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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!

I would like to welcome back two of our Pages: Katelyn Galway and Anna Hutchings.

I would also like to welcome two new Pages to the House of Assembly: Tanisha Wright-Brown and Alexandra Joyce.

In the Speaker's gallery – I don't think he is here yet – I would like to welcome Vince MacKenzie – he may join us a little later on – who is the subject of a Member's Statement today.

Joining us in the public gallery are several members of Team Newfoundland and Labrador who have just returned from the 2020 Special Olympics Canada National Winter Games in Thunder Bay, Ontario. They will be the subject of a Ministerial Statement this afternoon.

Welcome everyone.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Today we will hear Members' Statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Stephenville - Port au Port, Bonavista, Cape St. Francis, Lake Melville and Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

The hon. Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I stand on a point of privilege.

I rise today on a point of privilege. O'Brien and Bosc, in the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, states that a "Member must satisfy the Speaker that he or she is bringing the matter to the attention of the House as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the situation." As per our discussion on Friday, February 21, 2020, I sought your guidance on the point of privilege. I have given you notice and a written copy of my point of privilege.

Mr. Speaker, the point of privilege I raised on March 4, 2019, was rejected by the Speaker on March 14, 2019. Under the *House of Commons*

Procedure and Practice, third edition, 2017, procedures dealing with matters of privilege on page 7 it states, "If the Speaker rules that there is not a prima facie question of privilege, the matter ends there. However, if in the future additional information comes to light, the Member who raised the question of privilege or any other Member may raise the matter again."

Mr. Speaker, this information only came to my attention recently and I am providing a copy of an access to information request – February 11, 2020, document number 1 – and confirmation letter of the date I received the information – February 19, 2020, document number 2. As well, I have provided you with a copy of the audio for your review. This will clearly show that it's new information recently brought to my attention and this is my first opportunity to present it to the House of Assembly.

In our discussions on February 21, 2020, you informed me that I should include everything that can help my case and all evidence. Following your direction I'm presenting evidence prior to the new evidence. On December 24, 2018, during a technical briefing with the Management Commission, Mr. Chaulk was asked: Did all MHAs participate? He replied: One, never. When questioned who that was, he stated: Eddie Joyce. This was false, reckless and he misled the Management Commission.

Mr. Speaker Trimper's ruling on March 14, 2019, he stated "With the exception of the Clerk of the House, Members of the Management Commission are Members of this House of Assembly. Any questions they had about comments the Commissioner may have made in the technical briefing could have easily been raised when questioning the Commissioner or in debate on the reports."

Mr. Speaker, I wrote the former Speaker on two occasions. On October 26, 2018, I wrote to confirm what Mr. Chaulk said in the technical briefing and he responded: Unfortunately, it is not appropriate for me to comment on the contents of an in camera technical briefing of the Management Commission. On November 6, 2018, I wrote the Speaker again, asking for confirmation on what Mr. Chaulk said in the technical briefing on October 24, 2018, with the

Management Commission. Mr. Speaker responded on November 6, 2018: As the request refers to an in camera technical briefing of the Management Commission, it's inappropriate for me to comment on the discussions therein.

These statements were later contradicted by his own words in his March 14, 2019, ruling. That was the position of the Speaker until he ruled against the point of privilege on March 14, 2019, but stated in a response that it was just a technical briefing. I am confident that the Management Commission Members were not aware of the emails and the responses from the Speaker who refused to confirm this statement in writing.

On October 24, 2018, when I was informed of these statements by the Commissioner for Legislative Standards, I approached the Speaker and the Commissioner in front of the House of Assembly at the Speaker's Chair. When I presented the letters from my lawyer to the Speaker, his statement was: This is not what Mr. Chaulk said this morning. You were definitely willing to meet. I turned to Mr. Chaulk, in front of the Speaker, and produced the two letters from my lawyer and his comments were: I forgot about these letters I will correct the record. He never did. On three occasions this was requested, he refused to respond.

An Officer of the House refusing to confirm a statement he made in a technical briefing of the Management Commission is not acceptable. The Management Commission and the House of Assembly allowed this nondisclosure of evidence.

In another meeting between myself, the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, the Speaker stated: Eddie, I know you are right, but this is hard for me to do because he's an Officer of the House.

This confession by the Speaker, with the Deputy Speaker present, confirms that my rights were violated and Mr. Chaulk made false and erroneous statements to the Management Commission. This cover-up has to stop and it's incumbent on this Government House Leader who was present and actually asked the question, did MHAs participate in interviews,

and the Commissioner replied that one did not participate, should support the point of privilege, as she was present and confirmed to myself and the minister of Justice and Attorney General that Eddie Joyce was the MHA who refused to participate.

In March 24, 2019, response from the Speaker he stated: This particular issue was raised by the Member himself multiple times in questioning of the Commissioner in debate. This is true, but I want to provide the Speaker with a few exchanges in the House of Assembly with the Commissioner.

The following is one of the exchanges with Mr. Chaulk:

"MR. JOYCE: Sir, did you make a statement to the Management Commission that there was one respondent who did not wish to participate or refuse to participate in the interview?

"MR. CHAULK: Again, you're asking a question about a specific report about the –

"MR. JOYCE: That's not a report, Sir. That's a statement you made to the Management Commission. I'm asking did you make that statement. I wrote you twice; I asked you for the response. You made a statement to the Management Commission that there was one respondent who refused to participate.

"Did you make that statement, Sir?

"MR. CHAULK: You're asking me about a statement I may or may not have made in an in camera session of another committee. What I will say is that what I said before in my preamble is that representation by legal counsel is authorized by section 37(2) of the act where the Member can make representations in writing, in person, by counsel or other representative.

"Whether or not a Member or a complainant was interviewed or not is not relevant to this discussion because they are well within their rights to make their representations in writing, in person, by counsel or other representative."

Mr. Speaker, there are two issues with this statement. The Commissioner refused to answer the question which has a negative impact on me.

When an Officer of the House of Assembly refuses to answer questions to the House of Assembly concerning a Member of the House of Assembly and their reputation, it should be very concerning to all Members of this hon. House.

To this day, almost two years later, the Commissioner has never been ordered by this House to answer that question. This is a poor reflection on the House of Assembly and a lack of diligence by the Members which resulted in a rushed judgment in order to make the issue go away.

The second issue with Mr. Chaulk on further questioning. **MR. JOYCE:** Part of the process – should anybody who wanted to be interviewed, should they have been interviewed?

MR. CHAULK: You're asking a hypothetical question about –

MR. JOYCE: It's not hypothetical. If anybody who wanted to be interviewed, if he or she is a respondent, do they have the right to be interviewed if requested?

MR. CHAULK: Their participation is not – if they made their representation in writing, totally in writing, then it's not – I can't compel them to come in and talk and if they are not available – you know, it's a case of when you're in one of these, if you're being interviewed, you're only being asked questions about your written testimony, your written response –

MR. JOYCE: So why did you interview other people?

MR. CHAULK: Because a lot of them didn't have written submissions."

Mr. Speaker, I'm enclosing copies of the sequence of events for all complainants and respondents from these reports, and every complainant and respondent did file a submission. This statement by the Commissioner is false, trying to justify why he refused to interview myself and making a false statement to the Management Commission and to justify this action. This cannot be condoned any further.

Mr. Speaker, 37(2) of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act* states: "Where the commissioner conducts an inquiry under subsection (1), he or she shall give the member to whom the inquiry relates a copy of the request and at all appropriate stages throughout the inquiry the commissioner" must "give the member reasonable opportunity to be present and to make representations to the commissioner in writing or in person or by counsel or other representative."

It's clearly showing that a respondent under the act has the right to be interviewed. This is not dependent on submissions, but the right to be present under the act. These rights cannot be dismissed by the Commissioner and a violation of a Member's rights should be a grave concern to all Members.

Mr. Speaker, your request for all evidence to prove the case clearly shows that false statements were made. Management Commission Members did not fulfil their fiduciary duties. The former Speaker clearly admitted the statement was true but refused to present it to the House of Assembly. As stated earlier, if new evidence of the Member who raised the question of privilege or any other Member may raise the question again.

Mr. Speaker, on April 11, 2019, in a media scrum a reporter asked the Minister of Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General several questions in an eight minute scrum. As mentioned earlier, I have already forwarded a copy of the audio of that interview to you and I am enclosing a transcript of the information, document three, for your record.

It states, reporter: One last question for you, independent MHA Joyce was out here explaining about the kerfuffle with the Speaker at the end of Question Period. He says that in his case he was unfairly dealt with because of the Commissioner for Legislative Standard, Bruce Chaulk, informed people that he refused to participate in an interview with Mr. Chaulk. Do you know anything about that?

Minister Parsons: I think what Mr. Joyce is referring to is a technical briefing that the Management Commission had with Mr. Chaulk prior to the meeting going back into the House

and I think it came down to a situation where the Commissioner may have been informed that certain MHAs didn't participate, and, upon questioning, I think that was refuted. So I know there has been some dispute over that. I think that's where Mr. Joyce was trying to go, and I know he couldn't get the questions in because you can't ask Management Commission questions in the House.

The reporter: But to your knowledge, did Mr. Chaulk want to interview Mr. Joyce?

Minister Parsons: I know in the technical briefing that was provided the question was asked: Did MHAs participate or interview with the Commissioner? The Commissioner replied in one particular case, referring to that particular MHA that he did not participate. I think that since the MHA refuted that, he never had the opportunity to give those and to actually do a personal interview with the Commissioner. The new evidence came to my attention after my lawyer asked me to do research on a civil matter. I was not aware of this interview and it was never presented to the House of Assembly.

This confirms that this statement was made in the Management Commission meeting and all the documentation on file clearly shows that this statement was false and the House of Assembly should have been informed before any debate commenced on *The Joyce Report* of October 18, 2018. This is clearly new evidence which cannot be ignored and supports my claim that I was not given my rights under the act.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier stated that there are flaws in the process. If having the former Speaker admit that the Commissioner made a false statement to the Management Commission, having the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development confirming that the Speaker admitted I was right, the Government House Leader and Minister of Natural Resources in the meeting asked a question and get a response which was false, now the Minister of Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General – the highest law enforcement officer in the province – confirming that this statement was made and proven false, this must warrant this matter being brought back to this House of Assembly.

