



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Volume XLIX

FIRST SESSION

Number 64

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Scott Reid, MHA

Thursday

November 5, 2020

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Reid): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order, Standing Order 49, offensive language.

Yesterday, during Question Period, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Placentia West - Burin, in one of his questions actually said deaths of children at the hands of this government. That statement is very offensive if you think about –

AN HON. MEMBER: False.

MR. CROCKER: And false. At the hands of government, Mr. Speaker, if you think about it for a minute, most of us over here have children, and to make that type of statement is very disrespectful.

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

MR. DWYER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My district is Placentia West - Bellevue and I retract my statement.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

We'll proceed with Members' statements.

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today, we'll hear Members' statements from the hon. Members for the District of Torngat Mountains, Exploits, Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, Burin - Grand Bank, Humber - Bay of Islands, and also, by leave – I understand the Members will ask for leave – Burgeo - La Poile and the District of Lewisporte - Twillingate as well.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MS. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I speak today in this hon. House to pay tribute to each community volunteer ground search and rescue team in my District of Torngat Mountains.

Each community has a team of volunteers ready to go out into the wilderness on land or on sea to help. What does help mean, Mr. Speaker? It means searching, hoping to rescue. They volunteer so, if called upon, they will be able to rescue. Each volunteer knows they can make a difference. They train, they practice, they prepare. It does not matter what time of the day or night the call comes in. It does not matter what the weather conditions are. It does not matter where the search area. What matters is they have received a call to help.

Many searches have resulted in rescue. The value of our ground search and rescue volunteers can be measured in the lives saved.

Unfortunately, there are calls where there is no rescue, no happy ending. It is those calls that have been the hardest. Yet, it may be those calls where the greatest contribution is made, as loved ones sit home waiting, they are reassured that the greatest effort is being made by our men and women who know our land and know our seas; comfort in a world where little comfort can be found.

You are the heroes and we thank you for your service.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. FORSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to honour all veterans in my district, although most of them are passed now, but their memory and dedication will live forever.

As a boy growing up in Leading Ticks, I remember a veteran, Mr. Herbert Rowsell, selling poppies in our community. I have also had the fortunate opportunity to sit and chat with veterans like Mr. Lloyd Seaward, who sadly passed this spring. Those brave individuals gave

us so much for our freedom and better opportunities in life.

Mr. Speaker, I would like for all Members of this House of Assembly to join me in thanking and remembering all veterans, past and present.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

As Remembrance Day approaches, I would also like to take this time to say thank you to all veterans and Legion members throughout my District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave.

On November 11, as well as July 1, veterans and Legion members gather at war memorials in Harbour Grace, Upper Island Cove, Spaniard's Bay-Tilton and Bay Roberts to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Those who left the safety of their homes and families to serve so we can enjoy the rights and freedoms we live today.

A special thank you to all volunteers who keep our local Legions running, to the members and veterans who teach and share their touring experiences with young students who write Remembrance Day essays and poems each year to honour our beloved veterans throughout Conception Bay North.

A heartfelt thank you to World War I veteran Matthew Brazil; World War II merchant navy veteran John Pauls; retired Royal Canadian Navy veteran and Royal Canadian Legion president, Branch 15, Harbour Grace, Paulette Morrissey; and Sgt. Paul Wood of Bay Roberts currently serving with the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry posted to Halifax. Thank you to all who continue to honour, serve and protect.

Lest we forget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burin - Grand Bank.

MS. HALEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

COVID-19 might have given us the blues, but as every Newfoundlander and Labradorian knows, there's no cure for the blues like a good old kitchen party. If current rules prevent us from going to such a party, why not have the kitchen party come to us?

That's just what four former residents of my District of Burin - Grand Bank have been doing for the past 34 weeks. Every Saturday night Jim and Rowena Tarrant and Paul and Myra Bennett, known collectively as the Mainland Kitchen Band, come together to livestream from Ontario, providing an evening of lively tunes, sure to brighten the most melancholy of souls.

With sisters Rowena and Myra who hail from Little St. Lawrence, proving their proficiency on the accordion, and Jim from Lawn and Paul from Grand Bank, on stringed instruments, the group proves they are able to handle a variety of music types.

Thousands tune in worldwide, Mr. Speaker, including myself, to listen to great music and amusing dialogue. The four have a great rapport.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in thanking Jim, Rowena, Paul and Myra for helping distract us from COVID-19 for at least three hours every Saturday night.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, today, I'm pleased to recognize a long-time volunteer from my district. Doris Butt of Curling is one of the recent recipients of the 2020 Seniors of Distinction Awards.

Doris's involvement in the community spans many years, both here in this province and other parts of Atlantic Canada. She has been involved in many fundraising efforts, including with the

Kidney Foundation and the Heart and Stroke Foundation for over 35 years, has been a volunteer with her church almost all her life and has been a foster parent.

She has volunteered with the Girl Guides, the Scottish Heritage Society and was on the organizing committee of the Western Newfoundland Heritage Fair. Doris's contribution also includes volunteering with sports teams, including her involvement with the Humber Valley Speed Skating Club, serving in various roles on the executive, as a coach and has led the club in participating in three Canada Games.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating Doris on receiving the award and thank her for many years of service to her community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burgeo - La Poile with leave.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleagues for providing leave.

I invite all hon. Members to join me today in paying tribute to Hedley Clarke of Port aux Basques who we lost on September 13. Born in Corner Brook, he was son of the late Philip and Selena Clarke. He leaves to mourn with many wonderful memories his wife of 39 years, Joanne; his daughter, Terri; son, Mitchell; and so many family and friends.

Hedley was a man of many talents and passions. Over the years, he worked in many fields but the job he was most remembered for, and certainly was his most enjoyable, was as a broadcaster with CFGN radio and the voice behind the Port aux Basques Mariners.

Many evenings were spent listening to Hedley call the play when our beloved senior hockey team was on the road. He was well known as an athlete in our area, playing floor hockey, ice hockey, basketball, softball and broomball. Since retiring five years ago, he took up biking in the summer and snowshoeing in the winter.

He loved time spent riding on his side by side with Joanne and his close circle of friends.

He was a tremendous volunteer, activist, music lover, coach, referee, conversationalist, friend, family man and citizen. The greatest compliment I can pay Hedley is that no one could stay a stranger in his presence. His genuine friendliness and pleasant demeanour is something we could all aspire to. He made an impression on every person that he met.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me in honouring Hedley Clarke.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate with leave.

MR. BENNETT: I'd like to thank everyone for granting me leave.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and remember the passing of a former resident of Twillingate and Gander, Mr. Elmo Baird. Mr. Baird passed away yesterday at the age of 100 years.

As a young man, he enlisted with the Newfoundland Overseas Forestry Unit and sailed to Great Britain to aid the war effort during the Second World War. He soon felt the need for a greater commitment, joining the Royal Air Force, who trained him as an aircraft mechanic. Duty brought him to several theatres of war where he served diligently between 1939 and 1945. In 1947, Elmo returned home and married his sweetheart, Eleanor, recently celebrating their 73rd anniversary.

Mr. Speaker, when asked how he would like to be remembered, Elmo said, as "A decent person. That's all ... And that I did my duty. I've got nothing to regret." Mr. Baird, you have done your duty and you have done it well. Like so many, you have earned your rest.

We thank Mr. Baird for his service and wish his wife, Eleanor; children, Margaret, Diana, Roger, Austin; and their families and friends our condolences and prayers.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to rise for a moment of silence for Mr. Baird and all those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.

Lest we forget.

(Moment of silence.)

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

We're going to move to Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to recognize the important work of the Newfoundland and Labrador chapter of Equal Voice.

Equal Voice is a multi-partisan organization dedicated to achieving gender parity in politics. On the local front, Equal Voice NL has been a leader in encouraging more women to run for office at all levels of government by providing advocacy and training.

Recently, Equal Voice NL appointed two new co-chairs: Karla Hayward and Gillian Pearson.

During my tenure as the provincial rep on the national steering committee with the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, I worked closely with Equal Voice, both provincially and national. I have seen the positive impact of their efforts first-hand and I look forward to working with Ms. Hayward and Ms. Pearson on our common goals.

Mr. Speaker, as I look around this hon. House, I am proud to be one of nine women sitting here today. However, nine of 40 are simply not enough.

We know that when we have more diverse backgrounds and experiences at our decision-making tables, we make better decisions for the people we serve.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in committing to support, sponsor and inspire more women to take on leadership roles, particularly those who wish to run for elected office in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Official Opposition I join with the minister in recognizing Equal Voice NL's two new co-chairs, Karla Hayward and Gillian Pearson. As co-chairs of Equal Voice Newfoundland and Labrador, Karla and Gillian will continue to advocate for gender parity, provide programming and support women who wish to run for political office. I am confident they will be strong advocates for Equal Voice Newfoundland and Labrador.

I, too, am proud to be one of nine women sitting in this hon. House of Assembly and I agree that nine out of 40 MHAs is just not good enough. To improve this I implore all Members of this House to support women who wish to run for elected office and to help achieve gender parity on all of our municipal councils and provincial and federal legislatures.

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 would also like to thank the hon. minister for receiving an advance copy of her statement. I congratulate Ms. Hayward and Ms. Pearson on their appointments and applaud the work of Equal Voice Newfoundland and Labrador.

The hon. Minister is right, there needs to be more women in this House. That is a role for all

of us to encourage but, also, there is especially a need to have more women in municipal politics where their voices are sorely lacking. The NDP caucus looks forward to collaborating with the government to design and roll out initiatives to help correct the gender imbalance in provincial and municipal politics.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation.

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

Today in this hon. House I celebrate the impact and successes of our province's cultural sector.

It was playwright and actor Robert Chafe who noted, "Our culture is our voice, our way of announcing ourselves in the world. It is the beating heart of this place, ever evolving, diversifying, and strengthening."

The latest available data by Statistics Canada revealed that our cultural sector generates approximately \$451 million towards our GDP, and that our province exported over \$56 million worth of cultural products in 2018.

