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Speaker: Honourable Scott Reid, MHA

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Reid): Admit strangers.

Order, please!

We have some visitors today. In the Speaker's gallery, I would like to welcome Stephanie Lights, Chris Lights and Logan Butler. They are here this afternoon for a Member's statement.

In the public gallery today, I would like to recognize representatives from Let's Talk Science: Desiree Newhook, manager of communications; and Tom Walsh, regional lead. They are also joining us today for a Member's statement.

Also in the public gallery, I welcome Carol Murphy and Elise Murphy-Dowden, grandmother and the mother of one of our Pages.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today we will hear Members' statements from the hon. Members for the Districts of Ferryland, Bonavista, Cape St. Francis, Harbour Grace - Port de Grave and Terra Nova.

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to recognize a graduate from Baltimore School in Ferryland.

Trent O'Brien graduated grade 12 in June 2019 with perfect attendance. Not missing a day from kindergarten to grade 12 is certainly a great feat; 2,340 days without missing one day is a great feat. Trent's parents have a lot to be proud of, as not many kids have gone through school and not miss a day. Trent's classmates surprised him with a motorcade through the town on his last day of school back in June.

Trent's plans are to study science at Memorial University this fall, and he said he don't plan on skipping either day there either. At this time, I would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate Trent on completing grade 12 and

wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors.

I would like all Members of the House of Assembly to join with me in congratulating Mr. Trent O'Brien on his wonderful achievement.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let's Talk Science is a national, charitable organization committed to preparing Canadian youth for future careers and citizenship demands in a rapidly changing world. For 22 years, they have provided engaging, evidence-based science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs in Newfoundland and Labrador, all at no cost to our youth and educators.

Since 2012, these volunteers and staff have interacted with thousands of youth through outreach, online resources, professional learning and projects. Through a partnership with our Department of Education and school district, they have assisted in the implementation of grades one to six and senior high science curriculum renewals. They have created and supplied an extensive electricity kit for every grade six classroom and motion kits for all grade two classrooms, and continue to provide professional learning with our educators.

Working with other Canadian partners like the Canadian Space Agency, Let's Talk Science continues to engage youth in real science through projects like Living Space and Tomatosphere, creating an understanding around the optimal conditions for living and growing food on earth and in space. A remarkable team of volunteers, educators and staff having a great impact on our schools' youth.

I ask the Members of the 49th House of Assembly to join me in applauding Let's Talk Science, as well as the Hibernia Management Development Company Ltd., for their valued involvement in our educational system.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I rise today to recognize this year's inductees to the Royal St. John's Regatta Hall of Fame.

Mr. Speaker, residents in my district take great pride in the tradition of participating in the oldest organized sporting event in North America.

This year's inductees include the 1985 Outer Cove Intermediate Crew for their record time of 9:30:55. An impressive record that stood for 16 years. Crew members included: cox, Mike Power; stroke, Pay Hyde; Dave Kelly; Frank Power; Darin Hyde; Greg Morris; Paddy Dyer; and coach, Bill Power.

Graham Roche of Torbay was also inducted this year as a coxswain. Graham has been involved in the Regatta for over 20 years, first as a rower in 1992, and in 1998 he began his coxswain career.

Graham has won 25 medals. In 2008, he was coxswain of the O'Dea Earle team, which won the Triple Crown. Graham was also coxswain for the intermediate crews that won gold medals from 2002 to 2005. Graham has a passion for the sport, teaching beginners and veteran rowers. He has patience like you wouldn't believe – he even tried to coach me.

I would also like to acknowledge the late Frank Dinn, who was inducted as a builder. For 40 years he served on the Regatta Committee. He made a remarkable contribution to the Royal St. John's Regatta.

I ask all hon. Members to join with me in congratulating this year's Hall of Fame inductees.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave.

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

On World Fisheries Day, today, I would like to recognize a strong young woman from my district who demonstrates leadership while preserving tradition, culture and a way of life in a coastal community.

Featured on a recent episode of CBC's *Land and Sea*, Stephanie Lights of Bareneed has been named the woman in the wheelhouse.

She thrived as a busy hairstylist for more than a decade, but when Stephanie and her husband Chris started their family, Stephanie's father Wayne Russell, a well-respected fish harvester, could see the toll the busy full-time work was taking, and one day he made an offer to Stephanie to come join him on his fishing boat, a career change she fully embraced and loves. The father-daughter duo were on the water.

Sadly, Wayne and Stephanie only had two seasons fishing together. In July of 2018, while docked working on his boat, Wayne passed away suddenly.

Port de Grave is one of the most prosperous fishing harbours in the province, and harvesters from this community are known and respected far and wide. Wayne Russell was no exception.

I just know that Wayne is so proud of the job that Stephanie is doing, as he watches over his family, living the way of life that he loved so much.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all hon. Members to join me in thanking Stephanie for her family's contribution to the province's legacy and growth.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this hon. House to congratulate the senior girls

volleyball team from Southwest Arm school in Little Heart's Ease, the Tigers.

Five years ago, a group of female students approached their gym teacher about starting a volleyball team. They were told that if they could find a parent to coach them, they would allow it to go ahead.

After four years of playing as a team, with a group of only 13 players, made up of all eligible female players from grades nine to 12, they were successful in winning their first official female volleyball banner at Volleyfest for their school. They have since also won their first regionals, and a player named Katie Kelly was named MVP. They're travelling to Gander for provincials for the 50th anniversary of SSNL. They will have four players graduating this year.

This is a prime example of hard work and determination of a small groups of girls, with a volunteer parents as a coach, Angie Peddle, and their teacher sponsor, Megan Perry.

Once again, I ask all hon. Members to congratulate the senior girls volleyball team from Southwest Arm for their first volleyball banner and the excitement that goes along with raising it in the gymnasium.

Go Tigers!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

MR. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism for winning the prestigious Marketing Campaign of the Year Award for Place of Stories at the Canadian Tourism Awards last night in Ottawa.

I am proud to say that this is the third time that Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism has been acknowledged with this honour by the Tourism Industry Association of Canada.

The Place of Stories campaign positioned the province as a place of storytellers that comes alive through the warmth of our people and hospitality, and our unique places and experiences.

Mr. Speaker, the overall Find Yourself campaign has been recognized with 359 awards to date, and is considered one of the most successful tourism campaigns in the country. The fine work is produced in partnership with our Agency of Record, Target Marketing and Communications, and I acknowledge them as well.

I also want to recognize and congratulate the Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador for winning the Community Leadership award at last night's event. The museum is a living-library or irreplaceable Newfoundland and Labrador boat-building skills and knowledge, as well as a cultural tourism experience. The Winterton group does a fantastic job, and their award is well deserved.

Mr. Speaker, through *Budget 2019*, the provincial government invested \$13 million towards tourism marketing. This industry generates \$1.14 billion in visitor spending each year, and is responsible for over 20,000 jobs, representing approximately 2,800 businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I invite all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism, as well as the Wooden Boat Museum for their success at the Canadian Tourism Awards last night.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement.

On behalf of the Official Opposition, I'd like to congratulate the individuals who work hard behind the scenes to support Newfoundland and Labrador tourism.

Mr. Speaker, our tourism industry is vital to the province. It supports many communities including those in my district.

I suggest to the minister that we need to do more to capitalize on our tourism potential. We need to ensure that we use our cultural exports to bring visitors to our province.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate the Winterton Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador for winning the Community Leadership Award. These volunteers are a true testament to passion, dedication and commitment. The Wooden Boat Museum is a true example of what can be accomplished and successes that our tourism operators and attractions can have.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I also thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement.

I join the minister in congratulating both NL Tourism and their award-winning campaign and the Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador for their role in preserving the boat-building culture of this province.

As a former heritage director for Gateway Labrador, I fully appreciate the importance of growing our vital tourism sector as a part of a sustainable economy.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to inform the public that MyGovNL, the provincial government's platform that provides multiple online services in one convenient, combined location is now available to everyone after a successful pilot program.

Mr. Speaker, residents expect government to be innovative and to make their lives easier. With MyGovNL, residents can now review and renew their driver's licence and vehicle registration information very quickly and easily online. Residents can also update their mailing address through their MyGovNL profile, or can advise if they no longer own a vehicle. All of these activities used to require a visit to motor registration offices.

As part of *The Way Forward*, MyGovNL is making it easier for residents to access the services they need online, and will be expanded to include most programs and services for both residents and businesses in the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, the Digital Government plan is transforming the way services are delivered in Newfoundland and Labrador. We are helping residents access government services faster and with less hassle, letting people spend more time on the things that matter most to them.

Residents can now register for MyGovNL by visiting the government website:
www.gov.nl.ca/digitalgovernment.

This plan will put government in a position to deliver on its vision of "One Client. One GovNL. One Relationship."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. WAKEHAM: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister of an advance copy of his statement. We are living in an age which is becoming increasingly more digital. It makes sense to provide more services online for people's convenience. However, I do want to make reference to the fact that there are areas of this province which do not have high Internet

connectivity and there are people in this province who do not use online services.

Recently, a 92-year-old man in my district was fined \$300 for driving with an expired sticker. He did not have access to notification by email, and I suspect that this is happening in all districts in the province.

While I support increasing online services, I also recommend ensuring that in-person services are available to those who wish to use them. Banks, credit card companies, et cetera, all offer people a choice between paper and email. Let's provide services to all citizens in the best method available for them.

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.

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

Online service portals like MyGovNL can help make service provision easier and more efficient, and this is a welcomed benefit of embracing the digital age. I commend those who are involved in the launch of MyGovNL.

With MyGovNL making it easier to access online services, I, too, remind the minister that individuals without access to reliable Internet or without an email address must still be able to access services offline as well.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. CROSBIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On Wednesday, the Natural Resources Minister boasted of the benefit of the Bay du Nord Project for workers in the province, yet the technical briefing given by her department says: Fabrication of the hull, turret, flowlines, umbilicals and other components will be international.

So I ask: How many person-hours of work is the government sending outside the province?

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

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

As the Member opposite knows, as the people of the province know, the project to which the Member is referring, the Equinor project, opens up another basin here in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. If it's sanctioned in 2012, it would open up another opportunity for deepwater work here offshore Newfoundland and Labrador, so it brings many, many benefits.

But I will report to the Member opposite, when he attended the technical briefing, the employment opportunities for Bay du Nord is about 22.3 million person-hours, so about 11,000 – I remind you again 11,000 person-years of employment. That's tremendous benefits to Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member's time is expired.

MS. COADY: This government is working to create jobs and to drive economic opportunity.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: The Terra Nova FPSO will also be leaving our waters to undergo maintenance. It will be gone for eight months.

I ask the minister: How many person-hours of work on the Terra Nova is she sending outside the province?

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

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sending anything anywhere, so I will remind the Member opposite –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. COADY: I will remind the Member opposite that we are very, very pleased for the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador that the life of Terra Nova will be extended in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and just as with previous contracts under Terra Nova, the hull and the work around that has to be done outside the province because it cannot be done here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I think the Member opposite will celebrate the fact that we are enticing and encouraging more jobs and economic opportunity for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Does the minister feel that the FPSO retrofit for Terra Nova could have been completed here if her government didn't put jobs and hope at risk when she cancelled the installation of swing gates?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd be happy to offer a technical briefing to the Member opposite, because he should know that the Terra Nova couldn't fit with swing gates or without swing gates in Argentina. He should understand that technical information before he asks that question.

This government, Mr. Speaker, has been focused on growing the opportunity for oil and gas here in this province. This government has been encouraging the growth in our oil and gas

industry and this government has created jobs and economic opportunity for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, there is a perception in the trades community that workers outside the province are benefiting from our industry. Our residents are eager for jobs and hope.

I ask the minister: Why can't our province develop the necessary facilities to provide jobs and hope here?

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

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

I'm very encouraged to hear the Member opposite support *Advance 2030*.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. COADY: In that plan, it talks about growth and development of our supply and service industry; in that plan, it talks about making sure that we have the opportunities here in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and in that plan, it talks about the growth of development of economic opportunities as well as jobs in this province. I'm glad to hear him supporting *Advance 2030*.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Minister of Transportation and Works if he will table the scores for all the roads which have been paved in his district since 2016, and there are quite a few.

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

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

I have no problem tabling that, but if he would like to save the paper, he can just go online and look at the Roads Plans for the previous three years.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: I'll get to that part now in a little bit, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, if your government have taken the politics out of paving, how can you justify spending \$10 million in your own district this year while only a fraction of this amount in many others, including your own colleagues'?

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

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

I justify it in the same way that this year we spent \$11 million in the Member for Placentia West's district, Mr. Speaker.

We've spent \$140-something million this year on roads throughout the province. Very proud of our Roads Plan. Since forming government, we've paved 2,100 lane kilometres, Mr. Speaker, enough to go from here to Corner Brook three times. We'll continue our investment in roads, Mr. Speaker.

Last year we were fortunate enough to sign an agreement with the federal government that's going to inject another \$104 million over the next nine years into roads, Mr. Speaker, and if the Member opposite would like to contribute to next year's Roads Plan, the portal is open until November 23.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: You can't get near the portal, Mr. Speaker. He pretty well has a monopoly on that.

To his point of Burin, he cancelled the contract down there, and after a lot of infighting and whatnot, they reinstated it because that used to be a Liberal district and it went to Tory. He should have added that to his last answer. It used to be a Liberal; now it's Tory, a bit of a problem, but he had no choice but to go ahead.

Minister, according to access to information requests we have received, your district has received \$24 million in roadwork since 2016, up to and including the coming year, while your neighbouring Liberal district has received less than \$5 million.