If you make a decision that this is a *prima facie* case, I'm asking that you refer *The Joyce Report* of October 19 and *The Kirby Report* of October 6 back to the House of Assembly. I want to make it quite clear, if you decide it is a *prima facie* case and this is referred back to the House, we will be discussing the process. Not the merits of what's in the reports, but the process alone.

Mr. Speaker, O'Brien and Bosc states: "It is impossible to codify all incidents which might be interpreted as matters of obstruction, interference, molestation or intimidation and as such constitute *prima facie* cases of privilege. However, some matters found to be *prima facie* include" – and this is very important, Mr. Speaker – "the damaging of a Member's reputation, the usurpation of the title of Member of Parliament, the intimidation of Members and their staff and of witnesses before committees, and the provision of misleading information."

O'Brien and Bosc quotes Maingot as saying: "The purpose of raising matters of 'privilege' in either House of Parliament is to maintain the respect and credibility due to and required of each House in respect of these privileges, to uphold its powers, and to enforce the enjoyment of the privileges of its Members. A genuine question of privilege is therefore a serious matter not to be reckoned lightly and accordingly ought to be rare, and thus rarely raised in the House of Commons."

I refer to O'Brien and Bosc, page 141, where Members include privileges before the House of Assembly are treated with the utmost seriousness.

As you outlined, there is a formal process to be followed. I follow that process; I notify the Speaker of my intentions to raise the issues of privilege at this earliest possible opportunity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Apparently we have a problem with some of the mics, some of the sound system, I think. People are unable to get the feed from them. So we're going to take a short recess to deal with that issue. When we come back I'm going to give Members an opportunity, as we often do in this House, to give brief statements related to the point

privilege when we return, before I deal with it myself.

So we'll take a few minutes recess now to deal with our sound system issues.

Recess

MR. SPEAKER: Are the House Leaders ready?

We're going to resume the session now, but I want to tell Members that the problem that we have is not fully dealt with yet. Apparently, there's no problem in picking up Members speaking for the broadcast purposes, but we do have a problem in terms of Members being able to hear with their earpieces.

It seems like it's going to take a little while longer to fix that, so rather than hold up the proceedings of the House, I'm going to ask Members to be especially quiet this evening while we're dealing with this problem so Members can hear clearer. I'm going to ask Members to speak up a little when they're talking. I understand some of the earpieces are working and some aren't. So if you're sitting near someone and you need to try their one to see if it works, maybe we can work together a little bit and do that.

We're going to proceed where we left off. Where we were was the Member had just finished giving his point of privilege, so now I'm going to ask other Members if they would like to give a brief comment to the point of privilege.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I tried to listen very intently to the hon. Member's point of privilege. I know the Speaker will take into consideration and deliberate and determine on whether it's new information, but I do believe that every Member of this House should have and should be required to have due process.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to say a few words.

I echo what the Minister of Natural Resources just said. I think what all Members have to recognize here, Mr. Speaker, is that this situation does not just impact the Member for Bay of Islands. It impacts all 40 Members in this House of Assembly regardless what side of the House you sit, because at any given time somebody – whether it be a Member of the House, whether it be staff or whoever – matters can potentially come forward – whether it be through the House here, through the Commissioner for Legislative Standards, through the Citizens' Representative, whatever the case might be – and it is critical that every Member in this House has the opportunity to defend themselves and is given, as the Member said, due process.

Of course, it will be up to you to rule on whether or not it's considered a prima facie case and whether or not the information presented is new. It certainly would appear to be new from what I can gather in listening to what the Member has said. But there are very serious matters being raised here. One of those matters, of course – and a very important one, as I said – that the Member did not necessary receive due process, that every one of us should be entitled to, but also a couple of other issues that have come up in the submission that I believe definitely need to be discussed in the House of Assembly.

The allegation here is that the Commissioner for Legislative Standards gave false information to a Committee of the House and gave false information to the House of Assembly in general. That's the allegation. I don't know, I'm not the one to judge whether that's true or it's not true and I think it needs to be investigated, but it's definitely an allegation that is of such a serious nature, considering the fact that this is an individual who's appointed by this House, who's supposed to be independent of the House and who we rely upon to follow the rules and regulations and follow the law and to make the appropriate recommendations. That is definitely being called into question in what the Member is saying.

Whether or not you feel it's new information, prima facie, whatever the case might be, even that as a separate issue is a concern for me, as

one Member of this House of Assembly. It's a very, very serious allegation that at the very least needs to be looked into, whatever venue that should take, whether it's here in the House of Assembly, whether it's through the Management Commission or whatever the appropriate venue is, definitely has to be looked into and investigated.

Of course, the other allegation, if you will, coming from this – what I heard at least – is a sense that we have a Speaker or a former Speaker and a Deputy Speaker who, again, based on the allegation – I wasn't there, I don't know but based on what's in this statement, that we have Members that were aware of the fact that false information was presented to this House, of which we are all Members, and sat back and let it slide, didn't speak up or whatever.

Again, that's the allegation here. I'm not saying that happened. I don't know, but the fact of the matter is that we have three very serious matters. We have that one; we have the Commissioner for Legislative Standards allegedly giving false information; and, of course, we have the actual process itself where, allegedly, the Member was not given due process.

I see that as three serious issues contained within this report. I certainly encourage you, at the very least, that this has to be looked into by the Management Commission to confirm or to refute what has been said here because, as we move forward, whether it be with the policy on bullying, harassment and so on, or whether it be any other matter that could come before this House relating to any Member of this House on either side of the House, we all need to have a comfort level and be assured that we're all going to be treated fairly, receive justice and be given the due process that we should all be entitled to.

This is a very serious role that we have in the House of Assembly as legislators, as MHAs. It comes with great responsibility; it comes with great accountability as well. With that as well, we are also – and we should be entitled to know that everything is being done properly, above board and that we also receive the protections afforded to us as Members of this House.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, that you take that into account as you deliberate on this case. I would certainly support bringing this forward to look into those matters.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I've listened today to the information that's been provided to the House and I think as a sitting Member here, I think all of us, regardless of which side of the House we sit on, we must learn and respect information as it becomes available. We make decisions in this House from time to time based on the information that we have available to us.

Mr. Speaker, today the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands raises an issue and makes a submission that all the information wasn't provided at the time. One of the things that I've witnessed – and I think we've all had to deal with as making decisions in this House of Assembly – there's very little room for appeal on decisions that are made by sometimes Officers of the House of Assembly. That is really not something that occurs much in a society. Usually there is an appeal process.

In this particular case, decisions are made with the information – very little room to introduce new information or an appeal process. So in this particular case here that we're talking about – and I agree, this is really about fairness, this is really about respect of each other as Members that sit here. I had mentioned quite early, as been mentioned already by the Member, that there were flaws in this process. There was little opportunity to actually correct it when it was ongoing, but it doesn't necessarily mean that we have to ignore the fact.

If indeed there's new information, I think the onus and the responsibility on all Members of this House of Assembly is to seek the advice of you, Mr. Speaker, because there's a lot of damage that can be done by Members of this House of Assembly, from reputation – and you can do a lot of good deeds, make a lot of good decisions in this House of Assembly. If there is an incident that occurs and a reputation gets

damaged, well often that carries with you for a long time. That is something, I think, all of us, out of respect for each other, must prevent when possible.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will not go on much longer, but I will say that you have to make a decision on new information. But I would encourage you to do so, report back to the House of Assembly as quickly as possible. Because what it is for us, as all Members, is to make sure that when we make decisions we have all the information. If there's new information that becomes available, well that needs to be considered by you. What we all must keep in mind is that everyone deserves a right to a fair process, everyone deserves a right to be respected by each other in this House of Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further comments by Members on this issue?

MR. JOYCE: I'm going to speak briefly on that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes. So I'll allow the Member to respond to it.

MR. JOYCE: (Inaudible) for standing up and – this is about 40 people in this Legislature. I said it before, this could happen to anybody tomorrow. I'm definitely not going to dispute any of the facts. What I'm disputing here is the process. It started on October 24 when I was informed of a statement that wasn't true, which the letter from my lawyer proved it wasn't true.

I'm not saying, Mr. Speaker, anything here – I will not banish or try to tarnish any Member. I'm going on the process alone. I ask any person in this House of Assembly, if you had an incident with an RNC officer and they went off and filed a court case, found you guilty and you never had a chance to present evidence in person, which person here would not have that appealed immediately? That's what I've been trying to do for 18 months, appeal this decision. The only avenue I have is through the court process, except to this Legislature.

I ask any Member here, if you never had the right to be heard and you were found guilty, would you stand for it? There's not one person in this House who would stand for that on their reputation only. That's the point I'm making here today, is that I was never given due process. And because I wasn't given due process, the statements that were made to the Management Commission that I tried in this House on numerous occasions to bring up – even before the debate started, I wrote the former Speaker, I wrote the Commissioner, they would not respond if that statement was made. That's the process I had to follow because there's nothing in place for it right now.

So this is about me, definitely it is, because I've been trying for 18 months and I will get to the bottom of it – absolutely, no doubt – but this is bigger than here. This is a reflection on this House of Assembly, when everybody rushed to judgment on this thing without even looking at the process. So when you rush to judgment without getting all the facts and getting the information presented to the House of Assembly – which it should have been.

I ask the Speaker once more, everybody in this House, what happens if you found out somebody stole \$20,000, a Statutory Officer of this House? I'm not saying anybody did; I'm not saying that. What if they did? Do you know what would happen? It would be in this House and that person would be relieved of their duties. But what happens if a false statement is made about another Member? Here we are 18 months later trying to get it brought back to the House of Assembly.