A key part of our cultural industries is the film and television industry. It generates skilled jobs and creates economic spinoffs in our province. I also note that for the first time ever, this province has two television productions occurring at the same time: *Surrealtor* and *Hudson and Rex*. Both productions highlight the calibre and capabilities of the industry right here at home.

Mr. Speaker, now more than ever, tech innovation is a driving force behind the cultural industries. Most recently the St. John's International Women's Film Festival celebrated its 31st season, held virtually for the first time, and the response was fantastic. The festival screened 51 short films and presented 11

features, earning over 7,000 views on its streaming platform.

Also this year for the first time, MusicNL participated in Innovation Week by offering sessions with active industry professionals to examine what tech-based strategies would work in light of the uncertainties surrounding COVID-19.

Mr. Speaker, our arts and heritage sector has adapted and modified operations to safely open to the public. Our Arts and Culture Centres recently reopened and have sold out shows using a mix of live performance and streaming to reach audiences.

Our multi-faceted culture is expressed and celebrated each and every day by artists and heritage practitioners in visual arts, literature, film, music, traditions and practices, built heritage, languages, food, oral histories and storytelling.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in saluting all of them.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to thank the hon. minister for the advance copy of his statement, as well.

Newfoundland and Labrador is home to a unique culture that many admire and enjoy. Our culture alone is a tourist attraction in itself. Our people are what makes our tourist industry thrive.

We are excited to see TV productions such as *Surrealtor* and *Hudson and Rex* take place in our province. As a government we must do more to further expand the calibre and capabilities of the film industry here in the province.

Along with this, the tech industry is equally as important. Due to the ongoing pandemic, we are seeing online concerts and platforms such as Facebook Live and drive-in shows like the

recent show by Chris Andrews and Shanneyganock and friends.

Mr. Speaker, the number of talented artist and musicians in our province is unparalleled in the country. It is great to see our Arts and Culture Centres up and running again, offering shows to the people of the province. Adding the virtual component was a great idea that allows people who may not feel comfortable to attend a live show to watch from the comfort of their own homes.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members in the House to join me in celebrating all of those who represent our culture and heritage each and every day with the pride that we have.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

It is a wonderful thing that we can draw on such financial benefit while we celebrate and share our culture with the world. I want to congratulate all the artists who made all of the aforementioned productions possible. Their hard work is what puts Newfoundland and Labrador on the map for people from outside of this province to come visit, to relocate to and invest in this province. I urge the government to continue to focus on developing and nurturing this industry as it has a viable future for many years to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. CROSBIE: Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, C-NLOPB released their call for bids. The results are very disappointing, given that the parcels included in this round were of high geologic potential and only one in 17 received.

Will the Premier admit that this is a reflection on his government's failure to attract exploration investment to the offshore?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that question.

I think, like every Member of this House of Assembly, we would've like to have seen more bids yesterday. The harsh reality is this is a global economic crisis. The energy sector globally is facing downward pressures. This is not unique to St. John's; it's not unique to Newfoundland and Labrador. This is a global economic crisis and downward pressure on a commodity. We are doing our best to ensure that we're best positioned to capitalize on this commodity when it returns.

So instead of focusing on the negatives, let's focus on the positives, like the two robust discoveries by Equinor, the commitment by CNOOC to drill in 2021 and BP and BHP to drill in 2022.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, no doubt the Premier wants us also not to focus on the negatives presented by the two drill rigs which are now holed up in Bull Arm rusting away, and distract us from the fact that Norway is prospering.

The Premier and the minister's much-touted exploration program promised to bring exploration dollars and jobs to the province. This program saw only one bid received.

Will the Premier admit the program clearly is a failure?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology.

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

I can't say that we were surprised by the results yesterday, given the situation that we find ourselves right now in the oil world, we'll say. While we are happy with the fact that we have billions of dollars invested right now that we know will be explored, that these companies have committed to, the reality is that we as a province, just like the rest of the oil-producing world, are going through a difficult time.

I do want to point out, again, just to clarify for the Member opposite and for everybody, this is not just felt by us. He mentioned Norway. I have something here from the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate that talks about how "The decline in demand for oil and lower prices have led oil companies to reduce their exploration budgets for the year" In fact, this year they only drilled half the number of wells in Norway as they did the year before. It's not just us feeling it; it's everybody feeling it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: This is while we're going to be drilling no exploration wells for the foreseeable year.

Industry groups called for exploration incentives from government for months, saying that putting the right policies in place would attract new investment which will protect and create jobs and produce many local benefits.

With the program the Premier personally announced a total failure, and Trudeau and O'Regan having turned their backs on our province, what is the premier going to do now?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I would like to hear the answer.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I would like to hear the answer from the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to give it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. K. PARSONS: (Inaudible.)

MR. A. PARSONS: Again, I say to the Member for Cape St. Francis, if you ask me a question I would love to answer it, but I'm trying to give an answer now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

What I would say to the Member opposite is that the preamble to his question was actually false and inaccurate. He said there will be no drilling for the year. The reality is that CNOOC has committed; they have got a rig retained from Stena. They will be drilling in the first or second quarter of 2021. We have BP and BHP that have committed.

Again, I realize that this sector is going through a tough time, but the reality is – here's a headline from *OilPrice*: "Exploration Activity Offshore Norway Plunges After Oil Price Crash." The reality is that anybody that is in this field is going through a tough time, but I would like to think that the creative measures we are taking will lead to a brighter future.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Let's hope that rig that the minister refers to doesn't join the other two rigs that are holed up in Bull Arm or go to Norway like the third one.

The minister should remember a statement from the Minister of Health: "Hope is a girl's name, not a strategy."

Now, yesterday this minister –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. CROSBIE: – Minister of Industry, could not say when the weather will require warm idle at the Come By Chance oil refinery, could say not how many jobs are involved, could not say whether the buyer will want the province to assume the environmental liability. Issues like these can make a deal fall apart.

I ask the Premier: Will he take the file over from the minister and give it proper attention?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Unlike the Member opposite, I'm quite comfortable with my colleagues and have great faith in my minister to manage the file.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER FUREY: I know the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology has been working tirelessly with his officials and talking to the unions at Come By Chance to facilitate the best deal possible so that we can recognize the full value of this for the women and men who work at that important asset for Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Two years ago the health clinic in Portugal Cove-St. Philip's was closed by Eastern Health, leaving seniors, children and all residents without essential community-based health care, including mental health services.

With the minister's commitment to promoting community-based health care, will the minister direct Eastern Health to reopen the health care clinic in Portugal Cove-St. Philip's?

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

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

Community-based health care is a priority for our department and has been. I would refer to the fact that the significant proportion of health care is now being provided virtually and that this has become a huge asset to people in widespread areas of the province.

We have seen a 700 per cent increase in virtual care. Wound care can continue on almost an individual basis in people's homes, Mr. Speaker. We are moving from old ways of doing things to new and more effective, efficient and patient-centred ways of doing things.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a senior couple in my district who've been married for 59 years. That's right, 59 years, a long time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PETTEN: The wife is in long-term care for the last four years, and now with failing health, her husband is being denied his wishes to be united with his wife. All the while, there's an empty bed in her room. I've worked on this and we can't find any answer.

Mr. Speaker: When are we, as a government and as a people, going to start showing some compassion to the seniors of this province and give them the dignity they deserve?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Whilst I can't speak to specific cases, what I can say is that we are building new capacity in long-term care to deal with those challenges.

The Corner Brook facility, for example, Mr. Speaker, has adjoining rooms that will allow for couples to be reunited. We have old infrastructure and as we replace that and make it COVID friendly, with single occupancy rooms but adjoining, we will get to the stage where we will be able to accommodate seniors couples; but, at the moment, different levels of care required to be looked after in those facilities that can best care for them, that is our priority. Reuniting them will come as we build our infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, through my colleague in TI.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, all he's asking for is these people to have the dignity that they deserve.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: Almost two dozen elementary school children are forced to walk a long distance on Torbay Road to attend school. Torbay Road has no sidewalks and very little shoulders, carrying upwards of 17,000 vehicles a day. Yesterday, we learned that nine buses are sitting idle.

Minister: Can one of these buses be assigned to Holy Trinity Elementary so these young children can get to school safely?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not aware of nine buses sitting idle. That's something I can certainly check with the English School District about. I will say, Mr. Speaker, that all eligible students that are beyond 1.6 kilometres have been looked after. It did require an additional 145 buses put in the system, 145 drivers.

I will also say, Mr. Speaker, that there are some areas where we have more courtesy students accommodated this year than previous years and some areas where there are less.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Minister, it's all about the safety of the children and that's what we have to look at.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'DRISCOLL: Mr. Speaker, many parts of the Ferryland District are without cellphone coverage. In today's society we use our cellphones as a lifeline. Government is constantly touting the benefits of digital service.

Will the minister act immediately to upgrade cellphone coverage in the Ferryland District?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology.

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

I'm certainly happy to speak about cellphone coverage in this House. It's a topic that I brought up many times both on the other side and here. The reality is, it is something that needs to be improved in this province and we have to work with the federal government in which to do so.

I am happy to say that we are just in the process of concluding multiple cellphone projects in other areas of the district including the Humber - Bay of Islands, Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair and we're working on the 2020 bid round now. I'm not sure if there was any applications put in from Ferryland, but if there were I would be happy to discuss them with the Member in the hopes of being able to provide cell coverage to Ferryland.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. WAKEHAM: Mr. Speaker, the local service district of Mainland and the Town of Kippens have requested funding from government for an engineering assessment study on serious coastal erosion issues in both Mainland and Kippens.

Will the minister commit to providing funding to have this assessment study completed before we have a repeat of the destruction in Daniel's Harbour?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Municipalities.

MR. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Our department is quite aware of the situation out there. I've had several conversations with the Member opposite.

The situation we're dealing with is a residential area. It doesn't impact municipal infrastructure, so current infrastructure programs don't fit within the guidelines. I'm more than willing to continue to explore options and discuss it with our federal colleagues, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, it's sad to see that the minister is more concerned about infrastructure than he is people's lives.

