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*Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA*

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**SPEAKER (Bennett):** Order, please!

Admit strangers.

First of all, I'd like to welcome everyone into the public gallery, again, this afternoon.

### **Statements by Members**

**SPEAKER:** Today, we'll hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Cape St. Francis, Bonavista, Exploits, Ferryland, Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, volunteering is an effective way of building a connected community and helping you feel part of that community. Today, I would like to recognize two long-serving volunteers in the Town of Bauline, Bill and Sharon O'Toole.

Bill and Sharon moved to Bauline in 1983 and began to volunteer in 1985. For the past 38 consecutive years, they have been helpers to Santa and Mrs. Claus, certainly an important role in their connected community.

Their volunteerism has spanned generations, as former children, who are now parents, are bringing their children to the annual town-sponsored Christmas parade to spend an afternoon with Bill and Sharon. The smiles and laughter from the children and adults alike is clear to see, as is their community spirit and pride.

In Sharon's own words: the innocence of the children is so gratifying. Volunteering each year is so much fun, it makes our Christmas.

Speaker, I ask all hon. Members of this 50th General Assembly to join me in thanking Bill and Sharon O'Toole for their continued

dedication to the people of Bauline and wish them all the best in the many years ahead.

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

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

**C. PARDY:** Thank you, Speaker.

I wish to celebrate and pay tribute to the Lions Clubs within the District of Bonavista for their invaluable contribution in addressing resident and community needs.

Serving the district are the Port Union Lions Club, which was the first chartered on the peninsula; the Bonavista; Port Rexton; and Fort Point Lions Club in Dunfield, together they form Zone 4 in the Eastern Newfoundland family of clubs.

Last month, the four clubs donated \$100,000 to the Discovery Health Care Foundation, which was earmarked for the new Bonavista emergency room serving over 8,000 residents. Working through these clubs are numerous dedicated volunteers who are constantly focussed on serving those in need and improving the services provided.

The Lions motto is serving others, and we are very fortunate to have active members in our district who feed the hungry, aid seniors, assist the disabled and do so much more.

I ask the Members of the 50th House of Assembly to join me in acknowledging the quality work of the four Lions Clubs in the District of Bonavista who do an awesome job of serving their communities.

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

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

**P. FORSEY:** Thank you, Speaker.

From March 7 to 13, the Bishop's Falls Lions Club is celebrating its 40th Anniversary of the annual Lions Winter Carnival.

After the terrible flood in the Town of Bishop's Falls in 1983, the following year members of the Lions Club and other groups and organizations came together to rejuvenate the community and formed the Bishop's Falls Lions Winter Carnival.

Since then, for 40 years, the carnival has provided community spirit in such activities as snow sculptures, their famous moose burgers, sleigh rides and other events sponsored by groups and organizations in the town, with family fun for everyone.

Speaker, I would like for all Members to join me in congratulating the Bishop's Falls Lions Club on their 40th anniversary of the Lions Winter Carnival.

Thank you.

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

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Thank you, Speaker.

I stand today to recognize a well-known businessman from the District of Ferryland who passed away January 4, 2024, at the age of 87.

Mr. Bernard Kavanagh left home at the age of 17 and tried his hand at everything from hunting seals in the North Atlantic to peeling potatoes at the military base in Greenland.

A few years later, Mr. Kavanagh returned home and purchased his first delivery truck. In 1958, he married his wife, Clara, and they started their business selling potatoes out of their own home.

This grew into a very successful wholesale delivery business. In 1969, Kavanagh

purchased the Southern Shore Trading Company, which he turned into a general store, as well as a wholesale distribution centre. By that time, he was delivering Blue Star, Jockey Club and Labatt's beer, Coca-Cola, Vachon cakes and more.

At one point, he was running the wholesale business, a snack bar, gas station and a general store. He was a good friend of mine from my car dealership days and a staunch Liberal.

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

**L. O' DRISCOLL:** Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House to join me in honouring the life of Bernard Kavanagh and the contribution he made to our Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I rise in this House today to honour a community icon and close friend to so many, Mr. Mike Goodyear.

Mr. Goodyear and his family have helped grow Grand Falls-Windsor through community services and many successful businesses.

Mike has owned Central Funeral Homes for 23 years after buying it from his dad in 2000. Today, he operates the first aquamation machine in all of Atlantic Canada.

Mike Goodyear is a pillar to Rotary in Central Newfoundland for 41 years, serving his third term as president, twice as its past president and as assistant governor. He was presented with the Luminary Award for

his continued advocacy for electric vehicles. He continues to offer up his own electric vehicle as a demonstration as to how they can contribute to this province.

The highlight of Mike's service has come in the form of firefighting where he has served the Grand Falls-Windsor Fire Department for 40 years. Mike retired as a captain this year on January 23, and he responded to his last call, coincidentally, in the building where his career first started.

Please join me in saluting my friend and my captain, Mike Goodyear, for a lifetime of service.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** Statements by Ministers.

#### Statements by Ministers

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

**A. FUREY:** Well, Mr. Speaker, once again I find myself standing to celebrate Team Gushue.

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

**A. FUREY:** We knew it all along, but now it is definitive, the greatest Canadian curling team of all time, Mr. Speaker, from here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I rise today on behalf of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, particularly curling fans, to congratulate Team Gushue on winning the top prize in Canadian men's curling.

Last night Skip Brad Gushue, Third Mark Nichols, Second E. J. Harnden and Lead Geoff Walker won the Brier for the third year in a row, beating Saskatchewan's Team McEwen on their home ice in Regina.

I have to say, it was a boastful moment for me with Premier Moe and the text exchange about the Brier last night.

This makes Team Gushue the second team in history to pull a three-peat, and Brad Gushue is now the only Skip to have won the Brier six times.

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

**A. FUREY:** Teammates Mark and Geoff are also six-time winners. What an incredible accomplishment!

Speaker, the members of Team Gushue have not only dominated the national curling scene, they are incredible ambassadors for our Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. They are also inspiring role models for young curlers and athletes everywhere.

Their sportsmanship, professionalism and generous nature have endeared them to so many, and they continue to represent this province with honour and pride.

Next, they are off to Switzerland to compete for the World Men's Curling Championship. I invite everyone to join me in cheering them on as they hurry, hurry, hurry hard to win their second world championship.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Thank you, Speaker, and what a game it was.

The shot making was unbelievable and it created the reason why Brad Gushue is now on social media being called the GOAT – the greatest of all time – you can understand why.

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** I want to thank the Premier for an advance copy of his statement.

On behalf of the Official Opposition, we certainly applaud the Team Gushue victory last evening at the 2024 Montana's Brier. Our heartfelt congratulations go out to Brad, Mark, E. J., Geoff and Caleb. What a truly historic evening it was with Team Gushue winning a sixth Brier championship, along with Geoff and Mark, and a third for E. J.

As well, this team is only the second team in history to win the Brier on three consecutive occasions and I don't think they're finished yet. This was their sixth title in the last eight years, and they have dominated men's curling in this country for the last decade. If you want to win the title in Canada, ultimately, the road goes through this outstanding team. They are professionals in every sense of the word, great sportsmen and totally dedicated to their sport.

Also, they are great ambassadors, not only for our province, but for our country. They give countless volunteer hours to various causes throughout this province and have provided many hours of entertainment to all their fans.

Good luck in Switzerland at the worlds and we all look forward to another podium finish.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I thank the Premier for an advance copy of his statement.

Congratulations to the Team Gushue rink and for representing our province so well. We wish them well, too, as they head to Switzerland to compete in the World Men's Curling Championship.

Speaker, athletes across this province aspire to represent Newfoundland and Labrador on the podium, and I think that's the example set by Team Gushue. We encourage this government to continue its support of the development of athletes in every corner of this province, so our youth experience all the benefits of sport and have the best shot at reaching the podium.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

**J. ABBOTT:** Speaker, I rise today to highlight two procurement strategies we recently announced. These policies are aimed at maximizing the success of provincial suppliers in obtaining government contracts, enhancing local employment and increasing sustainable practices in purchasing here in the province.

The Newfoundland and Labrador First Procurement Strategy will help create an environment that provides the best opportunity for provincial suppliers to be successful in obtaining contracts. It will do so through maintaining the provincial preference discount; increasing open-call thresholds; promoting the use of exemptions under trade agreements; and reducing the use of bid securities for goods and services. It also will focus on new suppliers by helping them strengthen their ability to participate in government procurement processes by providing them with the knowledge and training they need.

