehow better than the rest in terms of our attitude and our acceptance of others in our society.

We only have to look to the recent election. We only have to look to all of our individual pasts to see that, in fact, we are struggling. Are we making progress? I would suggest we are. I would suggest that we are indeed making progress. As several have alluded to the decorum in this House and tolerance of people's opinions and their rights to be heard, I would suggest we have made great progress, but every now and then we stumble.

It's those stumbles that catch us all. It certainly caught me, and I think that's when we need to pause and say: Are we on the right track? Do we really have the conviction to really go to where we need to go, to where that 2013 said that we were? Can we get there? I guess it's how we deal with those stumbles that we need to really think about how we respond.

In terms of relevance to the point of privilege here today that was brought forward, I think what brought about a lot of the emotion that I certainly felt on this floor was because of the undercurrents around racism, words that we've heard, situations we've encountered and how we deal with it. Whether we're that person uttering those words or hearing those words, how did we act?

We only have to look at *Hockey Night in Canada* on Saturday night to see how that unfolded, and did Mr. MacLean react as quickly as he should have. It's easy to second guess. It's easy to challenge and so on, but at the end of the day, did those individuals, did they come back and say: You know what, I made a mistake, I'm apologizing for it and I'm committing to going forward and doing a much better job.

Last night, I was with my wife and about 6,000 other people at Mile One, and as we were listening to the 44th president of the United States and listening – you could have heard a pin drop, much like this room right now. You really

heard every word he said. I think for most of us, I said jokingly, going out, I don't think anyone was converted. I think we all went in realizing that we are very much fans of this gentleman and the better world that he was working hard on. It was really quite a moving experience, and I think we're all wishing back to another time.

So every now and then something happens, whether we get a new leader, a new shift in policy, that sets us back. I believe those around us, certainly around me, I believe in this entire House – in my role, previously, as Speaker, I came to know everyone in this House, and I do know what I've seen of them in the personal conversations I've had with them. I do believe there is great conviction in this Legislature, and I do believe this Legislature is committed to going forward.

I want to go back to my history, if I may. I came to this great province in 1987, and for the last 32 years most of my activity has been involved in working in a variety of cultures, but particularly with the Indigenous peoples of Labrador. I'm very pleased to say that I worked with the Innu, the Inuit, and then the Metis – now the members of the NunatuKavut Community Council – on so many great initiatives that I'm very proud of.

I helped set up and then operate, I'm thinking, four separate majority-owned, controlled Indigenous companies. We built capacity. We hired many dozens and dozens. It would probably be in the vicinity of, perhaps, I would suggest, a couple of hundred different youth, Indigenous youth from Labrador, and watched with great pride as they combined their traditional knowledge with the Western science that I had been blessed to have the experience to learn. It has been a very productive experience.

I helped with the Mushuau Innu Renewal Committee in 1994 with the relocation of Davis Inlet after the tragic events of 1992, where six children were burned in a house. The pain and the emotions at the time and how we collectively needed to do something to help that community and the efforts, and going through that soul-searching time was such an eye-opening experience.

I think, as the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands was just alluding, several of us have

had opportunity to sit through sensitivity training, Aboriginal awareness, Indigenous rights and so on. Those little exercises are all useful, there's no question, but I feel very honoured and blessed to have had the experience of working on that soul-searching, how do we find our way out of this, and my own personal commitment to help them and help others get there and do what I could. So that's been my commitment to Labrador, and particularly the people of Lake Melville.

It was with an amazing fall into an abyss on the 12th of September when a reporter called me and played back my words from a conversation that I had had the day before. In that fog of realizing: Wow, what have I just done? What have I just said? What mistake have I just made? I thank myself – I guess, I'm glad at the time that I had the basis, the clarity of thought to say: I'm not going to make any more mistakes.

I actually was in the Premier's boardroom. I thought I was going to be talking about all the good things going on in Municipal Affairs and Environment, and I get this call. I told the Premier what was happening, and I said they want a comment. I said there's only one thing I can honourably do is go and apologize. Because there are words on there, whether the intent was in a negative – first of all, let me rephrase. There was no negative intent. It was a time of frustration. It was, as the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands and some others have said, it was a mistake.

I said there cannot be any qualification of this. There cannot be any explanation. It's a setback for yours truly, and I need to deal with it. He said go. So I went. I went to the studio on television live. I can tell you when Mr. Germain was about to interview, I felt I was being strapped into an electric chair, but I knew I needed to do that. I needed to do it for myself, for my wife, for the people around me. I'm glad I did that.

That night was a difficult night. I called the grand chief and I called the gentleman that I was referring to on the phone and apologized to them very sincerely, thinking, maybe perhaps hoping, that would sufficient. It wasn't.

As the night wore on, I didn't sleep at all that evening, but the next morning I knew what I needed to do and I needed to get back to Labrador and speak to the people, the Indigenous leadership that I had offended with those words. I surprised them. That's not me. They didn't even recognize me, so I definitely disappointed them. I went to the airport, and something happened that morning to me. I want to go back, again, to my colleague from Baie Verte - Green Bay, and some others who spoke, about the opportunity to be in this House, and as low as I felt that morning, there were two thoughts on mind.

One was, first of all, a woman came up to me. I'm not going to mention her name. She's a constituent and, in September, she found out that she had cancer. Now she's on a battle, and my office has been helping her, along with the Minister of Health and Community Services. We are helping her get through that. She came up to me and she came over to me and she said to me: Are you okay? And I just said to her, and I've said to her since: That gesture of worrying about me when I realize what you're going through, wow. That helped me put it in perspective. I know who I am, I know where I'm going, I know what I'm committed to doing. I was in a pretty low spot that day, but for her to reach out to me, told me to keep going.

I was going to read a statement – maybe I'll get a chance to today or at some point soon – regarding the Special Olympics. They have an oath that I aspire to a lot, and it's an interesting oath. It says: Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt. I promised the people of Lake Melville, my colleagues around me on both sides of the House – for example, my own interest in competing with you, Sir, for the Speaker's position. That's why I did that. I said: I can't give up. I have to keep going. I have to show people that I'm going to get back on the rails and keep going forward.

The other thought that was on my mind, however, that morning – well, I was sorry and I could feel the remorse. I can tell you I was mad at myself because I knew what those words would mean to certain folks, particularly within the Innu Nation, that I had been working closely with so much of my life. I still wonder in my mind: Why did I say that? Why did I do that?

Why did I lose control in that instant? It wasn't about being recorded; it was about saying it. So many of my friends said to me, and they came up to me afterwards and they said – I'll leave my name out – what are you doing? They said, you're always correcting us in a conversation, and I do.

Sometimes some of my friendships get a little off kilter, get a little challenged because I'm saying don't make those generalities. You cannot make those sweeping statements. If you have an individual you have an issue with, that's one thing. That really goes to the heart of what are deemed to be racist comments. Unfortunately, I dropped my guard there. I said words I regretted and I apologized for it.

I felt as I got on the plane and I came to Labrador that morning on the 13th – we had a caucus call and I enjoyed great support from this team. They're a great team. It's good to be back, being part of them again. However, I couldn't reach the leaders. I knew they were mad. I knew I had upset them.

They were heading to St. John's. There were lawyers, elders and leaders coming to St. John's that day. I left messages with the grand chief and he was mad, he was angry and he was disappointed. The allegation at the time was that the Premier, the Members of Cabinet, my colleagues in this government and, frankly, my colleagues in the entire Legislature were racist. I don't believe that's the case; in fact, I know it's not the case. Otherwise, why would we even be on our feet here today talking about this?

It is a serious undertone. It's something that we're all struggling with, but when we hit those and make those mistakes, I feel that we do need to apologize. Like so many of the colleagues around me – and now to bring it back to the relevance of this particular point of privilege – it's bullying and harassment, but it's also about elevated emotions when we find ourselves caught by our convictions, whether we're at the receiving end or, unfortunately, on the distributing end where we've said the wrong thing. We need to realize that and we need to put ourselves back on those rails.

I called the Premier, thought about it and I said: Sir, I feel I need to resign. The criticism is of

you and it's of the Cabinet and it isn't, it was my mistake. I need to wear that. I feel that whenever we make those mistakes, that's what we have to do. We have to realize that other people are fighting big battles, battles for their life. Frankly, the Indigenous people of Labrador and Newfoundland and Labrador and this entire country have been on this struggle for years.

I'll go back to Don Cherry. When you just take "you people" out of the context, you say: Well, what is that? I've had so many people challenge my own words that were in that recording and say: What did you say? What was it? Well, what, in fact, I did and what he did is ignited a lot of frustration. So for the dark days that I've had since September 12 and 13, many people around me in my district have had many tough struggles for decades, for generations.

I was on that campaign with them to address, through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I carry the recommendations with me. I think a lot about it. I just wanted to say here on the floor today that we will stumble. We will find ourselves off the rails, but we need to commit – recommit myself. I keep saying to myself: Why did this happen to myself? I can only feel it's to help me refocus and double down my efforts to do what I can to address the challenges of embracing everyone in this province, in this country, into society where they need to be in a very respectful place.

With that, my colleagues, I thank you for your attention.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

**MR. BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to thank the colleague behind me there: the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands. I agree with a lot of what he had to say, absolutely. Also, I was given a piece of advice the other day by the hon. Member across the way, the Minister of Finance. Before I went into an interview, he told me: Attack the policy, not the person. Unfortunately, his own colleague didn't take those words to heart like I did.

I'll never attack an individual in this House, ever, because that's not who I am. Mr. Speaker, I'm the father and the husband of three Inuit women. Very strong women who have been attacked personally because of the colour of their skin and their identity, and it hurts. My family has been the victim of racism. To have a minister across the way using that identity to attack a Member of my caucus is very unfortunate. That is not the spirit of this House. The spirit of this House is not to attack an individual, it's to attack policy and debate.

It hurts me, actually, personally of how things have been unfolding. I also have to stop and think, all the individual had to do was apologize. Stand up in the House, retract his statement and apologize, but instead he continues to double down, and that hurts me to see that.

Mr. Speaker, my wife went to college here in St. John's. One day walking across the parking lot someone yelled a racial slur at her, a very hurtful racial slur. At 3 in the afternoon while I was at work back in Lab City, I got a very upset phone call from her about it.

In 2010, my wife was airlifted to St. John's, along with myself, when she was pregnant with my first-born child. We arrived at the Health Sciences Centre. She was taken upstairs to be looked after. I went down to administration to get everything straightened out. Behind the wicket, I handed my wife's MCP card and ID to the administrator. She looked at me, oh great, more natives from Labrador. Mr. Speaker, systemic racism is a problem in this province, absolutely, but to use it to attack a Member of this House is very unfortunate.

These are very personal things to me to be attacked like that. As an individual who does not identify as Indigenous, my perspective on the world has greatly changed after marrying my wife. Actually, living two years in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, my view on the world is a lot different than probably some of my colleagues. I also have a deepened – I fell into this world. My wife tells me all the struggles that she and her family have faced over the years of being Indigenous, but to have it used as attack against you is very, very unfortunate.

This is not the reason of this House; this system was created so that no interpersonal battles happen. We speak through you, Mr. Speaker. That's the reason of how the system works. To have a Member avoid you and make personal attacks here, on social media, these have to be condemned. This can't be allowed to happen in this House. We cannot degrade ourselves to this point.

We have to continue on a path forward where every Member in this House has the right to say and ask questions of the government, have a right to ask and those questions to be answered. Also, when we walk out through those doors at the end of the day, we can shake each other's hands and say, see you tomorrow, because this is what it was supposed to be like.

Unfortunately, the Member across the way decided to change that. I thought we were doing pretty good for a few weeks, but now this is very unfortunate. We need to challenge this now. We need to put an end to this now and ask for an apology. Then we can go back to doing the business of what these individuals here in the gallery are here about.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. BROWN:** I have homelessness in my district, Labrador West – homelessness in Labrador West. It's unreal. I have people lined up at food banks. This is not why I'm here.

All I ask, Mr. Speaker, is just – all we want is an apology. That's all we want, an apology and carry on with our business. I've sat and had long discussions with my wife about this, about these issues, about going through this whole thing, as insightful as this is, ask for an apology. That's all she told me, ask for an apology. That's all we'd need and we could keep going forward and conduct the business of this House that needs to be conducted. We have stuff piling up behind us now. We have things that are very pressing that need to be done.

Mr. Speaker, I am 100 per cent supporting this motion.

Thank you.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak today.

I want to say, I completely agree that there are lots of pressing issues that we must be debating here in the House of Assembly and I look forward to debating those, but it was the Member opposite, the Opposition that put forward this motion. We all have rights and privileges, as Members in this House, to debate specific motions that are put before us.

I have to say that I've sat in this House of Assembly since 2011. I've been here, I've been where the Member opposite was. I've been where the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands has been. I've sat in the Official Opposition and I've been with government since 2015 on this side of the House, but I take a little bit of frustration at the Member for Conception Bay South saying that we don't need to be wasting our time on this.

There is a parliamentary procedure and parliamentary practice, and we must honour those rules and privileges of the House and those practices of Members and have a fulsome debate on the matter, which you had determined we should do as Members. Every single Member has a right to contribute and should contribute to the particular debate here in the House today.

I would say for people who are newer, and there are many newer Members here – there are a couple of independents. The Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, we were elected at the same time. The independent for Humber - Bay of Islands has a very long history here in this House. The Opposition House Leader who introduced the motion, as well as the Member for Cape St. Francis, the Minister of Finance and the Premier, they have been here longer in terms of service than many other Members in this House. I can certainly tell you from the time that I stepped in this Assembly in 2011, the decorum in this House has changed substantially.

I remember sitting in Opposition when the government of the day, the Progressive Conservatives, would put forward motion after motion to call out Members to get up to

apologize. You did not know who was going to be attacked next. The amount of heckling that occurred in this House of Assembly was significant and substantial, and many Members engaged in it because there were not those cordial relationships that exist today.

I would say, as a minister here in this House, that I have been to other Members' districts. I have worked with them on issues, so has my office. I've been to Stephenville - Port au Port and made announcements; in the Member for Cape St. Francis's district as well. We've worked on a lot of matters to advance UNESCO status in the District of Bonavista, and this is how the House should function. It should function to be very collaborative.

It was not that way when I was here in 2011, as the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands can certainly attest. It was very much a survival mode of attack, attack, attack, with significant amounts of heckling, and you didn't know who was going to be that person and why. So, the temperature and tone and decorum in this House has changed significantly.

One thing about this debate that I hear and understand is – and I think we all need to reflect on our own behaviours and understand that we all are human and we all make mistakes. I know for myself, personally, I've had my share of bruises as a politician and I've made mistakes, so have other people in this Legislature, but what is being debated here today – and I have to go with the Minister of Education on this. I don't really know how we got here, and it's not to question the decision of the Speaker, but I want to reflect back on Thursday, November 7, and the *Hansard* that took place and the procedures and policies of this House.

The MHA for St. John's Centre asked a question. He had said: "Mr. Speaker ... the minister said he takes the words and knowledge of the Mi'kmaq seriously, yet in an interview on *Mi'kmaq Matters*, the Miawpukek First Nation chief said he only found out about the die-off in the media three weeks after the minister knew.

"So, if the minister truly values our Mi'kmaq citizens, why didn't he pick up the phone and tell the chief as soon as he knew?"

Then the minister responded, saying, in "that same interview, Chief Mi'sel Joe said I commend the minister for the work he's done and acknowledged the government's good, hard work on this.

"What I have found a consistent practice from this hon. Member, which I disagree with, is that he continues to marginalize. He has never phoned Chief Mi'sel Joe. I just got off the line with Chief Mi'sel Joe, just ... an hour ago. I have had several conversations with him. What I'll say is that that hon. Member right there has never ... picked up the phone to phone him to ask any questions. I've been down to Conne River, I've been down to the First Nation and spoken to him several times."

This is what had transpired in the conversation back and forth. Then there was a point of order that was put forward, and that point of order was around that you should address all your comments to the Speaker. That is indeed fact, and yourself as Speaker said yes, and the Member had said thank you very much.

Then he says to the point of order, to the Government House Leader – and it was changed to a point of privilege at that point – and it was a discussion to the point of order. The minister had said about the past pattern of behaviour is not keeping in spirit with reconciliation with Indigenous people and the company where there have been the marginalized interests and the importance of Indigenous people and nations in our province, and it's not acceptable.

Then there was a ruling made on that by Mr. Speaker, it says in *Hansard*: "While there's no point of order here, it's a disagreement between two hon. Members, I would take this opportunity to remind all Members of this House that comments should be directed towards the Chair. This is the past precedent in our House and all Members should abide by that. It's designed to depersonalize the questioning and the answering and I ask all Members to follow that precedent."

It's important, as has been talked about in this House, to talk about and tackle the issues, not to make matters personal. But that was put before the floor, and that's when it should've been

raised, a point of order or a point of privilege, when a matter comes forward.

In Question Period, as well, the Member for Mount Pearl North also said a question, saying: "I'd also like to point out that people hunt moose day and night, and a bullet goes just as far in the day as it does in the night." Well, that was the point that the Member for Mount Pearl North – even though the minister had highlighted that hunting at night is an illegal activity. So the minister further stated that calling for hunting at night, against the regulations, is basically an active defence of poaching.

I understand that there were questions going back and forth on this particular matter and, at that point, after Question Period it was the Opposition House Leader during Question Period, actually, not before it ended, got up and said point of order. As the Speaker, the Speaker said we would deal with points of order after Question Period. The Member is a long-standing Member, as the Opposition House Leader, and would know that you cannot interrupt Question Period as you stated, Mr. Speaker, and that any ruling on a point of order to retract a comment, as we've seen in this House many, many times, to request for an apology or withdrawal of remark, would be done following Question Period on that particular day.

The Opposition House Leader had chosen not to pursue that opportunity to call for a withdrawal of remarks right after Question Period. So here we are debating a resolution for the House. I've been in this House several times where sometimes unparliamentary language is said. No one condones unparliamentary language. We've been here where that has come forward, and as it's been raised in this House the Members have done the honourable thing and withdrawn the remarks.