Mr. Speaker, I have a constituent who's in a wheelchair. She started kindergarten; she lives in a local service district. Her approved bus stop is on a gravel road; however, the department refuses to plow the road. Yesterday, four community volunteers had to pick this little girl up and walk her to the end of the road, putting her at risk.

I ask the minister: Will he table the policy that his department keeps referring to that is preventing this little girl from going to school and having the dignity she deserves?

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

MR. BRAGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks for the opportunity to speak on this question.

Where people choose to live and their ability to get to school is important –

MR. PARROTT: (Inaudible.)

MR. BRAGG: It is where people choose to live. I choose to live in my hometown of Greenspond; you choose to live in your district, so we choose where we live. We may not be able to choose other things in our life but we can choose where we live.

Mr. Speaker, I guess I shouldn't have been so distracted on the word "choose," but if you look at it, people are starting to live further and further off the grid, outside of municipalities, outside of the normal areas. They're starting to develop cabin lot areas. The province has a road inventory that they've had maintained for the last number of years. We have not moved into any extra roads at this time and we are ensuring to maintain the roads we have at the best ability we can.

We have over 10,000 kilometres of roads – paved roads and unpaved roads – in this province, Mr. Speaker. If those people work and live outside that area, they should get together, band together, get a local contractor and clear their road.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Mr. Speaker –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: – this is not about choice. Government's priority should be ensuring that all children have access to school.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Mr. Speaker, last night and this morning I've spoken with unemployed oil and gas workers from many communities in my District of Harbour Main. Their stress levels are high. People are tormented. Their worries are real. They fear for their future.

I, once again, ask the Premier: What are the immediate and concrete solutions he can offer for the thousands of men and women in our province who have lost their jobs and have nowhere to turn?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER FUREY: Thank you for that question.

We're all incredibly empathetic and compassionate to people who face uncertainty and find themselves unemployed in this time of uncertainty with respect to a global economic crisis.

We're working – as I'm sure you are and we all are working – tirelessly to afford them opportunities to emerge from this pandemic. They will come. We have secured the \$320 million and working with the expertise there to ensure that our offshore is well-positioned as this commodity rebounds so that we can capitalize on the hard-working men and women in this workforce.

We have one of the best workforces in the world. It's developed over time and we can't

lose it. That's why it's so important to reflect wholesomely on that \$320 million so that we can invest that to protect the future of Newfoundland and Labrador and the industry.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Those are lovely words. They are words but I think the people want action. They want jobs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DINN: Mr. Speaker, there are serious health concerns across the province. I have a resident who has deteriorating eyesight due to macular degeneration and cataracts. His annual eye appointments confirm his eyesight is worsening.

Minister, what do you tell this person who has at least two years left on a wait-list for sight-saving surgery?

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

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

It gives me a chance to update the House on the fact that there is an open call for proposals from interested ophthalmologists to be able to do cataract surgery in their own private clinics, Mr. Speaker. That will add capacity for 3,500 new procedures in this fiscal year alone.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we are working with ophthalmologists across the province to come up with a provincial referral system with a central intake. I wait with eager anticipation to see what the ophthalmology community come up with in terms of proposals to utilize the money that's sitting there waiting for them.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. DWYER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The guide rails and road shoulders in my District of Placentia West - Bellevue are becoming a safety hazard on both the Trans-Canada Highway and Route 210, and off many branches of my district.

I ask the minister: Will he address the serious safety concerns from my constituents and visitors?

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

MR. BRAGG: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much and I thank the Member opposite for the question.

The Member opposite should be happy to know that in every region of this province this year, we let out contracts for guide rails. If there's a case where there's a section or two sections down from a recent accident or a recent rainfall, I would advise that the Member would reach out to the depot responsible in that district and ask them to make a request to get that done and repaired as soon as they possibly can.

Mr. Speaker, we take very seriously the safety of our roads, of our shoulders and of our guide rails. I thank the many people in this province that work daily to keep our roads safe during this next coming six months anyway, when we look at the winter season and over the course of the summer. I thank them for the time they served there.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I hope the minister doesn't start justifying the failure of his government to address concerns of the Innu Nation, our Indigenous people, on where they choose to live, Mr. Speaker.

With many people travelling further and further for medical attention and medical services, the time they wait for their reimbursement on medical refunds can be up to six months. The refunded percentage is not covering all their expenses.

I ask the Minister of Health: What's your department doing to help these patients, Mr. Speaker?

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

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

For those people who receive income support, there is money upfront. For Labrador residents, that's up to \$1,000 in advance for their air ticket. For people who use the Medical Transportation reimbursement program, if the appropriate documentation is submitted with the original application, the turnaround times are averaging 30 days – Mr. Speaker, one month.

I'm pleased to tell the House that system has improved dramatically. If there are specific problem areas, that is nearly always due to some documentation problems. If the Member opposite has a specific case, if she brings that to my attention, I'd be happy to work through that with her.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. FORSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In our PC Blue Book we will cover a hundred per cent of medical transportation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I'd like the Member to ask his question.

MR. FORSEY: Two hundred and eighty thousand cubic metres –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. FORSEY: Two hundred and eighty thousand cubic metres of forest fibre were unlocked from Abitibi cutting permits.

Minister, why are local domestic cutters from Exploits District being denied permits?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture.

MR. LOVELESS: I thank the hon. Member for the question.

The resource that's referenced here is an important one. We've had conversations about the resource in Central Newfoundland and Labrador. If there's a particular one that you're referencing, I've said to you before we can certainly have a conversation around that and I've said it to the other Member in Central as well. If there's something specific, bring it to me and we'll certainly discuss it.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LESTER: I'd like to remind the minister that conversations are not going to keep people's homes warm this winter.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LESTER: Mr. Speaker, last spring during the spring sitting of the House of Assembly we raised concern about the food security of our province. Two weeks later, the then premier was out saying that we were running out of food.

Now with the second wave gripping our continent and country, I ask the Premier: What has been done to make sure food will be available and affordable to all people of our province?

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

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

Issues around food security came to my department with the repatriation of wellness after the great divorce of 2014. We have a whole variety of programs and I wouldn't dare to speak to those under Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture.

We have provided significant support to Food First NL. We met with Mr. Smee on more than one occasion. We gave them nearly \$600,000 for community food program support during COVID. One hundred and thirty groups benefited from that. We had a Community Food Helpline. We've had the Red Cross involved and we have about \$146 million from the Safe Restart Agreement which can be redeployed. Longer term, we have over 63,000 hectares of prime land available to start new agriculture, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PARDY: Mr. Speaker, 90 per cent of the District of Bonavista still have their local dump sites, all of which are overcapacity and environmentally challenged.

I would ask the minister why it has taken so long to bring the District of Bonavista into one of the boards and have it more regionalized.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Municipalities.

MR. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I've only been in the role now approximately nine weeks, Mr. Speaker, and waste management has been a big priority within my department now. We're working closely with all of the waste management boards throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. I do have a meeting coming this Monday with the Eastern Regional waste management board and we will be dealing with some of the issues in regard to

that particular area and along with some other discussions.

Waste management is a concern right throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, but it's an issue that we want to make sure we do it right when we make these changes and implement the strategy that was put forward by Ms. Hann.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

My question is for the Premier himself. Premier, when you lobbied support from the people of my province, you assured them transparency, so let's see what it looks like.

I take my place here today on behalf of every blue-collar worker of Newfoundland and Labrador and ask our Premier: Does he agree with having workers from Quebec come into our province for work while so many of our own sit home with no paycheque? Or will he join me now in a commitment to finally start putting Newfoundlanders and Labradorians first?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BYRNE: Thank you –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

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

Order, please!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. BYRNE: I believe there's a conversation or individuals are engaged in a spirited exchange.

With that said, I would like to engage in a spirited exchange on behalf of the workforce of Newfoundland and Labrador, because that's why I've already sat down with Mr. Darin King of Trades NL, while my senior officials have had regular conversations with him and we have received his input about a potential, proposed template for a benefits agreement.

Mr. King has acknowledged that in instances such as a new contractor coming into Newfoundland and Labrador or one that has been here for several attempts, they would agree and support workers coming in from other provinces. That's a conversation that comes not from government but from Trades NL, and I welcome further refinement. That's why I'm directly engaged with Trades NL to look at their details and to use that as a template document for consultations.

MR. SPEAKER: The minister's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Finance outlined that there would be multiple opportunities for MHAs to have input into the Premier's task force on economic recovery. We've asked about these opportunities, but neither the Premier nor the task force have reached out.

I ask the Premier: Will he commit to having a MHA from each party and an independent representative on this task force?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Dame Moya Greene is working hard, seeking consultation with multiple Members. I'm sure

she will reach out as the opportunity affords for input from different parties and different Members of this House of Assembly, and will put forward recommendations where this House can have a fulsome debate about the recommendations in the future.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm sure that everyone here looks forward to being fully engaged in developing a recovery for our economy.

Mr. Speaker, the value of an hour of work is the same no matter who completes that work, for the same work. Again, I remind the minister that 93 per cent of respondents to a provincial survey published by \$15 & Fairness have said that they support a \$15 minimum wage.

Will the minister accept this call from the public of our province and commit to taking this first step towards a living wage for the workers in our province?

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

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

I'm so delighted that all parties have decided to engage in a discussion about a potential for a universal guaranteed annual income. We're making strides and working collaborative with each other. One of the things that I also would note is that there is a lot of input being received by important people who have really strong opinions and important opinions about this. One of the suggestions that have been offered is that, really, a living wage should be offered, which is really \$18.85 an hour.