We should not take any statements that are made, that are going to affect any Member, lightly. I just happen to be this Member myself, and Dale Kirby happens to be the other Member, but it's this Legislature. It's a reflection on the Legislature, everybody here, excluding the new Members who were elected in 2019, I have to make that – so I just want people to take that in reflection. At no time would anybody accept to be going through a court system without being interviewed, found guilty, being punished without having due process. I just ask everybody to keep that in mind.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, when you have the Attorney General, the Minister of Justice, the highest person of the courts in this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador standing outside this Legislature and saying what I said is true, you can't ignore it.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Any further speakers?

The Member for Lake Melville.

MR. TRIMPER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will make a couple of careful comments, given I was the Speaker at the time that the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands is referring to. I was one of those ones caught with this awkward technological issue. I was trying to listen closely to the Member in his remarks.

I would like very much to have a transcript or a copy of what he said exactly before I offer some other remarks. Given the procedures that we follow, I think this is my chance to speak and then I'll let you adjourn and make your decision.

Having been intimately involved with this process for all those months and then listening to, as best I could, what the Member said, I'm not sure I heard anything new that would add, in a substantial way, to the conclusion and the decisions of the House. I'll make that statement out there, but I do regret that I could not hear completely what the Member said.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member has had two opportunities to speak.

MS. JOYCE: (Inaudible) nothing about the report (inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: I'll allow – briefly, briefly.

MR. JOYCE: Yes, briefly.

I just sent a copy, a full transcript to the Member for Lake Melville of what I said and the full documentation, as you requested. You have a full transcript of all the evidence and the statements I just made.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

Any further Members who would like to comment on this?

Seeing no further Members, a point of privilege is a serious matter to come before the House. It's usually a rare matter. We've had quite a few recently, but it is a rare matter. Whenever it's raised, it warrants serious consideration.

In some cases, we make rulings on points of privilege immediately or we recess the House, go back, consult with the Table Officers, make a decision and come back. But given the nature of this particular case, there are a number of things I want to review. I want to review some transcripts from the House, some previous letters and some other materials to make sure I have a full understanding of the issues that are being dealt with here and the issues that are important to this particular case.

In some situations, we will take matters under advisement and report back to the House at a later date and I think it's prudent to do that in this particular case. That's what I'll be doing; I'll be taking this matter under advisement, reporting back to the House at a later date.

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: We're going to move forward with Statements by Members – again, it's been a while – Stephenville - Port au Port, Bonavista, Cape St. Francis, Lake Melville and Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

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

MR. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As a volunteer with the Piccadilly Central High School council for over 10 years, Judith Gaudon has increased opportunities for youth on the Port au Port Peninsula by establishing a scholarship and bursary program in the high school.

The scholarship program is designed to promote post-secondary education and also offers opportunities for the school to showcase the educational achievements of each student receiving one. Scholarships are presented at the

Cap and Gown Ceremony in December in which Judith organizes.

In addition, she organizes events such as a variety bingo and ticket sales to raise money for the school. This, along with the scholarship program, brings the communities on the peninsula together in support of the school. The entire school environment is highly enhanced by these activities which trickles down to the communities in which the students live.

Through the Port au Port Extrajudicial Sanctions Committee, she helps youth involved in crime get back on track and successfully reintegrate into society. Judith also stays active in her community working at the local cadet corps and helps young people find opportunities within the cadet program and the Duke of Edinburgh program. For her dedication and commitment to her community, Judith received the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers.

I ask all Members of this hon. House to join me in congratulating Judith on receiving the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to celebrate Heritage Collegiate's robotics team from Lethbridge, in the District of Bonavista.

This school has had a very successful robotics club for nearly two decades and has sent teams to provincial, national and international competitions. After the most recent provincial competition at our Marine Institute in 2019, where ROVs, remote operating vehicles, were required to perform a variety of underwater tasks, the Heritage team was selected to compete in an international competition in Kingsport, Tennessee in June of 2019.

The team of 10 students represented the province and displayed their robot which was constructed and programmed solely by the

students. One of their level III students was approached by an international official about the programming/coding design she had written, and another two were approached by the Marine Institute team to join their team this past fall.

The school is providing this valuable educational experience through the leadership of teacher and robotics mentor, Mr. Lyndon Williams. It doesn't happen without dedicated teachers such as Mr. Williams.

I ask the Members of the 49th House of Assembly to join me in issuing a congratulatory note to Mr. Williams and the Heritage robotics team for their achievements and success in this important area for our marine industries.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this has been one hard winter, and I rise today to recognize hard-working and generous people who helped to get us all through the January blizzard known as Snowmageddon.

My beautiful district consists of five towns and, like most of Eastern Newfoundland, we saw upwards of 75 centimetres of snow, with 130 kilometres winds, during the storm. Some people lost their power, others were snowbound in their homes and government had to call in the military. It was definitely a challenging time, but it also showed the true spirit of our people.

In my district, communities did everything possible to ensure the safety of our residents. Town councils and staff worked extended hours. Local volunteer groups like the fire departments and the Lions Clubs played an important role.

Mr. Speaker, many residents also stepped up and helped their neighbours. Once one was shovelled out and okay, they moved on to the next house to make sure they were okay too. It was a difficult time, but it brought out the best in

people. I felt great pride in our residents and our communities.

I ask all hon. Members to join with me in extending a big thank you to our mayors, councillors, workers, volunteers and, Mr. Speaker, to all residents who stepped up and offered a helping hand during Snowmageddon.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. TRIMPER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to inform this House of Assembly that one of Labrador's most active elders, Dorothy Michelin, turned 100 on the 13th day of February.

This adventurous woman was born in St. Anthony in 1920. At the age of 17, she travelled to Labrador to first work with the Paddon family, and later with the Hudson Bay Company in North West River. Here she met her husband, George Michelin.

Dorothy is a firm believer in the adage that if you don't use it, you can lose it. Many years ago, she learned Innu-aimun and is proud that she can converse with Innu elders. She uses an iPad to keep in touch with her extensive family of 11 children, 33 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren and 10 great-great-grandchildren.

While at bat during a recent softball game in Nova Scotia, she was asked if she wanted a stand-in runner. She declined; however, she broke her arm when she slid into first base, placing herself on the injured list at the age of 85.

Mrs. Michelin continues to live in her home, plays crib, knits and entertains her many visitors. Please join me in celebrating a century of active living. Happy birthday, Dorothy Michelin.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise here today to honour Chief Vince MacKenzie. Vince MacKenzie has served as fire chief of the Grand Falls-Windsor fire department for the past 15 years. As a member since 1983, he has served firefighting duties to the Central Newfoundland district and its 15,000 residents for over 37 years.

Chief MacKenzie is currently the vice-president of Maritime Fire Chiefs Association; vice-chair, provincial NL911 board of directors; in his third term as an elected national director with the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs executive board; and *Fire Fighting in Canada* columnist. He has served five times as provincial president with the Newfoundland and Labrador fire services, where he has lobbied all levels of government as an advocate for fire services all throughout Canada.

His leadership and dedication to fire services and community involvement has made the Grand Falls-Windsor fire department, as well as all of its members, the standard for fire departments throughout the country. As MHA, but more importantly as a protected citizen of Grand Falls-Windsor, I ask you all to help me now honour Chief Vince MacKenzie on a lifetime of achievement in firefighting and community services.

Stay safe, Chief, and stay safe to all the firefighters out there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House to thank the hundreds of health care professionals and support staff who went over and above the call of duty during Snowmageddon 2020.

On behalf of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, we are incredibly grateful for the

steadfast commitment and determination displayed despite the challenges of working during a state of emergency.

Your teamwork approach to overcoming the obstacles of Mother Nature is truly commendable. There is a selflessness and sensibility demonstrated by all those who care for people when they are most vulnerable.

Recognizing the challenges that our health care professionals and support staff faced, including long working hours and time away from their own families and loved ones, we are grateful for their focus and unwavering dedication to patients and families.

While appreciation for professionals and support staff in our health care system is important year-round, today is the perfect time to express gratitude and say a special thank you for all they do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Official Opposition, I join with the minister in thanking all health care workers who provided essential care and service during our recent state of emergency.

Mr. Speaker, in this province we are fortunate to have working, caring and passionate health care workers who continually put their patients and the public above their own needs. To everyone who worked in the health care sector, I extend our heartfelt gratitude.

Being away at work for extended periods of time can take its toll on families of health care workers. So I would also like to acknowledge the many friends and family who pitched in to help on the home front.

Mr. Speaker, now that things have returned to normal, I do encourage the health authority to

work with the unions and professional organizations to see how the system could have better responded and better supported the front line workers and those essential workers who found themselves on the job for days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Health care workers go above and beyond everyday. During Snowmageddon 2020 they went even further, sacrificing sleep, time with family and loved ones, and sometimes risking their safety getting to and from work.

Storms or no storms, there will be people who need medical care. We are fortunate our health care workers know that the people in their care must always come first. That's professionalism.

Thank you to those workers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

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

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate Team Newfoundland and Labrador on their recent success at the 2020 Special Olympics Canada National Winter Games in Thunder Bay, Ontario – and I thank them for their patience as we work through some technical issues here today.

From February 24 to 29, we watched as 44 talented athletes gave their all and made our province proud.

Mr. Speaker, Team Newfoundland and Labrador returned home on Sunday, bringing with them more than 40 medals.

In snowshoeing: Bradley Murphy won gold, silver and bronze; Floressa Harris and Crystal Young each won gold and bronze; Philip Beales and Jessica Summers won gold; David Horne won two silver; Robert Moore won a silver and two bronze; Johnny Philpott won silver and bronze; and Zachary Dean won bronze.

In cross-country skiing: Michael Budden won three gold and a bronze; Sarah Brown won a gold, two silver and a bronze; Ryan Drover won a gold, a silver and a bronze; Jody Lawrence won gold and silver; and Hannah Samelson won gold, silver and bronze.

In speed skating: Brandon Park won a gold and two silver.