In his response to this resolution that was put forward, the Member for Corner Brook has said he withdraws his remarks from those that would be deemed unparliamentary language that would be pertaining to any particular Member that would be considered unparliamentary. He has done that for the Member for Mount Pearl North. I respect him for doing that. I think that's important.

When you look at all of the resolutions and what here is being said about BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED about verbally apologizing, writing the other two Members of the House and then engaging in anti-harassment behaviour, this, to me, seems that it's a far stretch to what was actually said in Question Period back and forth and what was reasonable. The Member opposite has withdrawn remarks that would be deemed unparliamentary in this particular matter.

We're taking a significant amount of time to debate these issues, but it gives us a great opportunity in this House to talk about substantive issues that we face as Members, as parliamentarians, and also experiences that we've had and share when it comes matters of – as the Member for Lake Melville had just talked about and very eloquently – systemic racism and discrimination. That is certainly not acceptable.

Myself, as Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, I'm now responsible for the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism and I've had the opportunity to sit in a sharing circle and hear first-hand significant amount of racism and discrimination that have been faced by newcomers here that's totally unacceptable. It's just unacceptable.

I've also held a Minister's Roundtable on Immigration in Labrador. Hearing about experiences and learning on ways of how we can make Newfoundland and Labrador a very welcoming and engaging place. It's important and the onus is on all of us in this House to work together, to collaborate and to make sure that we do have welcoming communities. That we do more to ensure that our newcomers, that our citizens – and as other Members talked about, maybe there is further training that all Members in this House need to engage in, whether it is specific to Indigenous or also around newcomers and immigration and other marginalized groups.

The first meeting that I've had with an outside stakeholder group actually, as Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, was addressing racism Newfoundland and Labrador, as to how we can combat Islamophobia and racism here in our province. I had met with the professors involved in this report and listened to them. They had released a community report in September of 2019 and I certainly appreciated



the opportunity to hear what they had to say and their contributions and the recommendations that are put forward.

We take that very seriously. This is not something that is specific to one particular government department, but it goes across all departments and all levels at the federal, at the community level, community organizations, with labour unions, education groups and how we can address discrimination in all forms. That is something that is so important that we all have to do, each and every one of us in this House of Assembly. We all have to take actions to engage to ensure that we have better and ongoing policy improvements and efforts to promote inclusion, to respect the dignity of all of our residents, including residents of intersecting cultural, religious, racialized and other backgrounds.

We've seen this recently, as the Member for Lake Melville talked about, just in the remarks of Saturday on *Hockey Night in Canada* and just how the commentary of targeting groups of people, newcomers, immigrants, it's just unacceptable at any level. When people become aware of these remarks, they immediately should apologize. These things should not happen.

We all have to take action here in this Legislature and in this Chamber to engage in restorative justice, as was talked about, an important topic, and how we can work with Indigenous populations here in this province to improve the relations, as came out of the Truth and Reconciliation report, that we all have to take actions.

I was very pleased to hear Chief Mi'sel Joe, who I have great respect for, who I've met many times. I've had the opportunity to be in Conne River and I've met and have been working with Indigenous groups and organizations and governments for many, many years as well, Mr. Speaker.

It's important that we do listen and engage, and that all people in our province have a voice and that we take the greatest actions to ensure that when we are raising questions here in this House of Assembly, when we're using individual's names, in particular, and matters, that they be consulted, that they actually be reached out to and consulted. That you have the full and

wholesome view when you're a Member and that you're not just taking one particular side of the issue. That you actually reach out and consult and engage so that you have a very informed view.

I can't condone anybody wanting to be hunting at night. I think it's a very dangerous activity. It's against the law. If you look at from a point of view of where many farms are in this province, some of them are very close to residential neighbourhoods, very close to roads and other areas where people could be, and discharging firearms after dark should not be something that is done lightly here in Newfoundland and Labrador. That's certainly something that I could not support, and I hope it is not the position, as well, of the Member of Mount Pearl North.

Mr. Speaker, I think, procedurally, we're at this point and we are where we are in terms of the decision to accept this as a Member's rights at first blush of maybe being breached, but I would say if people look at the precedent here in this House, at the procedures, at the rules and how things have transpired over the years, that this motion is far too strong in terms of what actually had transpired and what had taken place in the House of Assembly.

I would call for action to be taken to either have this motion amended or withdrawn from the floor of the House of Assembly.

Thank you.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Premier.

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to actually thank all Members. Quite a few have engaged in this debate over the last few days, and some of the opening comments that were made were based on some comments that I made in this House of Assembly some time ago.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I stand by those comments back about a year and a half ago, because it's important that we send a message to the people of our province, especially in these times, that we do work in

collaboration. That's the commitment our government has made to the people of our province. It's a commitment we've made to the Opposition parties and the independent Members that we have in this House of Assembly. I think that is the message people want to see from us.

Mr. Speaker, that is not going to actually interfere from time to time where you'll see rigorous debate that will occur on the floor of this House of Assembly. That will continue to occur.

Mr. Speaker, over the last few days, as the minister responsible for Indigenous Affairs, I've been listening, and listening to the debate back and forth, the comments that have been made by various people, but I've also reached out to Indigenous leaders in our province. I've listened to the evidence that has been shared with me, that's been publicly, and following it very closely, all the comments that people have been making. That includes the comments of the media.

Mr. Speaker, there is one piece of advice that has been taken from a man that I have great respect for. As a matter of fact, it's not only me, as Premier of this province, that has the respect of Chief Mi'sel Joe, it's Memorial University, it's national leaders all across our country. As a matter of fact, the man has been recognized internationally for his work in social development, economic development with his group in Newfoundland and Labrador. As a matter of fact, I would say that most Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that have met Chief Mi'sel Joe will say that he has left a mark on their life.

I will assure you that you cannot spend five minutes in that man's company and not be left with a very pleasant memory. He is just a remarkable individual. He is someone that I've had many discussions with, Mr. Speaker, when you look for advice on issues around Indigenous affairs. It's not just Chief Mi'sel Joe, there are other leaders as well that I would often reach out to.

So, Mr. Speaker, one of the things he said to me is that he has said quite clearly about his remarks and how he feels about racism. This is not a new

issue for the Chief in Newfoundland and Labrador, this has been ongoing. As a matter of fact, in one discussion that I've had with him, or one of the comments he made to me was the fact that he's in his early 70s and he spent nearly six decades in promoting and advocating for the lives and changing the lives of Indigenous people in our province, and indeed across the country.

Mr. Speaker, we find ourselves here today when we're talking about a number of issues, one around the whole idea of what's happening within the aquaculture industry; some of the things that are happening around farmers. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, I could share lots of stories about moose hunting in this province. I've been fortunate that I grew up in an area – well, that was part of what we did.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I think this is the first year that I can remember in my life that so far I have not been moose hunting in this province. When I can get a Saturday morning or a Saturday evening some time soon, I will guarantee you I will be out there with my friends.

I will say, too, Mr. Speaker, that over this period of time I can tell you that I've spent time with farmers. As a matter of fact, I can share a story – this is in just recent memory of my older brother who is no longer with us. He never was one of those fellows who wanted to go moose hunting but, indeed, we encouraged him to go. So I called this farmer friend of mine and there were some moose – and I'm sure the Member here for Mount Pearl North would understand exactly what I'm talking about. I'm sure the minister responsible for FLR would know this story as well.

So, we go out early one morning and we saw this moose that was there just feasting on turnip. That's exactly what was happening. I can tell you, that particular farmer said no, we have to be careful because there are other people in this area. We need to be able to do this carefully. We need to be able to do this when dawn – when we can actually see exactly what's happening. That's what we did, and that was the first moose hunting experience for my older brother. It's great memories for me. It's just an example of

what happens within the agriculture community within our province.

Mr. Speaker, that is one part of the debate that got us where we are today. This occurred back on the floor of the House of Assembly just last week. Then we got into some of the other issues. As the discussion continued, it continued to grow and grow and grow. It led into some conversations that we had with Chief Mi'sel Joe. That is a gentleman, as I said, Mr. Speaker, that I have a lot of time for, and I know Members in this House of Assembly would have a lot of time for as well.

Now we're debating this resolution that we see to the floor of the House of Assembly. When I look at it on the surface, Mr. Speaker, I think that it is certainly the will of collaboration with all Members of this House of Assembly that we want to do the right thing and we want to recognize that each and every single Member, that we operate, as we speak in this House of Assembly, we do it with respect of each other, we do it with integrity. Mr. Speaker, that is what we were elected to do.

I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, there is also a point that when we do speak here that there are values and there are morals, too, that we actually stand on. I expect all 40 Members of this House of Assembly would agree with that as well.

When we go back and forth – and that happens quite some time. Often, it gets heated and sometimes comments will be said. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you in my almost nine years in the House of Assembly, from time to time I've had to stand up and address the Speaker and say: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw that comment.

I don't think there are too many people here that if they haven't been actively engaged in some good debate across this floor of the House of Assembly that would, actually, at some point in that debate, would say if I had to say that again, Mr. Speaker, I probably would not say it that way. That happens quite often. As a matter of fact, we all know stories that – even there have been comments that have been said other places, not just on the floor of the House of Assembly, if we had to do it again we would probably do it differently.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to make an amendment in a few minutes here to the resolution that we have in front of us. I know we have about 10 or 12 minutes or so now before the House will adjourn. I also want to say when we make – I think it's fundamental – decisions in this House of Assembly, we make every effort to seek advice from people that sometimes do not sit in those chairs. We have a lot of great people in the House of Assembly. We have a lot of issues that have been dealt with and that we're currently dealing with, too, within our province that had there been sage advice taken, maybe we wouldn't be in the situation we're in.

I would suggest that at some point all of us, as 40 Members here, elected MHAs, that from time to time I think when the opportunity presents itself, people like Chief Mi'sel Joe should actually have the opportunity to come to this House of Assembly and have their say as well. It doesn't happen often in this House but, Mr. Speaker, those opportunities need to present themselves.

We see ourselves just recently, where we've actually been engaging more and more the committee work to help us make the advice and get us in the situation where we can make proper judgments and proper decision-making for the people of our province. Mr. Speaker, at some point I think it's fair to say that people, Indigenous leaders across our province, people like Chief Mi'sel Joe, should have those opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, today I'm going to make this amendment:

BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Assembly finds the behaviour of the Member for Corner Brook has called into question the reputations of two Members of this House which does not meet the higher standard of conduct that this House commanded of all Members through its deliberations in 2018; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Member for Corner Brook shall withdraw completely and without equivocation his offending statements with respect to the Members for Mount Pearl North and St. John's Centre.

I think in the spirit of collaboration the Leader of the Opposition has agreed to second that motion.

**MR. CROSBIE:** Seconded, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** We usually recess to examine the amendment, but I've had a chance to look at the amendment and I thank the Member for providing a copy of it. I understand there seems to be all-party support for this motion, maybe – I'm not sure. So, I'm going to move forward with accepting the amendment that it is in order.

Seeing no other speakers to the amendment – sorry, the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

**MR. JOYCE:** Thank you.

I'm going to speak to the amendment and also later on to the main motion. There is quite a bit of leeway here.

Mr. Speaker, I listened intently here to all the issues that's happening in the House of Assembly. I see the Member when he first brought it in, brought up about the bullying and harassment about a year ago. This is a bit personal to me and there are a lot of issues I want to bring forward because every Member here is saying every Member should have the right. I'm not going to talk about the issues of what happened, but the process of what happened, how every Member here, how this is becoming so political, this House of Assembly.

I'll give you a good example of what happened. I'm going back, it might be '92, maybe even '91 – I can't remember – myself and the Member at the time, God bless his soul, a great man, Jack Byrne, we got in a heated discussion here and he had to withdraw his statement. He wouldn't do it. Do you know how we resolved that in the House that time, and the same thing could have happened here last week? Do you know how we resolved that? The Speaker stood up, asked him to withdraw, he wouldn't withdraw and he had to leave the House for the day. That was the punishment at the time.

Do you know what we did the next day, me and Jack Byrne? We went on CBC radio, side by side, had an interview for about 10 or 15 minutes and discussed our issue. Do you know what happened then? Jack Byrne's wife was

picking him up. I said: I'll give you a ride up. We went in for a cup of coffee, he had no money, I bought him a coffee and we had a laugh. He said: I got to go by the house now; I got to get some paint. We went by his house, driving him around, had a laugh. He said: I got to pick up the paint and bring it back. I brought him up to get the paint and brought him back.

That day Jack Byrne got in the House of Assembly and said, yes, I barbarized that Member so bad this morning on CBC, he chauffeured me all day. That's how we handled things back then, the House would handle it.

It's becoming so political in this House, everything. I use the bullying and harassment that myself and Dale Kirby went through. That was so political. And I'm going to bring up stuff, Premier. You made statements then, but I can tell you, Premier, that personally knowing you and knowing what went on, how many people in this room know – and I don't mean the people who are newly elected or the NDP; you were newly elected, but the other people. I use the Leader of the Opposition who stood up in this House and said I have issues; he wouldn't take me. He later apologized, and I thank you for that and I hope you're going to do it publicly, that you will apologize, that I have issues. In other words, I have some stability. Did anybody ever jump up and say he shouldn't say that? No one. Not a soul.

How many people in this House now know – and I look at the Government House Leader, and I don't know if the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island was there – that the person who came into this House, the Commissioner for Legislative Standards, misled the Management Commission. The Speaker admitted it. He admitted it to me personally. The Justice Minister, Attorney General said it publicly.

How many people brought that up in the House of Assembly during this debate? How many? An Officer of the House misleading the Management Commission, and what it was, was I was never interviewed. The Management Commission went in. He said there were 34 people interviewed; one refused to participate. The question was asked by the Minister of Justice. He said: Who was that? Eddie Joyce. And not one Member in this House would stand

up – not one – for what I and Dale Kirby went through. Not one. That’s so political, all this that’s happening.

I use the Premier for example. When you told me all this was BS, you know why you couldn’t say unequivocally it’s not true? Because there were two witnesses in the room. I’ve been talking to the witnesses. I said that I tried to ask this question in the House of Assembly. You want to talk about we all got to stand up for Members’ rights, how this only happens for whatever political purpose we want. I use this for me and Dale Kirby.

The former Speaker, I tried to ask a question about the Premier being involved with the process; I was shut down. It’s not worth the economic development of the province. I was shut down. Do you know why I was shut down? Because we got to get around the government Members. We’ve got to get around somehow. We can’t let this happen. We got to put this through.

Do you know what I was trying to ask? It was August 6 or 7. I was out in some community announcement we had. I think it was August 6 and 7. The Premier said to me: Reports come out tomorrow. I said: What? How do you know? He called me that night, he said: No, yours and Dale’s come out together, couple weeks’ time. Sure enough, two of them came out.

So I wrote the Premier when all this was done. I wrote the Premier and I said: Who in your office was contacting Bruce Chaulk? He wouldn’t respond. I wrote again, because someone in the office was telling me keep going, and sure enough. Do you know my lawyer, who could not get any information of when the reports were coming out, but the Premier was involved and he could.

Now, the question that has to be raised –

**MR. TRIMPER:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** We usually don’t accept points of order during this debate. If the Member wants to raise it after the debate.

**MR. TRIMPER:** Yes, I’m just reminding (inaudible).

Thank you. I’m just reminding the Speaker that the matter that the Member’s referring to has been discussed, resolved and voted on by this House. So he’s now wasting the time of the House.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** We can deal with that later.

**MR. JOYCE:** You’re talking about stuff dealt on in the House, but I say to the Speaker, it was your duty, your right. I say the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay, you weren’t at the meeting, the initial meeting when he said that, I know that, but you know there were conversations later. The Government House Leader knows there were conversations later. Guess what? No one brought it up in the House of Assembly.

Can you imagine, an Officer of this House could walk in this House of Assembly, make a false and misleading statement about a Member, so serious as bullying and harassment about myself and Dale Kirby, and never brought it to the floor of the House of Assembly when I asked it to be brought to the House of Assembly? Can you imagine that?

I ask the lawyers in this room, the lawyers. What would be the case (inaudible) if your client was never, ever interviewed? What would ever happen? What would ever happen if the officer, the police officer, who made a statement said he wouldn’t participate, but you had letters from your lawyer saying, when is the date, we’re willing to meet? What would happen? It’d be thrown out. But guess what, it was never brought to the House of Assembly – never brought to the House of Assembly.

So the question I give back to the Premier – and you standing up that we all have a higher standard to get involved. How many times did you ask your staff to get involved with Bruce Chaulk? Who was it? How many people did he tell about it? (Inaudible) you can answer it now, you wouldn’t answer it before. How many times did that person get in contact? How do we know that there was – were there any notes taken? Can I get a copy of the notes? Can I get a copy of those notes? This is the kind of stuff that myself and Dale Kirby went through in this House; we went through it in this House.

I know the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island, him and the Member for Conception Bay South agreed to bring it to the Management Commission. These are two PC Members. They didn't do it – they didn't do it. So you want to talk about being political, you want to talk about someone being hoodwinked and everybody saying we have to stand up for rights. How about the rights of myself and Dale Kirby that happened, and here we are now?

I still don't know how many times the Premier's office contacted – my lawyer couldn't get a date but he could. My lawyer didn't know what was going on but he did. You can see how this became so political.

I can say to the Premier of this province right now, who used to be my friend, who I trusted: When you stood in this House and you made all these comments about all the things that were going on, why didn't you make it public that, yes, my office was in contact with Bruce Chaulk? I have no – much knowledge. You know something else, and I have it here and I can read it off my phone. I think it was May 3 when the – I think Tracey Perry was the one who asked the question, asked the Premier: Did you make a complaint? He said: I never made a complaint to the Commissioner.

I put in for access to information and I produced it in the House of Assembly. The Commissioner came back and said the Premier did request an opinion and it was part of the investigational process. Can you imagine? I ask the lawyers in this room: Can you imagine someone making a complaint of disclosure? I can't get the information. I don't know what was said.

Besides all this, for all the people here, the government Members also, by the way, you voted for this also. I'm just letting you all know, in between that, he was the one who was going to go as a witness for me and I didn't know any of this stuff was going on. Everybody is standing here; we have to protect Members' rights. Remember what happened a year ago – just remember what happened a year ago.