The concept of a \$15 living wage, often it changes sometimes according to the conversation that you have as to what exactly is the target because, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I think is worthwhile of a discussion is what would be the merits or the intention for a

wage for a student versus a single person, versus someone with families? I am really anxious to have this discussion because it's so important for each and every one of us in our province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. J. DINN: Mr. Speaker, the coldest part of the year is fast approaching, and as in previous years we are already receiving a large volume of constituent cases of people, especially seniors, who are without adequate food, heat and shelter. For example, we have already gotten calls from seniors who are couch surfing or spending their entire day at the mall because they can't afford to heat their homes. This year people are still on fixed incomes, but the cost of food, heat and shelter have increased significantly.

I ask the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development: What specific programs have been put in place to ensure that our seniors and our most vulnerable neighbours are not left cold and hungry again this winter?

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

MR. WARR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The hon. Member actually brings up a very good point, when you look at the aging demographic here in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. We talk about our valuable resources; our seniors are people that we certainly need to pay attention to. COVID-19 has certainly highlighted more specifically the concerns around seniors: poverty reduction, homelessness, mental health and so on. I've had the opportunity to meet with Dan Meades of the Coalition for a Just Recovery.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I took the opportunity a couple of weeks ago to speak with the Seniors' Advocate, Dr. Suzanne Brake, who I had the opportunity to quiz and question. We had a wonderful session.

I look forward to bringing, as part of my mandate letter, the strategy on homelessness,

Mr. Speaker. I'll certainly report back as soon as I can.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I encourage the minister to do that as quickly as possible. Our seniors really cannot wait.

Mr. Speaker, we, as most people, were alarmed to hear that people caring for our most vulnerable seniors can be hired sometimes with fake documents and without comprehensive screening and background checks.

I ask the Minister of Health and Community Services: What oversight is or will be put in place to ensure that this does not happen again?

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

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

It was also a concern to the department. I would point out for the benefit of the House, that this is an employee of a private company. The health authority is responsible for standards, maintenance and inspections. I'm pleased to report to the House that these facilities get inspected on a regular basis, monthly; and, in addition, there are unannounced inspections too, Mr. Speaker.

Criminal activity cannot be condoned in any form. I have asked the health authority to go back and make sure that its monitoring was appropriate and, if it was, we'll look at ways that it may need to be improved in the future. This is an issue between a private individual who may or may not have committed a crime and a private employer. So we look forward to the results of the investigation with interest, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology.

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

I just wanted to follow up and provide some more clarification around a question from the Member for Ferryland during Question Period where he asked about cell service.

What I can provide the House is that service providers, such as Bell, can apply to the program that we have put out, but it requires them to partner with interested communities in a partnership agreement and everybody is a part of the funding.

From what I can gather, I'm not aware of any communities within Ferryland that applied, but what I would say to the Member is that if he has evidence to the contrary, that's where we can have a conversation about what we do going forward.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Further answers to questions for which notice has been given?

Petitions.

Petitions

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

MR. CROSBIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Federal participation is necessary to support the White Rose project and Newfoundland and Labrador's offshore oil and gas industry.

Thousands of jobs are at risk and 30 per cent of our economy is based on oil and gas and any economic recovery is dependent on a vibrant oil and gas industry.

The economic activity this will create over the next 30 to 40 years will enable the province to transition from fossil fuels to greener alternatives with positive impact on our environment.

This industry employs thousands of workers, both directly and indirectly, which will provide financial stability and helps to ensure the province's long-term sustainability into the future.

This industry has provided and will provide into the future billions of dollars to assist in providing the goods and services for the people of our province.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: to urge the government to nationally champion the benefits of oil and gas to the federal government for their support to restart West White Rose and our offshore exploration and development industry.

Mr. Speaker, this check today shows that this petition has close to 1,200 signatures. I'm pleased to present it to this House. I heard the Premier say minutes ago, we have one of the best skilled offshore workforces in the world and we don't want to lose them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSBIE: Unfortunately, I say to the government, that's exactly what is happening as we sit here. People are out of work and fear being out of work and are thinking of their options. I speak to them daily.

The Premier also referred to the federal \$320 million as if this was a full answer to support for our offshore. I would remind the Members, Mr. Speaker, former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney was overly polite when he called this a smaller amount, and indeed it is. This is intended to

support an entire industry, but is one-tenth of the value of the support package provided to support one producing well, called Hibernia, when Mr. Mulroney was prime minister and my father, John Crosbie, was a champion and an advocate for the interests of workers in this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSBIE: I would quote Mr. Mulroney from his speech a month ago: The Government of Canada would prioritize an advanced energy project that strikes a balance between enormous national and economic opportunity and managing our global climate change commitments.

That's the leadership we need from Ottawa, not what we're getting from Trudeau.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology.

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

I appreciate the enthusiasm from all Members of the House, and I congratulate the Member for his Facebook election head that he just taped right there. It's certainly full of passion.

What I would say is that we all know the industry is in a tough time, but the fact is we are doing what we can. That's why we are actively going through proposals to look at what we can do in scope of jobs. The question I have is so we have proposals from Husky and from multiple other companies as it relates to getting people back to work. Is the Member saying that we should pick one over the other? Because that's what it sounds like he's saying.

Now, this is the same person that said put all the money and put an equity stake in Husky; said put all the money into Husky. I ask the Member, if we put all the money into Husky, what are we going to do for everybody else?

If the Member is so fond of quoting former politicians, I would compare him to former

premier Peckford who said they sold the shop, because that's what that Member would do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Every day emergency medical professionals, emergency medical responders, primary care paramedics and emergency medical dispatchers provide vital medical emergency and transmission services to residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. These duties are essential for delivery of medical services in all regions of our province, especially at times of serious health crises when residents need access to immediate medical attention and/or transportation by ambulance to acute care facilities for lifesaving medical treatments.

Service agreements between government and its private ambulance owners have lapsed with no resolution in sight. As we have the collective agreement between the unions and said operators, with the collective bargaining process coming to an end with no resolution at hand, these hard-working essential employees will have no alternative but to take strike action. Such actions land squarely on government's lap.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, called upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to work with these groups involved to put in place new agreements immediately, ensuring no interruption in ambulance and medical services across our province to ensure there is no interruption in vital services.

Mr. Speaker, as we know, we've had an open debate around this particular issue and it's been lapsed for years. There have been discussions around new agreements coming in place; new processes have been kicked down the road for a period of time. The problem we have here – and it's by the providers and it's by the general public – is the fear that any disruption will cause extreme harm to the people in Newfoundland and Labrador, particularly, if you look at some of the rural communities here who rely on their

first responders for their immediate interventions around health care.

Mr. Speaker, what the industry is asking – this is coming directly from the industry from all corners of this great province of ours – is to get an agreement in play right away, not we're getting close, not a year down the road, not when we do another study on it. Look at it immediately, sit down, have the negotiated agreements put in play so that there's some stability in our medical providers when first responders are dealing with our ambulance service, Mr. Speaker.

We're not asking for something that's not obtainable; we're not asking for a big costing to government. We're asking to put in play what's necessary for proper health care and first responders' necessities here, Mr. Speaker.

We ask that this be moved immediately so that we can have, early in the new year, some stability in our road ambulances and the process and access that people would have to vital interventions immediately.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I call Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call from the – third reading, sorry, Mr. Speaker, of Order 3, Bill 46.

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that Bill 46, An Act To Amend The Credit Union Act, 2009, be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, An Act To Amend The Credit Union Act, 2009. (Bill 46)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Credit Union Act, 2009," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 46)

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

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

I call from the Order Paper, Order 4, Bill 49.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that Bill 49, An Act To Amend The Other Post-Employment Benefits Eligibility Modification Act, be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Other Post-Employment Benefits Eligibility Modification Act. (Bill 49)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Other Post-Employment Benefits Eligibility Modification Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 49)

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

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

I call Order 5, third reading of Bill 50.

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that Bill 50, An Act To Amend The Auditor General Act, be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Auditor General Act. (Bill 50)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Auditor General Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 50)

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

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

I call Order 6, third reading of Bill 51.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that Bill 51, An Act To Amend The Condominium Act, 2009, The Co-Operatives Act And The Corporations Act, be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Condominium Act, 2009, The Co-Operatives Act And The Corporations Act. (Bill 51)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Condominium Act, 2009, The Co-Operatives Act And The Corporations Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 51)

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Finally, for third readings, I call Order 7, Bill 52.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that Bill 52, An Act Respecting Tourist Accommodations, be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting Tourist Accommodations. (Bill 52)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act Respecting Tourist Accommodations," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 52)

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

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

I call from the Order Paper, Order 2, Committee on Ways and Means.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the House does now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Way and Means.

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 (P. Parsons): Order, please!

We are now continuing; we are debating the related resolution on Bill 43.

Resolution

“That it is expedient to bring in a measure respecting the imposition of taxes on carbon products.”

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

The Chair recognizes the Member for Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Again, it’s an absolute privilege to be here and represent the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis and the beautiful people in the District of Cape St. Francis.

Madam Chair, I know today we’re speaking about a money bill and it has to do with our environment. I’ve listened to speakers that spoke on this bill already. I think a lot of it has been discussed and it’s important of our environment and how we protect our environment is very important, but this bill also gives me the opportunity to speak on anything really that is involved in our province.

Last night, the Newfoundland and Labrador Soccer Association did a lifetime membership for Mr. Gord Dunphy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: I just want him to be recognized here today because I know he’s a very important part and a good friend with a lot of people on both sides of this House. They had

a great ceremony last night and I’m sure that if it had to be other times, it would have been a full house and thousands of people there because everybody really appreciates what Gord has done for soccer in our province, particularly on the Burin Peninsula. I listened to some kind words that were brought forward from the Member for Burin - Grand Bank; they were very kind words. I’m sure that Gord really appreciated it.

Madam Chair, Gord Dunphy is what soccer is all about in Newfoundland and Labrador. His career was 50 years long and he did everything. He started playing soccer as a young man and played in different leagues of junior and moved on, but his contribution to the St. Lawrence Laurentians is where his heart and soul is. He wears everything on his sleeve.