In singles 5-pin bowling: Michael Power, Brian Shea and Kevin Wiseman won gold, and Kayla Sceviour won bronze.

Gary Wicks, Kim O'Neill, Tony Kyritsis, Margaret McNeil and Joshua Gardner won gold in curling.

Congratulations to all the medalists. You have earned these medals through hard work, skill and determination.

Mr. Speaker, the Special Olympics motto is "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

I would also like to congratulate all the members of Team Newfoundland and Labrador for their spirit and bravery in competing at the Games. We are all so very proud of you.

To the staff and volunteers of Special Olympics Newfoundland and Labrador, the mission staff, parents, coaches and sponsors, thank you for your commitment to our athletes, and to the future of sport in our province. You have certainly played an important role in their success.

I invite all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to join with me in congratulating Team Newfoundland and Labrador on a successful Special Olympics Winter Games.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. DWYER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. I join with the minister today in echoing the congratulations to our Team Newfoundland and Labrador Special Olympics Canada Winter Games team on their success in the Winter Games in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

The 44 athletes competing in the Games competed to the best of their ability and brought home 41 medals. This is a great accomplishment. We are proud of their dedication to sport and for their bravery to compete at the Games.

To the staff and volunteers of our Canada Winter Games team, parents, coaches and sponsors, thank you for your commitment to our athletes and to the future of Special Olympics in our beautiful province.

I invite all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador to join me in congratulating Team Newfoundland and Labrador on their success at the National Winter Games.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. J. DINN: Mr. Speaker, I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement.

I join the minister in congratulating Team Newfoundland and Labrador on their many achievements at the 2020 Special Olympics Canada Winter Games. One of those members is Johnny Philpott who is a cousin of ours.

Athletes from our province returned home with over 40 medals, exemplifying their passion for sport and continued excellence in representing our province at the national stage. I thank all the athletes, staff, coaches, volunteers and parents, and everyone involved in making these Winter Games possible. You all rock!

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. WARR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today in this hon. House to recognize the many schools that go above and beyond to create safe and caring environments for all students. Each year, 35 schools are presented with a Safe and Caring Schools Special Project Award.

Last week, the Premier and I had the pleasure of participating in a Pink Shirt Day celebration at Elwood Elementary in Deer Lake. The enthusiasm and kindness on display was truly inspiring.

Students, teachers and staff, all wearing pink, celebrated friendship, promoting this year's theme: Lift Each Other Up – a simple but powerful message encouraging us to celebrate our differences and the things that make us unique. It was wonderful to have the added opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to present the award to one of the 35 winners, Elwood Regional High School.

Through the Education Action Plan, we are focused on building more inclusive learning environments that are responsive to students' strengths and needs. By this September, an additional 350 teaching resources will be in place, helping to ensure student success regardless of ability.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating the 35 schools receiving awards and recognizing their work to make our schools places where students feel safe and can learn and grow.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank the hon. Member for an advance copy of his statement.

Mr. Speaker, all of us on this side of the House join the minister in congratulating all 35 Safe and Caring Schools Special Project Award winners. As a former teacher and administrator myself, I know first-hand the importance of students having a safe and secure environment in which to learn and grow. Every child should have the right to attend school and be free of harassment, bullying or threat. Mutual respect, understanding and equality must be the guiding principles.

However, Mr. Speaker, I note the Safe and Caring Schools Policy is some seven years old and long overdue for a review. Our society has changed dramatically, including the explosion of connectivity and social media in past decade. One need only look at several serious incidents lately in our schools which have shaken parents, teachers and students.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement and join him in congratulating Elwood Regional High and the 34 other schools that received a special project award.

Teachers dedicate themselves to creating a safe and caring learning environment and while education plans are necessary, human resources that allow teachers time to give students individual attention are essential. I encourage the minister to continue to consult with parents, teachers and the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association to ensure schools have the human resources needed for inclusive and safe learning spaces.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Before we move to Oral Questions, I just want to welcome and note Vince MacKenzie is in the Speaker's gallery today, who was the subject of a Member's statement earlier today in the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Before we continue with Question Period, I just want to note that the problems with the hearing pieces are still problematic. We're going to continue, and again I want to remind Members to keep the noise level down, to speak clearly so all Members can hear the proceedings.

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. CROSBIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll try to heave it out of me.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSBIE: I have a question for the Minister of Natural Resources.

Nalcor says the government directed it to hire the minister's right-hand man for twice his previous pay. Did the minister direct the award of this fat consulting contract, and if she didn't then who did?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

He did heave it out of him, so I'll try and be equally as enthusiastic and talk about how everyone in this hon. House, and indeed I'm sure in the entire province, wants us to have maximum benefits from our oil and gas industry, Mr. Speaker. We have developed *Advance 2030* through work with the industry as well as with government and all stakeholders, really, in the

oil and gas industry. We've had eight new entrants, Mr. Speaker, \$4 billion in exploration.

I'm pleased to also tell the House that this year we will be having three drilling rigs offshore for exploration. That's the most since 1986, Mr. Speaker. I can say that having expertise available to us to develop that oil and gas industry is important.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: What a stupendous example of a non-answer, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to repeat the question; it's not a tough question, it can easily be understood: Did the minister direct the award of the consulting contract and if she didn't do so, who did?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe that this has been spoken of quite frequently in provincial news, Mr. Speaker. As I have indicated, I have not directed Nalcor in this regard. I have directed them in a number of other things. I have directed them, for example, to continue with seismic and exploration off our coast. I can certainly table the directions that I have provided to Nalcor.

I've also directed, for example, to make allocations for an equity investment in the Equinor project, Bay du Nord, should it proceed, Mr. Speaker. So I have given those directions to Nalcor.

If you're asking me specifically, and as I've said very strongly, publicly, no, I did not direct Nalcor to be involved in this contract.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister is clearly in non-response mode, so we'll move on and put it this way. The minister has claimed in the media that she was unaware of the direction to hire, but her right-hand man was in such a conflict that she and her Cabinet colleagues issued an order to waive the conflict.

How can the minister say she was unaware when she was personally involved in waiving the conflict of interest so Nalcor could issue the fat contract?

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

MS. COADY: I know this is political theatre and it's being played at its best here today, Mr. Speaker. I will say this, and I have said it publicly, I was, in general, aware of discussions that were happening, but I can tell the Member opposite that I did not direct the hiring of anyone with regard to a contract.

Now, I will say this, Mr. Speaker, we're in the process of transitioning and we have now transitioned to OilCo from underneath a utility. We have moved them out. We have added responsibility. They are responsible, for example, of effectively managing our assets. They are responsible for ensuring we have effective geology and promotion of our offshore opportunity and we've also added supply and service development to their responsibility.

As part of that transition, it was determined that they needed additional supports and that's what was done through this contract, Mr. Speaker. I have asked for a review of all contractors to the oil company and I have also asked for a review of their contracts.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, the hiring of this Scottish consultant, the minister's previous right-hand guy in her department, for twice his pay and a \$3,000-a-month living allowance, when he doesn't even live here, is yet another

corruption scandal which has damaged the government, and the minister was either incompetent to let it occur or irrelevant as minister for not being involved to stop it.

In the face of this humiliation, will the minister tender her resignation?

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

MS. COADY: Oh my goodness is all I'm going to say to that, Mr. Speaker. We are right in the middle of really moving our oil and gas industry along. We've moved the oil company from underneath the utility, Mr. Speaker. We have done *Advance 2030* that is supported by the industry, and I would say all Members of this House if I can because I think that everybody wants to maximize our benefits, Mr. Speaker.

We have an international consultant who is world renowned, who is available to the oil company, in addition to what they have internal to their oil company, to make sure that we have supply and service development. We know of opportunities globally, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue, on this side of the House, to work hard to grow our industries, to diversify our economy, to grow jobs in this province. I wish the Member opposite would join us.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, we, on this side, don't know how the minister has the face to stay in her job.

If the award of this fat contract were investigated by Officers of the House for gross mismanagement, as happened with the *Mitchelmore Report* into the Carla Foote hiring, would the report be called the Coady report?

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

MS. COADY: The Member opposite is starting to tread dangerously over a line – dangerously over a line, Mr. Speaker. I will ask the Member opposite to tone down his rhetoric, to understand

what has occurred here, to understand that we're trying to grow an oil and gas industry, to develop and make sure we maximize jobs in our economy.

I would say to the Member opposite, this is an entanglement he's gotten himself into where he's questioning the integrity of me, he is questioning the integrity of some global consultants who are well regarded in this community as well –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MS. COADY: I beg your pardon? Does somebody want to stand up and ask me a question? I'm happy to answer it; happy to answer questions.

The contract is held by the oil company. I have asked for a review of that contract. I have asked for a review of whether they require the consultants going forward, Mr. Speaker, and I'll leave it at that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: We have to move to the next question.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, we're just going to let that answer stand for what it's worth.

My next question: It has been reported that the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources was convicted for violating the very laws he's sworn, as minister, to enforce. I ask the Premier: Will he heed calls from conservation groups and remove the minister from Cabinet?

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

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

It is never easy to stand in this House and to admit that one has made an error in judgment – either an error of commission or an error of omission. Yes, Mr. Speaker, there may be Members in this House who have committed errors; some may be more serious than others.

But what is clear is that when you admit those errors, you still command the respect of the House and the respect of all Members.

So, yes, Mr. Speaker, I did receive a ticket for an offence under the wildlife regulations – a ticketed offence, a summary offence – for not having a plug in a lawful long gun. That was an error of omission. There was no ill intent on my part; however, that does not excuse the action, because it's my responsibility to ensure that that long gun is properly secured and within regulation. I do apologize to this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: We're going to move to the next question.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

MR. LESTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was pretty sure that everybody had heard the old adage, people in glass houses shouldn't throw stones, but it's quite evident one minister in this House did not.

Mr. Speaker, in a statement to *CBC News*, the minister confirmed he violated wildlife laws for having an unplugged shotgun.