Don't you think this is a case, Minister, of you taking advantage of your position?

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

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

The reason why we cancelled the tender in the hon. Member's district was because we decided to do the project in a one-year lot versus a two-year lot.

Mr. Speaker, I ask him to do his research. The other reason was there were some budget considerations around where we were able get a better value for our money. The reality is right now that project is concluding I think.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to apologize for investing money in roads throughout the province. I have a district that has great economic opportunity. Almost 25 per cent of the seafood in the province is transported on Route 70 and the Veterans Memorial Highway. The reality is we have invested money all over the province in roads, and we look forward to doing the same thing again in the 2020 construction year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I remind the minister there are 39 other districts in the province, not just one. It's absolutely disgusting to watch and read what I read in the ATIPP request. He can't justify what he spent in his own district.

They took the politics out of paving, not us. They need to live up. Their actions have to match the words, Mr. Speaker, and the laughter comes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. PETTEN: We never took it out, Mr. Speaker. We've never advocated for it; they did. They need to stop fooling the electorate because they're not fooling me or anyone on this side.

Minister, will you commit to having an independent assessment completed on our provincial roads – not your own little five-year roads mock-up you have done – with all the scores being made public, independently and this will truly take the politics out of paving and stop trying to fool the people of this province?

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

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, it's terrible that a Member that spent some time in the Department of Transportation and Works gets up this afternoon and talks about our engineers and our regional engineers. There are a number of components, Mr. Speaker, to the five-year Roads Plan – our regional engineers, our input. The Member has every opportunity until November 23, which is Saturday, to have his input.

Mr. Speaker, we have conversations all the time in this House with regard to roadwork and how things are done. The Member opposite has those conversations; then he stands up here today and tries to slander what I've done.

Mr. Speaker, I advocate for infrastructure for the people I represent – absolutely, 100 per cent. But realize, we've spent \$154 million this year on roads in our province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The past year, Red Indian Lake in Millertown has been designated as a unique place in the Commemorations Program through Heritage NL. Combined with the lucrative upcoming Valentine Lake mine, the Buchans Highway is set to see an increase in traffic, between tourism and industry.

I ask the minister: When are we going to upgrade the 11 kilometres before Millertown and the six kilometres going into Millertown of this very important highway to make it safe for the workers and tourists before the road falls apart or someone gets hurt?

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. Member for the question.

I would actually have to go back and check with our engineers and our regional staff to see where that highway is right now.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Route 60 is a main thoroughfare through the District of Topsail - Paradise. It's the section of the road on the shoulder that's constantly being eroded. In fact, I suspect it's going to be –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Order, please!

MR. P. DINN: I suspect it will be eroded again after the rainfall.

I'll applaud the Minister of Transportation and Works for the temporary solutions that have been made, but the residents of this area want to know when will there be a permanent solution to correct this dangerous part of the road.

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

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

I'm enjoying the exercise today.

Mr. Speaker, as the hon. Member knows – he and I had this conversation, I think, in a sidebar earlier this week – the temporary repairs were made. I did receive an email yesterday and I think the hon. Member is correct. It's something, certainly, that we will look at for the next construction season.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

What do you say, Minister of Transportation and Works, to the people of the District of Harbour Main, people from the communities of Seal Cove, Holyrood, Conception Harbour, Colliers, Roaches Line, Makinsons, South River, North River, and others who have to drive over roads which are in a deplorable condition?

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

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

I am very proud to stand here today and talk about what this government has done for Route 75, Veterans Memorial Highway. It's one of the proudest things that I've done as minister, what we've done for the people of that region, I say to the Member for Conception Bay South, because I tell you, 10,000 people a day travel on Veterans Memorial Highway, and it was this government that put passing lanes on that highway.

I've heard so many horror stories, been touched myself by people that lost their lives on that stretch of highway, Mr. Speaker. So, don't question this government and what we've done for the people of the Bay de Verde Peninsula.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Mr. Speaker, these are serious and real concerns from individual citizens, Holyrood council and many other municipal leaders. We need to know what you say to these concerned residents of these communities who are calling my constituency office on a regular basis. Minister, I know for a fact they are contacting your office as well.

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

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

Again, very proud of what we've done for the people of the Bay de Verde Peninsula. If you want to think about Conception Bay, it was just last year, because of savings that we were able to achieve from our five-year Roads Plan, that we were able to do in one year the entire Salmonier Line. That piece of road was atrocious, Mr. Speaker, and we took the savings in construction season 2018 and actually did that piece of road.

Mr. Speaker, we're doing improvements all throughout the province: 2,100 lane kilometres in the last three years; \$700 million of

investment; \$154 million investment this year. We're very proud of our roads program.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Mr. Speaker, as the minister responsible for highways and roads in our province, how can you justify the excessive road improvements in your district when so many other communities, like the ones I've mentioned, are left with roads in a total state of disrepair?

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

MR. CROCKER: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's why we spent \$154 million this year – 2,100 kilometres; \$700 million in the last three years.

Mr. Speaker, we have 10,000 kilometres of roads throughout this province. We're replacing them at a rate of, I think, about 4 per cent a year, which we need to improve.

Mr. Speaker, we've been working with the federal government on our new northern and rural program. I'm going to be in Ottawa, hopefully, to meet with the new minister sometime in December to talk about some flexibility in some of the programming to ensure that we're getting every single infrastructure dollar we can into the province.

I invite the Member opposite, I invite everybody in the House or anybody watching: the deadline for submissions to this year's Roads Plan is this coming Saturday. Get the information in. We'll work with our regional engineers to get another \$100-plus million invested in roads again in the 2020 construction season.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. FORSEY: Construction of the new Sir Robert Bond Bridge was completed a couple

years ago, but the residents of that area feel that the lack of lighting at the intersections is creating safety issues and it's only an accident waiting to happen.

Will the minister agree to install lighting in those areas?

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

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for the shout-out for this side for getting that bridge finally completed.

It was only yesterday they were standing in this House talking about cutting and cutting, and how we were going to reduce.

Mr. Speaker, road safety is very important. I'll take the Member's question under advisement. It's the first time it's been raised with me. If he would like to have a chat a little bit later about it, I can certainly accommodate that conversation.

Mr. Speaker, 2,100 kilometres; \$700 million; over a \$150 million in the 2019 construction season. I can assure every Member of this House we will have a Roads Plan next year very similar to the one that we had this past year.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. FORSEY: This part of the TCH runs through the boundary of Bishop's Falls and I've had concerns from the municipality of Bishop's Falls that they don't feel they should be paying for the lights in that area because of the construction that was done by Transportation and Works. This is a heavy traffic area for residents – ATV crossings, pedestrians and visitors as well.

Will the minister commit to fixing this issue?

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

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, I'll certainly commit to looking at the issue.

The reality is it's been Transportation and Works' policy throughout that when we install lighting, whether it's traffic lights or any other lighting, typically it then becomes the responsibility of the municipality. If the Member opposite would like, I can certainly take a look at this case for him.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. O'DRISCOLL: The English School District, a consultant report, parents and school council all agree that Mobile needs a new school. Last year, the former minister of Education stood by the decision to build an extension; however, students have outgrown the extension. The school is full, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the minister: Will you admit that an extension was a waste of money and a new, bigger school must happen?

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

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

When the study was done some years back, it showed that the current school, the footprint improvement, would catch this number, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure of how much that's been outgrown already, but it's something that from the department's perspective and the Department of Education we can take back and get back to the hon. Member.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

You keep speaking about politics on the other side and we hear that since I came in here six months ago. The evidence that supports a new school – the budget in 2009 included four new schools, yet the students in a rapidly growing area in my district are left without. The Mobile school will be over capacity in 2021, even with the extension. I suggest to the minister that the extension was a wrong choice.

I ask the minister: When will students in my district get the new school they were promised?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I think right now we have four schools under construction throughout the province: Gander, Bay d'Espoir, Paradise and others. Mr. Speaker, direction for school construction typically comes from the school district. I would have to go back and see what the latest submissions to the department, or to the Department of Education, have been with regard to school construction.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. WAKEHAM: Mr. Speaker, on October 28 the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District announced a review of the Stephenville High school system. On November 7 Piccadilly high school was added to the review, effectively creating an area over 75 kilometres, 24 communities, two high schools, six elementary-primary schools and one alternate learning centre. No reason was given why a review of the Stephenville - Port au Port District is happening.

Can the minister provide the reasoning why this district was chosen?

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

MR. WARR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the hon. Member for the question. Mr. Speaker, reviews happen within the school board. They happen on a regional basis – or on a yearly basis, I'm sorry. As I answered this question once before, my district alone as well – I have three or four schools in my own district.

It is a review; nobody here is closing schools, Mr. Speaker. It's the board doing their due diligence and I certainly support the board in their reviews. If the hon. Member has any other concerns he can bring them forward.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. WAKEHAM: Mr. Speaker, if the reason is financial, no financial information was presented. If they are comparing with similar areas, no examples were given.

I ask the minister once again: Why or how and for what reasons was the District of Stephenville - Port au Port chosen?

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

MR. WARR: There's no particular reason why, Mr. Speaker. It is a comprehensive review that the district undergoes and we do it every year.

Mr. Speaker, again, I support the review of the schools. We have 260, 270 schools across the province. Do we need that many? I don't know but the district undertakes the review. It's been going on for years and I appreciate the district doing their due diligence.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. WAKEHAM: Mr. Speaker, the Newfoundland and Labrador English School

District is providing schools with a – quote – thought-exchange website for public input, which has a limit of 300 characters for your thoughts. This was not relayed to the communities in general, only to the schools.

This method of public input has only been open to people who have communication with the schools involved and who are computer literate and have access. These parameters are not applicable to a large percentage of the district's population.

I ask the minister: What will he do to ensure that more people have an opportunity for input?

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

MR. WARR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm glad the hon. Member brought that up because it gives me an opportunity to talk about the engagement that we, the district, will undertake with parents, with people in that particular area, with the town councils. Mr. Speaker, this review is comprehensive and we will ensure that every person gets an opportunity to speak to the review of those schools.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We've all seen the pictures from Nain of the perishable of food that was frozen and spoiled; 26 pallets spoiled just recently. People in Makkovik just learned yesterday they shipped frozen food in September and it never arrived. Trying to track it down they found out just yesterday that it has thawed and spoiled; thousands of dollars worth of food for Makkovik.

I just got a call before I came in the House from Natuashish. A businessperson there had a whole pallet of soft drinks spoiled, but he's more concerned about the eight other pallets that are

missing, can't find it. This goes on and on and on.

I'd like to ask the minister: When will he admit that the ferry, the *Kamutik W*, has failed to meet the service contract for the North Coast? I'd like to add, scripted answers by the minister about tonnage and roll-on, roll-off abilities really is unacceptable, when the boat itself doesn't have the ability to meet the service requirements.

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. Member for the question.

Mr. Speaker, I addressed this same question yesterday, I think, here in Question Period. The reality is this is not acceptable. We don't find it acceptable. All damaged goods will be replaced or the person will be compensated at no cost to the individual or the end-user.

This will be burdened by the company, not the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker. These decisions to offload these pallets in Makkovik, we're questioning the company on that. We can assure the people of the North Coast, whatever products, whatever supplies were damaged, make your claims to the company. We will hold them responsible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, there is not enough time to get the freight to the North Coast now. Time has run out for my people. Freeze-up is around the corner.

I want to say, all this that's happening was told to the government, to Transportation, last year. All these problems were told this was going to happen. It fell on deaf ears and I think the minister should be accountable for that.

I ask him: Do you think money is going to feed empty bellies this winter?

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

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, it's the choice of the individual or the end-user what they decide to take, whether it's compensation in money or a compensation in goods. We've been quite clear to the company we don't care how they get these goods to the North Coast. We've been 100 per cent abundantly clear. But these goods, whether it by boat or by airplane, will go to the North Coast at the expense of the contractor.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

It's been almost two weeks now since the Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council closed its doors, essentially eliminating some services to the newcomers to this province.

I ask the minister responsible: What is the status of that council now and what have they done to get this service restored?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I certainly cannot comment on the status of RIAC's decision to suspend their services. Officials have been in contact with the organization and requested official updates. They certainly provided important service to the community, to the people of which they served. The department had a couple of projects with this organization in terms of a Creative Sewing Atelier and a number of initiatives to help advance entrepreneurship.

We'll be working with RIAC and the process to determine what the next steps are, Mr. Speaker, but this is not an organization that is core funded by government. They are independent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier regularly claims to be – and I quote – fully committed to the environment. Yet, we have seen the failure of wetland capping, a mining road abutting the Salmonier Nature Park, a massive salmon die-off, an illegal road going through Thorburn Lake and the destruction of the East Coast Trail at Ragged Beach, all on their watch.

I ask the Premier: Does government's environmental policy allow exemptions for destructive events such as these?

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

MR. BRAGG: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start by saying our best resource in this province are the people in this province.

We have a certain number of officers who go around and patrol our province looking for things that may not be up to par, we would say, or against the law. It's the people we trust to bring anything they notice that goes on within the environment back to our office. Once we find out about that, Mr. Speaker, we send out an investigator.

Anytime there is an incident – and the Member opposite mentioned four or five different ones. If she wants to take them on one at a time, I can update her on the status of each and every individual one; but each one we're aware of, we have a file on, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, in 2015 the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador pledged to develop the Eagle River Waterway Provincial Park to complement the Mealy

Mountains National Park. The Eagle River Park would protect 3,000 square kilometres of natural and cultural landscape.

I ask the minister responsible: What is the status of the addition to protect ecological areas in The Big Land?