Premier, I have to say, when you stand up and say we have to, and when you read the *Hansard* here how we have to go to a higher standard, how we have to do the – why don't we just be

honest of what happened a year ago? Why don't we just be honest what happened a year ago?

I asked the former Speaker, I asked the Government House Leader to bring it to the Management. The only thing I ever asked the Management Commission to do, which they refused to do, was bring it to the floor of the House of Assembly that the Commissioner for Legislative Standards walked in –

**MR. SPEAKER:** We're approaching the time when the House normally recesses. I ask the Member to adjourn debate before we recess.

**MR. JOYCE:** I'll adjourn. I'll come back (inaudible).

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The House is now recessed until 2 today, pursuant to our Standing Orders.

### Recess

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

**MR. SPEAKER (Reid):** Admit strangers.

Order, please!

We're just taking a few minutes now while we allow guests to be seated in the House.

Before we restart the debate, in the Speaker's gallery today I'd like to welcome Mr. Robert Lundrigan.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** In the public gallery today, Ms. Knee's grade eight class from Amalgamated Academy in Bay Roberts.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** We're going to resume debate.

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to continue on, but before I do, I just want to let the people in the gallery know that myself and my fellow independent, the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, have agreed that we would cut our time short so the Opposition can get to their private Member's motion about economic benefits. We have agreed to do that to ensure that's debated in this House. I thank my colleague from Mount Pearl - Southlands for doing that also.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to go back again and talk about what I did this morning. People are wondering – and this has been a wide-open debate – why am I doing this now? I've been shut down so many times in this House of Assembly trying to get the truth out. This is a great opportunity for me because you went through it; myself and Dale Kirby went through what we went through.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the former Speaker, the Member for Lake Melville, earlier stand up on a point of order. He said the House already dealt with this. Earlier when he was talking about his personal situation – I have to say one thing. Even the way you acted in the House of Assembly as Speaker – and I want to put this on the record.

I dealt with you for 2½ years, with your constituents, with town councils. There was never a racist comment come out of that man's mouth. It was always with respect and dignity. I have to say that, when it comes to dealing with people in your district and the comments that you made. I can confirm that my dealings with you were always with respect. Now, dealing with the Speaker is a different issue, but I never, ever heard a racial comment out of your mouth. I just want to put that on the record as a person. I heard the Member for Lake Melville say that it's time to recognize it and move on. I say to the former Speaker, you had information – and when you stood on a point of privilege and you said, well, we already dealt with that.

The point you're missing is that when the commissioner came in and spoke to the Management Commission and he made a statement that was false against me, it was never brought to the floor of the House of Assembly. It should have been. It was your statutory responsibility. It was the Management

Commission's statutory responsibility. When I produced documents from my lawyer saying I was willing to meet, I had one day and it was during Regatta Day. It was your statutory responsibility.

That's all I ever asked from the Management Commission, is go to the House of Assembly and say: This person made a statement; we have documents to prove otherwise. The Minister of Justice, the Attorney General, went out publicly and said it, but I couldn't get it brought to the House of Assembly. I say to the former Speaker and the Member for Lake Melville, when you want to say we have to recognize it, it's time for you to recognize that issue.

I just want to let people know also that I wrote the – and this is all documentation. This is not some Eddie Joyce may have said. I wrote you. You emailed me back and said it was a privileged technical briefing and can't discuss it. I wrote back something, so, if I shoot someone in a technical briefing it can't be discussed.

I said this information is pertinent to myself and Dale Kirby. I wrote again. The same thing came back and said this is – and this is not just the Speaker; this is the whole Management Commission, by the way, and the Minister of Justice finally spoke out. I wrote again, the same back again: it's privileged.

When I stood up on a point of privilege, the Speaker – and this is the information people don't even know – in his ruling, contradicted the emails that he sent me. He said any Member of the Management Commission could have spoken in this House of Assembly during debate, which he stifled them before, told them they couldn't speak. The Management Commission were neglect in their duty – were actually neglect in their duty.

I ask anybody in this House – and it's a great time to reflect because you always hear all Members have to be treated fairly; we have to treat people with respect. Dale Kirby was found in violation of Principle 5. I challenge anybody in this House to stand up and tell me what he was found on – anybody. The ones that were here all voted for it. Tell me. Do you know what he was found on Principle 5? He doesn't know.

They wrote and asked what did he do in Principle 5? Don't have an answer yet.

Principle 5 was set up back in 2008 for anybody that's in Cabinet that makes a vote that doesn't affect your family, your direct relative or some personal interest. That's what Principle 5 is. Yet, Dale Kirby could not get a response of what he violated and you voted – we voted and we're supposed to treat all Members equally in this House of Assembly. Just think about that.

When I referred to the Premier earlier, the Premier made many statements. We were good friends. I have to say we were very good friends. It just disappointed me so much what happened, I couldn't tell you. When the Premier cries out publicly: I'm not involved. When they're tabled in this House of Assembly that's when I'll know.

Now I know – and I have a letter. This is not Eddie Joyce talking. I have a letter. The Premier himself confirmed it; on occasion, we were in contact. Once you break that confidentiality, once a statutory Officer of this House of Assembly gives the information to a third party, he violated his constitutional responsibility. Once the Premier of the province, who publicly stated on many occasions, I'll find out when reports are tabled, was actually in contact and knew when the reports were coming out.

Once you say that, Premier, publicly that I wasn't involved, and then a letter saying you were involved, the question was: How much were you involved because now we know you were, first you weren't – how much? Will you produce the people you asked to get involved? Would you produce the notes that were taken? Would you produce who it was shared with? That's the kind of stuff.

It doesn't matter if you say it was just to find out dates so I could be in the area. That's what he said; I need dates because I'm (inaudible). You know how flawed that statement is, Premier? There are reports came in, I think it was September 25, myself and Dale Kirby, the first two reports with Colin Holloway. Guess what? You didn't bring it back to the Legislature. So the argument that you're using, you needed to bring back, you didn't even bring it back to the

Legislature then. The argument that you made is false.

Once you made those public statements and now that they're proven false, Premier, there are many, many more questions. The question I got to ask and I ask the lawyers anywhere in here, lawyers mainly: What would happen if someone contacted a judge or quasi judicial person? What would happen? Do you know what would happen? If they answer, which Bruce Chaulk did to you, Premier, they would have to be removed.

That person has a statutory responsibility to come back to the Speaker of the House of Assembly, through the Management Commission, and say I've been contacted by the Premier's office. It never happened – it never happened.

Just think about that for a minute what happened. This is my only opportunity. I know when I tried to ask questions, points of privilege – do you know one of the points of privilege that I was turned down on? It was the Member for Lake Melville. Do you know what it was? When all this broke, the Speaker said: Boys, why don't you leave the House for a while? Tensions are high. We said: Okay, not a problem. We did. Wrote him a letter.

The letter is on file saying because of stress, we're not going to come back in the House. The House came back for the next session and we came in the House. I stood up on a point of privilege about information that I had about what was said. Do you know why I was denied the point of privilege? Because it's not the first opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, can you remember that? Do you know what the first opportunity was? I should have came off stress leave to do it. When I argued, I said: Look, when you have government employees in this House who are off on stress leave, they're not to be contacted. Do you know what the ruling was? We're not government employees. That's why it was turned down: We're not government employees.

So I don't deserve the right to be off on stress, don't deserve it in this House. But you know the strange part about it? I will not get into any specifics of the reports. They'll be taken care of



in another forum. Trust me, they will be very soon. This is far from over.

Do you know what I was found in violation of? Principle 10 and I'll read Principle 10: "Relationships between Members and government employees ...." Government employees is the civil service. In a response when I put in to the Commissioner to get the Rubin Thomlinson report, here's what the Commissioner said. Here's what they said – I was denied.

Under section 33, has no application to the matter. In support of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards provided this office with an opinion from the Clerk of the House of Assembly: MHAs are not considered employees, but to squeeze something in there about me – they classified a Member of this House of Assembly as a government employee, but the Clerk of the House of Assembly said we're not. I never had an opportunity to explain that. Dale Kirby; to this day, no one in this House knows what he violated in Principle 5. Not one person could stand up. Do you know why? Because Bruce Chaulk told his lawyer I don't have to tell you.

I know the two Members down there opposite that brought in the – when I mentioned it, are the Members for Conception Bay South and Conception Bay East - Bell Island. When I gave them the information, I said, guys, look, here's all the documentation, bring it to the Management Commission, will you? That's all I want, is bring it to the floor of the House of Assembly saying that there was information given to them that was false.

I see my time is up. I can go on another 20 minutes, if – I'm going to have another 20 minutes anyway.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further speakers to the amendment to the main motion?

Is the House ready for the question?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The ayes have it. The amendment has passed.

On motion, amendment carried.

**MR. SPEAKER:** We now revert to the main motion, as amended.

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When I mentioned the two Members earlier, I was being fair. They were being fair and they were all astonished I never got an interview. Not once was I sitting down in front of the people who were doing the allegations. I went to two of them and they were astonished. I said, b'ys, look, here's all the documentation that I presented to the Management Commission. They said, we'll get you a meeting, and at that meeting there were people supposed to say, yes, we have to bring this to the House of Assembly. Guess what, they never had the meeting – wouldn't have the meeting, for whatever reason. Let them stand up and say why there was no meeting that went ahead.

That's the kind of stuff when I hear in this Legislature how we have to protect all Members, coming from the Members opposite about the Member for Corner Brook, how political this is, because I faced it. This is not right. I remember when we were in government, how many times did we come across and help people out? That's the way it should be.

We might get up and banter, but when you want to talk about someone's life, their family and you stand in this House now and you say, we have to do this because we have to protect Members – the Member for Corner Brook did so much, yet they had the same opportunity to protect the Member's rights. The three NDP Members weren't in the House at the time, and there are a lot of Members from the PC caucus also that weren't in the House at the time, I have to acknowledge that. This is why I find this is so strange that all of a sudden this has just blown up. We could've settled this last Thursday. If a few of us had to sit down last Thursday, this could've been settled.

What we could do is the Speaker make a ruling. Either say yes or no. Stand up, do what Jack Byrne did. Jack Byrne wouldn't apologize; he had to leave the House. That was enough. The next day he's back in the House of Assembly. The people in the media knew. The next time one of us in this House had to stand up and had to withdraw, we withdrew. If not, see you later. Sergeant-at-Arms, remove the person from the House of Assembly. That's how we dealt with stuff, but now everything here is so politicized. I know the Opposition at the time were saying we have two Cabinet ministers, and I know the Liberal bunch – let's crowd around now, let's kick them out.

Do you know – this is the strange part, here we have all these here – before there was even anything filed with Bruce Chaulk, except the Premier, the Premier did file something which I have under access to information. I know when he answered a question on May 3 he said, not true, I didn't do it, but he actually did. I still don't have a copy of what was put in against me by the Premier of the province. I couldn't get it and my lawyer couldn't get it, but I have to go defend myself, though.

When we stand in this House and we want to say we're going to protect Members, mean it. I don't care what party you're in, I don't care what stripe you are, but if you're going to stand and say we have to protect the rights of the Members, be serious about it.

I look at the workers up in the gallery. A lot of people say Eddie Joyce is an easy target. Why? If I was ever meeting with the workers, do you know what I'd do? I'd walk right in the room and I'd sit down and I'd have a conversation. They might not like what I have to say. When they leave, they'll respect me for saying what I said. That's why I was an easy target for all this. That's exactly why I was an easy target. I'm not going to get into specifics because there are a lot of specifics there, things that happened in the report that I'll take care of, I can assure you that, Mr. Speaker.

I say to the Members opposite and I say to the Premier of the province, when you stand up and you start reading from *Hansard* that we have to stand and be a higher authority, I ask the Premier of the province, who is the head of the

caucus over there: Is it right that one of your fellow caucus Members was never interviewed? Is it right, Premier, for you to be in contact with Bruce Chaulk? Is it right for that? Those are the kind of questions that I need that were never, ever discussed.

Is it right when your Attorney General says: This guy made a statement to the Management Commission – and the Government House Leader, she was on the Management Commission – and was never brought to the floor of the House of Assembly? Is it right? So, when you're talking about the rights of people, it's actually saddening the way all this went down. It's actually saddening.

I'll stand up now and I'll ask anybody in this House of Assembly, tell me what Dale Kirby did. One person, and I'll sit down and you won't hear from me anymore. Just one. Can you imagine, when we're standing in this House trying to defend people's rights, and here we are, we got it so criticized now that it's in the media for three or four or five or six days, and there's not a Member opposite – not a Member opposite – who can tell me what he was in violation of. Not one.

Do you know the strange part about all of that? There were at least four government Members – five, I think – that were here at the time. Five. They wanted a month's sanction for myself and Dale Kirby. Tell me what Dale Kirby did? Yet, you're going to punish him for a month. We need to push it on further. We got to drive the nail in now.

They were Cabinet ministers. Tell me. Just one person stand in this House. You wouldn't be able to tell. Do you know why? Dale Kirby doesn't even know. His lawyers don't even know; yet, when we brought that in front of this House of Assembly, everybody wanted to jump on him. This side wanted to jump on him because we were Liberals; the other side wanted to jump on him because you wanted to circle the wagons. That's the kind of stuff that happened.

I remember the big hullabaloo about bullying, and I just want to make it quite clear – quite clear – in those reports, there was no finding of bullying and harassment. Absolutely,

categorically none. I just want to let everybody know.

So, what happened when there was no bullying and harassment? They had to go, okay, what can we get? Principle 5, Dale. Okay, what is it? No one knows. Dale Kirby don't even know. Can you imagine that someone in court – and I say it to the lawyers because you guys have been in court. You go to a court and say, okay, you're found guilty of this. Well, what is it? Oh, we don't have to tell you that. That's exactly what happened here.

This is a very serious responsibility, Mr. Speaker, and I'm going to say something to you and the Management Commission. I'm making a statement here now and I want it investigated. I'm making a statement about an Officer of the House, Bruce Chaulk, Commissioner for Legislative Standards, and I have documentation. The Attorney General of this province has said publicly that he made a statement that Eddie Joyce refused to participate. I have legal documentation where I offered to meet.

I'm asking now, Mr. Speaker, if you want to treat all Members right in this House – and that happened to me – what else was added against Dale Kirby? I'm saying to you now, Mr. Speaker, it's your statutory authority to do an investigation on this here. If I'm wrong, I have to stand up here and apologize and withdraw my remarks. If I'm right, I want what I wanted from day one brought to the floor. That's all I ever asked for – all I ever asked for – bring it to the floor. So when you have a debate in this House and you don't have the full information – I'll give you one good example: Muskrat Falls. You don't have all the information.

How can anybody in this House of Assembly do what they did to myself and Dale Kirby? And you want to stand here and say we have to protect Members' rights, when the information that was given to the Management Commission – I think it was October 25, maybe 24 – that was said in the Management Commission, that the Speaker at the time confirmed to me right in front of the Speaker's chair, his exact words were: b'y, that's not what he said this morning. You were definitely willing to meet.

I turned to Bruce Chaulk, in ear of the Speaker, and I said: Did you see those letters? Oh, I forgot those letters; I'll correct the record. The Minister of Justice went out and said he made the statement, and guess what? It was never brought to the floor of the House of Assembly – never.

So this is the issue that I find with this, that it becomes so political. Everything is so political in here. If you want the right – okay, let's get some political hay out of this first. Let's do a bit of politics with this first. Let's try to ruin the Member for Corner Brook who's been involved in politics for 28 years. Let's ruin Eddie Joyce now – or the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands, let's ruin him – which they tried to do, which people in this House tried to do.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have to say – and the funny thing about it – it's not funny, it's not funny – but all this hullabaloo, the final report that the House of Assembly develop a Legislature-specific harassment-free policy, April 2019, hasn't been brought to the House yet. It hasn't even been brought to the House. Here it is, we're still waiting to debate it.

Do you know one of the recommendations in that? This is important for me, personally, on principle 10. Here's one of the recommendations in this report that was done by Members on the government side and Opposition – and the NDP, I think, were involved also with this. Here's one of the recommendations – and if you weren't a strong person you wouldn't be able to laugh at it, but I can, because I knew the difference.

“In reviewing the Code of Conduct and its related processes to ensure that moving forward all complaints of harassment be dealt with in accordance with the proposed Harassment-Free Workplace Policy ... the Committee is recommending that principle 10 be amended. The proposed amendment removes the reference to ‘relationships between Members and government employees’, but retains the idea of Members having regard for the duty of impartiality of public service ....”

That confirms, when you go to principle 10, it's between government Members and government employees. And I know the Member that I was accused of from the principle is not even a

government employee – confirmed by the Clerk of the House, confirmed here in this report. You go back and look at debate – look at debate. I was here in 2007, by the way, when this came in. I was here in 2007.

The debate that went through in – do you know who stood up and spoke about this? It's a guy by the name of Roland Butler. Roland Butler got up and spoke about how he was a civil servant and how he remembers how respectful MHAs were, and now that he's a government employee he has to be respectful to government employees. He said that's why we had to put that in principle 10.

Government elected officials still respect government employees, but that was used wrong in this report – absolutely. And guess what? No one stood up. All my colleagues, no one stood up. No one stood up and said, b'y, this is wrong. This is wrong.

If there was something that was done serious, I'd be the first one – you don't have to tell me that I did something serious. If I ever pushed somebody or if I ever shoved someone or ever smacked someone in the side of the head in this Legislature, there's the door, I'll walk out myself. I know the difference. Every employee, every government Member here, the same thing.

This is the kind of thing that I notice here in this Legislature that we're bringing up. This is the kind of stuff that we went through. And you know the saddest part about it all? The sad part for me, and I'm sure for Dale Kirby also – which we're not finished with – but the sad part about all this, we and our families went through all this misery, went through this misery for six, seven months because we believed in the process – even though it was leaked out in the media before we even knew it.

By the time we walked in the House of Assembly, it was on the floor of the Opposition, the Opposition asking question. By the time (inaudible) Opposition we were kicked out, gone, see you later, have a nice day. Do you know when the first complaint went in? Besides the Premier put one in, put a request in. I'm just saying what they have in the information, Premier. I can show it to you if you want it; I can show it to you.