The second strategy, referred to as the Sustainable Procurement Strategy, is focused on embedding sustainability considerations into our procurement processes for goods, services and construction alongside traditional criteria.

Those traditional criteria include price, quality, service and technical considerations. Applying a sustainable approach to procurement, such as promoting the use of apprenticeships, will ensure that the existing purchasing power of government departments and agencies will be utilized to help achieve broader social, economic and environmental goals.

Our government remains focused on modernizing purchasing processes, utilizing best practices, achieving best value for dollars spent and doing all of this in a sustainable fashion. These policies go far in helping us achieve these objectives.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** Thank you, Speaker.

I want to thank the hon. minister for an advance copy of his statement.

Speaker, I'm shocked to hear the minister beat his chest about the great successes in government public procurement. Let me remind the minister of the long-delayed procurement of the new penitentiary. Now years delayed, the minister is embarking on yet another sole-source blank cheque procurement when no one else wants to bid.

Speaker, the minister's own independent experts predict that this would result in cost escalation up to 30 per cent, yet the minister forges ahead anyway. Why does the minister think no one else wants to bid on such a lucrative contract? Perhaps it's because the fiasco with the new mental health and addictions facility that was awarded to a higher bidder is going to take a year and a half longer to build. Yes, that's right; \$39-million more and a year and a half longer.

You can't make this stuff up, Speaker. All the other companies who bid on that contract left the province and washed their hands of dealing with this government. Lastly, after the thousands of deficiencies and delays in the new long-term care homes in Central Newfoundland, the minister wants to twin the Trans-Canada Highway using the P3, while residents of Change Islands are seeing first-hand the benefits of a private ferry service.

Thank you very much.

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

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

**J. DINN:** I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

Any improvements to the public procurement strategies are welcome.

Speaker, fueling our local economy should be the focus of government procurement, and we encourage government to prioritize this, instead of sending millions of dollars out of the province for costly P3 schemes.

Thank you.

**SPEAKER:** Are there any further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Thank you, Speaker.

Premier, you have told this House that you and your minister toured the province talking to fishers about their concerns.

Can you tell this House what particular issues did the fishers want addressed?

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

**A. FUREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy to address that question. Thank you for the question.

Of course, we heard that there are significant historic and long-standing structural issues within the fishing industry, Mr. Speaker. First of all, let me thank everybody who works in that industry and how much we value them and the contribution they make to society and to the economy in general.

We heard that there are structural issues with respect to corporate concentration.

(Disturbance in the gallery.)

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

I ask members of the gallery to take their seats. If not, we'll clear the gallery.

Thank you.

The hon. the Premier.

**A. FUREY:** As we heard loud and clear, there are issues with potential outside buyers, Mr. Speaker. We heard there are issues with corporate concentration. We've heard that there were many structural issues and we're prepared on this side, as we've told them, told the FFAW and told the ASP, that we would do a fulsome review of all of those issues.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, again, can the Premier tell the fishers here today and across the province, what action are you taking to address their issues?

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

**A. FUREY:** Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, what we heard from everybody across the province, including harvesters, including plant workers –

(Disturbance in the gallery.)

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

Final reminder, if not, I'll clear the gallery. Please take your seats.

I respect your cause and everything else, but I also ask you to have respect for this House.

Thank you.

The hon. the Premier.

**A. FUREY:** What we heard time and time again, Mr. Speaker, was the old panel price setting was not working. Everyone was unanimous in that they wanted something different. As a consequence of that feedback, we enabled the Blackwood report, which laid out a formula that would potentially share in the risk on both sides, to prevent risk for the harvesters in the low-price environment and prevent too much risk for the processors in a high-price environment.

I am happy to say that is, apparently, the two sides. We're not particularly at the table, as we are just a facilitator in that discussion. Both sides are at the table right now trying to land at the right space –

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Oh, oh!

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**A. FUREY:** – for harvesters, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, the fishery is the backbone of our province.

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Fishers have their boats; they have their crews; they have their quotas. Now all they want to do is go out and catch their quotas and be able to have it processed.

I ask the Premier: Is that too much to ask?

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

**A. FUREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On this, the Member opposite and the harvesters and the plant workers are fully aligned. We want an orderly, timely start to this fishery, Mr. Speaker. It's in their best interest. Believe it or not, it's in our best interest.

That's why we set forth a process that was different than last year, which forced a choice between one extreme price and the other. That with the panel that was set up years ago, we tried to modernize that.

Again, both sides are at the table right now, Mr. Speaker, and as I understand it, the ball is in the FFAW's court and they're supposed to report back this week.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, I would suggest that the ball shouldn't be in anybody else's court but the Premier's.

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** The Premier needs to take the lead. The Premier knows this is what is happening. The Premier knows the galleries are filled with people concerned about their livelihoods. It's time for the Premier to be in

their court right now and it needs to happen immediately.

I ask the Premier on another issue: When did you first learn of the offer from Canadian Health Labs to provide travel nurses to this province?

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

**A. FUREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Given the people in the gallery, let me take a moment to address the preamble. I take this serious, Mr. Speaker. I called both sides into my office last week, after the harvesters showed up.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** You weren't in there.

**A. FUREY:** I was certainly here, Mr. Speaker.

As a result, the two sides are driving together and trying to hammer out a deal that is in their best interest. With respect –

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Oh, oh!

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

I ask Members on both sides of the House for order.

The hon. The Premier.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Oh, oh!

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

Do you want to waste Question Period back and forth?

The hon. the Premier. You have 20 more seconds, Sir.

**A. FUREY:** I met with them Tuesday morning, Mr. Speaker, both of them. I met with the ASP separate; I met with the FFAW on Tuesday morning. I'm happy to say that



is actually a fact, despite the Members opposite.

With respect to the body of the question itself, I became aware of that contract when *The Globe and Mail* news report came out.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** I have to use the paper for this one, Speaker, because on January 12, 2022, given what the Premier just said, three senior staff in his office, Peter Miles, Melissa Royle Critch and Ken Carter were all included in an email from the head of Canadian Health Labs.

Premier, were you aware that your senior staff were communicating directly with this company and you have no knowledge of it?

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

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in this Legislature last week, ministers often get emails with suggestions on how an individual or a company can resolve issues.

There was a nursing shortage in this province. Obviously, there were emails going into various officials and various ministers. It would be unusual for a staff member not to receive an email from somebody with a suggestion on how to resolve the nursing shortage.

My understanding, the staff simply forwarded that on to the appropriate authorities for follow-up, with no direction and no suggestion attached.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** So the chief of staff of the Premier gets emails and he doesn't tell the Premier about getting them. That's what we were told.

Premier, did you, your ministers and any of your staff meet – Zoom call, in-person or at dinner – with the CEO of Canadian Health Labs? Did this happen prior to the contract being signed?

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

**A. FUREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

You can imagine the number of inbound emails that come into the Premier's office every day. It's normal protocol if there is an inbound email for someone from Education, for us to forward it on to the Department of Education. If there is some inbound email for Health, to send it on to the Department of Health. That's what was done, Mr. Speaker.

As per dinners or Zoom calls, not to my memory or knowledge. I certainly, again, will reiterate the first I heard of this issue was in *The Globe and Mail* and let me say that I'm glad the Minister of Health is doing such a good job in getting to the bottom of this –

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

**A. FUREY:** – because if there was any misbehaviour within the facilitation of those contracts or the execution of those contracts, I am none too happy either, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, I am sure the minister gets lots of emails, but I am also pretty sure that every single time an email comes in and a phone calls in from a Liberal lobbyist, it doesn't result in a sole-source contract to Canadian Health Labs Company

for travel nurses and the Premier didn't know anything about it.

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** I ask the Premier: Are you aware of an instance where a travel nurse's family was flown into the province for Christmas and provided with a rental vehicle?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, as the Premier has indicated, as I've indicated it, if contracts were put in place and were not followed or if there was inappropriate spending at the health authority, the Premier has indicated that he would be quite concerned with that. I would be quite concerned with that.

That is the reason we've asked the Comptroller General to have a look. If indeed things were not as they should be, I can guarantee you law enforcement will be asked to look at it or the Auditor General will be asked to look at it.

We will ensure that these contracts were followed to the letter of the contract and if there was any misappropriation of funds – and we don't know that yet. We're not jumping to the conclusions the Opposition are but if, in fact, that is the case, officials will be called in.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, we're not jumping to any conclusions. We're simply talking about what's been out there in the public and that's what needs to be dealt with. Yes, the Auditor General definitely needs to be called in and maybe the RCMP, too.