I ask the minister: Where and how did he pay his fine, and will he table the receipt of payment?

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

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

Yes, indeed, the error of judgment and the summary offence – the ticketed offence – was indeed paid because that is, indeed, an omission that an error was made. So the offence was paid. I believe there was a journalist who had the proof of payment put on their social media platform. It's my understanding, my recollection, it was paid by Visa through the Justice Department's Fines Administration.

This was 2½ years ago, Mr. Speaker, so if I've made an error in my recollection, I will correct it to the House. But, yes, a ticketed offence did

occur and, in the same style or manner that many of us in this House may have paid a speeding ticket, that ticket was paid for under the means that are available to us.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LESTER: Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Was he in breach of any other wildlife laws when he was stopped?

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

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, what I can say is the wildlife officer displayed the utmost of professionalism and integrity. If there's an indicator that our system is working – some may say as a Member of this House that we receive special or elite treatment. The fact of the matter is that the wildlife officer conducted a hunter compliance test or check and levied the appropriate ticket. That's a testament, I think, to the wildlife officer but, more importantly, to the system itself that we adhere to, the rule of law.

There was only one ticket that was issued, Mr. Speaker, and that's a ticket that I truly regret.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LESTER: Mr. Speaker, we've gotten calls this morning from individuals with identical convictions and whose gun improperly was seized.

I ask the minister: Did you ask for any leniency, given your role? Are you, the minister, receiving one type of justice while the ordinary citizen receives another?

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

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, I can't speak to two different circumstances, but what I can say is there was no leniency that was requested, nor none granted. There was one offence. It was a

ticketed offence. It resulted in the levy of a fine and it was paid.

So, Mr. Speaker, in other examples there may have been situations where the long gun was altered or may not have been an appropriate or restricted weapon or a prohibited weapon. I do not know. What I can tell you, though, is that the law enforcement – the conservation officer – conducted herself in absolute compliance with her duties and we can all be very proud of our enforcement officers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LESTER: Mr. Speaker, to my recollection, the minister received a fine of less than \$100, whereas the maximum fine would be \$500. I would think that someone of his stature, to take this seriously, would be excluded a higher level of fine.

Mr. Speaker, what CBC reported yesterday and what VOXM also reported the same day are two very different stories. Could the minister explain what is actually the truth?

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

MR. BYRNE: It's difficult to follow the train of that question, Mr. Speaker, because it's hard to rebut to prove a negative. I'm not sure exactly what the hon. Member is referring to in terms of two different stories. I do know that there was one story or one reality and that is I was assessed a ticketable offence.

To the preamble of the Member's question, it is not for any of us, it is for our Enforcement Division, our enforcement officers and for the justice system to determine the fine. I recognize, and I think most others would recognize that it is a difficult challenge for someone to rebut the notion that there was a leniency that was offered. What I can tell you is that it's not abundantly clear to me that the officer in question actually knew my identity.

MR. SPEAKER: We're going to move to the next question.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

MR. LESTER: Mr. Speaker, I guess I can sympathize with the minister's response, because what I'm asking for is the truth, and that is something that apparently he doesn't understand.

We are asking for the details of the situation. There are two stories floating in the public. Please clarify for this House and the people of the province.

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

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, it's very difficult to rebut what I have said. The Member opposite doesn't provide much clarity as to exactly the ambiguities that he questions. So for the sake of the record, what I will provide you and the House, as I've done before, is the incidence in which I indicated that during the course of a rather routine hunter safety compliance check it was discovered that there was one single offence that could be observed, that was observed, and it was ticketed accordingly under regulation and the fine was paid.

Mr. Speaker, just as Members of this House may often find themselves –

MR. SPEAKER: We're going to move to the next question.

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

MR. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Recently, the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District made a recommendation to close two schools in the Stephenville - Port au Port region. One of the rationales given by the school board to close these schools was to increase the number of administrative positions – full-time administrative positions.

So I ask the minister: Are you in support of closing schools to hire more managers?

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

MR. WARR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the question from the Member.

Mr. Speaker, it's the elected school boards who have the authority under the legislation for organizing schools and services, not government. I have absolutely nothing to do with this process. The board has clearly stated that it's about ensuring resources are being used to the best and maximizing program opportunities for students in the region.

Again, I have nothing more to offer with regard to the Member's statement, other than the fact that, Mr. Speaker, it is up to the board and the district to assess those school systems review.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. WAKEHAM: Mr. Speaker, I can only assume by the answer that the minister supports the closing of schools to hire more managers.

In the fall of 2019, the Department of Education announced that they would introduce the junior kindergarten program, details to follow. While there hasn't been a whole lot of details to follow, one of the recommendations of closing these two schools in the Stephenville - Port au Port region will mean that the remaining primary school will not have the classroom capacity to accommodate a junior kindergarten program, if introduced.

I ask the minister: Will he intercede and ask the school board to withdraw this recommendation until such time as the total education system can be looked at?

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

MR. WARR: Mr. Speaker, while the plan is progressing and still under way with regard to the implementation of junior kindergarten, I'm not going to comment – I think there's a town hall meeting in the Member's district within the next coming days.

Mr. Speaker, families and parents will have the opportunity to assess what's being suggested here by the district and they have an opportunity, as all members throughout this province who are in the middle of a school systems review, to dialogue with the district.

Again, I've had no opportunity to have any discussion with regard to this and I'll let the review take place, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. WAKEHAM: Mr. Speaker, surely the minister would have knowledge of the implementation of a junior kindergarten program and the likelihood that it will require increased classrooms in order to implement. The result of this move will see that not being possible.

Currently, St. Thomas Aquinas, the school in Port au Port East, houses a public library which, according to the statistics, is the fourth most used library in the western district out of 29 libraries.

Now, in 2016, we know the Liberal government tried to close several libraries across this province. The decision was ultimately reversed.

What is the plan now for the public library should this school closure happen, or is this a backdoor way to close public libraries?

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

MR. WARR: Mr. Speaker, here in the province government continues to provide the lion's share of funding to the libraries – more than twice the average of provincial governments across the country.

Again, the systems reviews, there are no decisions made. The systems reviews are a yearly process that happens. They happened under their government, as it does happen under our government. It's a policy that the district has taken very seriously.

Mr. Speaker, the systems review is still under way. I'll let the process take its place and we will deal with it when it's done.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Last week, the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour announced a bus pass pilot program for Income Support clients within the St. John's metro area. I think we, on this side, applaud that as a good step.

However, I have to ask: What is being done to address those in rural Newfoundland and Labrador who are still struggling with affordable transportation and cannot afford to get to medical appointments?

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

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Member is right; we announced a pilot project last week to help Income Support clients break down those barriers that would impede them to getting to meaningful employment, making attachments to that meaningful employment and getting to their appointments. It was an opportunity and it's a pilot project that will be evaluated after a two-year period when that evaluation occurs. We've entered into discussions with the Corner Brook area to look at the options that we can do in that area as well.

This is a pilot project. We'll evaluate it at the end and, hopefully, it will be met with great success. I think the general public has thought it was successful at this point. We're looking forward to launching those bus passes in April. It will be a good opportunity for individuals that are the most marginalized in society.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I'm not sure those in rural Newfoundland can wait two years for this pilot to be evaluated.

A couple of weeks ago, the Liberal government announced a plan for minimum wage increases, but it did nothing for vulnerable groups, people who cannot afford such common necessities as transportation, food, shelter and child care.

I ask the minister responsible: How can the recent minimum wage plan be described as a balanced approach when it did not address the struggles of individuals trying to make ends meet?

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

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

As the hon. Member just mentioned, we did increase the minimum wage. We made an announcement about that. It's tied directly with the Atlantic harmonization which happens on April 1 every year. We're happy that the Premier and his colleagues came to the harmonization schedule; it gives opportunity to tie that directly to the national CPI.

But we understood that based on the review that had occurred, that we started in the fall of the year with an independent group, based on the information that came back from that group, we looked at that, that was a piece of the information that we used to decide that we needed to do more. We established that the base was too low. The balanced approach comes from here. We wanted to give the balanced approach to allow employers the ability to plan for this, which is part and parcel of why we've done it in a phased-in approach like we have, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

About a decade and a half ago, the PC government implemented and introduced the Poverty Reduction Strategy. It had the goal of reducing child poverty in the province. At the time, we were the highest in Canada.

It worked; it actually reduced poverty rate in the province from approximately 20 per cent down to 11. National anti-poverty advocates have praised this program, praised this strategy and said it should be done in other parts of the country as well. But rather than build on our success, the current Liberal government has gutted the strategy and today we're seeing the fall-out as seniors, the working poor, vulnerable groups and children are paying the price.

When will the poverty reduction program become a priority for Liberals focused on outcomes, as long as there are other parties on this side of the House who applaud it?

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

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member for the question.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about things like poverty, it's very complex; food insecurity, it's very complex. There's no one size fits all. I've said it in this hon. House a number of times, when it comes to the money that goes toward reducing poverty reduction, we are putting, as a government, more money than has ever been in the history of this province: \$286 million.

The hon. Member mentions we don't have a poverty reduction strategy. We actually have more than 100 poverty reduction initiatives that are under way, and we're continuing to do work. We're continuing to do reviews in our province.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about food insecurity, there are three different ways that it's measured. One of the measurements under marginal is when people worry about running out of food. Mr. Speaker, when we talk about that I think about Muskrat Falls –

MR. SPEAKER: We're going to move to the hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

MS. DEMPSTER: (Inaudible.)

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I ask the Member to sit down.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

MS. COFFIN: Let's get right to the point, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Premier: Who's in charge? Is it the Premier present? Is it the premier whispered to be waiting in the wings? Is it ghosts of premiers past? Or are we truly in the shallow state?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you.