He was president of the St. Lawrence Laurentians. He was coach. They won three provincial Challenge Cups back in ’92, ’98 and ’99. He won a national bronze medal in 1999. In 1999, he was also selected as Coach of the Year. Gord has put more into soccer than anyone I know. I don’t know a lot about soccer but I know what Gord Dunphy has done. Gord Dunphy is a friend to a lot of people in this province and soccer is part of it.

The thing that I liked about Gord the last number of years is what we call the Gord Cast. He’s doing the announcements of soccer on the Burin Peninsula. It’s gone to places all over the world. It’s gone to places like Argentina; it’s gone to the Middle East. People really enjoy Gord’s contribution to the sport.

Madam Chair, Gord Dunphy is a good friend and a good man. He only has one problem that I can really see: He’s a Leafs fan. I look forward to collecting a few more dollars off Gord. Myself and Gord had a bet last year on the Boston Bruins and the Toronto Maple Leafs. Gord, thank you for the \$20 I received from you.

Anyway, my friend, I really want to wish you the best. I know you’re going through a hard time in your life right now. There are a lot of supporters that think the world of Gord Dunphy and there are a lot in this House that think the world of Gord Dunphy.

Keep your head up. Good luck, my friend, in your future endeavours.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Order, please!

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

It's great to have an opportunity to speak once again. Yesterday, I spoke to this bill; I actually spoke to the bill. Today, I have another opportunity, and where it's a money bill, you can talk about whatever you want. I have a couple of others matters I want to raise.

The first matter I want to raise – and this would be for the Minister of – what's his title now – Immigration, Skills and Labour, there you go; for the Minister of Immigration, Skills and Labour, just to put a little bug in his ear. I have had a couple people reach out to me. I don't know if other Members have, but people who have been impacted by the shutdown of Come By Chance. There are a couple impacted by that and then there was another person, I believe, that was impacted by the Husky shutdown and so on.

The question they were asking and, I guess, the points they were making were that in their particular cases, they didn't qualify for EI. They were working, but they never had enough hours to qualify for EI. The point they were making was that in the past when you had situations, for example, where the mill shut down in Grand Falls-Windsor or where there have been fish plants that have shut down and so on, the government would meet with the workers and so on and people impacted and make sure that there was a transition in place and that everybody qualified for EI. If not, there were programs put in place by the government.

I put that out there to the government, to the Minister of Immigration, Skills and Labour, in particular. The people who have been impacted by the Come By Chance shutdown, by the Husky and so on – White Rose Project – you really need to make sure to reach out to those

employees and make sure that they're all looked after in the short term, at least, and to ensure that they all do qualify for EI and so on. No different than what you would have done for other major employers in this province, such as fish plants and mills and so on. I ask that you take that under advisement.

The other thing I just want to talk about, again, is the Dominion workers, of course. A number of us have talked about the impasse and the Dominion workers; we certainly hope they can reach an agreement and so on. Coming from that, I guess, was a motion that was brought – a private Member's motion – forward by the Member for Labrador West and unanimously supported in the House about a basic living wage, working wage and so on. That's certainly part of it, no doubt, but there are other issues that are happening, not just at Loblaws but with the other large retail sector employers as well, like Loblaws.

I think we need to have a look at – again, I guess this would apply to the Minister of Immigration, Skills and Labour, as well – perhaps it's also time that we have a look at our labour legislation that we have here in the province to see if there are things that we could be doing to improve it because some of the stories I've heard from workers, whether they be at Dominion or at the competing retailers and so on, are stories about – I'll just give an example – where somebody gets called into work for a five-hour shift. Of course, we can't give them a full-day shift because we want to make sure we keep everybody temporary, not permanent. We don't want full-time hours because we don't want to pay benefits so they'll manipulate the staffing in such a way that we don't have to pay benefits to anybody, but then you call someone in for a shift and you say, I want you to come in from say 12 to 4 or 12 to 5, whatever the case might be, and then 3 o'clock comes around and says we're slow now, go home.

Somebody had to pay for child care perhaps, arrangement transportation, whatever, with the intent to come in to work for five hours or six hours and then the employer, on the fly, says we're slow now go home. Now, all of a sudden, you're losing an hour or two hours pay. It's not like they're sending you home with pay. They're just sending you home without pay.

Then you have situations that work the reverse of that where someone is scheduled to come in for a shift from say 12 to 5 and 5 o'clock comes along and they say we're busy now, now you have to stay for an extra couple of hours. They're saying, well, my babysitter is only arranged until 5 o'clock. Well, that's not our problem, that's your problem. You have to stay for an extra hour or two hours or whatever, it got busy, so to speak.

These are things that are, to my mind, abuse. I understand that there has to be flexibility for employers. Split shifts are another thing. People could argue split shifts, depending on the kind of business you're in, it may be necessary; but I would suggest, if you're a large business, a large retailer like that and you're open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. or whatever the hours are, you don't need to be doing split shifts. It's crazy to say to somebody: Come in now for four hours in the morning, so your morning is gone at work, then stay home for the rest of the day. You can't do anything else because I need you back here again at 6 o'clock to work another two or three hours and so on. It's just messing with people's lives. It's totally unfair. I really believe that it's taking advantage of the situation.

I understand, again, there may be employers, depending on the type of business you're in, if someone has a business where – I don't know, I just throw it out there. Let's say if you had some kind of a business that you were supplying sound equipment or something and someone says you need to come in the morning to set everything up and then you need to come back in the night to take it all down, or whatever. I can understand where scheduling you have to have someone there for certain periods of time.

But if you're a large retailer and you're open all day from, again, 8 a.m. until 10 p.m. at night, there's none of this downtime, so to speak. You can arrange schedules to have people work eight-hour shifts or whatever and work normal hours. You don't have to be messing with their lives the way that they're doing. Again, it's simply taking advantage of people. It's manipulating the rules that exist under the current legislation to your ends.

Here's another one: I had someone reach out to me. They worked at a chain restaurant that we

would all be familiar – we won't name it; that's not necessary. They had a policy, for example, on tips. You had to give 5 per cent of the bill. The waitress or the waiter, server, whatever you want to call it, 5 per cent of the bill goes to the kitchen in tips. You might argue, okay, well if you're getting on the bill 10 or 15 per cent, you're giving 5 per cent to the kitchen, fair enough. You could argue that maybe that's okay.

There were cases, for example, if you had a bunch of young people come in and they didn't tip. So somebody runs up a bill for 50 bucks or 100 bucks, whatever – say it's \$100 on a bill – and they didn't give you a tip; the waiter or the waitress would have to take \$5 out of their own pocket and pay to the kitchen. That's their policy, because 5 per cent of the bill, not 5 per cent of the tip, goes to the kitchen as a tip. I brought that to the labour board and I said: This is absolutely ridiculous. They agreed with me. They said: It is absolutely ridiculous.

Apparently they went to the employer. I called them back, I said: What's going on. They wouldn't return my calls. I knew something was up. Finally, when I got that person back again from the department they said: Mr. Lane, I agree with you. It's wrong, but unfortunately, the way the legislation is written around tips, we don't have the teeth to be able to address this situation. We think it's wrong but we can't technically stop it. I said: B'ys oh b'ys, there's something wrong with this.

There are all kinds of things that are happening to the lowest paid workers in this province that have families to support. If we're going to look at a basic income, that's part of it, but we also need to be looking at the labour laws and how these laws are being manipulated and abused, as far as I'm concerned.

Thank you for the time, Madam Chair. I appreciate it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. WAKEHAM: Madam Chair, I'll just take a few minutes here today to talk about the

budget and what we've been doing. We've had about six weeks of sitting here in the House in this particular session and we certainly have raised real issues for real people, including the questions, of course, that my colleagues asked today. All of our caucus talked about real issues impacting real people in their districts.

These are the types of issues that people are facing every single day in this province. Outside of these walls there are real issues, real concerns, and it's our job to bring them forward and to let people know that we care about what is happening to them and we will work to try and find solutions to these issues that they continue to ask about.

Every day, I think, in this House we've asked questions on our offshore oil and the threat that we are facing. I think we have talked a lot about the tremendous loss of jobs that are real, that have already impacted people and the fear of the unknown, the fear of how many more jobs are potentially lost. The budget document itself alluded to a potential loss of over 13,000 jobs this year. These are serious, serious challenges.

We sit here today and we've passed the budget. It passed unanimously. It didn't pass unanimously because it was a great budget; it passed unanimously because everybody in this House, and on this side, recognizes the challenges that COVID has brought to our province, our country and, indeed, the world. We sit here today with final approval after seven months of expenditure on a budget has happened. Really, it's not a normal situation by any means.

The real challenge is going to be dealing with the serious issues that face this province and that we all face. In the coming months a new budget is expected, of course, to be delivered in April. It's normally delivered in the spring of the year. That new budget will have to contain significant measures to move this province back on track. We cannot keep ignoring the challenges that we have. It is imperative that we face them head on and deal with them. All of us will be looking forward to a budget next year that moves forward and takes action that is desperately needed to happen.

We've talked about the lack of support from Ottawa. I have to say that I don't know how people are not disappointed. I can't believe that people would not be disappointed with \$320 million. I know it sounds like a lot of money and, yes, it's good that we have it; it's great that we're going to be able to provide relief, but \$320 million. As I said the other day, they managed to find \$200 million to invest in a casino in Ontario. That pales in comparison.

When you look at the amount of monies, the billions of dollars that have been provided to other provinces throughout this country, we're just simply asking to be treated fairly. I don't believe that \$320 million is a fair treatment. I will continue to argue for that. The Premier has alluded to it's a first step, but at the end of the day, we don't seem to see any notice that, in fact, there is any more coming. We have not heard anything that gives us any confidence that there's more money coming.

As a matter of fact, the Minister of Natural Resources, federally, stood up and proudly pumped his chest about how his government had given more money than any other government since the Mulroney days. He talked about the \$2 billion, our Hibernia dividend, but he forgot to mention that it is being paid out over something like 38 years. So, again, there's a real problem here with the lack of support from Ottawa.