Do you know when the first complaint went in – after being kicked out publicly, the media got you, boom, gone? Do you know when it was? June. So here we're sitting on this, waiting. What's the complaint? We don't know. I don't know what was made to the Premier. We don't know. Dale Kirby, he didn't know. He didn't know what the complaints were. See how the process failed everybody? Yet, everybody on both sides jumped on the process because we were easy targets, easy targets.

So I say to the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island when you're bringing this in saying we have to stand up for all Members' rights, you had the opportunity – you had the opportunity. This is why I feel this is so political here now, instead of the letting the Speaker – the Speaker always handled things inside this Legislature, and the Speaker can handle things inside this Legislature. And the Speaker should handle things inside this Legislature. What we are doing now, we're using a lot of advantages that we have, the Commissioner, and we're using other avenues in the Legislature to make political points at people's expense. That's exactly what we're doing.

I say to all the Members here I'm going to conclude my remarks soon, but I can tell you one thing, that this is far from over. I can assure you that. I just want to read into the record the letter I got from the Premier. I want to read it into the record, because I don't want you to be blindsided, like I was. I definitely don't want you to be blindsided like I was. I can assure you of that. I still remember our conversation the night before, Sunday night at the airport. I remember that conversation quite well. Apparently we never spoke, but we did. I remember that conversation very, very well.

If you want to see pictures of me and you down at the cancer relay that Saturday, when we never spoke since the report was tabled, I'll show you the pictures of me and you at the cancer relay that Saturday when we stood on the stage together and I brought you around and introduced people. So when you stood in this House and said we never spoke since this report was tabled, once again, Premier, I'll show you pictures.

So that's the kind of stuff. When I read something like this here, I start questioning it, because I know that some of the statements you made about this here were wrong, and this is what I have to question. I don't believe what's in this statement. I'm just going to read it for the record. I really want it in the record, Mr. Speaker, because what me, my family, Dale Kirby and his family went through, over what? Principle 5? No one even knows. Principle 10? Misused. No bullying or harassment, absolutely none. I just want to let people know in my case – and I'm not going to get into any specifics. There was no swearing, no raising of voice, no pushing, nothing sexual. Twenty-six witnesses said he's right. I think it was 26, something like that. I was right, defended me.

But that's the kind of stuff that when people really want to dig into the facts of it all you find out more, about how myself and Dale Kirby were brought into this House, how we were kicked out of caucus. I was never kicked out – actually, I wasn't kicked out of caucus, I have to tell the Premier that. I wasn't kicked out. It was that day I said, listen here, I would win the vote in caucus. I said I don't want to put my colleagues through this here. I said I'll remove myself from caucus. I didn't want to put my colleagues through a vote and rip the Liberal Party apart. That's what I did. So this idea of I was dismissed from caucus, I was never dismissed from caucus. There was never a vote in caucus. I removed myself because I didn't want to put my colleagues and friends in the middle of it. That's what I did.

I'm going to read this for the record. This is a letter I wrote the Premier – I have to say I wrote him three, maybe four times – three I think it was – and finally I got a response. There were people telling me things were going on, I can assure you.

I'm writing in response to your letter of March 19 – and this is May 31. When these allegations were brought to my attention, I was informed that the Members were starting a formal process of the allegations. I outlined all the options that were available to them.

Subsequently, I was asked by the Members to refer these matters to the Commissioner for Legislative Standards under section 36(4) of the

*House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*. You would also recall that the process changed once Members opted to utilize section 36(1) of the act instead, as their right, which meant the reports would be sent to the House Management Commission, not to me.

Here's the other part: I can confirm that there were limited occasions where my office contacted the Office of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards for estimations on timelines when reports might be completed. This was only to prevent potential conflicts in travel arrangements and meeting commitments that would take me out of the province.

Given the Legislature would be reviewing these reports I, as Premier, would have decisions to make in respect to the Legislature reopening. It is imperative that I was available in the province. I can further confirm only logistic considerations were raised in these conversations. At no point was the substance of the reports discussed and, therefore, no violation of privacy occurred.

How do you know that? Were any notes taken? First, you were never involved. Were any notes taken? Who was it that was doing the contact? Can we get him down here in front of the Legislature and ask him questions? I'm going to find out eventually. Can we? Did he share it with anybody else? How do we know what the conversations between Bruce Chaulk and this person or these people were? How do we know? We don't.

When you make a statement saying that you had no involvement, you have to wait for the reports, and you find out that actually there was contact, that asks me questions. I really believed, I really trusted the system. I can honestly say I trusted the system. The system failed and where it failed a lot was inside this Legislature with everybody wanting to say, okay, it's a big uproar.

I think the Leader of the Opposition, when he said to me – he said he has issues. Now that he knows me he actually apologized to me, and I thank the Member for that. I'm like everybody else in this House. Sure, I stand up and I debate and I stand up and ask a lot of questions, but I can tell you one thing, there's no one in here

more compassionate than me or Dale Kirby when you see Dale Kirby's issues in his district.

This is a wake-up call for all of us. Myself and Dale Kirby, we're going to be fine. We went through this here; we came out stronger. We're going to be fine. But if we're ever going to get any decorum and respect in the House of Assembly, we've got to realize that we got families, we got friends. You could ruin your lives in this House of Assembly. We have to be careful of what we're doing, and if we're going to be true to our spirit and true to being elected Members of this House of Assembly, we have to try to protect our families and the spirit of people in the House of Assembly because I can tell you, for myself and Dale Kirby, it has failed us.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Seeing no further speakers to this motion, is the House ready for the question on the amended motion?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against?

Carried.

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

On Thursday, November 7, 2019, I made statements to the House of Assembly that were unparliamentary: "... maybe this hon. Member is not always on the side of the law himself."

"What I've constantly found from this hon. Member – and it's a pattern of behaviour ... A pattern of behaviour of marginalization of Indigenous ...."

I withdraw completely and without equivocation my offending statements with respect to the Member for Mount Pearl North and the Member for St. John's Centre.

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

**MS. COADY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By leave to introduce a motion.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Is leave granted?

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

**MR. LANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just want to clarify for the record so there is no confusion. We're going to be foregoing Question Period. Wednesday is the only day that myself and the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands have the opportunity to ask a question in Question Period. So, my understanding, there is agreement that we will be able to have our questions tomorrow.

With that, I will certainly provide leave.

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

**MS. COADY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That is for my next by leave, but I'll do that leave now. I also asked for leave earlier to read a motion so that we can get that on as well, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Let's deal with that one first.

Notices of Motion.

### Notices of Motion

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

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

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Registered Nurses Act, 2008, Bill 16.

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

**MS. COADY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Noting the hour, I'm also asking, by leave, to dispense with routine proceedings and move to the private Member's resolution.

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

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Leave.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Seeing no objections, we'll move to the motion.

### Orders of the Day

#### Private Members' Day

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

**MR. PARROTT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By leave, I would like to move the following private Member's resolution, seconded by the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Assembly urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to require community benefits agreements to be included with the contractors' bid packages when new public facilities are constructed and on natural resource projects, such as oil, gas and mineral development, to ensure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians receive maximum benefits.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Seconded by?

**MR. PARROTT:** Seconded by the MHA for Topsail - Paradise.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Does the member have leave?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Leave.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Leave is granted.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

**MR. PARROTT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, around Labour Day, our caucus issued a news release saying Newfoundland and

Labrador workers should have first dibs on all jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador. What a radical proposal. The question that was asked is: Are you allowed to favour a province? The answer is: You certainly are.

If they are at the end of a losing economic disparity, here's what the Canadian Constitution says in 36(1): "Without alternating the legislative authority of Parliament or of the provincial legislatures, or the rights of any of them with respect to the exercise of their legislative authority, Parliament and the legislatures, together with the government of Canada and the provincial governments, are committed to (a) promoting equal opportunities for the well-being of Canadians; (b) furthering economic development to reduce disparity in opportunities ...." In other words, the Constitution obligates governments in this country to reduce economic disparity.

What are we suffering in Newfoundland and Labrador? The highest unemployment rate. The highest population loss. The country is growing while the province shrinks. The country is working while we struggle to find jobs. That's the real disparity here, Mr. Speaker, and it's been going on for too long.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome all the people to the gallery. We haven't seen the gallery this full in quite some time, and make no mistake about it, our guests aren't here because they're working. They're here because they're unemployed.

I've heard the hon. Minister of Transportation in the last couple days talk about 98 per cent employment on local construction. I don't necessarily know if that's the right number, but if it is then passing this resolution should be quite easy if it's what we're doing on a regular basis.

I grew up in Wabush, Labrador, 1972, and as I've said here in this House before, my mom went to work in Wabush Mines in 1976. Wabush, Lab City is a strong union town. For years we watched companies from Quebec come across to work in Labrador and there was never anything said about it; and, of late, we're seeing that happen in different areas. The problem isn't that we don't want companies from other places

coming here to work, the problem is we need our workers doing those jobs. When that doesn't happen, it affects us greatly.

It's a pretty simple equation when we look at work, work equals revenue. I think the Finance Minister would agree, if we make a dollar, quite a bit of that dollar goes back into the economy. Some of it goes to the federal coffers but the most of it is spent here in this province. It's really what keeps our hospitals working. It keeps our roads up. It pays our salaries here in this House and it gives us a path forward.

We need to turn opportunity into jobs. I know in the past we've always said this, and it's funny, the word of late is climate change. I really believe it's time for a climate change. When I say that, I mean we need to create a climate that targets a particular industry that's a good match for this province. We have the workers, we have the resources and we have the location. What we don't have is a plan forward.

We look to the successes of Hebron and Long Harbour and the SPOs that were done there, and I'm not suggesting this agenda is all about union work. It's specifically about employing Newfoundlanders first, but they were very successful. The greatest example I give as I've heard recently the building trades talk about the amount of money that they put back into the economy.

People don't realize, if the building trades donated \$10 million, secondarily to that the employers that were employed out there – 59 employers. There were 59 subcontractors on the Hebron project; 59 of them most likely contributed to our economy in a big way, not just through taxes but through donations and other things. So we could take that 10 and quite possibly turn it into 20. Probably 6,500 to 6,800 workers at any point went through the gates out there, and you can be rest assured most of them gave money back to our economy, not just through spending money from their paycheques but donations.

To put that in perspective, you have to consider things like Hope Air. You have to consider things like the H. Bliss Murphy Cancer Care Foundation's family benefits fund; all of these things that are run by donations that we as a

government sometimes like to take credit for. I can tell you right now, if you're a cancer patient in St. John's it's way cheaper than if you're a cancer patient on the Coast of Labrador or in Corner Brook or anywhere else.

We shouldn't take responsibility for that. It's these people that put money in to these groups so people can get that treatment.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. PARROTT:** Unemployment in this province obviously is a –

(Disturbance in the gallery.)

**MR. SPEAKER:** Excuse me, I ask the Member to take his seat for a minute.

I just wanted to remind the people in the gallery, while we welcome you to the gallery – we certainly encourage you to attend – the tradition is that people in the gallery don't participate or respond to what's happening in the House. We want to maintain order in the House, although we do welcome you to come here and listen to the debate.

Thank you very much.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

**MR. PARROTT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The opportunity to move things forward in this province has never been more needed than it is today. We look at different opportunities, and there are a lot of examples. My vision of a Newfoundland-first – or our private Member's resolution today is that in any situation where government is involved, be it from a tax break, as in the Canopy Growth situation, be it ownership, our roads or anything that we're putting money into, I think there should be something definitely in the contract when it goes out to tender that Newfoundlanders should get first dibs on those jobs, cut and dry.

If the government is investing, if the government owns, if it's our natural resources, we should demand that people from this province go to work first. At the end of the day, I think it puts us as a government in a far better place. Work



affects everything. If we have a healthy workforce, suicide rates are down, health care costs are down, money that we can put into health care is up. It's really a very, very, very simple equation.

Recently, we did Muskrat Falls in Labrador and it was a great opportunity to put Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to work from all aspects of our population. There was priority hiring for Indigenous and there was priority hiring for Newfoundlanders under the Atlantic Accord. We did a lot of that, but there were lots of complaints that came back. Obviously, there were employees from Quebec. The power lines that were being worked on had employees from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Quebec and it wasn't being policed properly.

The one thing that I will say about any community benefits program for Newfoundland and Labrador is that if it's legislated in a contract, then we have the ability to police it. Right now, as we say we're doing this, we're building a hospital in Corner Brook and we're utilizing local labour. We don't know that for sure, we can't prove it. If we have it in a contract where it's an obligation, the employers will most likely follow those rules, because they know there is an opportunity for them to default on a contract.

I live in Clarenville, I moved to Clarenville in 2011. I grew up in Labrador. I've had the opportunity to live all over Newfoundland and Canada, to be honest, but when I moved there in 2011 and the boom was going on from Hebron, everyone was happy, there were so many things happening, economically, and it was a good place to be. You could see young families had lots of great opportunity to start.

Those opportunities may never come again, let's be clear. I understand where we are with offshore oil and gas, and I'm sure that the hon. minister across the way will get up and tell us that we're in a new phase in offshore oil and gas and that there may never be another GBS. But here's the bottom line, even if it's not a GBS and it's an FPSO, even if it's not offshore oil and gas and it's a hospital, even if it's not a hospital and it's a school, it's employment and it's hope. Without hope we don't have much.

We've got people calling my office everyday saying we can't do this anymore. The amount of foreclosures in the province is higher than it has been in years. These people aren't leaving because if they thought there was a better tomorrow, I think they'd hang on as long as they could. There's no hope of a better tomorrow. Right now, we tell people that we're going to try and be better, but I think the last two days in the House has proven that we're not much better right now.

When we look at community benefits programs and we think about utilizing our local workforce, we have proven time and time again the expertise that we have with the Long Harbour project, the GBS that we built in Bull Arm – two GBSs, the current ongoing Husky project, and yet we don't have any commitments for Equinor. We look at Equinor and the commitment we have for a 10 per cent equity stake at a cost of \$90 million, which we know will balloon based on the costs of operation and construction; 4,600 metric tons – 4,600 metric tons.

Now, to put that into light, the Terra Nova FPSO is 42,000 metric tons. I would guess that this new one, given the distance offshore, will be bigger. Less than 10 per cent, and that less than 10 per cent, depending on who you're talking to, is equal to the chains and rigging. I always say equal to a flare boom, helideck and two lifeboat stations.

Well, let me put that in perspective. It's equal to 80 to 90 jobs for six to eight months. I'll say that again: 80 to 90 jobs for six to eight months on a multi-billion dollar project that's going to go off this Island and get our resources. It's not good enough. At some point, we need to say it's just not good enough.

We don't have the capability to build a hull here in Newfoundland. There's no one questioning that. An FPSO is a lot more than a hull, and we've proven in the past that we can do this work. A hull can be floated here, empty, totally empty, no oil compartments, no nothing inside. All we need is a shell and we can do that work. That's what ought to happen here. That's what ought to happen with every project we do.

We have a tender out now for ferries on the South Coast of Newfoundland. I know the Members across are going to yell out Romania or they're going to say different things, but the reality of it is, we're not here about the past, because do you know what? We had a pretty good past. We're here about the future. Our future has never been bleaker than it is here today. Anything we can do in this province, we ought to do and we're not very good at that.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at a community benefits program, Newfoundland First campaign, when I think about this province, what we need, what we have and what we have the capability to do, the first place we ought to look is at the very best natural resource we have and that's our people. When we lose sight of our people, we will fail 100 per cent of the time.

We have an opportunity here today to pass a private Member's motion where we can move things forward and start looking at a community benefits program. It is my belief that we ought to look at it hard and we ought to support it, unanimously.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

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

**MS. COADY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is a very important topic. I agree on the general premise that everything that can be done in this province should be done in this province. I can tell you I'm working very, very hard to make sure that maximum benefits are coming to this province.

Allow me just to say a couple things before I get into the gist of my speech. I do not agree that there is – I'm quoting from the Member now – no hope of a better tomorrow. Mr. Speaker, I can say, unreservedly, there is a tremendous opportunity in this province.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MS. COADY:** I can say without hesitation – I know, I've been actually responsible for about

\$18 billion in investment in this province over the last two years, Mr. Speaker – \$18 billion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MS. COADY:** I hear the Member opposite talk about doom and gloom. I'm going to get into the gist of my speech, Mr. Speaker, and talk about some of the things that are happening and how supportive this government has been on maximizing benefits to this province, but I want to just take a couple of points from his speech and say he talked about the worst foreclosure record in history. That's not true, Mr. Speaker.

Vital Signs last week, published by the Harris Centre, said that foreclosures in a 10-year period from 2008 to 2018 actually had decreased by 35 per cent for consumers and 49 per cent for businesses. That's not doom and gloom, Mr. Speaker. That is a positive sign of things that are happening in this economy.

I will say to the Member opposite, to the people of the province, to the people in the galleries: There is a lot happening. There's a lot going to happen in our province. There's a lot of opportunity and it's because of some of the best workers we have globally live right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MS. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, this government requires that all natural resource projects in this province, in Newfoundland and Labrador, have benefits agreements that include not only the benefits to the province, but also include gender equity and diversity plans. Those benefits agreements would have to include project management, employment, engineering, education and training, fabrication, supplier development, procurement and contracting, dispute resolution, monitoring and reporting: all part of the plans that are required by this province for natural resources.

I know my colleague will be speaking about some of the other projects that are required; my job today is to speak about natural resources. These agreements maximize jobs and business opportunities for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Through *Advance 2030*, which is our plan to continue to grow the oil and gas industry offshore Newfoundland and Labrador – and what a tremendous opportunity we have, Mr. Speaker. Right now, we have four installations offshore, but there are 650 – yes, Mr. Speaker, 650 potential other installations offshore. Can you imagine the prosperity of this province?

I can also tell you that today all the work is being done in one basin, the Jeanne d'Arc Basin, but there are 20 other basins; 52 billion barrels of oil, Mr. Speaker, are off our coast. That's by independent review of seismic activity.