I think the Leader of the Third Party actual answered the question, because she directed the question to the Premier. I'm actually standing now to answer that question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, we have a great team here, we have a Cabinet, we have a caucus. I happen to lead this party and I'm Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador. We will be using the great team that we have here with us to make the decisions that will need to be made on behalf of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Mr. Speaker, yes, after 10 years in politics and eight years as leader of the party, into my fifth year as Premier, I'll be moving to a different chair, but still supporting this government and whoever the next leader of this party will be.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Premier: Upon passing Interim Supply and instead of governing, is it his plan to prorogue our House to give his party time to orchestrate the coronation of a new premier and drag us all into yet another costly, early election?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, the good news out of that question is all Members of this House of Assembly, indeed, want to pass Interim Supply. I am sure there are a lot of families out there that depend on those paycheques who will be happy to hear that today. So that is good news, I think, for people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, we have a House Leader, we have a Deputy House Leader and we have Members of the Opposition. We will work with the legislative agenda; we will continue to bring legislation to this House of Assembly to the benefit of people in this province. I'm happy to hear today that the paycheques of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will continue, and I thank the Leader of the Third Party for that support.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

From the Fisheries and Land Resources Minister's mishandling of the die-off of 2.6 million salmon, to his cynical accusations of racism and poaching levelled at two Members of this House, to his use of a racist slur against Indigenous people and the commission of a firearms offence, to the resignation of two members of the Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council as a result of his inaction, this minister has exhibited a pattern of behaviour – a pattern of behaviour, Mr. Speaker – that has caused the public to question his judgment, damaged the credibility of his department and brought shame on this government.

I ask the Premier: Will he finally acknowledge the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources has overstayed his welcome and release him?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BYRNE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, there have been some difficult issues like the salmon die-off, but there have also been some things that I truly regret and have apologized.

There are Members of this House that still command the full respect of this House, who have done some serious things themselves in their past, but they still command the full respect of this House. While they have had to atone for those issues, we accept them for who they are.

So, Mr. Speaker, if I do have one – if I have many frailties I have one strength, and that is the ability to apologize, to say I'm sorry, but also to reflect and to recognize what my strengths are and what my weaknesses are. So I stand before this House, not as a victim or as someone seeking consolation, someone prepared to stand on his own two feet –

MR. SPEAKER: We're going to move to the next question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Labrador caribou are so endangered that federal funds have been allocated for their survival, but in Labrador West two wildlife enforcement positions have been vacant for almost a year; and, also, some vacancies in Labrador East.

I ask the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources: When is he planning to fill the two positions in Labrador West and the remaining vacancies in Labrador to protect Labrador's caribou?

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

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

The question about caribou and caribou in Labrador, I had a conversation just a short while

ago with another Member of this House on this incredibly important issue. We have some vacancies, but they are being actively staffed.

I want to thank the hon. Member for highlighting the fact that a \$5.4 million comprehensive conservation agreement has been drafted and signed and prepared that will create a huge benefit for caribou conservation in our woodland herds. I also look forward to working with communities and, in particular, Indigenous groups on enacting this conservation agreement.

I am also very, very encouraged by the decisions to combine and to expand enforcement efforts, not only in Labrador but throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. It's going to make a big, big difference. I can see success on the horizon, and I pray for success on the horizon.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

MR. TRIMPER: If I may, under Standing Order 7, Order and Decorum, during the Question Period the Leader of the Opposition addressed the Government House Leader by her last name. It is convention not to use each other by the name. So he should either withdraw or a reminder.

MR. SPEAKER: I'll take this matter under advisement and report back to the House, unless the Member wants to make a comment now?

No. So I'll respond to this at a later date.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

MR. SPEAKER: In accordance with the resolution passed in the House on December 5, 2019, I'm tabling a letter from the Member for St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows to all Members of the House of Assembly.

I can further advise that the Member has informed me that he has met all requirements of the resolution and is currently fulfilling the requirements of his suspension.

Further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Mount Scio.

MS. STOODLEY: Mr. Speaker, I give notice of the following private Member's resolution, which will be seconded by the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

WHEREAS the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada believes that the *Personal Information Protection And Electronic Documents Act* (PIPEDA) falls short of protecting Canadians from privacy risks posed by advancements in artificial intelligence systems;

WHEREAS an artificial intelligence system is defined as a machine-based system that can, for any given set of human-defined objectives, make predictions, recommendations or decisions influencing real or virtual environments. AI systems are designed to operate with varying levels of autonomy;

WHEREAS Newfoundland and Labrador residents are protected in the public sector through the provincial *Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Act* (ATIPP) and in the private sector by the federal PIPEDA;

WHEREAS provinces including British Columbia and Alberta have their own privacy legislation (Personal Information Protection Act) in lieu of PIPEDA, that safeguards privacy and protection of personal information held by private companies and organizations;

WHEREAS other countries such as the UK have comprehensive legislation that protects residents' privacy and personal information from advances in artificial intelligence systems in both private and public sector organizations; and

WHEREAS within the current regulatory framework, advances in artificial intelligence systems may result in inadequate privacy protections;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House supports the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada in expanding PIPEDA to include artificial intelligence systems;

AND urges the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to investigate expanding provincial privacy legislation to include protections for the use of individuals' personal information by public and private sector organizations as it relates to artificial intelligence systems.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Before I take other notices of motion, I want to remind Members that we're having some technical difficulty. The noise level just a few minutes ago, too high. We need to take into account and respect that some people may not be able to hear what's happening here, so we need to keep our noise level down.

The banter back and forth across the floor of the House is not appropriate in this situation. I understand that in normal circumstances a certain level of noise is tolerated, but I'm asking Members to co-operate with us here today.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I couldn't agree with you more about respect and decorum.

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 63(3), the private Member's resolution entered by the Member for Mount Scio shall be the one to be debated this Wednesday.

MR. SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I give notice that I will move that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply to consider a resolution for the granting of Interim Supply to Her Majesty, Bill 26.

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have lots of motions today.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled An Act To Amend The House Of Assembly Accountability, Integrity And Administration Act, Bill 24.

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

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Social Workers Act, Bill 25.

MR. SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

MS. EVANS: Thank you.

I would just like to present a petition here.

The new ferry schedule for 2019 cuts our transportation service in half. This is a drastic reduction.

We are isolated for seven months out of the year. To have a ferry steam past within a mile of our dock is doing us great injustice.

We will lose a reliable and affordable service that can connect us to the south and beyond. We also stand to lose Cartwright, NL connection to

the 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 transportation and freight that is provided to our community by the province for five months out 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.

This is a petition that I presented, actually, earlier to the House on several occasions. As I mentioned, most of the people here now understand that the communities in my district, none of them are connected to the Trans-Labrador Highway. So the only means of transportation is by the ferry service in the summer or by the expensive air travel. I did talk a lot about the high cost of transportation, which was alarming and shocking to a lot of people here in the House of Assembly.

The community that has put forward this petition is Rigolet, Newfoundland and Labrador. In order for them to get to Cartwright or Black Tickle now for friends and relatives or to access the Trans-Labrador Highway, they first have to travel to Happy Valley-Goose Bay and then make their way to Cartwright or to Black Tickle. To get to Goose Bay is \$402 one way. So for them to get back and forth to Goose Bay, which is nowhere near Cartwright or Black Tickle, is \$804 return for one person.

During the recent meetings that I attended with the Minister of Transportation, he actually committed to me – he said that his department will reinstate the Rigolet community on the South Coast run. Can the minister now rise in the House of Assembly and make that commitment not only to me, but to the people of Rigolet, Cartwright and Black Tickle?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the hon. Member for her petition and I thank her for her involvement and what she brought to the table, I guess, two weeks ago in Goose Bay when we done our debrief on the North Coast ferry system.

Mr. Speaker, I have no problem at all standing here and committing that what we committed to in that room that day of Rigolet being added to the South Coast run this coming season will actually happen.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LESTER: Mr. Speaker, the majority of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing units permit smoking. Currently there are only two seniors' buildings that are designated non-smoking.

Second-hand smoke from both tobacco and cannabis can seep into multi-unit dwellings from many places including vents, cracks, walls and floors.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call on the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to designate 75 per cent of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing family units as non-smoking.

Mr. Speaker, we all know the exposure to second-hand smoke, be it from cannabis or from tobacco, can lead to serious health problems including lung cancer, heart disease and stroke, and can make asthma worse in adults and children.

It is especially dangerous for children as it can result in permanent damage to their growing lungs and cause respiratory and other illnesses like bronchitis and pneumonia, ear infections and even sudden infant death syndrome. Based on several studies, it varied from 44 per cent to 53 per cent of multi-unit housing residents that do not allow smoking in their house have

experienced second-hand smoke infiltration in their home from elsewhere in or around the building.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of –

AN HON. MEMBER: Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MR. SPEAKER: – Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: You're going to remember that eventually, Mr. Speaker; I have great faith in you.

I thank the hon. Member for the petition, Mr. Speaker, on this very important topic. We have been having ongoing discussions looking at what's happening in other jurisdictions. As I stand here, we're actually doing a review in Housing – smoking cannabis is prohibited on the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing properties, where smoking tobacco is also prohibited.

We, too, are concerned about health. Just a couple of weeks ago, myself and my colleague in Health joined me and we were happy, as a government, to launch a campaign: The New Look of Nicotine – vaping. We're really trying to raise awareness of the dangers of vaping. I think it's well documented the harms of tobacco. So we want to make a move to improve the lives of children in those Housing units as well, Mr. Speaker.

We're certainly reviewing options related to our smoke-free environment policy and once we've made some more progress, Mr. Speaker, I'll be happy to report back to the House on those initiatives.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There have been numerous concerns raised by family members of seniors in long-term care

throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, particularly those suffering from dementia, Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive debilitating conditions, whereby loved ones have experienced injuries, have not been bathed regularly, not received proper nutrition and/or have been 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 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, I'm glad to present this petition again today on behalf of the group Advocates for Senior Citizens' Rights. As I have stood and said in this House many times, this is something that should be of serious concern to us all, as we all have moms and dads, grandmothers, grandfathers and, one day if we live long enough, ourselves, that may end up at some point in time being in a long-term care facility.