We've spent a lot of time talking about workers, those without jobs, those on strike, including the Dominion workers in my own District of Stephenville - Port au Port. We now know a mediator has been appointed. We anxiously look forward to that work being done and this strike being settled. It's gone on way too long. The same people who a few short months ago were being hailed as heroes and essential workers, going to work when other people were closing their doors and told to stay home. There are other essential workers that we've talked about waiting to get the pay they deserve, rotational workers and the challenges they face in trying to make a living – those are all issues that are faced right now.

We've heard lots of discussions about health care, including in my own district again where the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association has said in a release that we have a

catastrophic shortage of doctors. We've heard lots in the budget about the new team that is being established to give us the advice we need to transform our economy. We've heard that before. We heard that when you took a million dollars from the Treasury and hired McKinsey. We had clear messages from McKinsey and even from Mills about the kind of things we needed to do. Now it seems we're going to have a new team, basically raking up the same ground and hoping to get more fruit out of it.

There's a phrase called implementation failure. It is used to describe what happens when you've been given the right advice but you fail to put it into action. When a government is unprepared to act on the advice it receives, what is the point of seeking the advice in the first place? All of the spin and feel-good rhetoric, they're not going to change the reality that people face around their dinner tables. It's not going to lead to jobs and if it doesn't lead to jobs, what's it really worth at the end of the day?

Spinning a good story is not going to lift the province up. You just don't tell people that everything is going to be okay; you have to show them. People in this province are discounting the words and they're starting to measure the results. Frankly, Madam Chair, it's not about party; it never was. It's about the people. It's about putting Newfoundlanders and Labradorians first. It's a responsibility of elected leaders to show leadership in the face of crisis, not to blame the crisis for failing to act.

I'll finish with a quote, Madam Chair, which simply says, "It is easy to sit up and take notice. What is difficult is getting up and taking action."

Thank you, Madam Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Finance.

MS. COADY: There are two more speakers.

CHAIR: I ask that people stand. It is hard to see. I know you're raising your hands, but please stand when you'd like to speak.

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

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

I guess I want to talk a little bit about what I haven't always talked about in these sessions. It certainly is about my own district and some of the reasons why I've gotten into this. I guess there are certain lessons I've taken away. I want to go back to looking at some of the lessons of the pandemic and lessons here for this House as well.

It's interesting, some of the challenges that face my district, you've heard them: the homelessness, the poverty, the addictions and the issues of mental health. We also have a number of small businesses. I don't venture too far from my own district. It's where I went to school.

Holy Cross is where I went. I think it was Mammy's Bakery at the time. You'd sit in school and you knew lunch was coming because you could get the smell of the bakery wafting through the windows. You could also get a bag of ends for 25 cents, which are the scraps from the various baked goods. A pretty good deal, actually, when I look at it.

My dad worked on the railway, so it was nothing for me after school, and my siblings, to go down to the rail yard and Dad would be there. We might get a chance to get on the train if we were lucky. Of course, we figured we were driving the train. Little did we know, the train basically was taking care of itself.

If you drive by there now, that rail yard, the turntable, everything is gone. I often think in many ways when we did the Roads for Rails agreement if indeed we made the right choice, as opposed to upgrading the main trunk to a standard-gauge railway. We could have had something that could have shipped goods a lot more quickly, but the fix was in on that in many ways. I look at it, I think we made the best deal possible, but we were shortchanged because keeping up the roads in this place is a difficult enough challenge.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. J. DINN: That would be it. I would think in many ways it would've solved an awful lot of our problems as well. Nevertheless, it's about sometimes looking at, down the road, the long-term vision and the investment that comes with it.

Certainly, if you go down at the end, just on Water Street there and you dig through the pavement, you will find the rails, actually, to the old streetcars that were there at one time. I look back at these times and look at the changes that have transformed my district and transformed the province. I don't always know if they're in the best long-term interest or not.

I do know that in my district where I go to get my hair cut they're local businesses. You go up on Ropewalk Lane and you can see it's sort of the centre part of the district and yet it, too, has Browning Harvey that manufactures Pepsi. I think they've been there for over 75 years. A long mainstay, one of the last when you look at the major bottlers that still have a business interest here. I have the green spaces: Mundy Pond, Martin's Meadow, Tessier Park and Victoria Park. They're significant; in many ways jewels within my district.

Then there are the schools. I do have a special interest in the four schools because of my own background. There's École Ste-Thérèse or St. Teresa's, Bishop Abraham, École Rocher-du-Nord under the francophone school board and one independent school, Lakecrest. To me, they're basically producing our greatest resource: our people, the next generation.

I used to say to teachers when I would speak to them as president – and I do believe this – maybe not in my lifetime, maybe not in your lifetime but in the lifetime of your grandchildren, maybe in the lifetime of my grandchildren or great-grandchildren, I do believe at some point we're going to be moving beyond this planet. We'll have a colony set up somewhere. We'll be beyond that. That's going to be the new world. How do we plan for that? How do we capture here in Newfoundland the technology?

We have a very brilliant people within our school system, children and students who stand to make this province great. A lot of what I look

for in the resources here of how do we start doing things, investing in the province locally, in the small businesses. We've seen them here that the minister of – the investment in seal oil capsules, for example. I think it's in those elements where we can start capitalizing on our own ingenuity, our own industriousness here, focusing on the fishery, which is a renewable resource. For me, in many ways that's the future.

The one thing I've enjoyed the most here, I guess, in this last year, if there's any enjoyment to be taken out of this pandemic, is when the chips are down we work together. We could have done better as well, and I'm thinking in terms of the joint public health and safety committee. We had the opportunity – I sat with the COVID food group, and there is a real effort to try and deal with the situation facing us in a collaborative way.

We have the Committee on Democratic Reform, which the Member for Mount Pearl - Southland chairs, and we're looking at a Select Committee to deal with guaranteed basic income. I do believe this: We have major problems in this province, no doubt about it, with the food insecurity, poverty, health issues and so on and so forth. I think it's best that we find ways, Madam Chair, to work together, to get beyond, and I guess in a perfect world get to the next fixed election date and see what we can do to get this province together, to right it to where it needs to be so that we can move forward.

I do not believe that any one person or any one party has the answers, but I do believe the answers lie here within this Chamber and within the people of this province. I think that's something we can achieve. We all have a role here to play; the Opposition to point out where government is deficient, government to make the legislation that will help this province.

I do believe that despite that, while we're playing those parts we can also find ways to reach across and to work together. I've had that opportunity with a number of ministers as well to resolve issues in my district. I think if anything brings me joy or fulfillment, is certainly that sense of being able to resolve issues for individuals. That's the thing I enjoy the most. I think that's something we all enjoy

here; otherwise, I don't think we would have gotten into this job for any other reason.

I do believe there's an opportunity here to work together collaboratively, and I'm talking about all parties and the independents so that we can find some way out of this mess and get the province on the path to the prosperity it deserves.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you to the hon. Member.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

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

It's wonderful to have such co-operation in the House this afternoon. This would be the last debate of the budget for 2020 and I wanted to make sure that we all thanked the Department of Finance and the officials in the Department of Finance for their outstanding work in making sure that we had not only Interim Supply – because it's not a usual year but they had done Interim Supply on a number of occasions – but also the budget. They worked very diligently to ensure that we had a budget by the end of September, Madam Chair.

I want to also thank and recognize all officials throughout government for the time and attention they took for Estimates. I know that is a very important part of the review of the budget, and I want to thank officials for ensuring they were fulsome in their disclosures and discussion for Estimates.

I also want to recognize and thank Members of this House of Assembly who undertook great scrutiny, great diligence and in the ultimate end, great support for this year's budget. I think we all can agree, partisan issues aside, that it was a very stable budget for very unstable times. We're in the middle of a pandemic, and this budget really focused on health care and providing over \$100 million, Madam Chair, for COVID response, which is essential. We're hopeful for ensuring that we are prepared with

protective equipment, we want to make sure we're prepared for testing and we want to make sure we're prepared in the hope of a vaccine.

This budget also focused on the economy. We all know this has been challenging times for the economy. Many Members have spoken about the challenges in the oil and gas industry and challenges in the tourism industry and challenges because of the global pandemic. So what we saw in this budget were supports for the oil industry, supports for small business, supports for technology, supports for the mining industry, supports for tourism, forestry, agriculture and the arts. All of this was found within this budget, and I am grateful for the support of all colleagues in this House for ensuring we had those supports.

The budget also focused on families. We know how important it is to support families, and the \$25-a-day child care was an important investment that the people of the province are making. I know that was unanimously supported in this House. There were supports for education and ensuring that we had both a solid educational system but also a solid post-secondary educational system, and we did maintain, of course, the controls on tuition.

There's \$123 million for income support and the Seniors' Benefit, and I know there are oftentimes in this House that we've debated and recognized the needs of seniors. We've debated and recognized the needs of those that are struggling and need supports from government. There's close to \$50 million for housing and housing supports, Madam Chair.

I did note a couple of colleagues talking about how difficult a time we are having right now globally because of the pandemic and how that's impacting things like oil and gas. I'll remind the people of the province and Members in this House of Assembly, that prior to COVID and prior to the challenges because of the pandemic, we had welcomed eight new entrants in our offshore. We had, I know in natural resources alone, over \$18 billion confirmed for invest in this province. Madam Chair, I think it's important to recognize that the global pandemic has impacted that, but don't ever think that we have not recognized or understood this

government's impact in terms of growth in our economy.

I want people to understand the reason why I have hope. The reason why I think that we are going to emerge from this particular pandemic strongly is because I've seen the level of investment that has been brought to this province by this government. I have seen the commitment to the economy by this government. I have seen the commitment to families by this government. When you ask for action, I think I can point out quite strongly the actions in this particular budget.

I close today, Madam Chair, saying that it is not just hope that we have for this province, it is a deep understanding of the strength of this province. It is a deep understanding of the economic opportunity of this province. It is a deep understanding of how resilient the people of this province are. Yes, this budget takes action, but I base that action on the hope, the resilience and the strength of not only the people of this province, but also the economic opportunities presented in this province.