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

MR. BRAGG: Mr. Speaker, the question came rather fast at me, and I wouldn't mind if the Member opposite wouldn't mind repeating the question, but in case I'm not sure what the answer is, I will certainly get the answer for the Member opposite and get back to him at my earliest convenience.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BROWN: The Eagle River Waterway Park, 2015 status?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is certainly something that is a commitment of government; the waterway park is an important piece. We've been working as a government with the Indigenous governments and partners on site and working with private foundations to be able to work and advance, and we're firmly committed to making sure there is a waterway park here in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Mr. Speaker, Ragged Beach is a key natural asset for the East Coast Trail and survival of the

Witless Bay Bird Sanctuary, and those working to protect it have legitimate concerns about its preservation. They are not convinced government at the municipal and provincial levels have exercised due diligence.

I ask the Premier: Will his government put an immediate freeze on the destruction of Ragged Beach and bring in a mediator who can help resolve this situation that has the potential to destroy a natural jewel?

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

MR. BRAGG: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the question.

This morning we had representatives from our department at Ragged Beach and they did an investigation that showed that the people operating and the construction in that area was within the controls of the permit we issued a week or so ago. Nothing out of the ordinary, that we're not aware of right now, is happening at Ragged Beach.

As early as two hours ago, I got an update on that and the construction they're doing there. I guess for the knowledge of everyone, the parking lot appears – and I saw pictures and the hon. minister opposite can change the view of this – has been eroding away. They're planning on placing some armour stone to protect the parking lot.

There's no other development along that beach except the development of the parking lot, protection of that parking lot area – from the pictures and from our expert people that were on the scene this morning.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. J. DINN: Mr. Speaker, we understand that those members from his department went up there checking to make sure that the equipment itself was in proper working order and not about

whether the assessment or the beach was being destroyed.

What we're asking for is, put a stop on this and have a cooling-off period, a moratorium, and bring in a mediator to resolve the outstanding issues that have been identified by those who are trying to protect a natural area – that's what we're looking at – and assess properly whether or not it's being eroded or destroyed. It's a gravel beach. It hasn't changed in over a hundred years, according to a lot of the people who live up there. It's been that way in living memory.

Will he commit to that?

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

MR. BRAGG: Mr. Speaker, I really understand the passion of the Member opposite, but when we are issued and we go out and investigate and someone asks us for a permit, we send out our team. They would outline some criteria and some conditions are outlined with that permit. Within the parameters of that permit and the work area described, that's where we would allow or not allow construction.

We can't have a moratorium on everything that ever happens in this province. Unfortunately, sometimes it may not be what everybody feels it is, but in this case, the work that's being done there, we feel confident is within the parameters of that permit. If someone feels and can prove otherwise, please bring that attention to our office.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I give notice that on tomorrow I will move that in accordance with subsection 8(8) of the Standing Orders, the spring 2020 sitting of the House of Assembly shall commence on March 2, 2020, and end on March 4, 2020, but in all other aspects the parliamentary calendar for 2020 as issued in 2019 shall remain unchanged.

MR. SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

MR. BRAZIL: Yeah.

MR. SPEAKER: Oh, sorry.

MR. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, could the minister please clarify the dates again on that? I think there's some confusion.

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

MS. COADY: Thank you very much.

The Table Officer was just explaining to me that I misread it as well. So allow me to try this again, and thank you to the Member opposite.

I give notice that on tomorrow I will move that, in accordance with subsection 8(8) of the Standing Orders, the spring 2020 sitting of the House of Assembly shall commence on March 2, 2020, and end on June 4, 2020, but all other aspects of the parliamentary calendar for 2020 as issued in 2019 shall remain unchanged.

MR. SPEAKER: Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

MR. JOYCE: I hate to do this to the Minister of Transportation and Works but –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. JOYCE: Please don't take it personal, and there's no collusion here. I'm a bit more independent these days.

Mr. Speaker, no need to read the prayer of the petition. I'm just going to stand up, Mr. Speaker, again, and I understand that some of the staff have been in contact with our office and some people in the local areas to get some of this work done before the winter season steps in.

I'll just go through a few things, Mr. Speaker, that you can mark down also when we visited the site back in 2018 was the brook out in Little Port Road. I know when the report came back it said debris has been cleared in part of it, and across the road, the whole ditch was filled in because of it and that has been cleared, but I just want to let you know that the gabion basket, as in the report that you'll see from the regional office, is out a long ways. The rocks have been pushed out of the gabion basket.

What happened in spring this year is that there was a lot of debris and a lot of the ice built up in that area and that caused flooding across the road, and that gabion basket, which was caused by the flood, needs to be repaired because there is still flooding across the road. Once it hooks up the ice and debris, it flows over the road, not through the culverts that were cleaned.

The other thing is, as I mentioned to you, a lot of the potholes that were in John's Beach that, hopefully, was going to be fixed last year, and I mentioned it to the minister and he's going to have a look at, is in some of the areas with the heavy equipment and with the tractors that were in the area, they'll be fixed this year. I know the parts in Frenchman's Cove have been done, the big contract in Frenchman's Cove and I will be forwarding about the John's Beach brook.

A lot of the work is getting done. I know they called yesterday about the gabion baskets that two of them weren't cleaned out. I understand the minister is asking to see if they can be done by local contractors as soon as possible, because

when the spring comes and the rocks are rolling off the hills, Mr. Speaker, it will be a bit too late.

I just want to know that the minister is working with the people and just advise the people on the South Shore that the minister is getting some of this work done. We'll get as much work as we can done before we get some funds from the rural and northern fund to fix John's Beach in the Mount Moriah area.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'll keep it going.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for the petition. We're committed to Route 450 and the work that needs to be done there, as we are committed to routes and roads all through the province – 2,100 kilometres, \$750 million, \$150 million this construction season alone.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to address some of these concerns around the gabion baskets with the contractor this fall. We realize there are some other issues with the gabion baskets being pushed out. That would have to be part of next year's construction season. We've already had a commitment under the new northern and rural program to do a tender next year in the John's Beach area.

I've also asked staff to go back and have a look at the whole area of Route 450 in the Bay of Islands to make sure that we're capturing other things that have happened, subsequent to the January 2018 storm, because we're still seeing damages caused from that storm. We had a slip just this year, I think, in the Copper Mine Brook area that wasn't attributed to the storm, but probably was a part of that storm. So we know there are ongoing issues there, Mr. Speaker, but we're committing to resolving those issues.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Before I recognize the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue, I just want to say the noise level in the House is a little too high. I ask Members to keep the noise level

down so we can all hear what the Members are presenting on behalf of their constituents.

The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

MR. DWYER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Transportation and Works is going to love me. This petition, again, is for the Minister of Transportation and Works, about Swift Current. Like my colleague from Humber - Bay of Islands, I won't rehash the petition, just for the simple fact that I've presented it several times.

But a couple of things just came to light, obviously, through Question Period and stuff like that. I think what we're looking at here, more than anything, is that we've been told that this was a plan that was going to go over two years, over two construction seasons.

MR. SPEAKER: I hesitate to interrupt the Member, but it's a requirement of our Standing Orders that the –

MR. DWYER: To read it?

MR. SPEAKER: – that you read the petition. I should've called the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands on that as well. Sorry.

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

I knew the Minister of Transportation and Works would want me to read it out anyway, I was trying to save him a little.

The reasons for this petition are that: Highway 210 is the main road going through the community of Swift Current.

The Department of Transportation and Works currently are working on a two-year project – that I think I just found out in Question Period, when it was retendered, I understand now that it's a one-year project – on Highway 210 from Garden Cove towards Pipers Hole, putting in an extra turning lane for Garden Cove.

The current tender for the highway work includes Highway 210 only. The side roads of Swift Current are not included.

The side roads in Swift Current are in deplorable conditions. The side roads have not been repaved since the initial paving in the early 1970s. The side roads which were used to divert traffic and store equipment during the current tendered construction contract are in worse shape now due to the extensive traffic it endured.

Therefore we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to consider paving/upgrading our side roads, including Darby's Cove, Sharpe's Lane, Maple Crescent, Old Church Road, Academy Hill, Hollett's Point and Shoal Cove Heights in Swift Current to the current existing road upgrade project as an add-on.

Just to reiterate, I guess, where I started was that even in the petition we're under the understanding that it was a two-year plan; now it's gone back to a one-year plan. Absolutely no discrepancies or anything like that, Mr. Speaker, on the work that's being done there because Farrell's construction is actually doing an excellent job. I thank the minister that they actually got the contract. There's absolutely nothing wrong with workmanship, Mr. Speaker. I would absolutely say that.

I think the thing is that there was no consultation with the local service district. Consultation before the commencement of the next construction season would be greatly appreciated, Mr. Minister. Would I be able to get that commitment for consultation with any public works projects that are slated for Placentia West - Bellevue?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member's time has expired.

MR. DWYER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

One of the reasons why this project actually looks to be turning into more of a one-year

project versus a two-year project is because of the terrific work that the contractor is doing. This was a contract for 11 kilometres, and it seems now the contractor is actually going to get, at least, most of this work, maybe not the surface coat, but a lot of the work that we had hoped to do over two years, the contractor has performed so well and the weather has co-operated that we'll get it done over one year.

Mr. Speaker, our commitment to Route 210 is very clear. We had a business case approved for Route 210, I think some time in June, for some \$20-plus million; a continuing commitment to that route. One of the things we recognize about Route 210 is we have some great international trade, great jobs happening there now that's going to benefit us in the trade world. We're going to be looking at continuing to expand on Route 210. We see the developments in St. Lawrence, the developments in Marystown and further developments on the Burin Peninsula that require this route.

Mr. Speaker, the Member references consultation with municipalities or local service governments. While that is something we would love to do, the reality is we are paving almost 1,000 lane kilometres a year. They're within our right-of-ways and we (inaudible) to get the work done.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member's time has expired.

Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MS. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The new ferry schedule for 2019 cuts our transport service in half. This is a drastic reduction. We are isolated for seven months of the year. To have a ferry steam past within a mile of our dock is doing us a great injustice.

We will lose a reliable and affordable service that can connect us to the South and beyond. We also stand to lose the Cartwright, Newfoundland and Labrador connection to a highway that leads us, in a timely manner, to other parts of the province. We utilize the ferry service at every

opportunity. It is the only economical means of travel and freight provision that is provided to our community by the province for five months of the year.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned residents of Rigolet, Newfoundland and Labrador, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to reinstate the ferry service to include our community on the South Coast run.

I'm standing here presenting another petition about transportation. Why is transportation so important? Well, first off, we have six communities in my district that are totally isolated. The only means of transportation is either the expensive air or the marine passenger ferry.

Standing here I also want to say this petition is not about asking for something new. What the residents of Rigolet are asking for is for something that was taken away from them without public consultation. They've always been included in the South Coast run. They have friends and relatives, their travel plans all focus around being able to access the Cartwright - Black Tickle run. Cartwright is actually tied to the Trans-Labrador Highway, which is another means of transportation for them. It's very, very important for them to be able to access this ferry.

I also want to bring attention to the fact that my district is the only district, I think – one of the few districts – that's entirely isolated with no road access. Why do we have to tolerate this deplorable transportation, costly air? I've said in the House many, many times how expensive it is and it's quite shocking to people, but looking at the marine transportation it's an affordable transportation cost to my people.

Six Indigenous communities having to withstand deplorable service. The service has failed and it's obvious to us. It's impacting our food security but, more importantly, in relation to this petition it's isolating us totally. I think that we really need to talk about the elephant in the

room. Why is this allowed to happen? Why six Indigenous communities where they still speak their language, the Innu people, the Inuit people and we're still isolated? We're not only isolated without roads, we're isolated by a failure from government to provide us adequate consultation and adequate service. I say it's a failure to Indigenous people.

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm not trying to set a record today.

Mr. Speaker, to the Member opposite's comments; we've seen a lot of challenges this year with the structure of the ferry service itself. This January or early February we're going to be convening a meeting of the users with the company, everybody involved.

I extend an invitation to the Member opposite to be a part of that conversation of how we structure the schedule going into next season, if that means we include Rigolet in a South Coast run, if there's a way to do that, Mr. Speaker. I offer a sincere invitation to the Member opposite to be a part of that discussion this winter.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further Petitions?

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CROCKER: Roundabouts.

MR. LANE: No, nothing for the Minister of Transportation. The roundabouts are working just fine now.

There have been numerous concerns raised by family members of seniors in long-term care throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, particularly those suffering with dementia, Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive debilitating conditions, whereby loved ones have experienced injuries, have not been bathed regularly, not received proper nutrition and/or have been left lying in their own waste for

extended periods of time. We believe this is directly related to government's failure to ensure adequate staffing at those facilities

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows:

To urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to instate legislation which includes the mandatory establishment of an adequate ratio of one staff to three residents in long-term care and all other applicable regional health facilities housing persons with dementia, Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive debilitating conditions in order to ensure appropriate safety, protection from injuries, proper hygiene care and all other required care. This law would include the creation of a specific job position in these facilities for monitoring and intervention as required, to ensure the safety of patients.

Mr. Speaker, all the signatories here today are from Labrador. They're all from Lab City and Wabush. This is certainly a petition now I have presented – I don't know how many times – a lot. It was initiated by a group called Advocates for Senior Citizen's Rights. As the prayer of the petition says, what they are looking for is a guarantee in legislation – not regulations, not health authority policy which can be changed on a whim, but in legislation – to guarantee certain ratios for the safety of their loved ones who are in long-term care. Specifically, for people with Alzheimer's disease, dementia and other cognitive debilitating conditions.