So, I ask the Premier now: Premier, have you directed your minister to write Canadian Health Labs and ask for the \$1.6 million back that was paid out for services that we know were never provided?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, if it comes to that and the funds were spent inappropriately, we will take appropriate action. But, Mr. Speaker, just as the Leader of the Opposition demanded we call in the RCMP, what would I ask the RCMP to investigate? The Comptroller General will advise us whether or not there was any misappropriation of funds and if there were, the appropriate authorities will be contacted. That is a guarantee.

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, we've already heard in *The Globe and Mail* article and, apparently, it's the article that the government opposite are basing their information on, that this \$1.6 million was never paid out to the nurses that we had under contract. So, therefore, the money should be recovered and what the minister should be doing is writing the company to ask for it back or for an explanation, but they haven't done either.

Speaker, it's remarkable, this contract started in the Premier's office and the Premier knows nothing about it. On the other hand, last week, we found out a minister found out about bodies in units outside the Health Sciences Centre on February 16 and another minister found out about bodies as a result of a CBC article.

I ask the Premier: When were you made aware?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, there are two issues at play here, one is the preamble. If, in fact, there was a misappropriation of funds, we will call in whoever needs to be called in, Mr. Speaker.

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

**T. OSBORNE:** If the letter of the contract was followed, then the issue may not be with the health authority but may be with the agency that hired the agency nurses and then the law enforcement would have to investigate them. We don't know that to be the case. We don't know, yet, Mr. Speaker, which is why the Comptroller General has been called in.

But, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that the operational issues within the health authority are best handled by the health authority; oversight and policy direction is what government should be providing to the health authority.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** Thank you, Speaker.

A simple answer to that, Minister, is just write the letter, ask the question. That's what we all want to know; just write the letter, ask the question. It's not a lot to write a letter, Minister. It's remarkable how out of touch you are over there.

Minister, you stated that officials in your department became aware that containers full of bodies were piling up in the parking lot of the Health Sciences Centre on February 23 or 24, but you found out through a CBC report. Why?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, I believe the word is operational. The health authority is

responsible for the operations of the health authority. While government was aware that there was an increasing number of remains – as there are in other provinces, that's not unique to this province. I checked with the Ontario media, Mr. Speaker, because the same thing, for example, was reported in the Ontario media. But it is an operational issue. While government was aware of the increasing number of remains, we weren't aware of where they were being stored specifically on the Health Sciences site.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** Speaker, the minister's name is over the door; he ought to be aware. His officials knew, so his officials obviously never told him, or he can't remember them telling him, somewhere along the line – it wasn't the health authority, his officials knew and he did not know, so that's the problem.

His name is over the door and it is the ultimate responsibility of a minister or Premier to be responsible. Full stop, you're responsible for the people of this province.

Speaker, the Minister of CSSD said he became aware on February 16.

I ask the Minister of Health and Community Services: Did the Minister of CSSD make you aware at that time?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, these storage units, the freezer units, were outside the Health Sciences complex for a number of years. It wasn't a new issue. The CEO of the health authority or officials in the department, if they knew – this was not an emerging issue or a new issue. What was new was the increasing number of remains and that was what was relayed on to

government, Mr. Speaker, which is a concern.

The health authority are putting measures in place for their responsibility and other departments or other agencies are doing the same.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** We're not getting a clear answer if he knew or he didn't know.

But that response about the number of bodies: One is too many. It doesn't have to be one, it could be 10, it could be 20, it could be 30. One is too many. It's shameful.

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

**B. PETTEN:** So did you know or did you not, Minister? This is a very serious question.

Minister, how many unclaimed bodies are actually inside the morgue at the Health Sciences Centre?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, again, this is an operational issue, and that number can change from day to day.

As much as the Member opposite would like the general public – or like to try to convince the general public – that the minister should be responsible for operational issues, that is simply not the case. We are responsible for providing oversight of the health authority, for providing policy direction to the health authority, Mr. Speaker.

If he wanted me to be in charge of operations, then I should be the CEO or I should be one of the executives. That's not the case. The health authority is responsible

for the operational issues at the health authority.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** Speaker, the buck stops in the minister's office, he knows that. These responses are lame. They're lame.

So the question is: Is the morgue, right now, today, full? Is it at capacity today?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, I'd be delighted to provide the Member with the cell number to the CEO of the health authority.

Again, this is an operational issue. It is an operational issue. A name over the door or no name over the door or whoever's name is over the door, the Minister of Health is not over in the morgue on a daily basis counting bodies.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** Minister, are you not concerned about this? I think it's appalling. It's not political, Minister, I said this publicly Friday. I find it appalling as a citizen of this province. I told this personally to my friends; it upsets me on a personal level.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Oh, oh!

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**B. PETTEN:** It upsets me on a personal level, I think it's appalling. It's a sad statement.

Are you concerned like me, or are you going to pass it off to David Diamond and his

officials? This is your responsibility, you're the minister.

Can you answer me: Are you concerned like we are?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, the Member gets a number of his questions from the media. I'm not sure how he missed this one, but I did say the sight of those units outside the building was quite disturbing. The fact that they were next to a dumpster was quite disturbing.

We've asked the health authority to deal with the dumpster issue. They are putting plans in place to deal with a more humane, more respectful manner, the remains that are being stored at the Health Sciences.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** Minister, it doesn't matter where those units are, it's disrespectful to those bodies, what's been done. That's my problem, it's been total disrespect.

Minister: Would it be accurate to say that the outside containers are solely for unclaimed bodies?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, again, I'll provide the Member with the cell number of the CEO for the health authority.

He's asking operational issues. How many bodies are there today? This is an operational issue. These questions are better directed to the health authority. We are responsible for oversight, for financial oversight, for budgeting at the health authority, for policy direction at the health

authority, for things like the Health Accord, which will transform health care in this province.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** Minister, just to be clear. You found out this – we're figuring out – in the last month or so. Did you not take an opportunity from then until now to ask those questions I'm asking; to ask what those containers are truly used for; to ask about the capacity at the morgue? Have you not done that, Minister?

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

**B. PETTEN:** That's a basic question. These are the things that came to mind last week. I don't know why it's taken all these provocative questions and you're passing the buck on NL Health Services.

Have you asked the questions? If you've not, you're not doing your job, Minister. Simply put, you're not doing your job.

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

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Again, Mr. Speaker, the Member's trying to make news of something that I've answered in the media a week ago. A week ago we had answered in the media the health authority are putting plans in place for a more permanent facility connected to the morgue. They had hired a consultant a couple of years ago to help with the design of the morgue, with the Office of the Chief Medical Officer over at the Health Sciences.

Those things are taking place, Mr. Speaker. They are being put in place. That is what we know. Those questions were asked when

this came to light in terms of the outdoor storage.

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

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

**C. PARDY:** Thank you, Speaker.

The CSSD Minister has stated that he was notified and was aware of the bodies piling up on the 16th in the Health Sciences Centre. The Member asked the Premier, he didn't stand to answer, but I'm assuming that he wasn't aware.

The Minister of Health and Community Services only became aware from the CBC and his answer talked about operational issues on three occasions, if not four, from his answers.

I would ask the Minister of CSSD, when he became aware on February 16, on the operational issue, did he notify the Department of Health and Community Services immediately, yes or no?

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

**P. PIKE:** Mr. Speaker, we take this very seriously. When I was informed of the issue at a meeting on February 16, I immediately went to my department to find out what our role was in this.

This particular issue is across other departments so, therefore, we decided to look at a review to ensure that there were no issues as it related to CSSD, like arrears in paying the funeral operators, see if that would have caused any issues. The answer to that was clearly, no, we were not in arrears. We're paid up, so that wasn't it. So –

**SPEAKER:** The minister's time is expired.

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

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

**C. PARDY:** I'll provide the answer or provide the minister another chance to be able to answer that question again.

Under the theme of operational issues here, we're talking about government departments and government looking after matters that are important to the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

So, the minister found out on February 16 that the bodies were piling up in the parking lot of the Health Sciences complex under the jurisdiction of his colleague, the Minister of Health and Community Services. Why didn't the minister notify the Department of Health and Community Services?

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

**P. PIKE:** Again, what we were doing was I was trying to find out, from my department, what our responsibilities were here. So that's what I was concerned about. And we wanted to look at – I wanted to know what was covered and so on. So I did find out that the basic costs for funerals are covered and that there is no additional cost to people in receipt of income support or those who are financially unable to cover funeral expenses.