This specifically speaks to the issue of persons with dementia, Alzheimer's disease and so on. We've certainly heard that in terms of the people with Alzheimer's, that there are an awful lot of people who would suggest that seniors here in Newfoundland are being overmedicated for that disease in these nursing homes, not necessarily getting the care they should be getting. That is, quite frankly, tied to the fact that there may not necessarily always be enough staff to take care of them.

It's one thing to provide them with food, for example, but if you just take that tray and you lay it down next to somebody's bed or whatever, but they're not capable of feeding themselves,

then it's just as well they basically didn't get the food, even though it was laid there.

If you have someone who's confused, they shouldn't be tied in to their bed, they shouldn't be tied to a chair and they shouldn't be overmedicated. There should be proper areas for these people where they can roam in a safe environment and that there are staff there to make sure they don't hurt themselves and they don't hurt other patients.

Again, these are our people that we're talking about. They're our family members. What's being urged here is to ensure that in these facilities that we have the appropriate staff complements at all times to take care of our seniors who find themselves in this position, Mr. Speaker. I will continue to bring this forward on behalf of people who are concerned about this very serious issue.

Thank you.

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

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

Just to respond to the Member opposite's issues, staffing in long-term care is done on an individualized basis. It's done to a personalized care plan. So they are staffed for need, not for numbers. The results of that care plan show that we provide, on average, 3.4 hours of nursing care per day. That doesn't include recreational therapy. It doesn't include music therapy, group activities and those kind of things.

The Member opposite mentions specifically about food. From my own experience in Lakeside Homes in Gander, the food in actually fact is served in relays. It comes up, it's staggered at half-hour intervals with the units being notified of which units are going to get in what order, and this occupies an hour-and-a-half to two-hour block to allow staff to feed patients who are unable to do that for themselves in turn.

We have a core staffing review to check that we are meeting and exceeding national standards, and that's being done jointly with the RNU. So we are on it, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further petitions?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate being back in the House, and welcome everyone back to the House. We have a robust session ahead of us and I hope to have the co-operation of everyone in this hon. House to do the people's business.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Service, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Medical Care And Hospital Insurance Act, Bill 20, and further move that this said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. Minister of Health shall now have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Medical Care And Hospital Insurance Act, Bill 20, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Medical Care And Hospital Insurance Act," carried. (Bill 20)

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, An Act To Amend The Medical Care And Hospital Insurance Act. (Bill 20)

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

When shall it be read a second time?

MS. COADY: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 20 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Service NL, for leave to introduce a bill, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act, Bill 21, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. minister shall now have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act, Bill 21, and that the bill now be read a first 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.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Service NL to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act," carried. (Bill 21)

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act. (Bill 21)

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

MS. COADY: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 21 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Order 2, second reading of Bill 19.

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Government House Leader, that we now debate Bill 19.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 19, entitled, An Act To Amend The Cannabis Control Act, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Cannabis Control Act." (Bill 19)

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the amendment to the *Cannabis Control Act* that I'm going to talk about today is very straightforward. It's an amendment to enact a change that the cannabis retailers have asked for and one that we're pleased to deliver.

Mr. Speaker, the *Cannabis Control Act* was first introduced just over a year ago. We knew at the time that the industry and the legislation itself would perhaps require periodic changes. It was a brand new industry. We expected some changes; in fact, I said that we anticipated some road bumps.

I'm pleased to say that there have been very few road bumps. In comparison across the country, Mr. Speaker, in the area of cannabis retail and distribution, the legalization of cannabis, other provinces from across the country have actually sought advice from this province. We seem to have gotten it right or as right as you could get it for the largest policy change that our province has seen in a number of decades.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at this brand new industry and the fact that much of it was unknown, in terms of sales volumes demand and a number of other issues, we anticipated that progression and sort of a learn as you go with this. I am very pleased to say and very proud of the Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor

Corporation for how they've handled the legalization and the retail sale and distribution of cannabis products. This amendment is a progression as we move forward.

As the legislation stands currently, retailers are required to report the returns and gross profit information to the NLC within the first 10 days of the month for the previous month. This has proved to be somewhat onerous. Retailers have asked for an extension.

Mr. Speaker, for example, if retail outlets were to report for the month of March, they would have had to report by April 10 at the latest in order to meet that requirement. We're making changes because that was onerous. We've heard from cannabis retailers and from the NLC that this requirement needed to be changed and we are delighted to change it.

Today, we are changing the rule and extending the filing period for returns and gross profit remittances by an additional 10 days. For example, retailers who are reporting for the month of March will now have until April 20 as opposed to April 10 to report on their sales and profits for March month.

Mr. Speaker, the NLC has indicated that this will not result in any operational issues for them, so we are happy to change the reporting time frame for our retailers. We've heard from both retailers and the community and we are committed to be responsive to the industry as we learn more about it, while also stewarding an industry where safety is first and foremost. Today's amendment is one small change, Mr. Speaker, but it proves that we are willing to be responsive to the industry as these needs arise. We're very pleased to be able to help the industry in the way that we are helping them.

Mr. Speaker, as the first year of legalized recreational cannabis came to a close, we had a positive discussion with the retailers about the challenges they faced and the opportunities that they saw in the industry. Out of those consultations, we announced changes to the commission rate for tier-one cannabis retailers, a change that supported the additional financial cost of operating the tier ones. They were more expensive to set up at the beginning, Mr. Speaker, and if we were to see the tier ones have

an opportunity to survive, those changes were necessary.

Rather than the previous 8 per cent commission at all levels, the rates that began on January 1 of 2020 include 12 per cent commission for the first \$1 million in sales per calendar year, 10 per cent commission on sales between \$1 million and \$1.5 million and then it would revert to the 8 per cent for anything above \$1.5 million in retail sales.

Mr. Speaker, again, this is responsive to the needs of the industry. It was part of the learning within the first year of legalization of cannabis products, and we've stated since the outset that we would evaluate the industry and that we might need to introduce changes such as the one that we're introducing today.

Mr. Speaker, this is a fairly administrative change but it's an important one. I think that the retailers in the province would benefit from this, very pleased to be making this change today and I look forward to debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's indeed an honour, as we're back in this sitting of the House now, to speak to the first piece of legislation that we will debate here in the House of Assembly. I suspect, unless there are some major issues this afternoon, that we will probably move to the next level of adoption.

Mr. Speaker, we're talking about Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Cannabis Control Act. As we know, the last 18 months there has been a lot of discussion, a lot of issues around the legalization of cannabis and the reporting process, the financial implications, the process from an administration point of view that needs to be put in play. I'm glad that the minister had said that they had heard from the industry because we have had, on this side, conversations with people in the industry, particularly the providers, the sellers – particularly the private ones – who were having some challenges in the mechanism

when it came to the administrative process that they needed in play.

Anybody who have been in business would know, when you do your reporting and you pay your remittances and all the other responsibilities you have, there's a certain period of time that you need to put that in play because you have all the other administrative things, all the other operational things that are important that you have to, first, make as a priority.

We all realize that the reporting process, particularly for profits, is a financial benefit to the province, and that has to be reported in a timely fashion. There has to be a happy medium to be able to make that work so it's not a burden, financially, on these individual companies, and a lot of them, particularly the private, independent ones, are mom-and-pop operations. So they need to be treated in a way where they can still administratively do it properly and not be under a time frame that either makes it that it's not being reported properly, not because of any untoward concept but because the time frames means they still have to operate their businesses.

The administrative change here, while it might seem small in changing a number, I think it's very beneficial to the businesses. I think it might set the trend for other things we do in other sectors in our society, taking some of the burden off to ensure they have a timely fashion to be able to report all the revenues or any other issues around expenditures or operations that would be necessary for us to operate provincially in the best manner for policing. I say that in the sense of an administrative responsibility that we would have as government, but also that there's isn't an extended burden on the individuals.

Mr. Speaker, we will be supporting this. We hope that this does take some of the administrative burden off the individual companies that are responsible for it, but also that it puts it in play so that we do have the best reporting process possible to ensure everybody are following all the regulations that have been outlined.

We're looking forward to passing this as our first piece of legislation and then moving on to some more substantive things in the House of Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

It's a pleasure to rise in support of this amendment. The *Cannabis Control Act* was an interesting piece of legislation. It broke ground in many ways because it actually addressed what is something that I think is becoming a more increasing issue, which is safe drug supply for people who have maybe some issues with substance use.

I think in the first instance this was, if you like, the low-hanging fruit because marijuana/cannabis was generally regarded as used in a recreational sense. It was provided through the illicit market and wasn't necessarily regarded in any great way as a gateway drug. The biggest gateway drug is still, paradoxically, alcohol, which is far less regulated and far more widely available – a subject we will be addressing with our forthcoming alcohol action plan in some respects.

So this speaks to the idea of a regulated industry, quality control, and people essentially knowing what they're buying. This has actually opened a Pandora's box further down the road, because now people – particularly the kind of user communities like you see in VANDU in British Columbia – are now making the same argument for what are traditionally regarded as prescription opioids or controlled drugs from different ways.

They are doing it in a very persuasive way. There is a ground swell of opinion. There's evidence from Europe. There are podcasts popping up everywhere from people with some very good communication skills and doing very good advocacy work in that regard. Really, I think in a sense, they are dragging the debate at a speed that maybe the medical administration, the medical establishment, and certainly some areas of the political establishment are really not that happy about going. So the *Cannabis Control Act* kind of set the stage for that.

One of the issues around it was that this was done in advance of federal legislation so we would be prepared and, as the Minister of Finance has mentioned, we were ahead of the curve in this regard. We were used as an area of expertise, really, even though at the time we crafted the legislation and the act had not yet been proclaimed because of the federal changes that needed to allow that to happen.

One of the understandings we had, though, was that this would be like a lot of legislation – and I think fondly of the *Highway Traffic Act*, which is always being revised. If you ever want to look at an example of a living statute, that's one that seems to be exuberant in its growth from month to month and session to session, but it would need to be revised.