That's what they're looking for. There have been many, many stories – if you go on there they have a website, a Facebook page. If you go on there you can see all the stories from all throughout Newfoundland and Labrador where people have gone into the long-term care facilities and found their loved ones who may not have been fed. Not because nobody wanted to feed them, not because there was no food, but because the food was left on the bedside. They'd show up at dinnertime and breakfast was still there because there was no staff person to actually feed their mother and father and they weren't able to do it for themselves. Or to find them in conditions where they're basically zoned out, overmedicated or strapped into chairs in these facilities because there's not enough

staff there to let them wander around the area, to take care of them and make sure that they're not aggressive towards each other or that they don't fall and hurt themselves.

Those are the issues. We can build all the long-term care facilities we need – and certainly we do need them, we recognize that – but if they're not going to be staffed appropriately, then we are doing a real disservice to the people of our province. As I said many times, these people that we're talking about, they're our grandparents, they're our parents and one day, yes, maybe you and I.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Further petitions?

Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

You're going to have to bear with me for just one second because the Government House Leader left me unprepared.

Mr. Speaker, I call for third reading of Bill 18.

I apologize for my not being prepared.

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Transportation and Works, that Bill 18, An Act Respecting The Demise Of The Crown, be now read a third time.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that Bill 18, An Act Respecting The Demise Of The Crown, be now read a third time.

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.

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, An Act Respecting The Demise Of The Crown. (Bill 18)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act Respecting The Demise Of The Crown," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 18)

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Transportation and Works, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 9.

This is on the Order Paper, number three.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into Committee of the Whole with respect to the said bill.

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.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Bennett): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 9, An Act To Amend The Automobile Insurance Act.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Automobile Insurance Act." (Bill 9)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I only have a couple questions so I won't take very long.

How was this error detected?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Chair, the error was detected within the department in some consultation with the legislative drafters after.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: Are you aware if anyone has been impacted by the error since the initial legislation was passed in April?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: No, nothing has been brought to our attention, but when we noted the error, we figured it was in the best interest of the general public to correct it as soon as possible.

CHAIR: Seeing no other questions.

Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clause 2.

CHAIR: Shall clause 2 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 2 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Automobile Insurance Act.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report Bill 9 without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 9.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 9.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

MR. SPEAKER (Reid): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 9 without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matter to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 9 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

MS. COADY: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

MS. COADY: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, report received and adopted. Bill ordered read a third time on tomorrow.

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 4, Committee of the Whole.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Service NL, that we go to Committee of the Whole on An Act Respecting The Regulation Of Real Estate Trading In The Province, Bill 13.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole and consider the said bill.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Bennett): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 13, An Act Respecting The Regulation Of Real Estate Trading In The Province.

A bill, "An Act Respecting The Regulation Of Real Estate Trading In The Province." (Bill 13)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, I have spoken on this in second reading and I was on the Committee. I've had a lot of conversation on this piece of legislation, back and forth and with officials, with the industry, I guess doing my own homework on it and whatnot. I expressed in second reading the concerns I had – or have, I should I say. I think they're legitimate concerns, and I just want to go back to a few things that I think are important to hit on, to be on record for.

We went through original Committee stage with the department and we had the industry, NLAR, in, and then we had someone from the public come in. Then we called them back for a second Committee meeting. We went to the Committee Room; we had meetings up there.

My questions have always been about the mortgage broker/real estate broker transactions on the same transaction for the buyer and seller, which is the sticking point in clause 28 in the prohibition. That's clouded the full bill for me. I've continually asked, and I'm on record – and I've read through *Hansard* and what have you – and I was never given an answer up until Tuesday, asking the minister: Can you justify why you don't want that part of the legislation? I was never given an answer.

I was in this Chamber and I had colleagues, Members opposite, and some of it's written here in this stating why, basically agreeing what I agreed. They couldn't understand, why can't you allow mortgage brokers to be part of the act? It's in *Hansard*, on the same page as I was, and no one was giving us any answers.

Then when we moved from here to a Committee Room upstairs, the tone changed, the argument changed. I was always at a loss, and I kept asking: Why are we changing? If it's not broke, why are we fixing it? Can you give me examples? Can you justify why you want that out? No, NLAR wants it out. They're opposed to it. Consumer protection; valid points, but it's not the home run that I – why do you need that out?

The Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune was quoted in *Hansard*, clearly quoted in Government Services Committee *Hansard*, September 30, 2019: "I would have loved to

have been a mortgage broker on a lot of transactions because I would've been equipped more with information and, therefore, in line representing my client to the best of my ability and to represent them. Because at the end of the day, the real estate industry is very competitive, no doubt about it. It's how I'm going to represent, say, if Alison is my customer, my client, I want her to be my client forever and ever, amen. So, it is, I guess, complex.

"You mentioned control. I don't like that word because it makes it seem like we're doing something wrong here. The industry is a good industry, but I think, for me, I would weigh towards the agent being a mortgage broker is going to equip him or her to represent the client. At the end of the day, for me, I want to hold on to that client and do the best I can. So it's about equipping that agent."

That's coming from a former real estate agent who totally supports in that commentary, when we were in this Chamber in the Committee stage, of leaving that there – as was I, as were others. We hit the Committee Room and that was changed. Somewhere along life's road there was an influence on changing their opinion.

The reason I'm going down this road is I believe in the Committee stage; I do believe in a Committee stage. Our leader has asked for it, and we all think – I thought it was a great experience, but if we're going to make things better and have true committees, we have to have some level of independence.

Obviously, somebody got to them that never got to me, and got them to switch their views or change their opinions. There was nothing shared from my side. When we got through the debate things were changed, and we had a healthy debate. Then when we got to the end of the Committee stage, before we were bringing it back here, there was a majority decision – and I heard commentary, the minister, we had a committee. Your Committee should have ironed this out before it ever came back to the House. I totally agreed.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment stated so when he sat in on a meeting. He said: Shouldn't we have a unanimous decision? I agreed, but I'm not going

to agree to make it a unanimous decision because everyone are happy and we have to put on a facade that this Committee is great. No, I don't agree. On principle, I will not agree. If I don't agree with something I'm not going to agree for the sake of agreeing, but that's the way it felt.

So here the minister gets up yesterday or whenever, Tuesday, during second reading and made a reference of the fact that the Committee made this decision, the Committee supported the bill being referred back to the House and no recommendations. The majority, which happened to be the governing party, decided that.

Like I said when I spoke in second reading, I can do math. I just accepted it. If anyone were to take it and answered in that meeting, they would have quickly picked up that's exactly what I said.

It's bothersome, because if we're going to go forward and as we go on over the years in this government, whoever is in power, and we're going to do committees, we have a lot of work to do. I think it's a great idea, it's a great concept and good things come of it, but I think a caution to everybody is there needs to be a level of independence.

You're sending a bill to committee for a reason. Government, bureaucracy with your minister's direction, has developed this legislation with industry or what have you. Then they feel they're comfortable, they've gone through the review. They're going to send it to this Committee. That's what the Committee is about.

You look in Ottawa, they do Committee stage. They give them back with 100 recommendations. Now, they might not accept them all. They might get back and they might be voted down in the House. They're accepting these changes; whether they accept them or not, they're accepting there are 100 recommendations. Whether they accept them, that's a separate issue. The Senate does the same thing. That's a committee. That's what we signed up for.

Not when you leave one Chamber and you go to the next room a week later and the view has

changed because someone, obviously, influenced their view, and you're asking: Can you explain to me why? I'm not getting any answers.

So backtrack to Tuesday; I'm having a conversation, you're back and forth – that's part of this stuff. Can we agree to something? Is there a way? So back and forth with the minister having a very open conversation, that's great. That's what the Legislature is about. I think it's great. In a minority government it's even better.

Yesterday, upon entering the House, an email comes back. Now, it was all: I'll talk to you tomorrow. We're going to look at it, I'll talk about it. That's fine, I don't expect an answer right away.

I get a news release. We're only gone through second reading, we're not gone through Committee. This bill is not passed yet. We're going through the process. We went through second reading. There was no big hang-up in second reading because it was a fluid conversation and we went through it pretty quickly.

A news release comes out stating the bill has gone through second reading and these are the recommendations – even though I had an issue with one of those recommendations. I'm like: Is there a common courtesy? I know it doesn't have to be anything; to each their own. I would provide the common courtesy to say we're not going to make any adjustments, this is the way it stands. That's fine. I wasn't offered that.

So in my conversation with colleagues opposite here, we were almost like, okay, well I guess there's no change. We have to accept it, which is not in keeping with the way I like to operate but fair enough.

I had my opinion on the mortgage broker/real estate broker piece, and I still do. I really do, but in saying that, I had the pleasure this morning to meet once again with NLAR, and to their credit, they highlighted a very important point that was not given to me before, as much as I asked.

It's a very important lesson, I think, learned here that government needs to start paying attention to. They provided me with information that I

asked government. Had government not known, that's fine. They should've known. They ought to have known. There's no excuse.

This legislation – I'm not impressed by it, because this went through the Committee, and this is the poster child of committee – we're going through Committee for the first time in 20-some-odd years or what have you. It's all good, but do your work. The NLAR met with me, we had a discussion. I went in that meeting and I was like, no way, because I am a bit stubborn and I get galvanized in my opinion and it was like, no one is changing my mind.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. PETTEN: I know, yes, you hear that. At least I'm being honest. There's no put-on here, it's pretty straightforward. You got it. They all know me.

But I went in and I sat down and I was open minded. They gave me two or three very important aspects that no one ever told me, but government ought to have known that.

If we're going to truly have a Committee stage, we're going to go through Committee with this legislation and we're going to sit in this Chamber and we're going to ask questions, whether it be Service NL or Education or Municipal Affairs, be equipped.

I did sit on that side. I wasn't in the Chamber. I was there, I sat in on the legislation, I know. You do your homework. You have a group of officials behind you. Give justified reasons.

Am I not worthy enough for an answer to a serious question, because we're Opposition or we're that other crowd? I don't know, what is it? I wasn't told. The Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune had a totally different opinion – as for a couple of his colleagues, but he especially did – from what he did here in the Chamber. Obviously, he was told something that wasn't shared with me. What is it? Is it something in the industry that I'm not privy to?

If we're going to have committees, if you're going to bring stuff to committee, do the homework on it. Whoever is responsible should do homework, because I think what NLAR

provided me today was a very important piece of information that they ought to have told me, I should have known. Would have made this conversation and argument and debate go a lot better.

When you go out into public and people ask you about any of this legislation stuff, you want to be able to talk with confidence, especially if you're involved in it like I've been through this process.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. PETTEN: You should know what you're talking about, but you're not informed. Not only not informed, then there are games being played, when you're coming into the House of Assembly and you get this news release 1:25 p.m. There's no respect. That's what it is, Mr. Chair, there's no respect.

AN HON. MEMBER: Dismissive.

MR. PETTEN: It's dismissing you. You're asking a question.

Another point, it made its way through me, I heard back through this grapevine. It's a grapevine so people need to be careful what they say because it always trickles back through, we've learned that along the way. Me, being MHA for CBS – I'm not allowed to use my name – he got friends in the industry. Oh, yeah, he must have friends in the industry. That's why he's fighting for this.

Well, I'll be on record, Mr. Chair, I don't know any mortgage brokers. There's one person I'm an acquaintance with and I have never worked with her in my life. I don't have any real estate brokers as friends.

AN HON. MEMBER: Shameful.

MR. PETTEN: I know real estate brokers, and the king of shame is back shaming me.

Anyway, I find that offensive. It is offensive. I don't have no motive. I come in this Legislature and I do take offence to that. I come in this Legislature, I come in and I ask questions, you do your debate, you do your role. You do

whatever, your petitions, but I come here to represent the people who elected me and when we do legislation this affects every resident of the province. You're trying to make a piece of legislation better. That's all.

If you feel that something is not right, you can agree for the sake of agreeing but, at the end of the day, that's not where we need to be. If we're going to do committees, if we're going to make these committees meaningful, if we're going to do this in a respectful manner, which it should be, it shouldn't be controlled by the majority of government. It should be controlled by six people in a room sitting down and hashing this out, having serious conversations, making sense of it. Then we'll come back here in a united front and say: We agreed with everything, but this one here we're not comfortable with because we weren't given the right answers.

We were not given justified answers in our Committee to keep that in the legislation. Evidence shows in *Hansard* it wasn't there. It changed after the fact but I was not privy to being told why. I was not being privy to being told why. It wasn't privy to me. That is wrong.

I used up my time, but I wanted to make that clear, what happened during this Committee stage, I think it's a great concept, I hope we continue on but, it should be some lessons learned because this crowd over here, as we're referred to –

CHAIR: Order, please!

The level of conversation is getting too loud.

Thank you.

MR. PETTEN: That's right, Mr. Chair, they don't want to listen.

We're paying attention, we pay attention, but I'll also say something else the public pays attention, too. Never lose sight of that. Never lose sight that people actually watch this Legislature because I think a lot of Members don't think they do. Trust me, they do. They pay attention to the Legislature. They watch what's going on. They actually listen. I hear that a lot of times, I'm just as surprised myself. I'm like, you really listen to this? They listen and no one likes

that stuff. No one likes this stuff to happen and be treated.

So, I'm on record as saying my total displeasure with how this all unfolded, but on that note, we have questions, but we will be supporting this legislation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PETTEN: I thank NLAR for providing clarification.

This is a good piece of legislation, but had we been told all the facts upfront and had the minister and her department done the proper amount of work and research, we would've had this solved a while ago and saved everyone a lot of time.