This is what our department does. Anything else is not in CSSD.

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

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

**C. PARDY:** Speaker, the Minister of Health and Community Services mentioned three or four times it's an operational issue and he distanced himself from that. This is within the wheelhouse of government. We're talking about operational issues. One minister finds out on February 16 and he

doesn't inform the minister of the department of which is responsible for.

Why didn't the minister take action if he knew that the situation was evolving at the Health Sciences complex? Why didn't he take action or reach out to somebody?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, I believe there are two separate issues here. One is the respectful keeping for the remains that are at the Health Sciences to ensure that they are treated with dignity and respect. The other issue is whether or not Income Support is providing the funding for individuals to claim their loved ones and have a proper burial.

My colleague, Mr. Speaker, has looked into that because that is what was suggested, as I understand, to him as one of the issues or part of the issue. It is a complex issue in terms of timing of the health authority contacting next of kin, contacting the Public Trustee and the Chief Medical Examiner's office.

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

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

**J. WALL:** Speaker, Redsea Riding, with an owner that was accused of sexual assault, was not subject to background checks while submitting the company's application for ride sharing.

How can the minister allow this to happen?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you, Speaker.

It's a very important question.

I just want to clarify that when we did approve Redsea Riding's ride-sharing licence, it was confirmed that all the drivers had a clear criminal background check and the individual that the Member opposite is referring to was not going to be a driver. It would not have been lawful for them to have been a driver but out of an abundance of caution, when the information came to light, we did cancel, suspend the licence.

I am very pleased to say that I believe, today, Uber has or is about to announce an initiative to recruit drivers.

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

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you very much.

I welcome new entrants to the market to provide more safe, reliable transportation to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

**J. WALL:** Speaker, the minister has a responsibility for everyone to make sure that background checks were done. This one was dropped.

We've now learned that Redsea Riding submitted an application on January 16 at 10:01 a.m. and subsequently approved to hit the road running at 1:16 p.m. the next day.

How was this approved so quickly?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you, Speaker.

When we look at our commercial business – and especially because we have a lot of commercial businesses across the province,

we do have a two-day business turnaround. That's our service level for commercial work. It's two business days. So it is not unusual to have a quick or – I would be disappointed if we did not meet our two-day turnaround for commercial business.

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

**S. STOODLEY:** We take this issue very seriously and, as soon as the information came to light, we did cancel the licence out of an abundance of caution.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Speaker, last week the Minister of Housing in media interviews and in the House stated that people living in the Colonial Building Tent City were continuously offered help, such as emergency shelters, warming shelters and a number to the province's Emergency Shelter Line and that no one needed to be in a tent.

Will the minister admit that what he was doing was essentially blaming and shaming the victims of homelessness and that it was their fault for living in tents?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Housing.

**F. HUTTON:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member opposite for the question.

The definitive answer is no, that is not what this government was doing.

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

**F. HUTTON:** Mr. Speaker, I will remind this House that the Premier recently decided to take Housing as a stand-alone portfolio, to

give it an even sharper focus, so that people in this province know that they have somebody every day focused on this solely. Which is what I am doing as the Minister of Housing, with a staff who care about people and want to make sure that each and every night they know they do not have to stay in a tent or have nowhere to go.

There are always options available and I will give that number again at any point in time to anyone who needs it.

Thank you, Sir.

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

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

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

If only we had a definitive answer on housing as a human right, we'd be much further ahead.

In a weekend Telegram article on one family's efforts to crowd fund for a funeral cost, Caul's Funeral Home stated that government has long neglected to acknowledge social responsibility for grieving families with limited resources. While there are some basic assistances that grieving families can apply for after the fact, there is little to help them at the time they need it most.

Will the minister commit to working with families and funeral homes to pay for and carry out funeral arrangements quickly and determine what, if any money, is owed government after?

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

**P. PIKE:** I guess the simple answer to that question would be, yes. However, rates paid to funeral homes, with regard to those, the department will be consulting with funeral home operators in the near future as part of



our Income Support planning and programming and to review the burial and funeral benefits. This will be done under the Income Support program.

We strongly encourage, though, families – and I want to leave you with this message – we strongly encourage families to get in touch with CSSD if you require assistance. Our client services people will deal with you immediately, will help you with the application, if required, and help you fill it out. So please, contact us if you need services.

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

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

**J. DINN:** Speaker, a class action lawsuit has been filed against Teladoc Health, Inc. where they are accused of illegally sharing personal health information to third party companies like Meta. Our province lacks data security legislation that clearly outlines how policies need to be developed in rolling out to digital services.

Can the minister confirm that tracking pixels were never placed on Teladoc Health websites in Canada, and will this government commit to introducing data sovereignty legislation and the personal health information of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians from ever being sold in the first place?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, we are aware of what has happened in the US with Teladoc. The rules and regulations and legislation in this province are different. We have the *Personal Health Information Act* here; we have the Protection of Privacy Act here, as well.

We can assure that Teladoc and the doctors who will be licensed and regulated in this

province to operate with Teladoc will follow the appropriate legislation in this province.

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

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

**L. EVANS:** Thank you, Speaker.

I raised the problem in the House of Assembly many times about patients in my district not able to travel to and from their medical appointments and treatment. This is creating serious long-term medical harm to patients.

I ask the minister: Will he commit to adding more medical flights? We need action.

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and this is an important question.

As the Member knows, we are going through the process of ambulance integration, including air ambulance. We know that the new air ambulance contract will see a greater reliance on helicopter services, will see a greater expectation of the operator for wheels up in 30 minutes, as opposed to 60 minutes, to ensure that if an aircraft is out for service, that another one is absolutely made available.

We do anticipate, Mr. Speaker, having a greater service for the people of the province.

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

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

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

**Notices of Motion**

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

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move the following motion:

That in accordance with Standing Order 65, the Privileges and Elections Committee shall comprise the following Members: Member for Virginia Waters - Pleasantville, Member for Burin - Grand Bank, Member for St. Barbe - L'Anse Aux Meadows, Member for St. John's Centre and the Member for Terra Nova.

**SPEAKER:** Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, I give notice that on March 13, the following will be our PMR, moved by the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port, seconded by the Member for Bonavista:

WHEREAS for the second year in a row, our province's fishing industry may be destined for a shutdown over issues such as pricing, leaving frustrated harvesters out of the water, protesting instead of on their boats fishing and leaving processing plant workers lacking product to process while days and weeks are lost; and

WHEREAS these repeated shutdowns in our fishing industry cost our fish harvesters valuable and perhaps irreplaceable fishing time in the short harvesting season, cost our fish processing plant workers the work they need, cost our province an important source of spinoff economic activity in our communities and revenue and cost Newfoundland and Labrador its reputation as a stable place to do business; and

WHEREAS many approaches have been proposed in the past and many approaches are in place in other jurisdictions that might offer hope of a resolution to the current impasse and ways of avoiding future impasses, but good solutions are usually found faster when all parties are around the negotiating table working hard on a resolution; and

WHEREAS an industry as important to Newfoundland and Labrador as the fishing industry requires the hands-on leadership and presence of our province's top leaders in government, including the Premier and the Fisheries Minister, especially in times of crisis like this;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House urge the Premier and the province's Minister of Fisheries to immediately take a hands-on role at the table with representatives of our fisheries workers and fish processors to help find a swift and effective resolution of the current impasse, as well as long-term solutions that make future impasses less likely and help place our fishing industry on a more stable and steady footing so the opportunities our province needs are not lost.

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

**B. PETTEN:** Thank you, Speaker.

That resolution will be our PMR for this coming Wednesday.

Thank you.

**SPEAKER:** Are there any further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been given.

Petitions.

### Petitions

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

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

I stand again today to present a petition and I'll read the petition.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to amend the *Limitations Act* to remove limitation periods for civil child abuse claims where the abuse complained of occurred against a minor (a) within an intimate relationship; (b) within a relationship of dependency; or (c) where the defendant was in a position of trust or authority.

And amend the *Limitations Act* to state limitation periods do not run against any time a defendant (a) willfully conceals or misleads the complaint about essential elements of the claim, i.e. the fact that an injury, loss or damage has occurred and that it was caused by or contributed by an act or omission, or that the act or omission was that of the defendant; or (b) willfully misleads the claimant as to the appropriateness of a proceeding as a means of remedying the injury, loss or damage.

The above-mentioned legislative changes should be retroactive and apply regardless of the expiry of any previous limitation period.