I say to the Member opposite, I say to the people of the province and I say to the people of the galleries: We have tremendous opportunity. We are really encouraging – this government has done a tremendous amount of work in *Advance 2030*, working with the industry, working with all involved, all of our stakeholders to make sure that we are doing everything to encourage, first of all, making sure that the exploration is done so that we can find the next many Hibernias. Not just the next one, the next many Hibernias, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we're focused on plans also in the mining industry, through Mining the Future and we're focused on plans of growth and development in all of our natural resources. We want to make sure that we're working with our communities' leaders, we're working with communities, we're working with Indigenous groups, we're working with stakeholders and we're working with the business community to make sure that we are maximizing every potential.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite did speak a lot about oil and gas. I will remind the Member opposite that we are governed by the Atlantic Accord and the legislation that requires full, fair and first opportunity for employment provisions of Newfoundland and Labrador residents. In addition to the Atlantic Accord requirements, the province, as I said earlier, negotiates benefits agreements with oil and gas and mining project operators. We also monitor those reports constantly. We have the C-NLOPB, the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board, that monitors and enforces and makes sure those

benefits are full, fair and first under the Atlantic Accord.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Natural Resources just added an additional person to make sure that we're monitoring because we have so many now agreements in place. I think there are 17 already in place with more that are under negotiation. They are monitored and that's a requirement of C-NLOPB, it's a requirement of the Department of Natural Resources.

We've negotiated, for example, benefits agreements in oil and gas projects like White Rose. I can tell you I've just been down to West White Rose being developed now in Argentina. I encourage people to go there. What an incredible amount of work that's being done down there. I can tell you from reports not only from the people on the ground there, but from everybody in Husky and others that I speak with the work is second to none in the world, Mr. Speaker. It is unbelievable, the incredible tradesmanship and workmanship. I'd say it is art.

If you go and look at the sides of the GPS that's being built down there, the slips, the forms that are being built, the concrete for it, it is unbelievable. We are best in the world, I would say, Mr. Speaker, at that. I know that other oil and gas companies around the world are looking and saying: Wow, that is incredible work. We're doing it and safety is first. I know that was the case at Hebron as well.

So, White Rose, Hebron, Hibernia South Extension, West White Rose and we're in the process of negotiating benefits agreements for the potential Bay du Nord Project, Mr. Speaker. We also have benefits agreements for a number of mining operations: IOC, Vale, Tata Steel Minerals to name just a few. We've established an industrial benefits regime in place for natural resources projects. Offshore oil and gas projects are governed, as I said, by the Atlantic Accord and its implementing legislation, and all of offshore requires benefits plans.

As I said, we have good monitoring being done by C-NLOPB. I can tell you that since I've been Minister of Natural Resources we've spoken to the C-NLOPB and they've increased the amount

of effort they're putting to ensure that benefits are flowing to this province and that we have the people responsible that are actually putting the monitoring in place and making sure that it's happening.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to also say there are a tremendous amount of community benefits. We work very closely with our communities to make sure that the community benefits are always there and that the communities are finding their path forward with these natural resources benefits plans.

If you look at, for example, Lab City or Goose Bay or other areas, I'm going to say they're really recognizing the amount of opportunity there is in natural resource projects. The community benefits agreements are certainly the preference of making sure that good work is happening in those communities, Mr. Speaker.

I noted earlier some of the work that's going on. I mentioned Goose Bay. For example, the underground mine that this government signed a deal with Vale, we finally were able to have them go underground, Mr. Speaker. That not only gives us considerable opportunity, 80 per cent of the engineering for the construction phase is done in this province. They're holding supplier development sessions; they have full, fair and first opportunity consideration for Newfoundland and Labrador residents.

Mr. Speaker, when I look across the spectrum of natural resources projects in this province, I can tell you that on average over 90 per cent of the people employed on these projects across the spectrum are Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. That's because we have an extremely talented, educated workforce and they are desired and wanted on these projects. Over 90 per cent across the board in natural resource's projects are Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Sometimes there are higher amounts and sometimes they're just hitting that 90 per cent, but they're all 90 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, with Vale I said about 80 per cent of the engineering for the construction phase within the province. They're holding supplier development sessions; they have a gender equality and diversity plan. With Canada Fluorspar they have first consideration for

employment during operations to apply to the collective agreement negotiated by CFI. They have commercially reasonable efforts to achieve a 100 per cent Newfoundland and Labrador resident workforce and the first consideration for training given to residents of the province. They have a gender equity and diversity plan.

Mr. Speaker, I can say without hesitation that there is an awful lot of work going on in this province today because of the efforts of this government of ensuring that the workforce is Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and that supply and development is achieved through Newfoundland and Labradorian companies. I can tell you that when I look at the West White Rose project, the tremendous benefits and the number of people that are working on site, it was close to 2,000 the last I checked.

Not only is this government requiring companies to ensure maximum benefits to the people of this province, not only is this government ensuring that – and as I've said, \$18 billion in the last two years in investments in natural resource projects in this province. Mr. Speaker, not only is this government ensuring but companies want to hire Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Companies want to hire Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, their expertise, their knowledge, their training and their education. Mr. Speaker, as a workforce they're highly desirable.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Work ethic.

**MS. COADY:** Their work ethic, the incredible productivity.

I can tell you when I was down in Argentina – which, by the way, my grandparents were from Argentina so it's always lovely to go back and see where they were from – visiting the site, the praise and accolades to the workforce were unbelievable. The productivity enhancements that they're seeing, the amount of work that is being done by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, we should be very proud. We shouldn't lose hope in this province, Mr. Speaker – we shouldn't lose hope. We know that there's more opportunity in oil and gas. I've just told you about the 650 potential Hibernias that we have.

Last week we had over 700 people attend a conference in St. John's. Seven hundred people amassed here in the city to talk about mining development. And I announced that there's been a new finding by the geological survey in Labrador of rubies and sapphires that can be used in various applications but, in particular, in lasers.

We're seeing that opportunity all across Labrador. We're seeing that opportunity all across Newfoundland. We now have – and I'll use Marathon Gold, Mr. Speaker, are moving towards a mine that will employ over 300 people in this province. That is going through environmental assessment now, because one of the most important things that we've often said in this House of Assembly is environmental protection and making sure that every project from natural resources follows the requirements of having a very, very sound environmental protection plan.

Mr. Speaker, we know that there are other opportunities on the Island of Newfoundland, and in particular there's a mass of opportunities in Labrador. We've seen, for example, the reopening of Tacora. When this government came into being in late 2015, early 2016, Wabush Mines was closed. It was only in the very recent last year with the lot of work that happened with Tacora, a lot of efforts that went into ensuring that they could reopen the Scully Mine. Think of the hundreds of people that are working there. Think of the work that's been done. And yes, we do have a benefits agreement for Tacora.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

It's a privilege to get on with the real work of what we do here. So I'm pleased to stand on this private Member's resolution. I do agree with the Member across, the Minister of Natural Resources, when she speaks to all that's being done in our natural resources. That is driven, of course, by legislation that's been in place for a number of years. The Atlantic Accord Implementation Act, in particular, dealing with

our offshore, in section 45 of that act that deals with the employment in the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador benefits plans. That actually requires the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador benefits plan to be put forward on natural resources that go offshore.

Consistent with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, individuals resident in the province shall be given first consideration for training and employment in the work plan that's submitted under the collective agreement. That's there. That's the benefits plan. That's a requirement of any offshore program or any natural resources program offshore that they submit that. That's what we're asking for in our private Member's resolution is for this, but also for other publicly funded programs.

Under the *Labour Relations Act* a project can be deemed a special project and a special project order can be put in place. As the minister mentioned, that public special project order can have common clauses that come in through an agreement on how those projects are going to go forward.

Some of the common pieces of that legislation or a special project order requires employment and hiring procedures to be outlined. It requires employment benefits plans. It requires issues such as equity and diversity to be addressed. Again, in legislation it's a requirement, much like the Atlantic Accord Acts.

Anyone coming in here to do business in the natural resources offshore or mining as under the *Labour Relations Act*, are required – it's a requirement. It's not some willy-nilly requirement put out there, it's put out there because we need to ensure that residents and workers within our province are given every opportunity to work, live and play in our province and raise a family.

The stats don't lie on this. We're doing quite well. In my past life as a labour standards officer, I actually at one point was responsible for monitoring employment benefits out at the Hibernia site. So I've had a first-hand look at how hiring occurs. Some of the discussion we get into when we see, I'll call it, CFA come in and take a job that a Newfoundlander should be

filling, and it does happen. Not often, but it does happen. I think our staff – and I agree with the Minister of Natural Resources that we have some great staff that are working to ensure that happens.

In the natural resource sector it's happening because we have legislation in place. We have regulations that drive that. What we're asking for here is a broader coverage. We're asking for a community benefits plan, a community benefits package agreement that covers all projects, especially those that are publicly funded within this province.

Now, we talk about hope and Newfoundlanders are very resilient. We always think for the best. It is very hard to get a Newfoundlander and Labradorian down, very hard, because we're such upbeat people. I mean, you just have to look around the gallery here. These people aren't here because they're all employed, making great wages, families happy, and they got all the bells and whistles and toys that they need. They're here for a number of reasons, but one is jobs. We need jobs.

I look at the stats – I got this from Newfoundland and Labrador Stats Agency and it's labour force survey data. In 2014, as an example, our labour force peaked at just under 282,000 people. The peak for this past year is 20,000 less; it's just under 265,000. The facts don't lie. We are losing jobs. People are getting discouraged. People with families or wanting families are moving away.

Government received the Goss Gilroy report last year. It's the report on the survey with Newfoundland and Labrador expatriates. Do you know that report told us that out of the expats that left, 62 per cent of them were working when they left? So that's telling you they left either because their job was not paying enough wages to live here, or a partner or a spouse had to leave for a better job. Once the expats left, 95 per cent of them were working. They're leaving the province to find work they can live on, wages they can live on. That's this government's report done by Goss Gilroy.

If I look at the McKinsey report, again commissioned by government, and it's on the Economic Growth Strategy for Newfoundland

and Labrador, final report. In the recommendations it talks to the economy, declining population, declining fertility rate, aging population, declining labour force. Now most people would call that doom and gloom, but I tend to be more resilient and I say there's always opportunity – and yes there is, but you can't look past this. You can't look past the data and what's happening in this province. We need to turn this around.

One of the comments in the McKinsey report spoke to ambition. The past Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, I know we had a discussion in the House here on immigration targets, and he was happy that his department had set achievable targets. Well, the McKinsey report talks to it and says: "Setting aspirational targets is crucial to achieving a meaningful change in economic performance. In some sectors, *The Way Forward's* plans and goals could be more ambitious."

So we need to set ambitious goals. I'll just use immigration as an example. Our goal is 1,700 new immigrants and we're going to surpass that, and that's good, but when your other Atlantic provinces are setting goals of 5,000 and 6,000, then it makes you wonder. If our population continues to decline, we will have less people paying more taxes as opposed to building our economy, having more people paying less taxes.

Child care, go to our fertility rate. I talked to some of these ladies and gentlemen out on the steps the other day. Some real-life stories: I can't afford to stay; I can't afford to have another child; I got to go away and look for work. They are looking for opportunities for them to live, stay and work here, and it's our job, as government and for every MHA in this House, to ensure that we provide those opportunities.

What we're looking at here today in this private Member's resolution is, yes, do what we're doing in the natural resources. Keep doing what we're doing. We're doing it because we got legislation in place. We're doing it because we require employment benefits plans, diversity plans, equity plans.

We make a special project order to ensure in other projects, such as mining projects, that we have human resource plans. That's why it's

working. I'm not going to deny it's working. We're hiring 90-plus Newfoundlanders and Labradorians on these projects. That's doing pretty good, but it's those other projects, the other publicly funded projects, when the stats show that we are in dire need of employment and jobs in this province.

We're leading the country in just about every negative stat that we want. We really are. It's unbelievable, and we have to turn that around. I do think hope is a big part of it. If we can create an environment here where you come in to this province, you're coming to work – and I think the Member opposite mentioned that companies want to hire Newfoundlanders, and I totally agree.

When Hibernia started, I remember it. The Norwegians were telling us our productivity was down here and theirs was up here. We quickly found out, no, we're just as competitive. If we understand that companies want to hire Newfoundlanders, then a resolution like this is a no-brainer. It's not going to upset the companies because they want to hire us anyway. Come in with a community benefits agreement that makes sure all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have an opportunity on any publicly funded project – and more if we can – to be employed.

I look at this – and people might throw things at us and say that the agreement on internal trade, or the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, won't allow us to do that. I will argue against that, because there are certainly provinces within this country that do get projects in place that they can go ahead and do.

I will tell you when the Agreement on Internal Trade first came into place, the whole notion on the labour mobility chapter was to ensure that there were no barriers put up to the mobility of labour from province to province, from territory to territory – no unreasonable barriers. You can only do that with a legitimate exception. That could be for public health, it could be for any reasons. At one point in time you could do that based on labour market development. That was one of the legitimate objectives that used to be in the Agreement on Internal Trade.

Somewhere along the line that's been amended out. I would argue it was in there for a reason and I would tell you that given the state of our economy, given the state of our employment, given the state of our fertility rates, population, aging demographic, I don't think any province or territory is going to object to us as a province trying to ensure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians here have an opportunity to work here, to raise their families here and to live here.

I think if we can start down that road, we will solve our problems because we will have more people working, we will have been paying less taxes and we will have more revenue coming in so that we can offer the programs and services they need. I fully support this resolution.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER (Bennett):** The Minister of Transportation and Works.

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

I thank you for the opportunity this afternoon to speak to this private Member's resolution. I thank the Member for Terra Nova for actually bringing in this resolution this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I think I'll take a couple of approaches to this resolution. First and foremost, I'm going to take the approach as MHA for the District of Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde and as a father of two post-secondary students who I want to make sure have every single opportunity to spend their working careers here in Newfoundland and Labrador. So I get that perspective. Also, as a former small-business owner, nothing drives small business in Newfoundland and Labrador more than Newfoundlanders and Labradorians working.

Mr. Speaker, I live in Trinity Bay and I remember the Bull Arm project, the first project for Hibernia, back in the '90s and the economic benefits that were brought to my community and to my friends. I see, today, the challenges that a lot of my friends are going through that were used to some of the jobs that we had during the megaprojects here in the province and some of the jobs that were available in the Alberta economy. Unfortunately, one of the largest

things affecting the Newfoundland and Labrador economy now is the economy of Alberta. I think that's had a big impact on us as a province.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to me the work that groups like Trades NL are doing. The Member for Terra Nova, I think, alluded to the work that Trades NL does for our community and some of the benefits that Trades NL already share with our communities.

Just recently, Trades NL – and I thank them for this – made a donation of \$15,000 to the Town of Carbonear for a health and wellness program.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, that's Newfoundlanders and Labradorians giving back, as the Member for Terra Nova said earlier in his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I'll just turn to the Transportation and Works side for a minute and talk about some of the projects that we have ongoing through the department, some of the major projects. In 2019, \$594 million is what we will invest in infrastructure in this province. The department this year will release over 1,200 tenders and it will provide some 5,100 person-years of work.

Mr. Speaker, the idea or the thought around community benefits has been going on in this Legislature for quite some time. I'm going to throw a compliment to the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands. He was the first one in this Legislature to actually make this an issue, primarily through petitions, I think, back in late 2018 and early 2019 when we talked about the Corner Brook hospital, Corner Brook long-term care and how that was going to be constructed.

One of the things that's already happened, I think from the conversation and from the movement, from Trades NL and Members here in this House, is I think we've become more sensitive to making sure the projects that we have today in our province are hiring Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Currently, we have nine projects ongoing in the province. The most recent numbers I have from October, just the month past, is of the 409 people today or in October who were working our nine projects – and when I speak of these projects, they

include projects like Coley's Point Primary, Gander Academy, Botwood protective care, Bishop Feild school, the new West Coast hospital and the new long-term care developments.

We are at a percentage right now in October of 96 per cent. The Member opposite earlier suggested it was 98 per cent. I would love to see 98. I would love to see 100, Mr. Speaker, but we're working with our companies and we're working with groups like Trades NL to ensure that we're maintaining these numbers.

One of the things that I've done since a number of meetings that I've had on this issue is taking some time to look at some of the community benefits agreements throughout the country. Some of these agreements that we refer to don't really measure up to what I would personally like to see in community benefits agreements.

If you look at, for example, British Columbia, there was an agreement in Vancouver that guaranteed 10 per cent of the new entry-level positions and 10 per cent local purchasing of goods. In Ontario, again, they're using 10 per cent of the work hours need to be given to local people. Mr. Speaker, that's not the bar that we want to set for this province. We need to set the bar as high as we certainly can. I like what the hon. Member for Terra Nova said earlier when he talked about the companies because it is our small contractors, in most cases, that are hiring a lot of these people.

One of the things that we've done in procuring our new infrastructure, particularly our larger scale infrastructure, is last fall we held a business-to-business session in Corner Brook where we invited businesses and local contractors to come in and meet with the proponents so that we had them on the ground level when it came to the proponents preparing their bids for these infrastructure projects. We all know that if we hire Newfoundland and Labrador companies, we're going to get Newfoundland and Labrador workers, Mr. Speaker.

As well, in Corner Brook this past fall, we had a job fair. It was extremely well attended. We will be following up with another job fair in Corner Brook this coming spring as construction really



ramps up. Right now, we're just into footings and really early ground work. In October we had 36 employees on site, 36 people working on that construction site, all of which at that time were Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Just last week, we held a business-to-business session here in St. John's for the new replacement to the mental health facility here in the city – another important construction project.

This leads me to the point of the conversation that we've had with Trades NL and the conversation that we are continuing to have with Trades NL. We have a meeting coming up, I think, on December 3. The most recent meeting we had was early summer, late June, I think. What we committed to taking away that day was an ability to come back at our next meeting with how we would structure the beginnings of community benefits agreements in this province and what some of the bars are that we wanted set.

When you think about some of the agreements that I've examined – and I know there are others and I would encourage everybody to look at the agreements in other jurisdictions – I don't accept 10 per cent or 25 per cent as a number that we should be looking at. I think we should be looking further than that. That's what I've been able to find so far when I looked at other agreements throughout the country. So it's extremely important that we make sure that this benefits agreement or a benefits agreement on projects in this province is tailored to Newfoundland and Labrador.