On that note, Mr. Chair, thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I apologize that the Member for Conception Bay South feels offended by the news release yesterday, but the news release actually said: "Legislation to modernize the Real Estate Trading Act to benefit both consumers and real estate professionals has gone through second reading in the House of Assembly."

It wasn't debated; we weren't in Committee, and the bill wasn't confirmed or passed. I'm sure the Member opposite knew that when he read the news release, Mr. Chair.

There were a number of questions that the Member for Conception Bay South had there. My departmental staff, in fact, held a briefing, and two Members from the PC Party attended the briefing. The Member for Conception Bay South could have attended the briefing also if he wasn't satisfied with the Government Services Committee process.

MR. PETTEN: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Chair, he's asking what the dual agency and dual licensing difference is. I'm going to enter the complete difference into the House of Assembly. I've got 14 minutes here now.

The definition of a dual agency, Mr. Chair, is when the salesperson represents both the seller and the buyer of a property, but dual licensing means when a broker or a salesperson is also licensed to provide the service, for example, under the *Mortgage Brokers Act*.

The conflicts, Mr. Chair – the Member is leaving – a potential conflict may arise when the seller expects the salesperson to obtain the highest price possible for the property whereby the buyer expects a salesperson to get the lowest possible price, Mr. Chair. This may be further complicated when there are issues regarding financing, inspections or other conditions.

With dual licensing, the conflict says the dually licensed real estate salesperson and mortgage broker would receive compensation on both the transactions, Mr. Chair. It may be challenging for the client to understand and differentiate the cost and the fees in order to make an informed decision whether to bundle the services with one provider. Situations may also arise where the clients feel pressured to complete a transaction without understanding the longer term risks, for example, increasing interest rates or fluctuating property values, Mr. Chair.

In the consultation process that was completed under dual agency, the response to banning dual agency was mixed in the *What We Heard* document, and only 28 per cent was in favour. This document was done when the previous PC government did the consultations in 2012-13.

Dual licensing, 83 per cent of respondents to the *What We Heard* survey on the engageNL felt that a salesperson should not also be registered under the *Mortgage Brokers Act*.

The recommendation that came forward, Mr. Chair, was that banning dual agency could pose challenges for clients in rural and remote parts of the province and recommending clear disclosure to clients to ensure that they are

aware of the potential for conflicts of interest. The recommendation for dual licensing was recommending a restriction from acting both as a real estate salesperson and a mortgage broker for the same client on a transaction.

Mr. Chair, my understanding is that the Government Services Committee process worked really well, except there wasn't a consensus on this particular clause 28. I am sure as we go forward with all the bills that we are going to put to the Government Services Committee that this is going to come up again, where everyone within the Committee does not agree.

The information came back to my department. My department reviewed the information they received and based on *What We Heard*, based on the information from the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Realtors, based on the consultations that we completed, we felt it was in the best interest for the protection of consumers of Newfoundland and Labrador to leave 28 in place as we proposed it, Mr. Chair. Therefore, our government decided that we would come into the House of Assembly and we would debate it in Committee that 28 should remain.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to stand and speak for just two minutes on this bill and say I will be supporting the bill. As the former minister of Service NL, we know there are a lot of regulations within the department that needs to be upgraded and brought up to modern times. The protection of consumers is the big thing here. So I just want to say that I will be supporting the bill.

I just find it kind of ironic – and before I say that, before I say my point, myself and the independent, the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, we had a briefing this morning and a discussion this morning with the deputy minister and her staff and they did a great job. So I just

want to recognize that we sat down with the staff. They answered every question we had. They gave us the amount of time as we needed. We had a great discussion with the deputy and the people in the room. So I just want to recognize that they were very open and we pushed back on a few issues, but they came forth and they gave us the information.

I just want to say, by no means, am I going to be saying that everything in this bill is correct. We cannot put anything in place that's going to protect 100 per cent, no minister can. This minister can't, no minister can, but what you can do is do it to the best of your ability to cut down the possibility of any paper fraud. This is what this bill is bringing in, is minimizing the possibility and protecting the consumer which is very important.

I will be supporting the bill and, again, I just wanted to give a little shout-out to the deputy and the staff at the office for their time and patience. When you're there and you know this is coming up and there's a possibility of amendments made, they want to make sure you have all the information and we want to make sure we had all the information.

Also to the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Realtors, I spoke to them and I had a very great conversation with one of their people also. They were giving us information also.

Then, as the former minister of Service NL, I had a good idea about this legislation, a good idea of the consumer protection part of it. This was all encompassing for my conclusion that I will be supporting the bill.

I just have to mention something here. We're all elected in this House of Assembly and we all have input in this. There is no one here – we all have the right to be part of this, but what I find so funny is we see the Opposition Member and the minister going back and forth and talking about the Government Service Committee – so funny, two people in this Legislature, the two independents, not even on the Committee. Not invited to it. Not even a part of it.

Two people here – and I know I'm probably one of the longest if not the longest, not in the House

but probably the first one ever to get elected, not on the committee, with the knowledge. This Member here has been here now what, nine years?

MR. LANE: Nine years.

MR. JOYCE: Nine years, not on the Committee, yet here they're going back and forth how we have to have a consensus here in this House of Assembly. It is something to think about.

I'll just give a good example. This morning, myself and the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands went up, had a great discussion with the deputy minister and staff and we got enlightened a bit more, and we had some questions about this.

This is why you can't just close in on the government Members, the Third Party and the Opposition because there's going to come a time when myself and the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, there may come up a time when they're going to need our aye or nay. As two Members who have been in this Legislature, we want to make sure that we have the best information possible to make the decision. But if you're actually cut out of the process, forget two of them, there will come a time, mark my words, I've been in this place long enough –

MR. LANE: Could have been this time.

MR. JOYCE: Could have been this time.

Again, part of the reason, I gave the Opposition some information. I said go check some of this out, as I knew. Sure enough, came back, we just got the information this morning what I was saying yesterday.

So this is just a caution to this Legislature, is that – and I'm the type, if you're going to make a decision, stand up and make it, be a person strong enough to stand up and make it, but also you need the best information possible to make the decision. So I'll just say to the government, please take that into account, somewhere take that into account, that's all. But I will be supporting this bill. I think it's the best that could come in, that the minister could bring in to protect the consumers.

I think, also, from the Association of Realtors' point of view, this is a saw-off for them also. There are some things there they didn't want, some things they wanted. But this is more something, okay, we can live with, because I'm sure there are other things they wanted to push. I'm sure there are some individuals that say, okay, we don't want this done, but this is something that you can say, okay, we can live with and we can work with.

Also, with the department, I know they're saying that, look, we can't guarantee, but this is the best that we can put in there. We all agree, there's no legislation in this House that's going to be foolproof, but you do the best of your ability to ensure and minimize the risk to the consumers, and I think this bill here is doing that.

I just want to thank the department and the Association of Realtors, and my colleague, the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, for arranging the meeting this morning with the department. My final point, and I know I'm repeating myself, but I have to get it through. There will come a time that myself or the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands is going to have to make a tough decision. If we don't have the right information, we may make the wrong decision. So I'm just throwing this out with no criticism to anybody, but just remember, this is in a minority situation where you may need us. If anybody, for or against, we need to make sure we have the right information before we make the decision.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: I just have a few questions here, Mr. Chair.

Outside the engageNL portal, who was originally consulted in drafting the bill?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: So the Member opposite is asking me who was consulted in drafting – or rewriting the entire act, I should say, the entire bill.

The engageNL portal, we used the information we received from the previous administration, 2012-2013 and we also had consultations with NLAR. They also did their own consultations throughout the province, which I attended one, but my staff attended many.

CHAIR: The Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: Did you consult other professionals related to the industry such as lawyers, mortgage brokers, home inspectors, appraisers and property appraisers?

CHAIR: The Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Chair, when you're writing a bill as such, JPS is always consulted and all departments within government are consulted as it goes through the process, through Committee, through Cabinet, back to Cabinet and probably back to Cabinet two or three times. Each time, the departments and Justice and Public Safety are consulted within government.

Did we consult? We put it on the engageNL portal so everyone out there who wanted to voice their opinion – I think there were 90 people, actually, responded to the survey, Mr. Chair. Within that, it was classified as real estate sales, buyers and general public.

CHAIR: The Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: When will the regulations be publicly available?

CHAIR: The Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Chair, one of the amendments that I'm about to put forward on clause 54 will move the act to come into force September 1. In the original act it was January 1 but this was if we were to bring the bill into the House of Assembly in the spring session. Of course, as the Member opposite knows, it went to the Government Services Committee and here we are now in November.

CHAIR: The Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: What is your plan to inform and educate the industry participants and

the public about the contents of this new act? How do you intend to make sure they understand the legislation?

CHAIR: The Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Chair, we'll be working with the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Realtors as we move forward with the regulations and drafting the regulations. The last few days Service NL has been putting out some social media tweets on Twitter and stuff just to inform the public. There is a news release, as you know, that went out yesterday and probably another one will go out when we get the bill passed.

Usually, it's the individuals that are involved and engaged in this industry because it's an act and it's pretty complicated. It's primarily the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Realtors, but there are also some people in the general public that will be interested.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

The Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: The Government Services Committee recommended that government review the *Mortgage Brokers Act*. When will that occur?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: That was one of the recommendations that came through the process and I certainly understand why now, Mr. Chair. We are going to take it under consideration. As the Member opposite would know, the Department of Service NL has a significant amount of legislation, so we will definitely be adding it to the roster and review for further determination.

I can't exactly give you a date because you know the number of pieces of legislation that we're working on.

CHAIR: The Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

This is not in the scope of that but related to it. NLAR is also advocating for regulation of property inspectors. Is this something government is considering?

CHAIR: The Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: We've had some conversation with NLAR and we're waiting. I don't know if the paper is in from them yet, I haven't been advised. It may be. Just waiting on a draft paper for my staff to evaluate and then there will be further discussion.

CHAIR: The Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm just going to have a couple of comments. My colleague borrowed my bill.

I don't want to make it too repetitive. I, too, will be supporting the bill, Mr. Chair. I think overall it's a good bill. It's something that certainly needed to be done. One of the things I take from this is that I've always said – I think a lot of Members have always said – did you consult with the stakeholders, the people who are going to be impacted most by this?

Certainly there were a lot of consultations. I actually attended one of the consultations myself. I can't remember if it was the Holiday Inn or the Airport Inn. I think it might have been the Airport Inn that was held by NLAR when they were discussing all of these things, so I had a pretty good idea what it was all about when it came forward. I certainly supported it in principle.

On the clause in particular that was a little contentious, I would say I do have some mixed views on it. Certainly, NLAR, what they wanted was that you could not be a real estate agent and also be a mortgage broker at all. What the government changed it to was that you could, but not on the same transaction. That was sort of the compromise position.

NLAR actually wanted to go and take it further, that you had to choose one or the other, but they are satisfied with the compromise position that's been chosen. I can see both sides of it. From the

perspective of protecting the public, consumer protection, I think the full separation would be better again.

There are other things that could have been changed in here. One of the concerns I still have, to some degree, it's a matter of how far do you take it in terms of the consumer protection. Even with what's been proposed here, you could have a situation – for example, we're saying that it would be a conflict of interest for one individual to be the real estate agent and to be the mortgage broker. We're saying it's a conflict of interest; that's why we're not allowing it on that transaction.

Even under this legislation, you could have a husband and wife, as an example. I'm the real estate agent and my wife is the mortgage broker or vice versa and that, even with this legislation, is allowed. While that's not something that's been pushed by NLAR and it's not in this – and maybe it's something at some point may evolve – personally I can see a big conflict and have an issue with that because, really, it's almost like the whole blind trust thing.

I believe blind trust is total BS, in my opinion, because you're depending on the fact that, in this case, husband and wife, and you're representing the exact same person. I know the financial information and my wife is trying to do the sale and we're depending on the fact that they're never going to talk about it. They'll never mention it across the supper table; they'll never mention it lying in bed. It will never come up. It will never come up because they're going to draw that line that this is a conflict. I can't talk to you about that honey, that's what we're saying.

When you look at it that way, or even in the case of in the same office, somebody has a business and you have a mortgage broker here. I'm at this desk and the real estate agent is at that desk and we're still dealing with the exact same person. We're just kind of, on a leap of faith, hoping that there are morals and ethics and all that good stuff – which I'm sure there is 99 per cent of the time. Although we've seen an example, a very high-profile example where that wasn't the case, so absolutely it can happen, but we're depending on the fact that I'm not going to talk to the

person sat right here about that same individual. I'm not going to share information.

Even with what's here I see gaps in terms of consumer protection. I would like to see those gaps closed, personally. With that said, NLAR has not asked for it. It's not here and there are a lot of good improvements. I'm not going to vote against doing something good because it doesn't go all the way. I'm going to vote for doing something good and I'm going to encourage the government to look at these other issues and perhaps close those gaps as well, because it's all supposed to be about consumer protection.

With that said, Mr. Chair, just to reiterate, I will be supporting the bill. I would echo the comments of my colleague from Humber - Bay of Islands about the whole Committee structure and the fact that while we're having a little bit of a back and forth over how the Committee work went and the meetings of the Committee, all this happened and myself and my colleague weren't even offered the opportunity to be part of it.

Even if we weren't voting Members of the Committee, we should at least have been given the opportunity to attend the meetings, hear what was being said and offer our input. Who cares if we couldn't vote on it? We all know when the vote comes it's going to be the majority is on the government side. They're going to vote for it one way anyway, more than likely. If it's being done totally right and everyone agrees, it'll be a consensus anyway.