I stand again and present this, Mr. Speaker. What we have here again is something that the government can do. We always hear the minister stand and say well, it's before the courts. Well, take it out of the courts and just change it. This is something that's in the government's hands. This is not something you're saying, well, this group is saying they want to proceed so we have to defend ourselves. This is something that the

government is fighting. This is an opportunity.

I ask anybody here, if you had a child that was in school that was abused and then you find out that, okay, the abuse was covered up by the school. Okay, what can I do? You can't do anything. You say a word and you're going to be in more trouble. What would happen?

Immediately, that would be in this House of Assembly and that would be before the courts. But because it happened to a person who, in this case, was under the jurisdiction of the government, there is nothing being done. We're saying: Okay, we misled you, you went through a tough time. We physically harmed you, but we're not going to do anything about it.

That wouldn't stand today. It would not stand today. It would not stand in any jurisdiction in Canada today. And from my understanding, there are seven or eight other provinces who changed it, but for some reason, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador are saying: No, we're going to take that to court now.

If that happened in any other jurisdiction, if that happened in any other government institution, Mr. Speaker, we'd be in here today praising people up, thanking them for bringing that forward to us.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity.

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Thank you, Speaker.

The background to this petition is as follows:

St. Shott's Road on the southern Avalon is in need of major repairs. These roads are in deplorable condition to the point that it's a safety issue. This road is relied on by residents and visitors on a daily basis. With a World Heritage UNESCO site in the area,

there is an increased volume of traffic in the region.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to upgrade this piece of infrastructure for the safety of residents and visitors to allow a safer commute on this roadway.

Speaker, I spoke on this many times, certainly in budget speech along the way. But this stretch of highway from St. Shott's to Peter's River and down into St. Shott's as well is in deplorable condition. The road itself is between 37 to 38 years old, according to the residents.

Last week on the first day back in the House, I had a resident call me and he had an incident the week before that there was somebody there driving a rental vehicle and had three flat tires. They were waiting on the tow truck to come and get them. That's not acceptable in these days. That's in the middle of the day; it wasn't in the nighttime. He always had supplies in his car, he said, but he couldn't help him – three flats. So they were waiting on a tow truck.

That's just one example of the number of issues that happen in the district. Also, this stretch of road joins the Irish Loop. It's the full Irish Loop. So that's something that has to be looked at. Tourism – when the whale watching season happens over in St. Vincent's, the number of people who are over there is incredible that are using this. They come up the Southern Shore or they come the other way from Salmonier Line and go over to St. Vincent's and they may continue down the shore, but sometimes they know about the road, they turn around and go back, it's that bad. It's terrible. It's something that should be looked at in this budget, for sure, to be able to maintain and repair this road.

I mean, right now, like I said it's decades old and band-aid solutions are not working anymore. They're not magicians on the

highway, to be able to put down cold patch on these roads. You need to be a magician to fix the road. It needs to be done and totally torn up and some more road structure underneath it and repaved. So I look for the minister to have this in his budget.

Thank you.

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

**L. EVANS:** Thank you, Speaker.

This is a petition urging the House of Assembly to ask government to amend the *Limitations Act* to clearly state that there is no limitation period for civil claims involving child abuse of any form.

Various forms of child abuse often co-occur and are highly interrelated. Treating child sexual abuse differently from non-sexual child abuse for limitation period purposes is inconsistent with the shift in society's awareness and understanding of the damaging effects of child maltreatment.

Ensuring the limitation period for child abuse ensures those responsible for heinous acts can be held accountable, regardless of how much time has passed. This will act as a deterrent for child abuse, increase access to justice and ensure all victims receive the redress they deserve. It would also bring Newfoundland's approach to child abuse claims in line with human rights standards and the revised statutes in most other provinces.

Speaker, I have a lot of petitions, specifically from my district that I need to present, so why am I taking the time to present this one? Because this applies to everybody. It applies to anyone that's a child that's being abused especially by those in a form of authority.

Speaker, when you look at 730 days in solitary confinement is a form of torture, it's

a violation of our human rights. Why would we allow children to be abused to that degree? Is it because society views sexual abuse differently than the torture of children?

At the end of the day, abuse is abuse. Really, the only people benefiting by this statute of limitations, Speaker, are the perpetrators – those who victimize, bully and abuse and torture children. In actual fact, how we treat our most vulnerable is how we are judged as a society.

I hear, especially on this side, people speaking out and saying at the end of the day we have to actually show the abusers that we are not going to accept it. Because this government is accepting abuse and torture of children by not reversing the statute of limitations. Really, honestly, and I'll defend that – I'll defend that. Why are you letting abusers get away? Why is letting a history of abuse – seriously, I'll defend that. I'll defend that to my dying day.

Children are not always born into a place where they can be protected. Seven-hundred and thirty days in a small box (inaudible) –

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

The Member's time is expired.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, thank you.

(Inaudible) that it's unacceptable to have facts like that stated in this House that aren't true.

I haven't been a Member for very long, I guess it's going on three years now, but as a minister I stood up and gave a public apology with regard to one file. It was with regard to abuse in this province. I know when I've had questions on that, I've acknowledged that this province, unfortunately, has a very sad history with

regard to sexual abuse in this province that we all know about. That I heard about when I was a little kid. It's been going on for 30, 40 years and, unfortunately, this does take a long time for these things to work through the system.

There's a whole team of lawyers upstairs in the Department of Justice and Public Safety that work on this every single day. They have to read briefing notes, they have to read trial briefs and they have to read applications in court that are very, very disturbing. I would not want to do that job; you couldn't pay me enough to do that job. Because it just breaks your heart, breaks your mind and breaks your soul.

They do it and they do it on behalf of this government and they acknowledge it and they go to settlement conferences. They try to avoid trials, Speaker. They try to avoid revictimizing these individuals and come to an agreement of payment.

Now, that sounds pretty empty too, because I can guarantee you that payment is not going to solve problems of individuals who have been sexually abused in institutions in this province. But it's one of, if not the only, things we can offer individuals who've had that happen to them. We can't roll back time; we can't take away what was done.

To say that the government doesn't acknowledge is disgusting and untrue –

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

**J. HOGAN:** – and this is the second day in a row I've had to stand up and correct the Member for Torngat Mountains on her mistruths.

This House of Assembly is for the public and for people to understand what the government does and to learn what's going on and to learn some facts. They're not learning if they're listening to the Member for Torngat Mountains here.

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

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

**C. PARDY:** Thank you, Speaker.

In the District of Bonavista, the number of family doctors and nurse practitioners currently available are not in adequate supply to serve the population. The government needs to review its recruitment and retention practices to further enhance the likelihood that adequate health care professionals are in place. Until then, residents are asked to register on the Patient Connect list, but the majority of them are not eligible if new practices open up in the regional service centre of Clarenville.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to extend the catchment area of the Patient Connect list for Clarenville to include the entire Bonavista Peninsula as opposed to ending in the Lethbridge area.

We will eventually find our quota of medical practitioners who are going to service our peninsula but, until then, we'll often hear from government to say, put your name on the Patient Connect list. I am standing here today with viewers in the Bonavista Peninsula area who have their name on the Patient Connect list who think that if a doctor moved into the Clarenville area, which would be our service centre, then they may get a call. Shamefully, I state today that they won't get a call because the catchment area moves about 20 kilometres down the peninsula and it ends. The 100 kilometres beyond that will not get a physician in Clarenville via the Patient Connect.

This petition by these residents, primarily driven by a couple in Port Rexton who have their names on the Patient Connect list, ask to open up the whole peninsula for any physician or nurse practitioner that would

operate into Clarenville, that they would be eligible to have their names drawn in order to have a medical provider. That's not a big ask, what we've got.

So where we are now in the situation, we have many who think they are, I think the latest number was 656, that would be on the Patient Connect list. Many of them have a doctor in Clarenville and have for years, but if that doctor ever moved, the chance of having another physician in that area is out, if they live the 100 kilometres on the lower tip of the Peninsula.

So, I think this is an easy fix. I call upon the minister to make the adjustment.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Again, a petition I've presented many times.

WHEREAS there are many hopeful mothers and couples in this province dealing with infertility issues and require medical assistance to conceive; and

WHEREAS the costs associated with out-of-province fertility treatments, specifically in vitro fertilization, is extremely cost-prohibitive; and

WHEREAS there are doctors in the province trained in in vitro fertilization and have the desire to set up an in vitro fertilization clinic in the province; and

WHEREAS the province is dealing with an aging population and serious population growth challenges are being endured;

THEREFORE, we petition the House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to establish a fertility treatment clinic within the province, providing full fertility services including in vitro fertilization for hopeful mothers and families. And in the interim, provide financial assistance to access out-of-province fertility treatments.