It's also important, Mr. Speaker, that we include groups like the Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Association and the Heavy Civil Association because a lot of the work we do in Transportation and Works is smaller scale work. In lots of cases, when we talk about benefits agreements, they're not agreements that you would be able to get in place in these really small projects, but the reality is an awareness and an opening up of an opportunity of conversation around these projects to make sure that we're getting the best benefit for every single person in this province.

I just want to reflect back on the long-term investments when you think about the Corner Brook hospital, in particular. We're looking at a

project of some \$700 million. This will be a great project for this province. Not only will we get the long-awaited health care facility in Corner Brook, it's going to provide a lot of jobs.

The Member for Topsail - Paradise alluded to it in his remarks, I think, that now is the time. We've come off 2014 – the Member alluded to some numbers from 2014. Unfortunately, in 2015, I was sitting on that side of the House and in The Economy of that year – every year when we release the budget there are three books. There's the Budget Speech, there's the budget and there's The Economy. Unfortunately, back in 2015, while I sat over there, The Economy book for that year actually predicted that our employment numbers in 2019 would be worse than what they are today, Mr. Speaker.

That's not something to be proud of, but it's something that we did see coming. Maybe in the future as governments, and future governments, we need to take those opportunities, when we see these things coming, to plan projects. There's no time better to plan public procurement than when we have a softer market, because we take infrastructure funding – I reflect back to 2008, actually, under a previous federal Conservative administration, the country – at that time, Newfoundland and Labrador was probably in a bit of a high, but the rest of Canada actually was in a tough spot. We all saw the signs that popped up, the infrastructure investment signs, because what the government did then to spur economic growth, to pick up the economy, was invest in public infrastructure.

So, that's something I think is a lesson for all of us as we go forward, how we leverage public infrastructure money to make sure that in economic hardship and economic downturns that we have a spot – I guess in some ways a placeholder – for our skilled workforce. So our skilled workforce maintain their skills and also we get public infrastructure projects completed at that time.

One of the things we have done, as a government, in the procurement of Corner Brook acute is this government brought in a permanent minister to the Status of Women. One of the things we've done – and this is a Women's Employment Plan and we've also

included in the Corner Brook health care contract or tender or RFP, apprenticeship plans.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's no reason why we can't take that to the next step and start incorporating community benefits plans that benefit, but, again, we need to make sure we get it right. It really can't be some token measure of 10 per cent or 25 per cent, because I think, from what I've seen in those agreements that I've looked at, a lot of it certainly wouldn't get us in a place any better than where we are today with some 96 per cent of the people currently working on our public infrastructure projects in the province from the province.

I can assure the people in the gallery today and the Members opposite and everybody in this Chamber that one of our priorities in the Department of Transportation and Works, right now, is holding the feet of our contractors to the fire, and we will maintain that. I don't know if there was a time in the past where the Department of Transportation and Works expected our contractors on our major projects to report in, practically on a weekly basis, of where their employees are from.

So that has been spurred by the conversations that have already been had here in this place. We'll continue to do that. We will continue to monitor our projects as we go forward. We will continue to work with the stakeholder groups. We will continue to work with all Members in this House, because I think we all share the belief that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians should be the primary beneficiary of all of our tax dollars, because the reality is, at the end of the day, if those dollars are earned here, they stay here. That's important for every single one of us in this province.

I'll conclude my remarks, Mr. Speaker, and give somebody else the opportunity, but I can assure the people in the gallery today, and the Members opposite, that will continue to work with all the stakeholders in this to ensure maximum opportunity for Newfoundland and Labrador workers.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Speaker recognizes the hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

**MS. COFFIN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is particularly near and dear to my heart. My partner is a Red Seal carpenter, a scaffolder, a rigger, a rod buster, a signalman. My partner is currently at Argentia. I happen to know that Argentia just went through a significant round of layoffs and I'm fairly certain that many of the members here may have been involved in that. I'm not sure. Many of the individuals and our brothers and sisters in the gallery may have been caught in that round of layoffs.

We know that the construction industry is volatile. It does not have regular labour; it is precarious employment. So it is very, very important that we ensure that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador do have first access and first rights to get jobs and procurement opportunities on any project here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I'm delighted that the Member for –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Terra Nova.

**MS. COFFIN:** – Terra Nova, sorry, brought this resolution forward. I do want to take the opportunity to discuss some of the nuance points in a community benefits agreement.

Certainly, we saw the Minister of Natural Resources, she did tout the benefits of the existing industrial benefits agreements that have been working on a number of sites in and around the province including our offshore. Certainly, we have reaped a lot of benefits for that and I know that a number of our brothers and sisters here may have been involved in some of those projects. They have benefited from that.

What we are seeing today, though, is a private Member's motion to address community benefits agreements, and that's a slightly different type of agreement. It does, of course, ensure that benefits do come first to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, including in procurement and in employment opportunities, which is why we're here. Again, I cannot stress the importance of ensuring that people in

Newfoundland and Labrador do have access to this work.

I am very aware that our union halls are full and they need work. Christmas is upon us. We are into the down time in the construction industry so this is an excellent and opportune time to address this particular issue.

Within community benefits agreements, one of the key words there is community. As we know, in Newfoundland and Labrador we have lots and lots of communities dotted all across the province, and I can speak from growing up in Fortune. We used to throw rocks at the folks from Grand Bank – figuratively, of course. Then I moved to Grand Bank, and lo and behold, figuratively, we picked up rocks and we slung them back at the crowd from Fortune.

Now, if we're talking about community benefits agreements, we are talking about a benefit that accrues to a particular community. Say, for example, we have an Argentia site and Argentia has a community benefits agreement. Now, will the fine folks at Placentia be sitting at the table with the folks at Argentia who have the community benefits agreements, or will the folks from Argentia be watching on the outside and have no opportunity to participate in that even though their communities are literally adjacent? We have some concerns about how that's going to work.

Certainly, it is inappropriate for one community, which is going to be substantially affected by a major development in a neighbouring community, we have to consider how that's going to affect the entire area. When we are talking about a community benefits agreement, perhaps we want to consider not only a community, but an adjacent area.

I'll give you an example of that, and this, of course, is not localized to a particular community, but it also needs to be done in conjunction with the province. For example, when the Argentia project began, there wasn't an industrial benefits agreement in place. However, the start of the Argentia project coincided rather inconveniently with major road construction on the Argentia Access Road. So we had thousands of workers at all hours of the day traversing roads under construction. It made

it very difficult to get to work and added long periods on to their drives. That's a fairly inappropriate and poorly executed approach to development.

Similarly, during the same time as Argentia was happening, government at the time had the idea that we ought to not have 24-hour snow clearing. I remember numerous occasions when the men and women who were travelling back and forth to Argentia did not have a snowplow ahead of them on the way home. I have seen truly terrifying videos of people travelling back and forth those roads. If we want to talk about true community benefits and benefits to the men and women who work very hard, who work very long hours, who sacrifice time with their family to traverse these roads, then we had better get that right.

Any community benefits agreement or community benefits agreements also ought to include social, economic and environmental concerns. What we have seen in our industrial benefits agreements is no recognition of those facts. When we talk about community benefits agreements, we need to talk about how the community will continue to benefit and what types of benefits will accrue to that particular community.

Certainly, one of the things we want to think about is if we're having thousands of men and women traversing those roads we'd need, one, a plan to ensure that the roads are maintained. If we are going to have, for example, transport trucks and cement trucks and semis hauling massive pieces of industrial equipment on our highways, it would be very appropriate to have a community benefits agreement that included continued road maintenance that would have been eroded as a result of that particular project. These community benefits agreements must span a wide breadth of factors.

Similarly, we should also talk about the training provisions that ought to be included in the community benefits agreement. Training provisions can include opportunities for training for individuals targeted by those community benefits agreements, and those community benefits agreements not only talk about hiring Newfoundlanders and Labradorians first, but we also need to address the needs of Indigenous

individuals. We need to talk about gender equity. We need to talk about LGBTQ2S individuals in these community benefits agreements. We need equity in hiring. So, that's an important piece. That goes back to training.

If, for example, we have a marginalized or identified group that is a priority hire and that person doesn't necessarily have exactly the skills for that particular job but would be a good fit with a little bit of training, that training program ought to be included in the community benefits agreement.

For another example, if we have an industrial project that requires a very specific skill set that is not prevalent in our local economy but could potentially, with a short training period – take a lot of individuals who are extremely well qualified that just need a little bit more training to be able to engage in that community benefits agreement, then that training provision ought to be included in a community benefits agreement.

If we want to ensure Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are hired first, we must ensure they have the skills and the abilities to be hired first. It would be a crying shame if we had a community benefits agreement in place and then, say, an employer wrote a job description that not one individual in this room would be able to meet. So I think that training component is absolutely vital as well.

The time goes quickly here. Let's have a quick chat about some other things.

Very important in a community benefits agreement is enforcement and monitoring. If you talk to employers or contractors, and they are expected to have a hiring plan, it's very easy to say check the box, I have a hiring plan or priority hiring plan, but if there's no monitoring and enforcement there is no impetus for a company to actually include that plan. That is a disadvantage.

The companies that want to be compliant ought to not have to worry about companies who do not want to be confined, who will just say: No one is going to check this anyway. Yes, of course, I have a plan. I'll hire them but no one is going to check on me anyway. Monitoring and enforcement is also very, very important.

Training; we need provisions for local citizens and workers, because not only will a community benefits agreement benefit the individuals who are working there, but the community itself needs to benefit. The community, the town council will need perhaps additional municipal enforcement officers. The town council, especially if this is a large project, will have to deal with additional policing because, of course, there may be other issues that will be associated with that. We could have higher rates of crime; we could have higher rates of drug use. I'm not saying anyone here is involved in that, but when you have more industrial activity you find these other things that come with that. So we need that type of plan.

We need child care in these communities. If we have a husband and wife or a husband and a husband or a wife and a wife who have children and they have nowhere for those children to be while they are both working – whether or not they're working on the same shift or on different shifts – then they can't go to work if there is no one to take care of their children. A community benefit must put in place the supports necessary for individuals to go to work.

Speaking of, we need accommodations for these individuals as well. As we've seen in Southern Harbour, there was an enormous boom for rental properties. Now that Bull Arm is gone, that demand has gone. We had a huge demand which drove the price up, which caused an increase in supply, and now that the demand is all gone we have a glut of supply, no one to rent to and very low prices. So we have another problem that we have there. When we are talking about these community benefits agreements, we must ensure that they are comprehensive and provide the necessary supports for individuals to go and do the job they love to provide for their families.

Another problem that we've seen in some of the industrial benefits agreements that I hope we can perhaps address in a community benefits agreement is there are often bundling of procurement and work. Oftentimes that bundling involves a piece of work that is totally inaccessible to local providers – be it employers or it be contract providers – and then another piece that is very appropriate. So when you bundle those two things together, the part that is inaccessible to Newfoundlanders and

Labradorians, since they can't bid on that, they can't bid on any part of the project. That is very inappropriate. So perhaps if we have a community benefits agreement we can ensure that bundling will not occur, so that we do have full and fair opportunity for local contract providers, as well as for local men and women who want to work in that industry.

Any community benefits agreement should include a significant worker engagement, an affirmative action component, as well as it should address inequality. I think I've addressed most of those points along the way. Again, I agree that we need a process by which we ensure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have the full, fair and first opportunity to partake in the development of any of our natural resources.

I'd like to include that any P3s that we would be undertaking now or in the future would be included in such an agreement, and I would like to see that all of the items that I have addressed – and maybe some that I have missed along the way – if we decide to proceed with a community benefits agreement, that those concerns are very clearly addressed, and of course we put the rights and the majority of the benefits associated with any type of agreement rest firmly with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

**MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the critical and fundamental essence of this resolution is about jobs and hope. This is about jobs for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Jobs our people need to stay here and move here. Jobs our communities need to survive. Right now, as we deal with a huge population drain, there is no greater priority than jobs. Without jobs and the income that they circulate, every other challenge will only continue to get worse. Without jobs there is no revenue for health care, education, poverty reduction, infrastructure or balanced budgets.

We have lots of opportunities here for generating jobs but, unfortunately, these opportunities are being lost and sometimes given away. When we see work opportunities being sent out of our province or temporary labour is being brought in to displace local skilled workers who are ready and able to do these jobs, the entire province suffers. We have seen this happen in the past and we're seeing it happen today.

When I look at the issue of jobs, Mr. Speaker, not only in my District of Harbour Main, but in the whole province, I agree with the Minister of Natural Resources when she says there is a lot happening. What's happening is we're seeing skilled, qualified Newfoundlanders not getting the jobs they're qualified to hold, being overlooked and displaced in favour of outside workers.

When we look at the Constitution, Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Constitution does provide for us to favour our workers. The Canadian Constitution says in section 36 that Canada and the provincial governments are committed to things like "promoting equal opportunities for the well-being of Canadians;" but also about "furthering economic development to reduce disparity in opportunities ...."

What that means, Mr. Speaker, is that the Constitution obligates governments in this country to reduce economic disparity, but what are we suffering in Newfoundland and Labrador? We've heard it before: We have the highest unemployment rates; we have the highest population loss. The rest of the country seems to be working while we're struggling to find jobs. That's real disparity. That's what the Constitution is talking about. It's been going on for a very long time.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about jobs, we need to ensure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are not overlooked and displaced in favour of outside workers. Newfoundlanders are not getting the first option or the opportunity. Newfoundlanders are actually watching as outsiders take the coveted positions that they deserve.

I have heard these concerns and frustrations in my short term of six months as an elected

politician in the District of Harbour Main, and I continue to hear these fears and concerns from my constituents throughout the many towns and communities in the District of Harbour Main. I see the look of hopelessness on the faces of my constituents. This is not only indicative of the District of Harbour Main but is representative throughout the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

One issue I think needs to be recognized and acknowledged, and it has been brought up, is with respect to the Newfoundland and Labrador workforce. It is true and indeed the case that our workforce is highly trained, productive, delivers high-quality work. Our workers are doing it right. Our tradespeople are doing it right. We see achievements and productivity and safety by the skilled workers of our province, and that's well known and certainly not in doubt. Our workers have a long history – a long history – of building projects that are the highest quality, while maintaining impeccable safety standards.

Mr. Speaker, our natural resource development, the resource potential in this province is incredible: oil, gas, mineral development. But what is not happening here is that the government is not maximizing Newfoundland and Labrador's benefits from resource developments. They're not stepping up to ensure that our workforce, our Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, are getting the first opportunities for work.

We see this in the contracts, in the agreements that we've heard referenced here this afternoon. We see contracts negotiated that fail to guarantee local benefits or local labour. It boggles the mind how such agreements, such contracts can be negotiated by a government in the economic climate we have here right now. Our unemployment rate leads the country and is rising. That's not the way we need to be leading. We need to be leading in terms of job creation, skills transfer, investment and growth.

A wise government would see the link between the two. You need your economy growing in order to get your fiscal house in order. Of course, a growing economy will generate the revenue we need to pay for the services we need to deliver to children, the elderly and many in

between. That's where we see the community benefits agreements.

One of the solutions is a series of policies that will reduce disparity by giving our people jobs on the projects we are developing here. One of the ways to target local job growth is community benefits agreements associated with major projects in resource sectors and public infrastructure. Doesn't that just make good sense?

That's what Trades NL is calling for. Trades NL renamed community benefits agreements, actually, to Newfoundland and Labrador benefit agreements. Why? Because they consider Newfoundland and Labrador all one community. This isn't about region against region; they designed a benefits agreement that works in Newfoundland made by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

One other point, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Minister of Transportation. He had referred to a Women's Employment Plan. Yes, indeed, it's good in principle, but I ask the question: How many females are working at the Corner Brook hospital or Core Science building today? The problem is, I would say, that they'd have difficulty knowing the answer to that. With no monitoring, with no accountability, they don't know. Government asking for a Women's Employment Plan is only ticking the box for contractors bidding the projects. We have to do more than that.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that when we look at this resolution we be mindful of the fact that there's no time for excuses here. We have to have tough new rules that make a difference. We have to have a good understanding of what we're fighting for. Do the right thing.

This is for future generations who want a future here. Their bright future tomorrow requires tough action from us today. Our children are depending on us. We are the ones sitting in the position of making those changes in policy. It's on us, and we, the Official Opposition, have no intention of letting them down.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

**MR. TIBBS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

First and foremost, I want to thank the upper gallery for their patience today, sticking around all morning for our session, waiting outside in the rain and now being in here with us. We really appreciate it. Thank you very much, guys and girls.

Mr. Speaker, we can talk all day about the economic outcome of Newfoundland and Labrador and how our declining population is going to make that suffer even more, but when it comes down to it, jobs, of course, are what everybody is after. I know the people in the upper gallery, that's what they're here for today. They want answers. They want action, and we're hoping to give it to them in this private Member's resolution.

Like we talked about, the revenue when Newfoundlanders and Labradorians work here, the more Newfoundlanders and Labradorians work, the more revenue comes in. Hospitals, schools, we talked about the infrastructure and whatnot, but besides that, if we look at the face value of it all – if we make it personal, Mr. Speaker.

I take myself, I worked in the trades right up until last February. I had my butt in the mud for the past 20 years. Unfortunately, it was throughout Western Canada. That's where I had to go to work myself, and there are many more like me out there. It's something I had to do for my family, which was travel back and forth every single month and go for up to 60 days at a time. I can guarantee you, I'm looking at all the young faces here now and I can tell it has obviously gone through their mind as well, but we want to keep them here.

Everybody wants to stay here. This is their home. To me, it's the greatest province in all Canada. I love it. I know they love it and I know they want to stay home, and there are so many more out there like it that wish to stay home. That shouldn't be a luxury. That should be a given.

So this resolution today, it's something that should have been done a lot long time ago. It's a no-brainer, of course. Take care of our own first, make sure that we keep the people of Newfoundland and Labrador here working.

I just remember, I won't take too long, but one thing I want to talk about is when I tell you I travelled back and forth to Western Canada for the past 15 years, I remember seeing a lot of young people on the plane, back and forth sort of thing, and the desperation, the look on their face that they have to leave their families once again; 20- and 25-year-old kids having to go away for so much time, and sometimes years at a time and then try to come back. It really affects them. It affects the family life at home. Like I say, it shouldn't be a luxury. I know the minister works hard to keep the work here and tries to get the work here, of course, she does – but to say that it's not all doom and gloom.