So whether I have a vote or not, I should've had the opportunity to participate, as did my colleague. If we chose not to go and not participate, fine, that's our right, but as duly-elected people, elected by the people – not someone who was elected to a party and then left, or got banished or whatever the case might be – duly-elected by the people as an independent Member, we should've had opportunity to be on those committees if we wanted to and to participate, and I do want to reiterate that point.

As my colleague said, it would make a big difference. Do the math. I would say, do the math. There are 20 Members over here, 20 Members over there. One person in the Speaker's Chair, we're down to 19. Another

person at the head of the table here, we're down to 18. The Minister of Justice off on leave, we're down to 17. Guess what? If there was a major amendment to turn this around and it could've come to myself and the Member for Bay of Islands and could've totally taken this off the rails and off track. That's not what we want to do, because as I said to the minister – and I know my colleague feels the same – we want to do the right thing.

No politics here; I couldn't care less about it. I really couldn't, but it is important to understand, particularly – it should be a given. Whether it's a minority or a majority, it shouldn't matter. We should all have input. We should all be given that respect, but specifically, in this minority situation, more than ever, we have the ability, these two chairs here, to determine how things are going to go.

In the future, we would ask for the courtesy and the respect to be part of the process and given all the information so we can make informed decisions.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

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

Just a couple of questions, if I may, with regard to the cost or the potential financial impact on the people buying, the consumer. I see here, a lot of these, it looks like there are going to be administrative costs associated with this, whether it's collection of fines, whether it's the setting up of training and continuing education. I'm assuming most real estate brokers and salespersons have errors and omissions liability insurance, but maybe some of them don't. Establishing a real estate recovery fund, I can see an awful lot of administrative costs and requirements coming into this.

Has there been any discussion or costing out of the potential impact on a transaction? I would assume these costs, then, would be passed on to the consumer, to the person buying the house and sometimes to the person buying the house for the first time. Has there been any discussion

or costing out or analysis of potential impacts of these on the person buying the homes?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Chair, I would just like to respond to a question the previous MHA had about code of conduct, or an indication. I just want to let him know for the House that the REALTOR Code exists. It's effective March 2016, and it was the Canadian Real Estate Association that put this forward. Within this code, it actually does talk about code of conduct and conduct unbecoming and such. So there is actually a document and a code the realtors follow. NLAR follows this.

For the second lot of questions: What are the fees that are required to work as a salesperson? I guess it's the fees around the process. It's \$1 million for errors and omission, but under the current legislation an individual would be required to pay about \$2,000 to become licensed as a salesperson.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: The costs are as follows: The licensing exam is \$1,500; the annual licence fee is \$200, and the salesperson bond, at present, is \$160. Others costs could include NLAR fees if you're a member. Of course, the errors and omissions, which is required, that's approximately, it says, about \$400 per year. Let's see if there's – yeah, so the annual bond fee then will be replaced, of course, by the recovery fund that's in this piece of legislation.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John's Centre.

MR. J. DINN: Just to clarify. I understand that's right, there would be fees, but I'm just wondering, to the person who's going to the real estate agent or the broker, will that affect what they're paying or will that be absorbed in the fees that are already there or will it have an impact on the fees?

In other words, what I'm looking at, in effect we are setting up, for example, establishing a real estate recovery fund that doesn't manage itself. There's probably going to be lawyers involved; there's probably going to be people to manage it, to do the paperwork. There's probably going to be, when it comes to collection – then it's the other question, too. I'll come to that. When it comes to collecting the penalties and so on and so forth, administering it. I would assume, my knowledge, anything to do with administration, there's going to be an increase in the cost.

What I'm looking at right now, when you look at the fees real estate agents or mortgage brokers charge, is there a potential here to result in an increase of fees to the consumer, to the person buying the house to accommodate these extra administrative requirements now, the training? Because someone has to pay for it.

So it's either the real estate agents, they're going to absorb the costs and the fee structure that exists or they're going to find a way, well, we have to pay this so it's going to be passed on to the consumer. Housing prices are expensive enough as it is. I'm just wondering, has there been an analysis to the potential impact on the person who's buying the house, who's availing of these services? That's the first thing.

Secondly, I'm just wondering about – it's great to assign penalties, the devil is always in collecting the penalties. It's great to assign it but I'm just looking at the mechanisms for collecting it. Again, if you're hiring people to collect the penalties, that's a cost that's to NLAR or to the real estate agents.

I'm just wondering again, will these get passed on to the consumer or are they going to be absorbing those extra administrative costs within the fees structures they currently charge? I'm just trying to look at what's the financial impact on the person buying the home. Secondly, once they impose penalties, how do they plan to go about collecting it?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Chair, the recovery fund will be within the department. The Department of Service NL will be managing

this. There will be no additional staff hired to do this. We have capacity within the department to do this. The superintendent already monitors such things under the prepaid funerals and insurance, and there are other acts within the department that we do similar work and activities right now.

The same thing for the fines, the superintendent of the *Real Estate Trading Act* will be responsible.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The superintendent and the deputy superintendent are significant positions. This bill will permit the appointment of these positions by minister rather than by Cabinet. Can the minister provide the reasoning for this, and will these individuals continue to be hired through the Public Service Commission?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Well, the Member opposite almost answered the question at the end.

In actual fact, the individuals that are hired through the PSC right now hold these positions. So there's no need, because they're the individuals within the department that would hold the positions. So the minister just adds the position onto the person holding that role. So rather than having to take a sheet of paper and go through the Cabinet process when somebody moves or goes to another job – which is what happened in the department in the last 12 months – the minister who is responsible for the department can assign the position to the person who has received the job through the PSC.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Consultations show 98 per cent support for a code of conduct. Clearly, that is something people wanted.

When do you expect to have a code of conduct in place, what will it include, who will administer it, and how will it be enforced?

I know that's four questions all in the one.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: So the code of conduct will be drafted as per the regulations, and we anticipate it to be in place by the summer of 2020.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: Will training be accessible in all regions of the province?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: What I can say to that question is the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Realtors do training right now. While everybody is not in the organization, the majority of the people are in the organization. So if there are individuals that are not in the organization that want the training, they can certainly reach out to the Department of Service NL and we'll be working with them to ensure that they receive the training as outlined in the act.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: Consultations indicated that respondents were equally divided on whether there should be different types of licences, such as residential or commercial licences. It doesn't appear in the act.

Can you offer insight on that? No, okay.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: Can you provide more detail on the recovery fund and how that will work?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: So, Mr. Chair, under the current legislation, the minimum required bonding for brokers is \$15,000, and for

salespersons it's \$5,000, and in the event a bond is needed to be called, the amount would not necessarily be enough to cover all the deposits held in trust. So what will happen is the proposed legislation will create the fund to be financed by the industry participants and managed by Service NL, and regulations will be set out in how the licensees will contribute to the fund and administration of the fund.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you.

NLAR was very clear that changes be made to address concerns on how the industry operates in the digital age. For example, the use of e-commerce, advertising and marketing.

How have these concerns been addressed?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service NL

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Chair, the code of ethics is my understanding, but I'll get additional information if necessary.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: Just one more question, and it's more of a statement if anything. We are supporting this, obviously, along the way, but in clause 28, I mean, we had some concerns.

I would just pass on my concerns, being a former car salesman, that when they come in to buy a vehicle, you come in, we figure out what vehicle you wanted; then, we put you in the finance office. We were doing one-stop shopping all the one place, and taking care of the customer. I think that was my thought when I came in the Committee first, that that customer doing that job and taking care of you to the highest extent that I could do if I was doing it. You were taking care – I can't say a customer for life, because you have a choice to go somewhere else to buy a car, but we were working on the best car and the best deal that you could get for yourself, whether it be financing, different types of financing and whatever the case. That's just my opinion and just my statement on that clause 28.

Thank you.

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

One quick comment that I forgot to mention when I spoke earlier. One of the things that has arisen from some of the discussion and briefings that, certainly, I had with officials of the department – who did a great job, as the Member for Bay of Islands said – and members of NLAR is that one thing that is lacking and I would hope – I just say it for the sake of the record; I know the minister is aware – but one of things that is lacking that's very much needed to complement all this is that we need some new, updated legislation for mortgage brokers.

My understanding is that sometime in the 1970s or something is the last time that that legislation was changed. We do need a review of that to look at professional standards and everything else and what can be done and what should or what should not be done, how it should be modernized to meet the needs of today's industry and so on.

I just throw that out there, again, just for the record because I think it is something that should be worked on as well to complement what we're doing here today.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Seeing no other questions, shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 18 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 to 18 inclusive carry?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 18 carried.

CLERK: Clause 19.

CHAIR: Clause 19.

The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Chair, I'd like to enter an amendment.

An Act Respecting The Regulation Of The Real Estate Trading In The Province: Clause 19(1) of the bill is amended by adding immediately after the word "broker" the first time it appears the words "or salesperson."

This amendment would add words that were inadvertently omitted in the bill.

CHAIR: This House will recess to review the proposed amendment.

Recess

CHAIR: Order, please!

We have reviewed the proposed amendment and the amendment is found to be in order.

All those in favour of the amendment, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, amendment carried.

CHAIR: Shall clause 19 carry with amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 19, as amended, carried.

CLERK: Clauses 20 to 53 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 20 to 53 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 20 through 53 carried.

CLERK: Clause 54.

CHAIR: Clause 54.

The Chair recognizes the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Chair, I'd like to enter an amendment.

An Act Respecting The Regulation Of Real Estate Trading In The Province; 1. Clause 54 of the bill is deleted and the following substituted: 54(1) This act comes into force on September 1, 2020; (2) notwithstanding subsection (1), paragraph 6(1)(e) and sections 9 and 10 or a subsection, paragraph or subparagraph of those sections come into force on a day or days to be proclaimed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

The amendment would amend the date that the act comes into force.

CHAIR: This House will recess again to review the amendment.

Recess

CHAIR: Are the Government House Leaders ready?

Order, please!

We've reviewed the proposed amendment and it is also found to be in order.

Shall the amendment carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, amendment carried.

CHAIR: Shall clause 54 carry with amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 54, as amended, carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act Respecting The Regulation Of Real Estate Trading In The Province.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report Bill 13 carried with amendments?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the bill with amendments, carried.

CHAIR: The Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move the Committee rise and report Bill 13.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 13 with amendments.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

MR. SPEAKER (Reid): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have carried Bill 13 with amendments.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole has reported that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have carried Bill 13 with amendments.

When shall the report be received?

MS. COADY: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

MS. COADY: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

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

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

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Service NL, the amendments be now read for a first time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK: First reading of the amendments.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Service NL, that the amendments be now read a second time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK: Second reading of the amendments.

On motion, amendments read a first and second time.

MR. SPEAKER: The Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Order 4, third reading of Bill 13.

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. the Minister of Service NL that Bill 13, An Act Respecting The Regulation Of Real Estate Trading In The Province, be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting The Regulation Of Real Estate Trading In The Province. (Bill 13)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act Respecting The Regulation Of Real Estate Trading In The Province," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 13)

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Order 3, third reading of Bill 9.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I've been informed I said tomorrow rather than now.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 1, Address in Reply.

MR. SPEAKER: Order 1, Address in Reply.

The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to speak for a few moments, Mr. Speaker. I know there's been a lot of discussion on decorum in the House. I've often said, Mr. Speaker, when I sat in your Chair that it was one of the cornerstones of what I wanted to deliver in the House.

There is an MQO poll out and I'm not going to go into the numbers, we all know the numbers –

MR. K. PARSONS: (Inaudible.)

MR. OSBORNE: And I say to the Member opposite, be a little bit patient and have a listen and I'd be delighted if you got up and followed me in fact.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to go into the numbers in the poll. We all –

MR. K. PARSONS: (Inaudible.)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. OSBORNE: I'm going to take my seat for a moment, Mr. Speaker, if the Member wants to stand and say that.

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

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

He said if I wanted to follow him and I told him I wouldn't follow him back and forth across the floor like he does. I'm going to stay where I'm to.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, I'll speak about that for a little minute here now.

I wasn't going to go down this avenue; I was actually going to talk about something else and I'll get back to that. I'll speak about that for a minute. Because we can get dirty in this House if we want to. That's not my nature. It's not my nature. I can take a political jab, I can throw a political jab. In fact, sometimes I enjoy that and I've often said that in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I know the Member opposite is divorced and I'm not going to go into that, but I'm going to compare crossing the House –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. OSBORNE: Hang on now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I want to remind the Members, temperate language should be used in this House. I want to remind Members –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I just want to remind Members at this point that temperate language is advised for this House.

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis, on a point of order.

MR. K. PARSONS: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

That is uncalled for. Disgusting.

MR. SPEAKER: This is a disagreement between two Members.

The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MR. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, this is not an attack. Give me a moment to say anybody, any particular Member – I'm going to compare it to divorce for a moment, because if you're in a relationship that doesn't work is the point that I was talking about. I'm divorced as well.

If you're in a relationship that doesn't work, and that's the case when I was on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker. The Member knows how I was treated when I was on that side of the House. We've often had conversations about that. We've had conversations about it. If you're in a relationship that doesn't work, you've either got to stay in the relationship and not be happy, Mr. Speaker.

They're going to try to turn what I'm saying into something that's completely not at all what I'm saying. Mr. Speaker, if you're in a relationship that doesn't work, you've either got to stay in that relationship and be unhappy or you leave that relationship for something that works.

Mr. Speaker, when I –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, I'll say again, this was not a personal attack. I'm divorced as well, I said, and I found a new relationship, one that works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask the minister to continue with his remarks.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when you're in a relationship that doesn't work, you have a choice of either staying in that relationship – the Member made a jab, and what I'm comparing it to is being in a relationship that doesn't work, and that's exactly where I was when I was on that side of the House.