Speaker, I've raised this many times. The Premier, four years ago or more now, promised – and I quote – to enabling IVF treatments in the province. We actually know that in the Liberal Party AGM back in November 2016, they also passed a resolution to cover IVF costs under the provincial medial care plan.

In addition to that, in the mandate letters of the Minister of Health and Community Services and Women and Gender Equality, they were tasked with increasing access to fertility treatments in the province. All that's been offered to date has been a small subsidy to allow them to travel out of provinces.

We need to do more; more for women in this province and couples in this province who want to start a family in this province. The costs are astronomical. Medications are not covered. Fertility drugs can cost between \$2,000 and \$10,000. The procedure is extremely expensive to go out of province. People don't realize but embryos are also stored out of province, at a cost to some of about \$500 a year.

There are many reasons, many good reasons, why this should be done in this province. Only one other province in Canada does not offer it, that's PEI and they can drive across the bridge and get it. So this is not all about travel and costs. This is about the unnecessary stress that's being placed on women in this province and couples who want to conceive and have a family in this province.

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

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

**P. LANE:** Thank you, Speaker.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to amend the *Limitations Act* to remove limitation periods for civil child abuse claims where the abuse complained of occurred against a minor (a) within an intimate relationship; (b) within a relationship of dependency; or (c) where the defendant was in a position of trust or authority.

And amend the *Limitations Act* to state limitation periods do not run against any time a defendant (a) willfully conceals or misleads the complaint about essential elements of the claim, i.e, the fact that an injury, loss or damage has occurred and that it was caused by or contributed by an act or omission, or that the act or omission was that of the defendant; or (b) willfully misleads the claimant as to the appropriateness of a proceeding as a means of remedying the injury, loss or damage.

The above-mentioned legislative changes should be retroactive and apply regardless of the expiry of any previous limitation period.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say I'm glad to present this again, but I certainly willingly present it. I'm not glad that we have to present it. My other two colleagues over here have presented the same petition, but it's important that we keep this issue going, keep it at the forefront because it's a very serious one.

Now, I'm certainly not going to suggest, as I heard the Minister of Justice when he spoke, that nobody cares over there and so on about abuse. I would never say that. I don't believe that for a fact, but what I would say though is that I can remember a number of years back watching the Hughes inquiry.

A lot of us over here, of my vintage for sure, would have watched that and how horrific that was when that sort of came to light. Then we've seen the issues with residential schools and so on. That's been acknowledged. We've heard certainly a lot about the horrors that have happened here.

This is another one. The difference, I guess, between this one and the others, is that this one is not sexual in nature. The other ones, what happened at Mount Cashel, what happened in parishes throughout the province and so on, a lot of that was sexual in nature. What we're talking about here is physical abuse. We're talking about a gentleman who was in Whitbourne many years ago, under the care of the province, back in a time when perhaps all the proper legislation and rules and so on and policies were not in place that we have in place today.

We're talking about an individual in the form of Mr. Whalen, and I am sure there are others, who were absolutely mistreated. Basically, placed in a cage for almost two years. As my colleague said, it would be considered torture – by today's standards it would be considered torture.

It's not acceptable, but because there was no sexual element, we're just going to pass over it and say there is nothing we can do about that one. Actually, there is. We can make this change –

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

The Member's time is expired.

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

**SPEAKER:** Before we move into the Orders of the Day, I'm now going to rule on the Point of Privilege raised by the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands on March 5, 2024.

In his point of privilege, the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands provides details regarding payment of costs awarded

against him following the conclusion of a judicial process commenced by the Member. He also outlines his interactions with the Commissioner for Legislative Standards regarding a possible inquiry by the Commissioner related to the payments of costs. He asserts that his parliamentary privilege has been violated and his reputation damaged because of efforts taken to collect these costs and because of communication with the Commissioner.

Parliamentary privilege consists of the rights, powers and immunities to protect Parliament and ensure that its Members may fulfil their parliamentary responsibilities without interference. It is an essential and vital element in the functioning of a modern, democratic Parliament.

In the ruling on the point of privilege, I must examine the effect these matters had on the Member's ability to fulfill his parliamentary responsibilities. In accordance with Bosc and Gagnon, if, in the Speaker's view, the Member was not obstructed in the performance of his parliamentary duties and functions, then a prima facie breach of privilege cannot be found.

In Bosc and Gagnon, 3rd edition, it states that: "A complaint on a matter of privilege must satisfy two conditions before it can be accorded precedence over the Orders of the Day. First, the Speaker must be convinced that a prima facie case of breach of privilege has been made and, second, the matter must be raised at the earliest opportunity."

In reviewing this matter, I am satisfied that the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands has raised this point of privilege in accordance with the required process.

While the Member asserts damage to his reputation in the collection of court-ordered costs, these costs were awarded in the context of a civil litigation initiated by the Member, which, by its very nature, is a public process. The court's judgment, as well as documents filed with the court, are



publicly available to anyone interested. There are legal mechanisms by which the costs may be collected in the usual course.

The Member has not demonstrated that the collection of court-ordered costs has interfered with his parliamentary duties.

With respect to communication with the Commissioner for Legislative Standards, any such communication is confidential between Members and the Commissioner. The Commissioner is an independent Officer of this hon. House and has statutory duties and responsibilities, which include making inquiries to ensure that Members are complying with their statutory obligations.

In that context, while the Commissioner may have communicated with the Member about a possible inquiry in accordance with her statutory mandate, there is no evidence that this private communication was of a nature to damage the Member's reputation such that it interfered with his parliamentary duties.

As the Member has not shown how his individual parliamentary privileges have been affected in the execution of his parliamentary duties, nor how he has been obstructed, impeded or in any way interfered with, in his parliamentary duties, I find that there is no prima facie point of privilege.

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**E. JOYCE:** (Inaudible.)

**SPEAKER:** No, I made my ruling. We're going to move on to the Orders of the Day.

### Orders of the Day

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

**J. HOGAN:** Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 2.

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

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Premier, that notwithstanding Standing Order 9, this House shall not adjourn at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, March 13, but shall continue to sit for the conduct of Government Business and, if not earlier adjourned, the Speaker shall adjourn the House at midnight.

**SPEAKER:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Motion 3.

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

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that pursuant to Standing Order 11(1) that the House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 12, 2024.

**SPEAKER:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Motion 4.

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

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, pursuant to Standing Order 11(1) that the House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 14, 2024.

**SPEAKER:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 15.

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

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that An Act to Amend the Memorial University Act No. 2, Bill 69, be now read a second time.

**SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 69, An Act to Amend the Memorial University Act No. 2, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act to Amend the Memorial University Act No. 2." (Bill 69)

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

**K. HOWELL:** Thank you, Speaker.

I stand today to introduce Bill 69, An Act to Amend the Memorial University Act No. 2. Speaker, there is no doubt that Memorial University is an important part of the fabric of our beautiful province: intellectually, economically and historically. As Newfoundland and Labrador's only university, Memorial has a role to play in fostering a bright future for our province.

Memorial University holds a special obligation to help meet the social and economic needs of the province, offering a comprehensive array of programs, ranging from the arts and sciences to professional degrees, including the faculty of medicine. Our government is focused on supporting post-secondary institutions while also working to ensure that students attending those institutions are receiving a high-quality education.

As the provincial government provides significant funding to support the university, of utmost importance is the accessibility of post-secondary institutions like Memorial University to the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. Today's amendment serves to enshrine in legislation the definition of Newfoundland and Labrador resident that is currently used to determine eligibility of Newfoundland and Labrador residents by Memorial's school of medicine.

Speaker, this amendment does not change the definition as it is currently being used by the faculty of medicine. Rather, it ensures that there is no ambiguity, no misinterpretation of the definition and that the definition most appropriately supports individuals who are indeed residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. This amendment does not impact which individuals can apply to Memorial's faculty of medicine. We encourage all people and all residents to apply and to help strengthen our province's health care system.

This amendment is meant to ensure that the individuals who receive acceptance into the faculty as Newfoundland and Labrador

residents are bone fide residents of this province. As a government, we have a responsibility to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent appropriately and, in this instance, our government is aiming to support Newfoundland and Labrador residents in their medical school journey.