Hope is something that I'm sure a lot of people haven't had in a long, long time, because hope is easy for us to talk about as we sit at our desks here and make the salary we do, but when you're up in that gallery and you look down here and you're trying to pay attention but you have to think about where the youngsters' Christmas presents are going to come from this year, that's not hope. That's not hope at all.

I know the distraction and whatnot – and I can't imagine it now. I lived it; I lived it for a long time. You get a couple of months of work here, a couple of months work there, shut down, no work anymore. When are we going to work again? Not sure. So what do you do? You have mortgage payments, you have car payments.

I know all 40 Members here want as many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians working here as we can. If we can pass this legislation it would be absolutely fantastic and it would be solidified then. We know it has to be done, and there will be repercussions if it's not done. I think that's the main part we're getting at.

When I talk about the younger crowd on the planes and whatnot going back and forth, there's only one thing that made me sadder than that, and that was to see the older folks, 63 and 64 years old going back and forth to Alberta for 20, 30 days at a time. Leaving their wife at home for

– they’ve been married for 40 and 45 years and hobbling on to the plane at 63 years old to travel across one of the largest countries in the world to get employment. That’s sad. That’s very, very sad.

We all have families at home and we all have to try to take care of each other. I know that, and this is one of the reasons why I took this position; I went after this position. One of the biggest reasons is to get people working again.

People in Grand Falls-Windsor, for instance, we’ve had our mill shut down now for quite some time. We’re resilient, we find new ways, but like I say, if we can get more employment and get more people working here on the Island and on the Big Land, you know what, we’ll be better off for it.

I know when I was going back and forth to Western Canada it was 100 positions for one job. There would be tons of people, if we go back there sort of thing – and here we have 10 résumés for one position. I look forward to the day that, you know what, we have to bring in workers from other provinces. Where every Newfoundlander and Labradorian has a job, we have to bring in other people, but we’re not there yet. The more work we do towards it, the better off we’ll be. Like I say, we take care of our own first, I guarantee you.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Speaker recognizes the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

**MR. JOYCE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I’m only going to spend a few minutes here, just to support the motion.

I say to the Member for Terra Nova, it was a great motion you brought forth and I just have to recognize – I know the Minister of Transportation and Works mentioned that when I was presenting petitions here and bringing it and highlighting it. I’ll speak about the good work that the minister did on behalf of that.

I have to give the Member for Terra Nova who supported me on that, filled me in on the community benefits and how to approach government and how to approach the workers themselves and the benefits of it. All throughout the last number of months when we were in the House, the Member for Terra Nova has been a strong advocate of that. He has spoken to me on many occasions about it and he has enlightened me on a lot of things I wouldn’t know because I was never in the field.

I just have to recognize the work the Member for Terra Nova has done on this behind the scenes that a lot of workers and a lot of people in the House of Assembly haven’t even seen. I just have to recognize that. Thank you, personally, for that, for the education on that.

We hear all the information about the number of jobs, the amount of money that’s spent here, and I’m not going to rehash none of that, but what I’m going to rehash is coaching basketball. I coached grade four, five, six girls, and you’re speaking to them. Then when you’re talking to one of them, no, Mom is picking me up because Dad is away. That’s when it hits home. That’s the kind of stuff that hits home with you.

I don’t care if you’re Liberal, NDP, PC; we can’t supply jobs for everybody in Newfoundland and Labrador, unless there’s a major project, and we need many of them. What we need to do is try to maximize the benefits that we do have. I know I’ve been dealing with Trades NL and I know I’ve been dealing with the ironworkers a lot – and I know there’s a lot out in the Member’s district – dealing with them, trying to get a lot of work on the hospital in Corner Brook and around the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I support that.

I know in the House of Assembly – and I know the minister mentioned it – I presented 25, 30 petitions and I got to say it’s working. To the Minister of Transportation and Works, I know sometimes we have very heated discussions and arguments, but they did go have a job fair. Can I guarantee or anybody in this House guarantee that there’s going to be a union job? No, but we can try to work with what we can that is going to local people. A couple of ironworkers told me, when they started on the work at the hospital, they got to have those professional tradespeople



doing the work, because it is so fine and you need the expertise on that.

It's just not a community. You can't just say, okay, Corner Brook area, that's all is going to be hired. If it's Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, all of us should be happy anywhere –

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. JOYCE:** – in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and this is what we should strive for. I agree with the Leader of the NDP. So many times, communities are fighting among themselves, and a lot of times, that's over because they're so desperate themselves. That's not because they dislike their neighbour or they don't like their neighbour. That's just because they're a bit desperate themselves.

With this whole process of a community benefits agreement – and I know the Minister of Transportation and Works has met with Trades NL on many occasions to try to work some things out. I spoke to Trades NL on many occasions, and across Canada, there are community benefits agreements in place. Why don't we just sit down and say, okay, what can we do here? What is it within legislation we can do? What is it we can't do? What are other trade agreements that we don't have? I use the Atlantic Accord as a prime example. What can we do within the Atlantic Accord that we can assure it's all done? So this is how we work together on it and this is the first step with it.

So I won't belabour the point. I just want to say that I'm very happy with the amount of local workers that are hired at the Corner Brook hospital construction. There are going to be a lot more working at the Corner Brook hospital. To the minister, there was a job fair and it was blocked. There will be another one coming up again once we get full stream. The minister committed to that and he fulfilled that commitment.

I just want to let everybody know that the Trades NL is very close to me, because I see the benefits of it. Keeping people home with their kids, coaching some basketball and the young people who want to stay. I see a lot of people in

this gallery who would love to stay home and work, and we can do it.

A lot of times, too, when you look at the cost of it some people say, well, we have to move away. But they may not need as much money here. We can find some way to travel back and forth. Maybe you can find some way to work it out. This is what we, as parliamentarians, were elected to do, trying to find solutions like that through government projects and to other megaprojects, which I know the Minister of Natural Resources is working on and has worked on, and I know inside in the Cabinet room very vocal on that also.

I just have to recognize that a lot of times we do have opinions and we do it. The Minister of Transportation and Works also sometimes he gets upset when I present the petitions, but it worked – it worked. The big thing is not me and you saying who are upset with each other, it's the workers out in Corner Brook that are working.

It's a special thing with Trades NL, I know. I know I've mentioned all the money that they gave out, Trades NL itself, what they donate to. I know the Trades NL. I'm involved with an orphanage in Uganda. Trades NL donated \$25,000 to put every kid in school, to start secondary. I just want to thank the workers.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. JOYCE:** So, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to sit down and give other people an opportunity to speak about their own experiences and all. But I thank the Member for Terra Nova for bringing this up. I thank the Leader of the Official Opposition and House Leader for giving me an opportunity to pass on a few words. I know that working together we will make great strides to keep people home and for local benefits.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

**MR. TRIMPER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Very interesting PMR, and I do thank the Member for Terra Nova today for bringing it forward.

I must say, as I was sitting and digesting what was being asked in this PMR – and I think it's important, as I introduce my own remarks, to just revisit it. It's to call on the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to require community benefits agreements to be included with the contractors' bid packages when new public facilities are constructed on natural resource projects such as oil and gas and mineral development to ensure that this province receives maximum benefits.

Very interesting because – and from my own perspective as I spoke somewhat about this morning – my professional career has been, for the last 30 years before I got into politics, doing environmental assessment of resource development projects in this country, in this province and internationally. There's been quite an evolution around environmental assessment.

Classically, back in the '80s – and just a little primer so people can understand where we are in the context of this PMR – a proponent would come forward and say I want to do something like conduct and construct a NATO base in Labrador, a low-level flying NATO base which I worked on. At the time, the proponent would describe the project, all of its negative effects and then it would come forward with what was called a mitigation section. It would say we're going to do this; we're going to ensure the planes don't fly over the caribou herds. We're going to make sure we hire local people; we're going to do all these good things. Then you'd have something called residual effects. Then you'd wrap it up in a little bow and you say here's what we're really going to do.

Over that time we have evolved. We've evolved from the concept of promises and hopes to solid, solid decision-making, solid project planning that would actually allow us to make wise decisions around the environment. When I talk about the environment, it's not just the biophysical environment; it's also the socio-economic environment.

Whether it be the decommissioning of the Long Harbour prosperous plant – I've worked on all

three phases of the Trans-Labrador Highway. This morning I spoke about the relocation of the community of Davis Inlet; a very interesting project. It was actually quite a milestone in the evolution of environmental assessment in this province because for the first time you had the proponent, which was the Mushuau Innu, you had the most affected folks, who were also the Mushuau Innu, and then those that were going to forward with the mitigation measures were also the Mushuau Innu. As long as you had agreement from all three you were going to get somewhere, and eventually we did get the community relocated.

I want to go to Voisey's Bay – the Voisey's Bay project which I worked on extensively. I was at that site long before Mr. Chislett and Mr. Verbiski and I some days wish maybe I staked a claim or two myself, but a very fascinating project to watch it go from the discovery through. In Labrador, where I live and represent this great district, it's been interesting because we've gone through several large environmental assessments, but when Voisey's Bay came along – and I look to my colleagues from Labrador – it was really a game changer for us. It, for the first time, recognized the Indigenous peoples of the area.

In 2002, I was present when both the Innu Nation and, at the time, the Labrador Inuit Association ratified their impact benefit agreements. That was, for the first time, I could suggest in the history of this province, we actually had ironclad agreements that one was going to have to follow as the project was implemented. It was a real dramatic change.

I would suggest we had some of that same hope when the Lower Churchill came along. Unfortunately, it did not get implemented in that way. There are so many things and lost opportunities. That said, a lot of people from Nalcor, that I know personally, have worked very hard to ensure that they, as much as possible, have been maximizing benefits in terms of jobs, in terms of services, in terms of local capacity building.

Some of the great moves we are making in this regard – again, I want to talk about, first of all, Newfoundland and Labrador as a community. It is very much the community that we are all

preoccupied with. I think it is important, however, to put the context of this PMR in terms of what's happening. We can always make improvement but, that said, we have a pretty good record to stand on right now.

In our province, we have something like 14,000 people directly employed on projects, including: White Rose, Hebron, Hibernia, Terra Nova, IOC, Vale, Canada Fluorspar Inc., Tacora and the Lower Churchill Project, and more than 90 per cent of those are residents of this community, of this province. That's a pretty good track record. I'm not going to hang my hat on there and say we should stop and that's good because, obviously, we can always do a lot more.

Some of the strategies we use – before I get to the real crux of what I feel is the missing point here, and I want to, especially for the gallery, alert them to something, but I do want to recognize a particular initiative. It's called the LATP, Labrador Aboriginal Training Partnership. This is very much a partnership of various governments, including the Indigenous governments in Labrador, and under the leadership of Keith Jacque, it has become a role model for allowing local people – in this case, Indigenous people – based in Labrador to have opportunities to be trained and be ready for those opportunities in our backyard.

I got to say, living in Happy Valley-Goose Bay for the last 32 years, it is very frustrating to see folks coming from outside – and I don't want to pit Labrador against Newfoundland because, again, we are all one community, but let's just say outside the province, or lost opportunities when we have the skill sets in our own community. I sense from what I understand of the issue of the folks who have been very quietly and peacefully making a presence to all of us these last few days, it's their frustration of seeing something happening in their backyard and them not being able to take advantage of it.

Now I want to go back to the environmental assessment process. When you go through that process – I happened to grab this morning, just to prepare a little bit, and somebody else mentioned Marathon. It's a company, actually, I worked for in the past on their own

environmental assessment work and their project down at Valentine Lake.

I just had a little look at what the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment – and my colleague, the minister is right beside me. I just had a look at their guidelines. If you go through them, they're right online, you can see great detail – the requirements for maximizing community benefits outlined in great, specific detail around hiring, services, businesses and so on. It's extremely well done and it reflects sort of the current thinking.

What is tending to not always happen, however, is the follow through. Does this fully get translated into those bid packages? I have seen the frustration where sometimes that is not the case, and it's important to try to find a way and a lever to actually get to where the Member for Terra Nova is suggesting in their PMR.

My advice to a lot of the people who are watching at home and sitting around me here today is to pay close attention to the upfront planning. That's where we have to get it right. We have a lot of good people who are doing this, and I'll reference two individuals who are very well-known internationally in this province. Mark Shrimpton and Keith Storey wrote the book on impact and benefit agreements, industrial benefit plans, community benefit plans and they've spoken on the work they've done in this province all over the world.

We have a lot of expertise. I think what we need to do is have a better alignment from those designing the projects to those implementing the projects. There's a great opportunity there.

I feel I just want to put it out as a caution. Again, I'm here fully supporting of this PMR, and everyone here is watching, but I think we have to move carefully. As we look across the country, and as my colleague from Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans was suggesting about his previous experience travelling back and forth to Alberta, we have to ensure that however we do this, however we make these commitments, we have to ensure that those who are availing of opportunities in other jurisdictions in our country don't find that door closed to them either. Again, it's in the upfront planning.

When we release a project through the environmental assessment process it's because it has been well designed and it's because we understand fully the positive benefits of the project and we're willing to work and deal with the negatives. It's when that changes, that's when we get the frustration. That's when we get the people in the galleries watching and protesting because they had expectations. There was a project that was being planned, that was being talked about that's in their backyard and they're not now involved. I can imagine the frustration. I've lived it myself and I've shared it myself.

With that, Mr. Speaker, and to allow others to have an opportunity to speak, I thank you very much for the opportunity to get on my feet.

Thank you.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

**MR. LANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm only going to take a couple of minutes.

First of all, I want to thank the Member for bringing forward this private Member's motion. I certainly support it 100 per cent. I'm sure everybody in this House of Assembly is going to support it, and why wouldn't we?

I did listen to my colleague and he does raise – it wasn't something I necessarily thought about, but he does raise a good point that there has to be a little bit of caution, I think, as we work through this, if it gets worked through at some point to see what the impact might be.

While it's great to get as many benefits as we can for our own people, which should be our primary focus, we do have to be mindful of the fact that we do it in a way that we're not going to see the doors shut on the other part of the country when we have Newfoundlanders travelling to do work there. That is a consideration for sure. We just have to be careful in how we craft this, when we craft this, to make sure that it doesn't happen.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other things that comes to mind – a couple of things I've heard from people in trades and in oil and gas and so on, we have an industrial benefits agreement, as has already been referenced. I think it's been said that 90 per cent or thereabouts of the people working, whether it be in the projects related to mines, minerals or whether it be the offshore, are Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. That's a great stat. If that's the case, then that is a great stat. We should always try to get as much as we can. If it could be a hundred per cent it would be great, probably not possible, but it is good to hear.

That's 90 per cent of the work that has actually taken place in the province. That's another point. I'm not sure if it has been raised but I think it's an important point to make, that it's one thing to say 90 per cent of the work related to our offshore is done by Newfoundlanders that's done in this province. My question, though, is how much of the work that could be done in the province is being done elsewhere? That's a question. I don't know. It's part of the negotiations. I realize that.

I know one of the things that we've seen a trend, not just with this administration but the past administration, was to go beyond simple royalties or super royalties and look at taking equity stakes. I know that's something that's been carried on by this administration as well.

So I wonder, there are some people who would say we shouldn't be taking equity stakes. There are some people who hold that position, that we're kind of rolling the dice, we're gambling if the upside is great, if things go great. But if the price of oil goes down the tubes, then there's a downside to us in terms of being a shareholder. So there are questions around if that's the way to go or not.

Personally, I think I would rather see less focus on equity stakes and a little more focus on making sure more work is actually happening here in Newfoundland and Labrador, more of the work. Again, we also have to ensure that the work that is here is being done by Newfoundlanders, but that more of it is actually happening here. That really needs to be our focus.

Now, I've heard in the past, you hear excuses – I'm going to call it excuses. I'm not putting this at the government, per se. But you hear excuses of we couldn't do this project in Newfoundland because we didn't have the capacity. Bull Arm wasn't large enough to do whatever. We've heard things in Argentia about the gates in Argentia. If only we had the gates, we could do more work. We heard things about the graving dock over the years in Marystown, I believe. If only we had a graving dock we could have done more, but we didn't have one.

So part of the planning in all this, I would say to the minister – and perhaps this is something she's already doing. I'm not saying she isn't doing it. I don't know what she's doing in that regard. I'm just throwing it out there. Part of the consideration has to be building capacity. So if there are certain types of work and certain modules and so on that currently can't be done in Newfoundland and Labrador because we don't have that capacity, we don't have the infrastructure, then perhaps part of the oil royalties, part of the money that's coming in on project A should be invested bearing in mind project B, C, D, E, F, G and so on to build a capacity so that, nope, we can't do it this time, but by to God, when the next one comes along, we are going to be able to do it. And then we're going to build further capacity so that when the next one comes along, we'll be able to do more again.

I'm not sure if that's part of – the minister is nodding her head as if it is part of the planning. I hope it is, but I do throw it out there as part of the debate. So maximizing our capacity over time so we can do more. Then if we have 90 per cent of our people working, they're all working, because there's so much work we have no choice but to bring people in from outside. So I just throw that out there as a comment.

The other thing is, it's one thing to have benefits agreements, it's another thing to enforce the benefits agreements. I've heard from people in the past – I can't confirm it as being right or wrong; I just throw it out there, what people have told me – as an example, in the service industry in the offshore, where a Newfoundland company gets the job, but the crew that's working on that particular vessel are not Newfoundlanders, to which I say shame on the

Newfoundlander if they were intentionally getting around it and hiring people from outside and filling their pocket – they're doing fine – but then farming out the work to elsewhere for their own convenience. Shame on them if that's happening. I can't say it is. I'm just telling you what people have told me.

That comes down to enforcing the agreements that exist under the Atlantic Accord and under those agreements. I think periodically, if we're not doing it, any benefits agreements that we have in place, any future benefits agreements that we put in place have to be ongoing monitoring and very, very strict enforcement to make sure that we're not being told one thing on paper while the complete opposite is happening in reality, or someone is finding a loophole to get around doing what they're supposed to be doing.