MR. K. PARSONS: My personal business is my personal business, not yours.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MR. K. PARSONS: I'm not listening to that no more.

MR. PETTEN: Get some control of this House.

MR. OSBORNE: Anyway, as I was saying, Mr. Speaker, this wasn't a personal jab at anybody. I compared it to myself as well.

When you're in a relationship that doesn't work – and myself and the Member who made the jab at me had conversations about the fact that that side of the House was not being particularly fair to me, and the way they were treating me. He knows that because he's had those discussions with me.

So when you're in that type of a relationship, Mr. Speaker, you have a choice. You can stay and be abused or you can leave that relationship. That's exactly what I did, Mr. Speaker. It's no different – or you can stay and be unhappy. Not necessarily abused, but you can stay and be unhappy where you are or you can find somewhere where you're happy.

I can proudly say, Mr. Speaker, I joined this side of the House, and the relationship that I have with my colleagues on this side of the House is much different than the relationship I had on the other side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is what we just saw in this Legislature a few moments ago is unfortunate. It's unfortunate. That type of thing doesn't have to happen. We don't have to take

jabs at each other on either side of the House, and that's the point I was getting to.

When I started to speak, I said there's a poll out. I'm not going to get into the numbers on the poll because we all know what the poll says, but I'm going to get into some of the intent for why the poll is the way it is.

Mr. Speaker, I will say, the Leader of the Third Party and the Third Party have seen some changes in that poll. I believe it is because of the approach they're taking and the fact that they're not making the types of jabs when somebody is on their feet speaking that we just saw when I was on my feet.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that part of the reason they've seen some change in the poll is because of the approach they're taking to the issues. You go after an issue, you deal with the issue, you can have political jabs back and forth, you can make statements back and forth in good fun, but you don't have to get dirty about it.

I believe part of the reason the Third Party are seeing some of the improvement in their numbers, Mr. Speaker, is for that reason. Likewise, the Conservative Opposition, the Official Opposition, have seen some changes in those numbers as well. I believe the reason they've seen the changes in the numbers is because of the way they're dealing with issues, the way they're reacting in the House.

Mr. Speaker, we've often talked about collaboration in this Legislature; we've talked about collaboration. The reality is collaboration is something we need in order for this Legislature to function.

The Member for Cape St. Francis had asked me to apologize. I will say on the record that if he found my remarks offensive – I didn't get a chance to fully go into it. I should not have pointed any individual out. I should simply have said any Member or any individual who is in a relationship that doesn't work, look for a relationship that does.

I will apologize to that Member, Mr. Speaker, and I'll apologize to all Members of the other side of the House. They should know me long enough, they should know me well enough

because I've been in this Legislature and I don't make personal attacks. If he felt it was an attack on him, I apologize for that. It wasn't intended to be that. I used myself as an example as well.

I'll apologize to all Members of the Conservative Opposition if they took offence to that. I hope it's not politics that's being played here because that was not the intent of what I was saying, Mr. Speaker. The individual took a jab at me and I simply said when you're in a relationship that does not work, you either stay in the relationship and you're unhappy or you leave the relationship, and that's what I did. I left the relationship because it wasn't working.

Mr. Speaker, I sincerely apologize to the Member for Cape St. Francis, and I'll get back to the initial intent before there was a jab made at me and some remarks made about me which were unfortunate as well. He stood on his feet and repeated those remarks. That is unfortunate, but that is exactly the point of what I was talking about.

I'll say directly to the Leader of the Third Party, you've avoided that type of activity and I think that it has played very well for your image and the professional approach that you take to issues in this Legislature. You and I had a discussion about that a little bit earlier today, Mr. Speaker. The independent Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands is in the Legislature; he's taken a very similar approach. Avoids conflict – no doubt, have a jab, have a little bit of fun, in good fun. Not a personal attack, but in good fun. I think that he's found – I know when I've been in his neck of the woods the view that the people of his area have of him. It speaks for itself and it speaks in these numbers. It speaks in the numbers that are in the poll.

It's unfortunate that we got off track, Mr. Speaker, but the point when I initially stood is that we can all take a lesson from these numbers, on both sides of the House, in how we conduct ourselves in this Legislature, in the remarks that we make to each other in this Legislature. With that in mind, again, because I hope the Member for Cape St. Francis is listening, Mr. Speaker, I sincerely apologize. What I said wasn't intended in any way, shape or form to be directed at him. I used myself as an example. There are a number

of people in this Legislature that were in a similar situation.

We don't have to be unprofessional to each other in this place in order to work together. In fact, I think we'd work together better when that is not the case, when we are professional towards each other and when we respect the fact that in each of our respective districts, people put us here for a reason. We may not always agree with the policies we're putting forward or we may not always agree where we stand on a particular issue. We may not always agree on an idea, but it doesn't mean, Mr. Speaker, that we have to make personal jabs at each other across the House.

Again, I enjoy a political jab if it's in good fun or in good humour, Mr. Speaker. I think that's part of what makes this place tick, to a certain degree. We need to have a good laugh every once in a while. When you make a comment in good humour, I think that bit of levity can allow this place to actually function well also. Mr. Speaker, what we've seen here today even, when I stood on my feet and the jab, it's ironic because that's exactly the point that I was making when I stood to speak, that this type of jab or insult across the House is not conducive.

Mr. Speaker, we've talked about collaboration, and in fact, just after the election, in the spring session of the Legislature, the Conservative Opposition talked a lot about collaboration. I did an interview there a day or so ago, Mr. Speaker, talking about collaboration, and in fact in that interview I said the discussions that I've had with the NDP party, Mr. Speaker, I found that there's a willingness to collaborate. Even discussions that I've had with independent Members, I found that there was a willingness to collaborate. You may not always reach what you're trying to reach in those discussions, but there's a willingness to try.

I haven't found that, Mr. Speaker, with the Conservative Opposition, the Official Opposition. I mentioned that in the interview that I did, that we need a different approach. My door is open, and I've said that many times, that my door is open to working with all Members of this Legislature, and even the Official Opposition. I've had requests from a couple of Members of the Official Opposition over the last

couple of weeks, Mr. Speaker, to help them with an issue and I don't think there's anybody can deny that I've done what I could to help those individuals with issues in their own districts or for constituents of theirs.

What we've seen here again this afternoon, I think, is a display of politics, Mr. Speaker, and that's unfortunate because if we're going to really take ownership of what's happened in this province and for the betterment of the people of the province, and we're going to put this province on a sound fiscal footing, Mr. Speaker, we need to be able to find solutions and share ideas.

I've said many times over the last couple of weeks, just as an example, I'm not interested in closing hospitals to balance the books. If that's what it means to balance the books, I'm not going to close a hospital to do it, but just this week in the Legislature, I was asked in Question Period am I going to close hospitals in order to achieve savings. I think I'm very clear, I think I'm on the record as saying I'm not going to do that. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the only people that are talking about cuts and layoffs – how many people are going to be laid off in order to return to surplus – are the Official Opposition.

I don't think anybody in this Legislature, from either side, has said those things. That's unfortunate as well because that creates a level of fear with public servants when it doesn't have to be there. In fact, I think I've been very clear in our public sector negotiations that we would achieve reductions in the size of public service through attrition, and that's what we've been focused on.

I've had people in this building since that Question Period ask if there were layoffs coming. Mr. Speaker, we are not interested in reducing the size of the public service through mass layoffs. We're going to approach it through attrition. To raise those fears in Question Period, where most people tune in and the media is tuned in, is unfortunate. That's what stops collaboration, that type of fear mongering that hospitals are going to close or schools are going to close or people are going to be laid off.

That's where I go back to the polling numbers. I'm not about to gloat about these polling

numbers, Mr. Speaker, which is why I said at the very first words when I stood on my feet, I'm not going to get into the numbers because that's not what this is about. Those poll numbers could change tomorrow. I've been at politics long enough to know that at the very next poll, these poll numbers can change. The last thing I'm going to do, any time there's a poll in this province, is stand up and gloat about where we are in the polls versus somebody else, because they can change the very next poll.

Anybody who spent any amount of time in this Legislature would be absolutely well aware that's the case, that those polling numbers can change with any given issue or with any decision, but they can also change based on the level of co-operation and the level of dialogue in the Legislature. It's unfortunate this got the way it did when I stood to speak because that was the exact message I was going to portray, that it didn't have to get the way it got, Mr. Speaker. Any Member of this Legislature who has sat with me long enough knows that's not the type of individual I am and that's not the way I approach things.

Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that that's the way it got. These polling numbers, as I intended from the outset, should be a lesson for everybody in the Legislature on how we dialogue, on how we converse, on how we try to find solutions. That was the message I intended when I stood up, Mr. Speaker. That's the message these polling numbers, I believe, are telling all of us in this Legislature.

Thank you.

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Sometimes it's indeed a privilege to stand in this House and some other times it isn't, and this is one of those. Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we were insulted and embarrassed about the comments that were just made in reference to a colleague of ours.

We've come a long way in the last two years in trying to improve decorum here, and the conversations. Having the debate, an open

debate when it comes around policy or somebody else's individual view from their party perspective is very healthy. It's part of the fabric of what the House was built on here and it's part about having a good, open conversation so that you can get the best information relayed to the people. But when it's a personal attack on an individual or calling out a particular situation in their lives, that's overstepping the bounds.

I know, no doubt, after things come out, people feel regret. They may even have an honest apology for it, but the reality is we have to be accountable to a higher standard here. We have to think. We have to have our filters before we put things out to the general public. Particularly, before we attack a colleague in this House of Assembly on a personal matter. That's not the way we operate in the House of Assembly. It's not the way the people of this province expect us to operate.

There are times we stand here as proud individuals representing our districts, representing, if you're a minister, your department; but, particularly, all of us represent the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We have to do that with full decorum. We have to do it by following the procedures and the protocols in the House of Assembly.

What we witnessed right here, Mr. Speaker, takes us all down to a lower level, and I would hope the general public would realize this is not how we conduct ourselves in the House of Assembly. We conduct ourselves around representing people, being cordial to each other, being open for dialogue and keeping any personal views separate from doing the best part of the work for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I won't belittle that anymore, but I do want to talk about the House of Assembly and how we've gotten to this point. We've had many challenges over the last year and a half, particularly as it comes to harassment, intimidation and lack of decorum in certain areas. We've all come to an understanding and a personal agreement that it wasn't acceptable, that we all wanted to find ways to improve the respect we have within the House, but particularly the respect the general public would have in how we conduct ourselves.

To do that, we all have to buy in to the fact there are changes that were necessary, and I thought we all did. We all did our training, we all did harassment training and we all had great dialogue. I actually felt good about being in the sessions because I had my colleagues from different parties where we could banter back and forth, but in the gist of understanding that we needed to do better and we had to have a better understanding of what was acceptable and what wasn't acceptable.

We had gotten to a good place. We were trying to put the past behind us, we had tried to put the conflicts that had happened in this House of Assembly. Some of it is between parties; some of it is within caucuses. We tried to set a decorum that would be representative of any entity in government, any other agencies they could follow. We don't have the privilege of being able to slip from that. We don't have that. We have to be at a standard that sets the goals for everybody else. The bar has to be so high that there's no way we can get over it, because it's the bar we set.

When we deviate from that, when we slip-up, we make ourselves regressive on what people think about the House of Assembly and how we operate. We need to ensure that not only do the people have respect here, but when we do make a decision, when we do have debate on a particular bill, when we do say this is in the best interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, they would know we did it because we did it through a professional manner and we did it with the right intent.

That gets diminished when there are personal attacks. It gets diminished when we lower ourselves to street slugging versus having open debate. That's the difference, Mr. Speaker. We need to be cognizant of what's right and what should be the main objectives of how we operate in the House of Assembly. We've come a long way when we look at equality and inclusion, but to do that our standards have to be so high that they can't be in doubt.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to belittle this. I'm not going to drag it out in any way, shape or form. What I do want to say is I believe a mistake was made here. I believe the minister no doubt has tried to apologize, but I think he needs

to wholeheartedly apologize to this Member here and everybody else in the House of Assembly for the comments that he made earlier.

We need to set that bar so high that there's no deviating from it. If you make a mistake, you own up to that mistake. You ask for forgiveness and we move on to doing what we're set to do here, represent the people, Mr. Speaker. I do ask that the minister would stand and apologize to this House and to my colleague there for the comments that were made.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: By leave, the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MR. OSBORNE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Members weren't present. I did apologize.

I'll apologize again, Mr. Speaker, while the Members are here. I unequivocally apologize. I certainly didn't intend to point out that particular individual. I was trying to make a comparison. I understand the Member was offended and I absolutely unequivocally apologize to that individual.

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to stand in this House and speak. We're in Address in Reply; we can speak to whatever we want.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to talk about something that is very important to me; it's something I've raised in this House of Assembly numerous times. I might sound like a broken record, but I'm going to continue being a broken record because I believe it's important to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and it certainly is important to me.

The issue I wanted to speak about, which should be of no surprise, relates to the Muskrat Falls Project. I do want to say once again, Mr. Speaker, we all know where this project has gone in terms of what was promised. It was supposed to \$6.2 billion plus financing, would

have brought it up to, I think, \$7.5 billion was the number given. At the time, Wade Locke at MUN, an economist, had come out and said, yeah, we can comfortably afford \$8 billion and with this we're at \$7.5 billion so we're fine. That's where it was supposed to be.