I thank Members of this House for their support of the budget. I appreciate the strength and support of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. I encourage them to continue to keep each other safe as we move through this pandemic.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Order, please!

Shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act." (Bill 43)

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 follow.

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 Revenue Administration Act.

CLERK: Shall the long title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, long title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the resolution and bill carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 43.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report the bill carried without amendment.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

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

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

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

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

When shall this report be received?

MR. CROCKER: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

MR. SPEAKER: The Government House Leader.

MR. CROCKER: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I lost my way.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. CROCKER: I thank the Members opposite for their gracious invitation, but for right now I'll decline.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that the resolution be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the resolution 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.

CLERK: "*Be it resolved by the House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows:*

"That it is expedient to bring in a measure respecting the imposition of taxes on carbon products."

On motion, resolution read a first time.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Deputy Premier, that the resolution be now read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the resolution be now 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: *"Be it resolved by the House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows:*

"That it is expedient to bring in a measure respecting the imposition of taxes on carbon products."

On motion, resolution read a second time.

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act, Bill 43, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act, Bill 43, and that the said 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, that the hon. Minister of Finance to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act," carried. (Bill 43)

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act. (Bill 43)

On motion, Bill 43 read a first time.

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, that Bill 43 be now read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the said bill 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 Revenue Administration Act. (Bill 43)

On motion, Bill 43 read a second time.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Immigration, Skills and Labour, that Bill 43 be now read a third time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 43 be now read a third time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act. (Bill 43)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 43)

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

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

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that we take a short recess for the arrival of the Lieutenant-Governor.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that we take a short recess.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

Recess

MR. SPEAKER: Are the House Leaders ready?

The Opposition House Leader, the Third Party House Leader ready? Okay.

Order, please!

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Mr. Speaker, Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has arrived.

MR. SPEAKER: Admit Her Honour.

All rise.

(Mr. Speaker leaves the Chair. Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor takes the Chair.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: It is the wish of Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor that all present be seated.

MR. SPEAKER: Your Honour, it is my agreeable duty on behalf of Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, Her Faithful Commons in Newfoundland and Labrador, to present Your Honour a bill for the appropriation of Supply granted in the present session.

CLERK: A bill, "An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2021 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service." (Bill 42)

HER HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR (Judy May Foote, PC, ONL): In Her Majesty's name, I thank Her Loyal Subjects, I accept their benevolence, and I assent to this bill.

MR. SPEAKER: May it please Your Honour, the General Assembly of the province has at its present session passed certain bills, to which, in the name and on behalf of the General Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

CLERK: A bill, "An Act To Amend The Insurance Contracts Act." (Bill 41)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act." (Bill 43)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 2." (Bill 44)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 3." (Bill 45)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Credit Union Act, 2009." (Bill 46)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Loan Act, 2020." (Bill 47)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 4." (Bill 48)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Other Post-Employment Benefits Eligibility Modification Act." (Bill 49)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Auditor General Act." (Bill 50)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Condominium Act, 2009, The Co-operatives Act And The Corporations Act." (Bill 51)

A bill, "An Act Respecting Tourist Accommodations." (Bill 52)

HER HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR: In Her Majesty's name, I assent to all 11 bills.

This is an opportunity I welcome, every time I come here, to thank you for all of your hard work, especially during the pandemic; I know how difficult it has been. I also want to thank all of those who support you, those throughout the public service.

I really want to thank all of our essential workers because I know how hard they work, putting their own lives at risk many times just to keep the rest of us safe. This is an opportunity to thank them, to thank you and to wish you all the best as you return to your constituencies. I know some of you, of course, your constituencies are closer than others.

Thank you for the way that you have approached the business of the House, particularly during the pandemic. I know that it's been tough on a lot of people; a lot of people have been hurting as a result of COVID-19. But what's been reassuring, I think, for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador is to watch their leaders in action and the tone that you've set, because the tone gives people reassurance that our province is in good hands. Not just from the leaders here in the House of Assembly, but throughout our province, the leaders in business and the leaders in our social sectors. It's all very important for all of us to realize that mental health is something that impacts all of us.

I want to thank Dr. Janice Fitzgerald and her team, from whom we've all been taking advice. I think that is why we've done so well here in Newfoundland and Labrador, when others

throughout our country are not doing as well. I encourage everyone to continue to follow her advice so that we can all stay safe and not have to worry like our neighbours are having to do in other parts of the country. The Atlantic bubble has worked well. I'm hoping that it will continue to work well. It's working well because of all of you as well and the way that you have approached the pandemic here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you for your hard work. It's always good to be here to have the chance to commend you on what you do and to commend you on your dedication. I especially appreciate the way that you have all been working together. It's been obvious for anyone who has been watching the debates and listening to what you all had to say about being able to work together that you have taken that leadership role of getting our province through a very trying time.

We all know that this is the best province in the world in which to live, certainly the best province in the country. Because of the way you have handled all of the issues that you have had to deal with, we are doing well in Newfoundland and Labrador, so thank you, on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, for your leadership that I know will continue past this session.

I'm also excited and I want to compliment you on the changes to the *Standing Orders*. If I smile when I say that, it's because I'm so excited to see baby Alexander here. What a wonderful addition to the House of Assembly. What a great decision that you all made. So congratulations for doing that. I look at the future when I look at Alexander and we know that with that particular change, our House is in good hands.

Thank you so much for all that you do. I appreciate it and on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, thank you. If I could just make one request: Keep that positive tone going. It's really important as we all deal with this terrible situation with the pandemic. We know that we want the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to come out of this better and feeling positive and having a good way of handling issues that arise in their own circumstances because of your leadership and the positive tone that you have set.

Thank you so much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HER HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR: I can't stop smiling. I think she welcomed me actually – he, I'm sorry. See, I've got this she thing.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise.

(Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor leaves the Chamber. The Speaker returns to the Chair.)

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

It's tradition that we usually ask the party leaders to have some comments at the closing of a session, so I'm going to call on the hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, thank you kindly.

Her Honour mentioned tone in the House, and owing to the slight degree of excitability I detected earlier today, I will strive to give my remarks, as we approach the end of the fall 2020 sitting of the House, a calming tone.

I'd like to, on behalf of my caucus, welcome the new Premier and look forward to further debate led by his able leadership of the government as time passes. On behalf of my caucus, I'd like to look back briefly on what's transpired and also forward to what's to come.

First of all, I'd like to extend the gratitude of our caucus to all those who worked hard to make this sitting possible. It's been an unprecedented year with the COVID-19 pandemic raging all about us. It's not an accident that this province has been spared the worst of the pandemic's ravages. Although many have been affected, some tragically lost their lives; other jurisdictions have fared far worse than ours. Through the all-party Committee, that I had a hand in initiating, we provided our advice to the government on ways to reduce our exposure and protect our people. Those measures have largely worked.

People continue to protect themselves and their families by self-isolating, wearing masks and

physically distancing from one another, despite the hardship this causes many families, especially our seniors in long-term care homes and our rotational workers. Exposing our vulnerable loved one unnecessarily to a potentially deadly virus would be reckless and irresponsible and so we each do our part.

In this House we physically distance from one another and we do it for reasons different than in older days when social distance was measured in sword lengths. The public galleries are closed, although from force of tradition the Speaker continues to recite: "Admit strangers." We have managed to function effectively and get the people's business done.

Let me thank the Table Officers, the House staff, staff at Hansard, the Legislative Library and many others who have facilitated the people's work in the House. Let me thank those who ensured the budget Estimates Committees functioned effectively in this time of crisis. The procedures were unprecedented but the work got done. We were able to hold the government to account, which is our role as the Opposition.

Let me thank the staff in our own offices, just as the other Members, I'm sure, will thank theirs. Much of the work MHAs do happens behind the scenes. It simply would not be possible to juggle all those responsibilities without the assistance of the professionals whose job it is to ensure our work as Members is done as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Let me also thank the public for tuning in to watch the proceedings. I'm constantly amazed when I run into people who say: I was watching the House today. It's important to have the public spotlight on the work we do because this is not just any workplace, this is the people's House. The business we do here shapes the lives and the future of more than half a million Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I would thank the journalists who also hold our feet to the fire. That's their job, their role, their obligation. They call it as they see it. They put the facts before the people, and that kind of scrutiny is absolutely vital in any healthy democracy.

I would thank, as well, all Members, all staff and all hard-working public servants who are ready to go to work on a sitting day in December in the interest of those hard-pressed financially with locked-in pensions.

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 think we are at the close of what is an absolutely historic session of our House of Assembly. We have had a great many new and interesting challenges and I think we have met those challenges head on and done a fine job with that.

I'd like to say a formal congratulations to our new Premier, and welcome to our House. As raucous as it can be, it is still quite interesting and I feel as if we have gotten to know one another on new levels. In fact, a little while ago I was reflecting on our sitting, and if I can be a little bit metaphorical for a moment, it reminded me of nan's quilt. Nan's quilt reaches from St. John's East - Quidi Vidi all the way up to Labrador West and tucks us in and holds us snugly. Nan's quilt is made up of 40 squares; each square reflects our respective districts.

As I have listened and watched and saw all of the MHAs perform here, I have a much better sense of what was in each of those squares and how each of those squares represent our districts and the diverse work that happens in our districts and the diverse individuals in our districts, but it's all part of one large piece that keeps us warm and safe and comforted. We are in a time when Newfoundlanders and Labradorians need that comfort and that assurance, and the safety and security that when Nan tucked you in at night, you knew you were in a very safe place and you were going to be okay, no matter what was outside.

Mr. Speaker, we have been in the longest minority government ever this province has seen. I think that speaks volumes to how well we have co-operated and how well we respect one

another and how dedicated we are to making the right decisions to ensure that Newfoundland and Labrador is on the right path. We are, however, also in one of the most critical social and economic circumstances that this – perhaps the most critical economic and social circumstances that this province has ever been.