One of the things we heard very clearly was from individuals who had companies, the suppliers, that the reporting requirements were challenging. So the logic behind this was to try and address a new industry that we were trying to grow – if you like that analogy – and to help them with lightening their regulatory requirements or at least putting in something that was a reasonable compromise.

Again, doing what we've done before, we scouted around and said: where is that precedent we can use for this? Within the Department of Finance, the other piece of legislation analogous to this that the department has relates to alcohol. The requirements for alcohol are that the reports have to be submitted within 20 days of the end of the period for which those reports apply.

The cannabis ones, I think from an abundance of caution – a little bit of maybe trying to look as though we were not being too lax for those people who felt that was an issue – had been set at 10 days. Even in this age of electronics, electronic stock monitoring, SKUs, bar code readers and all this kind of thing, it's been difficult for the suppliers to meet that 10-day deadline. This is a simple change, but despite it being simple, with it being enshrined in the substance of the act, it requires a visit to the floor of the House to have a discussion and to beat it out to make sure due diligence is done.

You can see on these occasions why sometimes much of the criticism occasionally of some

Members of this House, items like this are put in the act which is a framework and then regulations are published and altered within that act under the authority of Lieutenant-Governor in Council. There's always a debate in there that the usual suspects will get up and tell you that we have delegated the authority of the House to a select group of Ministers of the Crown to alter and change as they see fit, but really I would argue that this is a perfect example of why the current trends in drafting have evolved the way they are.

Legislative time is at a premium and we find ourselves in this situation of debating a change of one digit in the House because that's all this is. Whilst I fully support this, and I would encourage the Members opposite to do the same, I think it is an opportunity to reflect – for us on this side of the House and for the critics who will meet these bills when they come – that there is a role for framework legislation and there is a role for regulations under those to be done in a more nimble and flexible timeline. There is always a debate to be had as to where that grey area starts and ends, and I wouldn't want to curtail that in terms of principle, but at some point there's a reasonable person test that has to apply to this.

So again, not to beat this to death for one digit, seven minutes and counting, I would suggest that this House support the change of 10 days to 20 days.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to point out that this is an excellent first step in levelling the playing field between big business and small, especially when it comes to cannabis retail.

Certainly, we have seen a disproportionate advantage given to large business, especially retailers who have been able to have access to funds, the legal, the accounting and a variety of other expertise that have allowed them to bid on

contracts, to be able to establish retail stores, to be able to have their returns in on time. In fact, we've also seen big businesses and numbered companies getting breaks on the part of government.

So, certainly, it's nice to be able to see small businesses given a little bit of a break, because as we know, small business owners are the people who do all of the jobs in their retail outlet. They are the accountants, they are the comms, they are the front-line staff and they are the store clerks. They do all of that work, so affording them an extra amount of time to be able to complete that work is a fine first step.

We do also need to recognize that small retailers are the heart of business. When we give opportunities to large businesses, a large share – in fact, a disproportionate share – of the revenues they glean move outside of our province. If we want to ensure that we have a healthy province, keeping more small businesses in business, helping them retain those profits and to circulate them in our province will result in a healthier economy for all. So the things that we can do to help enable these individuals to thrive in their community are absolutely paramount.

I would encourage the minister to look into helping these individuals gain access to greater variety and more timely delivery of products. Certainly, I've heard numerous small retailers say they have had difficulty accessing product and they often do not get the variety that they require. So that's another piece that, perhaps, we could debate.

We should also look at the difficulty associated with cannabis retailers being able to access bank accounts. Some retailers are going to be unfairly disadvantaged because that is their only way of managing their money, and if they can't operate a bank account, if they can't have a bank account, and they have to have a safe one, that's a safety concern. They are opened up to all manner of criminal activity. The other is that they can't access loans and they can't access a whole pile of services, financial services that would help them run their business.

So while this is a very good first step and I support it, I think we also need to look further into modifying this legislation to help retain

small businesses and help them thrive in our economy.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DAVIS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, it's a mouthful I know.

I'm very happy to stand here today to talk about the *Cannabis Control Act*, Bill 19. My hon. colleagues in the House of Assembly, I agree with much of what they said. The Leader of the Third Party, talking about small business, I can't agree more as the minister of business; I couldn't agree more that we want to try to open up opportunities for them. Anytime you can improve the ability for reporting and improve that ability for them to take a little bit longer to do that is a good thing.

I like what the Minister of Finance had to say with listening to businesses, which is important. When they reach back about opportunities and how we can make their life a little bit easier, we should try to always do that and I'm happy we were able to do that in this case. Extending the reporting deadline by twice as much as it was before is impactful, even if it is from 10 days to 20 days, it's still an important piece that allows them to have a little bit more leniency with respect to that and allows them to not impact their business as much.

Anytime we have that opportunity, we should always take advantage of that, from the business perspective, from my department, but it also gives us the opportunity to assess and look at opportunities to improve.

We've always said, as the Minister of Finance said, when we brought in this legislation in the beginning was it's going to be an opportunity for us to – it's a new industry, never been done before, legally, of course, it's never been done before, but what we're trying to do is make it safe for the people of the province, which is important, but also providing those business opportunities for growth.

Creating an industry is important; we've done that, not only from the production side but now

the small business side, which is good. There are many of these retailers out there that we want to try to support as much as we possibly can.

From that standpoint, anytime we have the ability to grant them a little bit of a reprieve, I think we should. Listening to them, in consultation with the stakeholders that are involved, that just goes to show that when people reach out and communicate with us we're going to be willing to listen to them and try our best to fix those little concerns that people do have from time to time. We're not always going to agree on everything, but in this case it was a great opportunity for us to take that step further to make that small business a little bit more – make it a little bit easier for them to provide what they do in this marketplace.

They are backbone of the Newfoundland economy for sure, employing thousands and thousands and thousands of Newfoundlanders each and every day. Every opportunity we can to try to support them, even in the slightest way, is a benefit to them.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my hon. colleagues for their support of this slight change to the legislation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I won't be speaking long to Bill 19, but as always, I like to have a few words on every bill, so at least for the purposes of *Hansard*, if nothing else, everybody knows where I stood on any particular issue, so today will be no different.

Mr. Speaker, I will say that I, too, support this particular bill. As has been said by others, I think small business is certainly the engine that drives our economy here in Newfoundland and Labrador. Anything that we can do in this House of Assembly to support small business, to reduce red tape, to make things easier for them so that they can succeed, I really think that that's important and that's something we should be doing.

Obviously, again, as has been said, this is a new industry. I think that, as the Minister of Finance said, he anticipated more bumps in the road than we've actually had. That's a good thing.

Obviously, the legislation that was brought in by this administration and debated and passed by all Members of this House of Assembly, obviously, I'm going to say – dare I say – we did a good job on that and it's worked out rather well.

Will there be issues that will arise from time to time that will require us to go back into the House and make adjustments and so on? I'm sure there will be. If that's required, then, obviously, we have a responsibility to listen to those that are driving our economy and to assist in any way we can, while, obviously, balancing the needs of the population as a whole.

So the only other point I will make, I did listen to the Minister of Health and Community Services. I do agree, in this particular case, that perhaps this is something that could have been dealt with in regulation because it's a minor change, and then it could have been done a lot quicker, but I will disagree from a broader perspective. When he refers to the usual suspects, I know I'm one of them when we talk about regulation, I don't mind and I will always do that. I think there is a place for legislation and there is a place for regulation.

When it comes to a minor change such as this, I think it could probably go under a regulation that could be changed by the minister and department and so on. But when it comes to substantive pieces of legislation, substantive matters, when we look at, as an example, the *Public Procurement Act* that we've passed in this House of Assembly that involves the expenditure, literally, of hundreds of millions of dollars and to suggest to leave all that to the minister to make regulations to do whatever they want, no, I did have an issue with it and I will continue to have an issue with those types of things.

Certainly, when it comes to something like this, I would agree with the minister that this one probably could have been captured under regulations. Be that as it may, it isn't in the regulations; it's actually in the act. It requires approval of the House and I will support it.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, if he speaks now he will close the debate.

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

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

I just wanted to thank all speakers who spoke to this piece of legislation. It is important legislation. It does help small businesses.

I did want to make a comment. The Leader of the Third Party had raised a concern, Mr. Speaker. We've heard from one individual, a retailer in this province, and that's around his inability to get banking. That is outside the scope of the NLC or the regulations that we deal with. It's, in fact, federal regulation that deals with banks. I just wanted to inform her of that. It is a very unfortunate situation but it's something that the individual would have to take up with the federal Member for the area.

The other point I think she raised was the number of retail outlets. I think just recently the NLC added another seven outlets. They review it on a regular basis and where they see a need for additional outlets, they certainly put additional retail outlets. I'm sure that they're following this debate today as well, as it pertains to the NLC. If there is a need for additional outlets, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that will be looked at.

Again, I wanted to thank all Members of the Legislature for their contribution to the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

The motion is that Bill 19 now be read a second 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: A bill, An Act To Amend The Cannabis Control Act. (Bill 19)

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

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

MS. COADY: Now, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, “An Act To Amend The Cannabis Control Act,” read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 19)

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

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 19.

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 to consider 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 19, An Act To Amend The Cannabis Control Act.

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Cannabis Control Act.” (Bill 19)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Cannabis Control 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 the bill carried with 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 Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move the Committee rise and report Bill 19.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 19.

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): 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 19 without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole has reported that the Committee has considered the matters to them referred and directed him to report Bill 19 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 Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to provide clarification. I think I used the word retailers; I meant to say suppliers. The Leader of the Third Party was talking about supply and NLC have brought on seven new suppliers. I think I used the word retailer as opposed to supplier, so I'll just clarify that.

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will say we've had a lot of co-operation in the House today getting a bill through the House expeditiously. It's our first day back. Hopefully, we can remain dedicated and committed to doing the people's business over the next number of months. I thank the House for that.

Considering the hour of the day and considering it being our first day, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that we do now adjourn.

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

All in favour of the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All against?

Carried.

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

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