By the way, that was supposed to include – because I can remember people at the time talking about the North Spur and I can remember going to Nalcor's AGM at the Holiday Inn, I was the only Member there at the time. It was asked – I can't remember if it was by Mr. Dumaresque or somebody who was there, it was one of the people who had concerns and asked about the North Spur. The then-CEO referred it to the 2IC, who's still working there. He stood up and he said: Yes, we're well aware of the North Spur. It's been studied to death. We have the plan in place and it's all included in the DG3 numbers of \$6.2 billion – all included.

I can remember at a later point there were issues raised about methylmercury mitigation. It was raised in meetings; we would have had a briefing. We were told: All taken care of, no worries. Yes, it's an issue. You can get methylmercury from these type of projects, but we have a plan. It's all under control. Don't worry about it. Again, it's all within the DG3 numbers – \$6.2 billion.

We all remember the rate calculator. I'm sure we can recall about the rate calculator and how that was put out there and showing how this is what it would cost if we continue down with Holyrood. Here's Muskrat Falls. It's going to rise a little bit, it's going to even out and we're going to be within those numbers. Everything would be fine, again, within the cost estimates.

Of course, we know now – as time has gone on, we've seen the project double. We're now talking \$12.7 billion. If you listen to Mr. Vardy – and I don't know if his numbers are right, although I think some of us should have listened to him long ago – he's saying now, based on his calculations that he has done, and certain numbers that are being left out of the calculation given by Nalcor, he believes it's going to be \$13.7 billion. I don't know if he's right or not, but he has thrown that out there now – \$13.7 billion.

Now, I will say again for the record, as one Member, as a person who was there, as one person who voted for it, the sanction, did I know any more information than was put out there to the public? Absolutely not. I knew what the public knew. The same thing, the Member for Cape St. Francis and the Member for Bell Island and whoever else is there – and they can all certainly speak for themselves but they were there at the time.

AN HON. MEMBER: No such thing as Bell Island.

MR. LANE: No such thing as the Member for Bell Island, whatever his district was called.

The point is we knew no more than the general public. We knew what we were being told in briefing after briefing. We had a few briefings and that's what we were told. Did people that were in the Cabinet or the Premier's office at the time know more? I don't know. I don't know if they knew more or not. I've used the term I was hoodwinked.

Was the minister of the day hoodwinked also? Was the premier hoodwinked? I don't know. I can't answer for them. Did they know more than we knew? I'm sure they would have gotten more information than we would have gotten, but whether they were given the right information, I don't know.

We have seen the Muskrat Falls inquiry – and I will give credit to this administration for at least having the inquiry. It took some coaxing and pressure but it happened, and good on them for doing it. Through the inquiry, we have learned, of course, some pretty disturbing information; disturbing information about the intentional lowballing of project costs, the hiding of risk reports and the list goes on. People not knowing, apparently, what's going on; having high-level meetings, discussion, projects that's billions of dollars and nobody taking notes. Not even a note, not even on the back of an envelope or a napkin – nothing.

Imagine having meetings – we're paying these huge salaries, we're having these people up in these executive suites and we're talking about projects, billions of dollars, and nobody is even taking any notes. Nobody knows what was said.

The CFO is saying there was information that he didn't get. He's the man who's supposed to be managing the finances of the project and he doesn't even know what's going on. Can you imagine? It's mind-boggling.

Quite frankly, at the time when there were people out there who were referred to as naysayers and so on – and I referred to them as naysayers. I defended the project on social media and otherwise, took a big hit for it to my personal reputation trying to defend it, but I really believed at the time – I really truly did. I'm saying why would these people – there's no way. This is a conspiracy theory. There's no way that these professional people making these huge salaries and qualifications and all these letters on the back of their names – there's no way that they don't know what they're doing. There's no way that they would be doing anything wrong. I just couldn't comprehend it; I still can't comprehend it, to be honest with you. I still find it difficult to comprehend that what went on, went on. I don't understand it, but here we have it.

Now, as you can imagine, as somebody who stood in this House of Assembly in good faith – and I can at least honestly say that – and voted on the project because I actually believed what I was being told and I believed that it was a good project for the province – something that I'm going to have to pay for, just like everybody else. My family, my grandson is going to have to live with all this. Why would I ever want to support something that was wrong? Why would I ever want to put the province in the hole? Why would I? I wouldn't.

So I am very angry – yes, I am very, very angry. Do I want blood? Do I want to see heads roll? You're darn right I do. That's why I am so angry, I was so angry. I said to myself after the government changed and we had a new administration: When the new Premier comes in, the first thing he's going to do is clean house, and the CEO has to go. The CEO has to go and be held accountable. I could not fathom any other scenario other than that was going to happen. Not just because it was the right thing to do, given all that has gone on. Even from a political point of view, he would've been the hero. He would've been the hero, politically. People wanted blood. A lot of people still do.

But what happens? I don't know what happened in the transaction. One minute, the CEO was talking about leaving to spend time with his grandchildren or something, whatever the story was, and it changed back and forth over two or three days. There was a lot of waffling, and at the end of the day, he walks away without cause – important to repeat that – without cause and \$6 million – minus taxes, of course. Marches off on the way to the bank, laughing on his way to the bank, so to speak. Unbelievable.

Now, fast forward to last week. Now the CFO – chief financial officer – the guy in charge of all the books, all the finances associated to this project, likewise, we're parting company with \$900,000 in payouts – \$900,000. Without cause.

I did ask in Question Period; I never really got an answer. I got a part of an answer, I suppose. I would like the Premier to tell us – the minister – at Nalcor in those executive suites, what would one have to do to be let go with cause? How bad would it have to be to be let go with cause? I can't fathom that it could be any worse. How could you not be let go with cause?

Now, I suspect – and I don't know, the minister may never say, or the Premier; they may never want to say it or admit it – what's going on. There's no doubt that whether it be the CEO or the CFO and the others to come – because I'm sure at some point now there's going to be a lineup. I can think of a few names I want to see on the list, I want to see out of there. I wanted to see them out of there long ago. I'd like to be the first one as they're going out through the door to give them the old heave-ho. That would give me some satisfaction, to be honest with you, but there are going to be others.

Obviously, where we are now is that everybody is going to be allowed to just walk out, walk away with full severance, full benefits – well, I don't know if their reputation will be intact, but on their résumé, I suppose it will be intact because they weren't fired – laughing all the way to the bank. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador are stuck with this albatross now around our collective necks and they just walk away. There's something wrong with that picture.

To go back again, I'd like to know – I can understand, perhaps, the strategy. A lawyer

might say you know what, based on years of service they are entitled to a certain amount of remuneration because they worked X number of years and so on. They're entitled to that. Legally, you can't keep it from them. I could understand that, but I wonder would they be entitled to the entire compensation package? Surely there has to be a difference between being let go with cause versus being let go without cause. There has to be a difference.

I would say part of the remuneration we had no choice, if I had to guess now. The other part of the remuneration, that the lawyer said the easiest, quickest and cleanest way to deal with this and get them out the door? Pay them their money and let them leave. That's what I think happened. Pay them their money and let them leave, that's the easiest way to make this happen and let it go away and let's forget about it.

The minister said the cheapest. It may be the cheapest, but then there's a thing called justice. For my money, considering all the billions we've already spent and considering the millions we're spending on the inquiry, if it was going to cost us a few extra dollars to see justice served, then I say go for it.

If they want to challenge it in court, let them get a lawyer and do it. If I could and I had my druthers, they'd be fighting it for the rest of their life. They wouldn't get a dime. If I had to keep them in court forever I'd keep them there, because there has to be some form of justice. As far as I'm concerned, justice has not been served.

Obviously, now that we've set this trend, it's not going to be served on the others either. That is very, very unfortunate. It is more than unfortunate. It is outrageous. It is angering. I'm not the only person that feels this way I can assure you. You talk to the average person and see the reaction. See the reaction when that was in the news about that departure and the \$900,000 or the CEO and the \$6 million, and when the next guy leaves and he gets his couple of million. Just ask the people how they feel about it.

AN HON. MEMBER: I'm sure they get performance bonuses.

MR. LANE: Yeah, it's unbelievable. Yes, you talk about performance bonuses; we can go back to DarkNL, the same characters. The core function of Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro is to keep the lights on. That's their job: provide us with power. That is your job. That's your only job. They couldn't do that.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible) wasn't a crisis.

MR. LANE: Yes and the Premier at the time said it wasn't a crisis. I know it was a crisis. I know it was a crisis because I took calls and I witnessed when seniors were being taken out of their homes. There was a fatality that happened during that event. One of my constituents, as a matter of fact, sadly, so, yes, you're darn right it was a crisis.

At the end of the day they couldn't keep the lights on. What happens? Everybody gets their full bonuses. Why? Why did they get their bonus? Because they had a great safety record. Imagine, that was the explanation given by the CEO at the time: they had a great safety record, so everyone gets their full bonuses. Great job, b'ys, great job. You couldn't keep the lights on but you had a good safety record so full bonuses. People freezing in the dark, seniors evacuated from nursing homes, properties flooded, Village Mall shut down, a fatality in my district – everyone gets their bonus. People are not accepting of this. They're not.

I say to the Minister of Natural Resources, who didn't negotiate the contracts and didn't write them – and I understand that, I really do. I'm not trying to be hard on you. I say this: The CFO now has just quit, been fired, let go, severed – whatever the heck you want to call it – and others will follow. For God's sake, whoever you're going to replace those individuals with, whoever it's going to be, they're going to need contracts too. For goodness sake, do not repeat – I say do not repeat – what has been done.

Do not put new people in those positions, or any position on an ABC for that matter. We're looking for a new head of the Liquor Corporation. I don't know if they have the same kind of contracts or not, but for goodness sake if we're going to be hiring people in agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, the new oil

and gas corporation – any of these places – these ridiculous contracts have to stop. You have to change them.

I know you may not be able to change them for someone who's already there, but new people – you cannot be putting in contracts to let people go in and totally mismanage something, put us billions of dollars in the hole and walk away with their money in their hand. It has to be stopped. If you say you couldn't have stopped it on this, which I think you could have, but there was a choice not to and I understand your rationale. I would have gone a different way; that's just me. Then again, you're not someone whose name will always appear in *Hansard* as voting for this. I am, so, yeah, I have a personal stake, but they would never have gotten it if it was me. If I was there, they wouldn't have gotten it, not a chance.

Surely, for new people that are going to be coming in to these positions, Minister – and I say to yourself, the Minister of Finance, whoever is involved in all this, the Human Resource Secretariat, whoever it is, contracts in the future cannot allow people to be negligent, incompetent and then simply walk away without cause and full remuneration in their pocket. It cannot be allowed. I'm certainly asking the minister and the government to make provisions, make changes in these contracts on a go-forward basis with new people that this can never, ever happen again.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I certainly will not be long.

I just want to stand and I want to try and bring some perspective to what has happened in the House here this afternoon, and essentially what's been happening the last couple of weeks. We can learn so much from our children.

As we know, the third week of November is National Bullying Awareness Week, which is

what we're into here now. Their logo is stamp out bullying, end the hate, change the culture, which is where I think we should be going, and I'm speaking to all of us. This is where we need to go.

Now, there's no doubt things get said that you would love, the minute they're out of your mouth, haul them back. But until we change the culture, we're going nowhere. We're only going backwards.

Now, I know in Paradise, as an example, there are a number of activities happening for children in the community in dealing with Bullying Awareness Week. I would say to all Members in this House, take the time to go to the schools or visit some displays of these kids and children and our youth – who are our future – and look at their posters and see what they're saying. Because we should be leaders here, each and every one of us. If you look at those posters, you will see where the leaders really are. They're our youth. They know it's not acceptable to be intimidating, harassing, discrimination, personal attacks. They know that. We should know that and we should do better.

My point to everyone in this House, everyone: take the time and see what the kids are saying. It's really amazing, some of the posters they do up on bully awareness and treating everyone with respect. I think if we do that, we will be much better for it.

I leave that thought for all of the House to consider.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think we've had a good week in the House. We have all worked very hard together to expand the scope of practice of registered nurses to include prescribing. We've strengthened consumer protection in real estate transactions. We've allowed permit holders to get assistance from others to cut timber for personal use. These are just some of the things that have happened in the House this week. So, I wanted to make sure we

all ended, reflecting and focusing on the good work that we've all done in this House.

There are, from time to time, things that do occur, and there have been some apologies here today and there's been some back and forth. I will say, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to end this very good week of hard work by this House of Assembly – all of us put into this work this week, I wanted to make sure that we at least reflected on the fact that there are people now that may be infirm or aged or not able to get out to cut their wood, they'll be able to get people to do it for them, Mr. Speaker.

We're going to have communities that will be able to work with nurse practitioners and nurses and registered nurses because of the good work that has been done to allow nurses to have a larger scope of practice. I want to make sure that as we end this week, before we go back to our constituencies, before we go back and talk to the people of our districts, that we reflect on that good work, Mr. Speaker.

From time to time, things get heated in here, and I'm not making any deference to the fact that we have to continue to make sure that we are always focused on respect, that we are always focused on ensuring that we have healthy debate. I'm not taking anything away from that, but I want to remind each and every one of us of the good work that we have done, and how each person in this House – and I know this, Mr. Speaker, because I work with people here in this House every day – are all focused on the benefits and the strengthening and the helping of people in our great province.

I want to end today reflecting on that good work and thanking everyone in this House for that good work.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I will say, considering the hour of the day, I move, seconded by the Minister of Transportation and Works, that we do adjourn.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

The House now stands adjourned until 1:30 in the afternoon on Monday.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Monday, December 2, 2019 at 1:30 p.m.