We want home-grown physicians to complete their education at Memorial. We want them to work in the province as stewards of health and well-being. There are 80 undergraduate seats available each year in Memorial's faculty of medicine. Of those 80 seats, up to 69 are filled by Newfoundland and Labrador residents. That's 86 per cent of undergrad seats that are filled by residents of this province.

It is incumbent on our government to ensure that those 69 seats are filled by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, by the people who have roots here, who are more than likely to practise here and who've contributed to the province through their own efforts and taxes over the years.

Our government supports post-secondary institutions and the students. This is evident through almost a half a billion-dollar investment in Memorial University made in the fiscal year, including \$295 million for Memorial University's core operating grant, \$58.4 million for Memorial's faculty of medicine, approximately \$28 million for student financial services, \$2.2 million to double the capacity of Memorial University's nurse practitioner program, and up to \$10 million to invest in the offset of the campus renewal fee for students.

Our government also supported the expansion of the faculty of nursing with three satellite sites in Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor and Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

Though financial measures are important, our government is also working to identify other ways that we can support students and the university. By enshrining in legislation the definition of Newfoundland

and Labrador resident for use by Memorial University's faculty of medicine, we are promoting the use of an existing definition to ensure that the students of Newfoundland and Labrador have an appropriate chance for admission when considered against others who have more recently moved to the province.

Admission into the faculty of medicine at Memorial is super competitive. We have a duty to ensure that Newfoundland and Labrador residents, as defined by this definition, are considered for the seats that have been allocated for the provincial residents.

We want an equitable, biased-free process. While 69 of the 80 seats at Memorial's faculty of medicine are reserved for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, it is also crucial that the other 11 seats are allocated appropriately as well. A clear, equitable process benefits everyone. It benefits the students, it benefits the staff and the university environment and, ultimately, it benefits our province.

There are two criteria outlined in this amendment, by which a person needs to meet at least one of the requirements in order to be considered a Newfoundland and Labrador resident. The first is that the person is a citizen or permanent resident of Canada and has completed or is deemed by the Department of Education to have completed four years of school between Grade 7 and level II in the province, no more than 12 years before the date of application to the faculty of medicine.

What that essentially means is that a person is a citizen or a permanent resident of Canada and has completed most of their high school education in Newfoundland and Labrador, no more than 12 years before they applied to the faculty of medicine. If the person meets the criteria, they are considered a Newfoundland and Labrador resident by Memorial University's faculty of medicine.

The second potential criteria that a person can meet in order to be considered a resident is if the person is a citizen or permanent resident of Canada and the person's permanent address was located in the province for at least three years immediately before the date of application to the faculty of medicine. It's important to note that the person cannot be attending a post-secondary institution as either a part-time or full-time student in those years.

In this case, this might be for people who did not complete their high school education in Newfoundland and Labrador, but who've since made this province their home. They reside in the province for reasons other than attending post-secondary and are contributing to our province as individuals and as taxpayers. In those cases, they would be considered Newfoundland and Labrador residents for the purposes of their application to the faculty of medicine at Memorial.

Individuals who do not meet those criteria are still able to apply for the faculty of medicine and would be considered non-residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

All of this, our government is working to support Memorial University, to support students and to support a well-functioning health care system that promotes the well-being of every individual in the province.

This amendment applies to the faculty of medicine only; however, paragraph 70 outlines that the Lieutenant-Governor in Council may make regulations prescribing additional faculties or schools for that purpose.

What that means is the amendment today provides flexibility for the Lieutenant-Governor in Council to prescribe that definition to apply to other faculties, should the government propose it. Right now, we are focusing on the faculty of medicine with the ability to expand that definition, should the time come.

As progress is made at the university to enhance transparency and accountability, it's important to emphasize, once again, that this proposed definition is the one that is currently being used by the faculty of medicine.

I look forward to further discussing this proposed amendment in this hon. House.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I want to thank the staff of the minister's department for providing a briefing on this bill. It was well done. It was always nice to sit down and see some familiar faces and have a chat.

If I'm reading this right, this bill and the Explanatory Notes: "This Bill would amend the *Memorial University Act* to define 'Newfoundland and Labrador resident' for the purposes of admission to the Faculty of Medicine or other prescribed faculties or schools of Memorial University."

I think the intent of this, as has already been stated, is to prevent people from moving to Newfoundland and Labrador, potentially, for their last year of studies and apply and become a resident to the medical school, and it's ensuring that those resident in the province get first opportunity.

So, as was already stated, the applicant must live in the province for a minimum of three years. They do not need to be a student or work but must live in the province.

Currently, there are 80 seats in the med school; 66 are for Newfoundland and Labrador residents, including as well three Indigenous. So you have 69 for

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. There are four seats for PEI residents and one for a Nunavut resident. Those five seats have been purchased by those provinces and territories to allow them to come to school here.

There are six other seats, however, that are listed for seats for Canada, so it would be nice to see us having those six seats as well, allocated for Newfoundland and Labrador residents.

It is a change that I think is needed. It's just, basically, bringing what's on the med school site into legislation so that it can be enforced and looked at.

I have a number of questions but I'll leave those for when we go into Committee. But outside of that, right now, there's not much more I can say on this.

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

**P. LANE:** Thank you, Speaker.

I'll be supporting the bill based on the fact, of course, that we're just setting up a definition which makes good sense to me. I don't have an issue with the definition so I'll support in that regard.

What I do have an issue with, though, Mr. Speaker, and my colleague just alluded to it slightly; I'll put it a little bit stronger, I guess, from my point of view, at least, is the fact that we have 69 seats allotted for Newfoundland and Labrador. That leaves 11 seats.

I can, perhaps, live with the fact, in terms of co-operation with PEI; I can live with the fact that we have four seats for PEI and one for Nunavut, particularly because PEI and Nunavut are subsidizing. They are paying for those seats. So, I, as a taxpayer; you, as a taxpayer; the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are not subsidizing the education

of somebody from PEI or Nunavut, should they get those five seats.

Now, there's a good argument to be made that given the crisis we have with doctors and the need to try to get as many doctors as we can and the higher the likelihood of us recruiting our own versus trying to get them overseas; hopefully, our own students would want to stay here in Newfoundland, given the fact that their family and friends and that all live here and they might, hopefully, want to stay here close to family and practise here. That's the concept, of course.

But I have a real problem with the six additional seats because, at least what staff told me, and the minister can correct it if I'm wrong, but it's what staff said, at least, when we did the briefing, that these are six Canadian seats – six Canadian seats that have not been purchased. Yet, unlike the four for PEI and the one Nunavut, these six seats have not been purchased by another province.

So what that really means is that the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador are going to subsidize seats in the medical school for somebody from Ontario or Quebec or British Columbia or Alberta or whatever. Their kids can come to Newfoundland, they can come study at Memorial University, may or may not stay here, less likelihood they're going to stay here than our own, but, as a taxpayer, we're going to subsidize their education.

I have a big problem, a big problem with that as a taxpayer and I got a feeling that a lot of people in this province would have a problem with it as well. I would say even though, I guess, it's technically not covered in this bill, because this bill is just setting out the definition; I don't know if this is actually in legislation, I don't think it is. I think that MUN has just, on their own, sort of come up with the formula.

I'm not sure the rationale, why they think it's okay for taxpayers to subsidize seats at the medical school – six seats for someone who's not even from this province, but whatever their rationale is, I would say to the minister, if that's something that's not technically under the legislation, then we need to talk to them about changing that policy.

Now, granted, I can see, I can understand, totally, that if there was a situation where we had only 69 students from Newfoundland to fill those seats, fair enough, and there are seats left over. I still think the province, whatever province it is, should be subsidizing it, the same as PEI are doing, but how about if there are more students because I've had situations in the past, I don't know about other Members, but I have, in the past, had parents reach out to me.

I can remember one in particular a couple of years ago, and their son, I think had a – I want to say a 95.6 overall average. He had chemistry, biology and all those sciences that are related to being a doctor. A 95-point-something average and never made the cut because it was so competitive. The kids obviously ahead of him had higher averages than that, which is pretty unbelievable.

I can remember saying to her that was probably my average if I were to take two years of education and put them together and average them out; add the two of them together, maybe I'd get that kind of an average, certainly mind-blowing averages, a lot of them were like 99 per cent, 98 per cent overall. But in that particular year, her son, who was a brilliant young fella with, like I say, a 95-point-something average didn't make the cut and wanted to be a doctor, wanted to go to med school and couldn't get in. I think it's very disappointing if that's the case, and then we simply said, okay, we're going to give these six seats to someone from some other province who are not even paying for it. I got an issue with it.