Those would be two components beyond the actual benefit agreement itself that we're talking about that I think needs to be considered if they're not already being considered. Beyond that, the concept of benefits agreements that go beyond natural resources and look at the larger projects, whether it be hospitals or long-term care facilities and so on that are being constructed in the province, ensuring that Newfoundlanders are getting that work, I think it's a great idea. I support it a hundred per cent.

Thank you.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER (Reid):** The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

**MR. DWYER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, it gives me great honour to represent, actually, most of the people here in the gallery today. Most of these people are my constituents. I'm here in 100 per cent support of you.

What I want you to know is that the proceedings today are a little bit different than what we normally do. We usually have a Question Period and we answer the ministers' statements and we also present petitions, so just know that that petition is right here, okay? That's not finished yet; that's just not being presented today because

we wanted to make sure we got in our private Member's bill for a resolution just because that's only presented on Wednesdays. This is just a part of the procedure, so we want you to understand that your petition is certainly going to be presented more often than not. I appreciate it.

One of the biggest things I guess I would like to say is thank you for showing such class, not only in here in the House but out on the steps. You guys and ladies make a valid point. There's nothing, Mr. Speaker, that is wrong in what they're saying. Like myself, they come from a generation of giveaways and we've learned nothing about secondary processing. There are lots of other things that we can do here that makes a big difference to our economy.

Our Member up here from Mount Pearl - Southlands, he's saying about diversification of the economy in taking some money out of one project and putting it into another. I would go one step further than that and I would say that when we're planning, then that plan goes to - that we take money, let's say, from the oil business and we put it into a whole new sector.

We need to create jobs. We don't need to take the jobs that we're being offered. We also feel - and just to talk about the giveaways, we're talking about a community benefits agreement here today and the reason why we're talking about it, Mr. Speaker, is because we always feel that we have to give so much away in order to get the little pittance that we're being offered.

That's enough of that. We're people too. You look at the economy of Canada and the two big economic powerhouses, as I've said before on many occasions, are Ontario and Alberta, right chock full of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians running their economy. We can do this ourselves. We have the expertise, we have the control, but we have to understand a little dirty, four-letter word that we've never understood in our history and it's called risk.

If we mitigate risk, we can understand this and we can fix this, but we have to have people with enough backbone to stand up for our own people. That's the reason why we're talking about community benefits today, because we've never gotten it right, Mr. Speaker. We don't

know how to diversify the economy and we don't know how to stand up for our own people.

We don't have to give anything away in order for us to benefit from our own natural resources. We're talking about a coker coming on stream for a refinery but, of course, again, all I'm hearing is that it's cheaper to do it outside the province. I don't care. Even if it costs quadruple to do it here in the province, the money is going into the pockets of our own citizens. We are getting back on tax dollars; we are getting back on revenue.

We have to understand that little dirty, four-letter word named risk, and that's it. It's not a bad word, if you know what you're doing and you know how to handle it, and you know how to budget for that, and you know how to diversify the economy.

These people in the gallery all want to stay in Newfoundland. I was one of the people who had to go to Alberta for six years myself. Was I happy about it? Well, no, but at the time I was single. I came back to Newfoundland to start a family and get an education because this is my home. This is where I'm from. I don't want to leave any more. I know none of you guys or ladies do either. I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, you don't want to leave either.

With that being said, we've done lots of projects, lots of quality, quality projects, by quality, quality tradespeople. We had 16 unions out working in concert with each other in Bull Arm. What do we have today? We have one that we're trying to do the union splitting; we're trying to get them to argue and fight amongst each other. Don't fall for it. Stand together, stand strong and we can do this.

(Disturbance in the gallery.)

**MR. DWYER:** As I said before, we have to understand risk. It's not a hard thing to understand, but we have to put Newfoundland and Labrador first and not just talk about it. Not just say it. Not just use it as a buzz word. Not use it at the door when you're trying to get a vote. Do something about it. Let's do it. Let's do it ourselves. We have the natural resources. They've been out there for billions of years. What's the rush to get them out, so we can let

US companies profit? Why don't we profit from it ourselves for a change? That's what we need. That's what these people need. That's what everybody outside this Chamber needs as well.

Newfoundland first is a great initiative. I'm here to stand by all the people in this province and make sure that they get jobs and they get to stay here and raise their families here.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

(Disturbance in the gallery.)

**MR. SPEAKER:** Before I recognize the Leader of the Opposition, I just want to remind members that, while we welcome visitors to the House, I would ask that you not participate in the debate and not interrupt the debate, but we certainly appreciate you attending.

The hon. the Opposition Leader.

**MR. CROSBIE:** Thank you.

The issue is enthusiasm, Mr. Speaker. I'm afraid the folks in the gallery find it difficult to restrain their enthusiasm, and I understand why. A little earlier, I counted 51 people up there in the gallery and I believe every one of the 51 is still there. The attention span and dedication of that group deserves to be noted and applauded.

I just want to point out that the PC Party of Newfoundland and Labrador are not johnny-come-latelies to this issue about community benefits. When we ran a scan six months ago, seven months ago, in the general election, one of our major planks and themes was Jobs and Hope, Focus on Jobs.

We explained that we wanted a partnership for jobs; it's in our Blue Book. We promised: "To ensure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians receive the maximum benefit of public funds, when new public facilities are constructed a Crosbie government will require community benefits agreements to be included with the contractors' bid packages.

"This will give consideration to the employment of apprentices, underrepresented groups and a

local force; ensure the use of the local supply and service industry and local materials; and ensure that our communities are the true beneficiaries of the economic activity created by public funds."

Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, the Member for Topsail - Paradise attempted to ask very apt questions, questions of interest to many residents of this province, including the folks in the gallery, about whether this Liberal government would implement a community benefits package or policy. Three times he attempted to get an answer to that question. Three times the government, including the Premier, failed to answer the question. A very reasonable, very apt, very appropriate question of great interest to the people of this province, no answer from the government.

To understand the importance of this to the tradespeople and the workers of this province, one only has to go to the website of Trades NL and the part that deals with something called NL First. It explains what NL First is. "WHEN WE'RE WORKING," it says "EVERYONE THRIVES."

"Right now, NL is experiencing a lull in construction leaving many skilled trade women and men out of work or having to leave the province. Trades NL believes" and I would add, the PCs of Newfoundland believe "that the provincial government can do more to ensure Newfoundlanders and Labradorians receive first consideration to work on projects in the province and from our resources. This can be achieved through the implementation" – and the Trades NL website – "of Newfoundland and Labrador Benefits Agreements (NLBAs) for public infrastructure and negotiation of stronger benefits agreements with industry. The most recent examples of potential work include government announcements for a new West Coast hospital, prison and mental health facility, along with industry announcements such as mining in Labrador and the Bay du Nord oil project.

"We want our members, their families, and everyone who calls this province home, to live and work here. We want everyone in the province to benefit from the fruits of our members' labour. Our members have a long

history of building projects of the highest quality while maintaining impeccable safety standards. Collectively, our members are amongst the most giving group in the province, donating more than \$20 million to local charities in the past eight years alone.”

The call from Trades NL is the following: We call “upon the Provincial Government to implement a community benefits and workforce development lens on all infrastructure and resource development activity in this province.” We, on the Opposition side of the House in the PC Party of Newfoundland and Labrador, echo that call for action and completely back it and call upon the government to do so too.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. Member for Labrador West.

**MR. BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, to the people up in the gallery: solidarity. I come from a district that has over 3,000 unionized steelworkers, so I completely understand each and every one of you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I ask the Member to direct his

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**MR. BROWN:** Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

I want to speak on my personal experience in working in the industry and with community-based agreements. First of all, when we had the good times, the up times, there were 10 bunkhouses built in Lab West alone for all the projects that had to go on up there. A majority of the individuals that ended working up there, it was pretty split between Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador.

We had so many people fly-in and fly out, it created a whole world of even social issues in the region, but it worked. People were working. Most service industry places – anyone who paid under minimum wage or paid minimum wage or a little bit above, they lost all their employees. It created a whole sub-economy.

We also have to look at the importance of these agreements, but also the importance of

implementing an agreement that is important that we have it here. So we have to look at every aspect of the agreements and every aspect of how it would benefit a community, but we also have to make sure that the negatives are mitigated.

We have to benefit individuals. Take my District of Lab West, we have to also look at making sure that Indigenous people have access to training and jobs and everything like that on their lands. So we have to keep this really important.

I also want to make a point that there has been some negative effects on these agreements too, but we have to make sure we mitigate it, we do our homework. We make sure that everything is done accordingly that mitigates most of everything.

I also want to say that when we do these agreements, we also look at local communities. Make sure that the town this project will be built in, make sure they have all the resources they need to make sure that they don't suffer any negative effects of influx, degrading of infrastructure. Make sure they have a working fire truck, things like that. So we have to make sure of this.

I just want to say that I support the idea. I always will support the idea of community-based benefits agreements. I support making sure that our residents and residents of Labrador and Indigenous communities have first crack at all jobs.

Thank you.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Terra Nova, if he speaks now he shall close the debate.

**MR. PARROTT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The first thing I'm going to do is repeat the resolution: BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Assembly urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to require community benefits agreements to be included with the contractor's bid packages when new



public facilities are constructed and on natural resource projects, such as oil, gas and mineral development, to ensure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians receive maximum benefits.

Mr. Speaker, this is about jobs for Newfoundland and Labrador, nothing else. Jobs that our people need to live here. It's about jobs that we need for people to move here and it's about jobs that we need for communities to survive.

I thank all the people who stood up and spoke on this private Member's resolution. There were some very great points. I'd be remiss if I didn't go back over some of them.

The Minister of Natural Resources stood up and she spoke about a report from 2008 to 2018, the Harris report on foreclosures. I would be absolutely shocked if we didn't have a report between 2008 and 2018 that didn't say we were booming. It's the most economically, prosperous time that this province has ever seen. We had Voisey's Bay. We had Long Harbour. We had Bull Arm. We had Muskrat Falls. Why aren't people going to buy houses?

Guess what we got now? From 2018 to 2019, we got foreclosures and houses for sale. Although that report is probably accurate up to 2018, it's definitely not accurate right now. Two thousand workers in Argentina – there are currently 950 workers in Argentina, and that will go down to about 50 come Christmas.

Another comment she made is you should visit Argentina to see the great work that's happening in Argentina. The Argentina GBS is built on Archimedes' principle. It's the shallowest GBS that was ever built in the world. It has very little mechanical outfitting. There's not a lot of work out there. If you want to see the great work that's happening on West White Rose, go to Corpus Christi, go to Texas, and you'll see the work.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. PARROTT:** The Member for Lake Melville mentioned that we have 14,000 people working in the resources, and you know what? It's great. Once these mines are built, once the offshore resources are created and we put our

people to work, there is no better benefit than to have our people working on them; but, 14,000 may not be good enough. If we have 650 potential sites offshore that we haven't developed, the potential to develop them, we need to start looking at getting more opportunities for people to work, and that means keeping the jobs here.

One of the comments he made was about community benefits and talking about what happens, if we create a community benefits program in Newfoundland, to the workers that go to Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, when Newfoundlanders leave Newfoundland to go away for work, we need to be very clear: they're going to fill a void. They are not going because Albertans aren't being employed. They are going because there aren't enough people out West to do the work. Cut and dry. Our people leave and they go out West on turnaround work, construction jobs because the people out West are not there to do the work.

Currently, benefits agreements exist in many other provinces, and they take care of their own residents. Period. Western industrial provinces, such as BC, Alberta, Manitoba, have all implemented community benefits agreements.

Quebec, we could stay here for days and talk about Quebec. We all know what Quebec does. Quebec accepts bids in a different way. We could not go to work in Quebec if we wanted to. If you look at Muskrat Falls and you look at Labrador West, we know as a point of fact that there are always workers from Quebec. It's just not acceptable. I'm not saying that Quebec companies shouldn't be able to be bid, or Nova Scotian, but our people should be employed.

The Minister of Transportation and Works made a comment how great it is for Newfoundland companies to be building facilities and stuff here, and I agree 100 per cent, but the mere fact that a Newfoundland company wins a contract does not necessarily mean that Newfoundlanders are working on those contracts. We know with Canopy Growth, we had Gyproc people come from away. We've got ironworkers coming in now doing work on different facilities. Contracts won by Newfoundland companies, subcontractors from other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, we all hope for a brighter future, but let's be clear, you can't take hope to the bank. Hope won't pay for your meals, hope won't pay your light bill. It won't do any of those things. We need to ensure that people have cheques in their pockets. We need to ensure that the work that can be done here is done here. We need to be the primary beneficiaries of our natural resources and all of our infrastructure.

When I speak about a community benefit, I refer to Newfoundland as the community. I don't think of a community benefit as one that benefits one single community in the province. We are no bigger, as a province, than some small cities are in Canada. Our population is 521,000 – 523,000, depending on who you talk to – but it's going down. When we look at community benefits programs, we need to look at all work. We need to look at work for unionized workers, we need to look at work for non-unionized workers, and we need to look at work for Indigenous people, for people with disabilities. We need to take the whole spectrum that makes our community that we all love, called Newfoundland, and that's who we need to consider for work.

Now, it's okay to say we have to start worrying about accommodations and all the things that happen after work, but if we don't have a way to pay, if we don't have the jobs here to start with, those aren't worries. If we don't start somewhere with work it doesn't happen.

When we talk about community benefits and we look at a path forward – and listen, I'll be the first one to say, the Minister of Natural Resources, her and I have had some great conversations. I know she's working hard, there's no question. We don't necessarily agree on everything all the time.

Right now, currently, I think there's a path forward with the Bull Arm site. We put out a RFP in 2016 or 2017 – I think 2017 – bids came back in 2018, and here we are still nothing there. It's not much better than a glorified wharf rental. We've had two companies come in there. It's not a great amount of work, there's not a great amount of benefits. Nobody knows what the cost is. The cost was asked. There's a Nalcor-borne cost. They're looking after what it is. We don't

even understand what we pay for when it comes to Bull Arm.

What I do understand is currently on the offshore with the drilling regimes and exploration regimes, they all are doing recap work, they all require their ships to be restocked. Bay Bulls doesn't have the capacity to look after it all and we don't have any secondary place to do it. There's enough work that happens offshore from fabrication, I would say, to employ 250 or 300 Newfoundlanders full-time forever. We ship a lot of that fabrication away and it makes no sense.

Newfoundland first is Newfoundland and Labrador first. It's everybody that lives in this province, it's every business that lives in this province and every worker that lives in this province. The path forward for us as a province, for everyone that sits in this House, is to find a way to employ Newfoundlanders and Labradorians at every opportunity we get. That's from road construction to hospital construction to offshore oil and gas, to mines, to exploration. Any opportunity we get, we need to seize it.

There's more revenue generated in employment than there is in resources. Royalties will not pay our way forward. We know that, we see it; we can't even budget for it. If we look at the volatility of oil and gas and royalties that we've bought into, we don't know what we're doing today or tomorrow. We need to have people working, period. It's when we've been the most successful and it's our best opportunity to be successful going forward.

Mr. Speaker, I left Newfoundland in 1990 and, the day after I left, I worked at getting back here. That was my number one goal. You can look around at the people that are up here, I'm sure that most of them have gone away to work turnarounds or do whatever. They've missed their daughters' graduations, they've missed their mother and fathers' anniversaries and they've probably missed being around when a loved one died. They scarified to go away and work. We can do a lot of things here that we missed the opportunity to do.

The Minister of Transportation and Works talks about Corner Brook. I applaud the government on Corner Brook. I think they're doing the right

thing and I think it's a good model for us to move forward. I have no problem; I'm on record saying that here. I think at the end of the day we need to find a way to do that with every single opportunity we get, even from a procurement standpoint at some point. We're not right there but if we can buy goods here in Newfoundland, we need to buy them here in Newfoundland. If we can produce them here in Newfoundland, we need to produce them here in Newfoundland.

We need to look at secondary producing. We're opening up a salmon farm and guess what? Most of the salmon will probably end up going away. The best example – I love this as an example – Icedwater Seafoods in Arnold's Cove. Mr. Speaker, 99.8 per cent of a codfish – I'll say that again: 99.8 per cent of a codfish – gets produced and sent to market. No offal, no waste, no by-product, 99.8 per cent. That should be the standard.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. PARROTT:** We've done it there. Why can't we do it everywhere else?

I heard the Minister of Natural Resources talk about Tacora, and I applaud the government for getting Tacora back online. I tell you, my mom and dad we working in Wabush Mines, and my brother, three of them lost their jobs; three of them lost their pensions. I see what happens when that happens. Our reliance on resources scares me when you think about those things.

That is why we need to develop our own resources, we need to operate our own resources and we need to be responsible for secondary processing of our own resources. At the end of the day, all of our natural resources have a shelf life. When they're used up, they're gone. Mr. Speaker, 650 was the word that the minister said; 650 potential offshore Hebrons – exact word: 650. Think of that; 49 million man-hours it took to develop Hebron – 49 million man-hours. That's substantial. Now, times that by 650.

Mr. Speaker, the argument in the past and I still hear it, I heard it yesterday, actually: Companies don't want to come here and work; it's too expensive – too expensive. Well, let me tell you, when ExxonMobil came to Newfoundland to

build Hebron, they estimated 23 million man-hours. It took 49 million man-hours. Now, I will stand here today and I will tell you, I worked there from day one, right to the finish. I sat on the board of directors and I understand what happened. The Newfoundland and Labrador tradesmen did not – I repeat did not – cause that project to go over by 26 million man-hours.

A company came in here, they didn't bid properly, they went way over and they blamed it on these people. Now, as an excuse, they're saying they don't want to come back here and utilize our tradespeople anymore. It's wrong. It's our resources. We need to utilize these people to develop them and that is the path forward.

Mr. Speaker, the best way for us to get out of the hole we're in is to employ people. Now, I know government is not in the business of creating jobs. It's not our role to make companies, but that doesn't mean we can't set standards. That doesn't mean we can't hold employers accountable and it doesn't mean that we can't make it a part of the process.

Mr. Speaker, I humbly and respectfully ask that all Members of the day support this bill. I also say, people need to understand that support of this bill is only the beginning, there still needs to be action and that action has to come in this Chamber.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

It being Wednesday and approaching the time of 5 o'clock, in accordance with Standing Order 9(3), the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 o'clock in the afternoon.