Throughout the last year, we have addressed many of those. There are still a great many things to address, if I could take a moment. We have created virtual proceedings. Huge amounts of work have been done and now we are prepared in the event that COVID again becomes prevalent in our society that we can operate our House virtually. That is a really important move.

We had a historic opening. Immediately after COVID shut down our House, we had 10 Members come in and do the business of the House with the blessing of the other 30. I have, and eventually I will put this in a lovely frame, signed Orders of the Day from then and I will cherish that for a very long time. That was quite a special thing.

We have also done a number of other historic things. We have amended an Interim Supply bill. Not everyone was happy about that, but I think that was notable in that it was done and it was done for good reason. I think we all realize the benefits associated with it.

We established a Select Committee on Democratic Reform. This is a historic undertaking, as well, and a great deal of work has come about as a result of that. I think that we can modernize our democracy here in Newfoundland and Labrador by the contributions of everyone to that Committee.

Most recently we've seen a guaranteed basic income Committee struck. I think this is innovative, it is progressive and I believe that it will be a significant undertaking and will be to the great benefit of everyone in our province. I look forward to that work beginning.

I want to thank the Member for St. John's Centre and the Member for Labrador West for bringing forward many of these bills and collaborating with that. I also want to point out that we have fought for labour rights. We have

fought for living wages. We have seen these debates come to the House of Assembly and I think that they are in the forefront and they are very important. I believe that we are going to see more work done on that and that, too, will be a benefit to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We've addressed individual housing concerns but we still have a ways to go.

If I can take a moment, I want to acknowledge the workers of this province and the outstanding service that they provided keeping our shelves stocked, our roads safe and our families healthy and educated. Time doesn't allow me to mention every worker, but they can be assured that their commitment and dedication has not gone unnoticed.

I also want to thank, and I cannot thank enough, the hard work of the staff of the House of Assembly. I do believe every day something new happens, and it's very interesting to hear how they've raised their work and they have addressed all of the challenges that they have faced with impeccable professionalism and dedication to their jobs.

I also want to thank the staff from across the public service and all of our political staff as well. All have gone above and beyond to ensure that everything has worked efficiently and effectively in the past year, and especially since COVID has become a new reality. Well done to everyone indeed. I commend you and my caucus commends you for the outstanding work that you do on our behalf and for the people of this province.

I would like to end with a quote from Nelson Mandela. We have done a great deal, but I think he sums things up rather nicely. There's still a lot to be done. He says: "... after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb." I look forward to us helping one another climb those hills together.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Forgive me; I've never seen this place so quiet.

Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, I would like to thank the people of Humber - Gros Morne for electing me as their representative in this Legislature.

It's been a busy session of robust discussion and debate for Members of the House. The COVID-19 global pandemic has touched every family, community and business in our province and, indeed, around the world. As hon. Members of this House of Assembly, during the fall sitting we came together to discuss legislation that supports the socio-economic well-being of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians as we collectively, as a group, face the global pandemic and economic crisis.

In this climate, our government is investing hundreds of millions of dollars to make our province the best possible place to live and create new sustainable jobs for the futures of our families. Investments in such things as child care, infrastructure and businesses all contribute to a better quality of life and a stronger economy. In this session we've successfully passed *Budget 2020* and, Mr. Speaker, may I add, the first budget for Newfoundland and Labrador during a global pandemic. At its core it maintains the principles of ensuring every taxpayer's dollar is closely scrutinized, accounted for and used prudently to its full potential.

Some key actions in *Budget 2020* included \$25-a-day child care in 2021 that will allow more parents to participate in the workplace and lead to more positive learning experiences for our most available asset, our children; \$30 million for small businesses and community organizations to offset expenses incurred by the pandemic; more than \$600 million for infrastructure projects that will improve access to services and create new jobs for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians; increased investments for the arts community; \$2.1 million to advance our goal to welcome more than 25,000 new permanent residents to this province by 2022; and close to \$100 million being available to respond to demands for such things as PPE, testing and mobilizing efforts to support immunization in the event – and there will be an event – of a COVID-19 vaccine.

We brought forward legislation that will make it easier and safer for business to conduct amidst the current COVID-19 pandemic, and new legislation that creates equity in the province's accommodation industry.

For the Leader of the Opposition, I applaud you, Sir, your caucus for taking time to analyze our budget, critique it and the legislation for this province. Well done.

The Leader of the Third Party, likewise, I truly appreciate your perspective and the full knowledge that you bring to the table in the wholesome debate.

Also, even though they're not here, I'll recognize the independent Members. I thank them for sharing their opinions. They're always welcome when representing their constituents.

So I take this time to thank everyone for their steadfast commitment during this difficult session. We all recognize as elected officials in this hon. House we are here to serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We never should lose sight of that.

Thank you all to the staff of the Clerk's office and all the House of Assembly staff. So many hard-working people keeping everything going behind the scenes and wearing many different hats during this particular difficult time of COVID-19. To the Legislative Library, Hansard, the Broadcast team, the Table Officers and the Sergeant-at-Arms, thank you.

To the security guards who are here day-in, day-out, serving the building, we greet you every day. To public servants and political staff everywhere, in our constituencies and here in the buildings, thank you very much. You have all gone well beyond this session as we safely navigate the new normal life of COVID-19.

Mr. Speaker, to your own staff working countless hours behind the scenes to ensure we're prepared for the House during these sessions, I want to thank them all for the work they do.

I'll finish up by thanking Mr. Speaker and the people of the province for affording us this hon.

privilege to sit here, what is indeed during not generational times, but historic times.

Over the years I have had the pleasure of visiting a number of beautiful communities in our spectacular province, from Nain right down to the boot of the Burin Peninsula and every place in between. I think about the people I've connected with: hard-working, resilient, proud Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. You're why I'm so honoured to be here representing you all as the 14th Premier in this Legislature.

We are all here, each and every one of us sit here every day reflecting on the importance of this province, the undefeatable people and its undeniable future. In my short time in office, our government has secured \$320 million from Ottawa to help support the hard-working families in the oil and gas industry. We are enlisting experienced teams, the best and the brightest, to look at reimagining the economy, health care and how to best navigate the oil and gas industry in what's arguably its most tumultuous time.

Rest assured, our government is committed to building a bright, prosperous future for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. I believe together, each and every one of us and the constituents that we represent, will emerge from this pandemic, in this global economic crisis a stronger, more caring, more compassionate and more diverse society and economy that will represent the future generations of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you very much. I hope everyone takes a moment to safely honour our veterans and their loved ones on this Remembrance Day.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

It's also a tradition that the Speaker say a few words at the conclusion of a session as well. I'll keep my comments brief; I just want to do some thank yous before we leave.

First of all, I want to thank the staff of the House, the Broadcast Centre, who keeps us on the air and makes us accessible to the people at home. I think that's especially important, given

the fact that we've had to close our galleries. It maintains that scrutiny of what's happening here in the House. I want to especially thank them on the work they've done in keeping our broadcast going and keeping us going during these unusual times.

I want to thank the people at Hansard who record what is said in this House for history, for people who are doing research and people who are looking at things that were said here years into the future. I want to thank them for the work they do every day providing us with a record of what was said in the House, and doing that in a very timely manner. The next day, sometimes the same day, *Hansards*, a transcript of what was said in the House is available.

The Legislative Library, many people here I know visit the Legislative Library to retrieve documents and to look at some of the books and other documents they have over there. So I want to thank them for the services they provide as well.

Corporate Members Services as well, we all have contact with them. They make sure that things run smoothly, that all the bills get paid and everything is in order. I want to thank them as well.

The Table Officers, this has been an unusual time and the Table Officers – it's been a demanding time for them to keep the House running, in fact. Many other legislatures across Canada, some of them haven't been open, others have operated at reduced capacity and other legislatures around the world have gone virtual.

I want to compliment the staff on being able to move very quickly to adapt to these difficult circumstances that we faced and to keep our House open and functional and being productive. I want to thank them for that.

The Sergeant-at-Arms is here; the role of Sergeant-at-Arms is to keep us safe. He has extended that duty into many other things as the circumstances have changed as well. I'd like to thank him for the work he does everyday for us as Members of this House.

The staff of the Clerk's office who keep things running behind the scenes, I want to thank them

as well. I want to thank everyone in the public service who's helped us keep this House operating and to keep us going. It was evident, I guess, a few days ago we lost our power here in the House, the electrical power, and within a matter of 10 minutes, I think, the generator was going and the Broadcast Centre was up and running again. It just shows how quickly people will adapt and how skilled the people are in terms of keeping this House running in a challenging time.

We've had a very productive session, I think. We've gone through a lot of legislation, and I think the session has been a little different from the ones that I've been here in the past. Other people have talked about that it's a little more cordial. I've wondered why has that been the case. I don't know if it's because of the health orders we're sitting down and we can't get as animated, or if it's just the mood of the time; I'm not sure. We've had a very collegial sort of session, I think. We've had some issues and sometimes it gets heated, but that's the nature of legislatures. We've been able to work our way through it.

Yesterday, we had a very interesting private Member's motion. As we approach Remembrance Day, it was very touching, very emotional to hear stories and comments from other Members of the House about their memories and their experiences of Remembrance Day. I think that's very important to have had that happen, because this Remembrance Day that we're coming up to is very different from what we've had in the past. So I want to thank the Member for bringing that motion forward.

Also, I want to thank all the Members for their co-operation. It's been about a year now since I've been in the Speaker's Chair. When I first sat here about a year ago, I talked about Parliament being a place where people come to talk. That's where the word Parliament comes from; parlay, Parliament. It's the place we come to talk to each other and to talk on behalf of the people we represent. I want to thank you all for making this the place where we come to talk, where we come to represent the people that elected us.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I have a short speech. It was written by the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROCKER: No, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Before we adjourn, I want to thank my colleagues across the way, the Opposition House Leader and the Third Party House Leader for their co-operation over the last few weeks. We spent a lot of time huddled trying to get through this and both were a pleasure to deal with.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, I move that this House now adjourn, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

This House now stands adjourned.

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