I would say to the minister – at least this is just my point of view – that barring the five seats that have been paid for, then that would mean there are 75 seats, not 69. I would say 75 seats should be offered to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, to residents and if in the event there are not 75 students who meet the criteria to actually get into med school, then open it up. Then open it up to others, once we make sure that our own residents are looked after first. But surely goodness, we're not going to be turning away our own kids and bringing someone in from another province and subsidize their education for them and then our own kids can't even get in.

That would be the issue I would have, Mr. Speaker. Like I say, the legislation as such, I got no problem with the definition and I got no problem, once our kids are taken care of, if they meet the criteria to get into med school, I have no problem at that point in time, opening it up to others. Whether they're from other parts of Canada or other parts of the world for that matter, it doesn't matter to me. They could be international students; they're more than welcome – no issue – none.

But once ours are looked after and there's anything left over, then we open it up to others, and they pay. Taxpayers of this province should not be subsidizing their education. Let their own province, where they live, subsidize it. Like I say, PEI are doing it and Nunavut are doing it. So why are we going to do it for PEI and Nunavut but someone can come here from Quebec, Ontario, BC or Alberta and we're going to subsidize their education for free? If I was PEI or Nunavut I'd be questioning that one. If I was the Government of PEI, I'd be saying, why are we paying? You're going to let someone come from Alberta, you're going to subsidize them but I'm going to pay for it; what's that all about? I don't know.

Maybe there's a good answer. Maybe there's some reciprocal agreement or something. Maybe that's what it is. I don't

know what it is, but nobody could give me that answer at the briefing. But I do raise that as a concern. Particularly given the fact that we are in such dire need of physicians in this province right now. Maybe when we get a point where we have all the physicians we can handle, all we can muster, maybe then half the seats we could sell to other provinces or open up to international students or whatever, not a problem, no issue.

But until we fill the gap here then I think that we need to concentrate on getting our own students through so hopefully they're going to stay here because their family are living here and this is their home and this is where they want to stay and practise.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**SPEAKER:** Seeing no further speakers if the Minister of Education speaks now, we'll close debate.

The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** Thank you my hon. colleagues for their comments and I look forward to answering questions in Committee.

**SPEAKER:** Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 69 be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

**CLERK (Hawley George):** A bill, An Act to Amend the Memorial University Act No. 2. (Bill 69)

**SPEAKER:** This bill has now been read a second time.

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

**L. DEMPSTER:** Now.

**SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act to Amend the Memorial university Act No. 2," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole presently, by leave. (Bill 69)

**SPEAKER:** The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

**L. DEMPSTER:** Thank you, Speaker.

I move that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 69.

**SPEAKER:** A seconder for that, please?

**L. DEMPSTER:** Seconded by the Minister of Education.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

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

**Committee of the Whole**

**CHAIR (Gambin-Walsh):** Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 69, An Act to Amend the Memorial University Act No. 2.

A bill, "An Act to Amend the Memorial University Act No. 2." (Bill 69)

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

**P. DINN:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

With regard to section 69(3)(a) and (b), does this prevent direct entry from undergraduates?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** No.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

**P. DINN:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

When we talked about the seat allocation, at our briefing it was 69 Newfoundlanders, three of which were Indigenous seats, four purchased seats for PEI, one purchased for Nunavut and six others. Of course, when I look at the MUN site and I guess it is just not up to date or for some reason it lists 60 Newfoundland seats, 10 New Brunswick, four PEI and four as Canada/international.

So, when I look at this, I am assuming – well, no, I'm not going to assume; I'm going to ask the question: Which is correct?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** The legislation that we're proposing today is correct. I guess the website hasn't been updated but thank you for bringing that to our attention and we'll certainly pass that information on.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

**P. DINN:** (Inaudible) given the state of our health care and crisis situation, we need more Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to be employed here in health and to get their qualifications here in the province. Why are we offering six other seats? Why would we not offer those six seats as well as Newfoundland and Labrador residents and then if there is an opportunity to other Canadians?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** Thank you.

The answer to that is there is an implied reciprocity agreement with other universities across the country. There are programs that Newfoundland and Labrador doesn't offer so our students have to travel elsewhere to get an education in those important fields and then return home for work.

Likewise, if we are expecting other provinces to let our students in, then we have a number of seats that are reserved so that other provinces can send their students here to avail of programming that may not be available to them. Also, it doesn't specifically say that they can't be Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. So a Newfoundlander and Labradorian who, say, has been away working who might not fit the definition, as outlined, as a resident, may still have an interest in applying to our medical school and may sign and make avail of those six seats. There might be an historic attachment or somebody's mother was from Newfoundland and they live in Ontario, but they want to move home. So those six seats give room for that as well.



We're also interested in ensuring that we have very qualified candidates; that's not to say that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are not qualified, but it is based on more than just your marks. So the diversity that is demonstrated in the admissions process by which there is a series of interviews process and considerations are given to things, more than just your transcript, also gives some flexibility for those six seats to ensure that the university has the opportunity to do that.

**CHAIR:** The Member for Topsail - Paradise.

**P. DINN:** Just in relation to that, if there's a minimum qualification for these seats, for a resident to go in there, if they meet the minimum qualifications, would you not allot those seats to a Newfoundlander and Labradorian?

**K. HOWELL:** Sorry, I couldn't hear the Member.

**CHAIR:** Sorry, could you repeat the question?

The Member for Topsail - Paradise

**P. DINN:** Just in relation to the admission and getting the best candidates: If there are minimum entrance requirements set and we have Newfoundlanders meeting those, would we not give preference to those Newfoundlanders to fill those seats?

**CHAIR:** The Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** So those 66 seats that would be reserved for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are prioritized for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. As I mentioned, the six remaining seats are largely part of a reciprocity agreement that exists between universities, ensuring that we make space for students because we expect other universities to make space for Newfoundland and Labrador students as well.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise

**P. DINN:** In relation to that, because it would be nice to see a break off those six others, I know PEI is there as purchasing four seats for the medical school and, in return, we actually purchased 3 seats for the Veterinarian College, as an example.

So why would we not have some kind of arrangement like that for the six other seats?

**CHAIR:** The Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** Well, because there is an infinite number of programs that could be available to our students that they may need to go away and enrol in. We don't know, specifically, what students may expect to enrol in what programs. So once they identify that there's a student coming from another province, then once they have that reciprocity agreement in place, then they can open up seats to them as well.

We can't go out and determine every university's available programming and what students in Newfoundland and Labrador may wish to be part of it and how many seats should we, statistically, deploy because we have students who may or may not wish to be enrolled in those programs. But by ensuring that the six seats are available, we do have an agreement in principle, that other universities would do the same for our students.

**CHAIR:** The Member for Topsail - Paradise

**P. DINN:** And I ask those questions because in your preamble you spoke about strengthening our health care system, you talked about our taxpayers' dollars being spent accordingly, you talked about having homegrown medical students, you talked about the almost half a billion dollars that goes into MUN. I agree with all that. It's just when I look at the seat allocation – and I understand your logic, what you've said, but

still, to me, why would we not just put those six seats in as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and should there be other people looking for those seats, then address it?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** The same answer. We need to ensure that we have that flexibility so that other provinces understand we're willing to take some of their students. In return, they would take some of ours in programs that we can't offer here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

**P. DINN:** You may have answered this in the preamble as well, but why is this coming in as solely for the faculty of medicine?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** Right now, it was the one that we prioritized, given, as we've mentioned, the health care issues and the need for physicians here in Newfoundland and Labrador. The bill also gives us the opportunity to expand this at a later time, should we choose to do so.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

**P. DINN:** When we had the briefing on this, we were told that this was brought in through a discussion with Memorial and not with the medical school, so my question would be: Why would you not discuss this directly with the medical school as well?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** The medical school already uses this definition. This is their implied definition of Newfoundland and Labrador, so we simply took what it is that they're using and now we wish to enshrine it in legislation.

I've had conversations with the president, as I routinely do every month, and him, in meetings with his departments and his faculty heads, would have talked about this.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

**P. DINN:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

In relation to that, this definition of a Newfoundland resident, does it adhere to other legislation such as the Elections Act or the Canada *Citizenship Act*?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** I will have to get that answer for the Member. I know that this is, as I said, the definition that Memorial University has been using to determine their residency, but I'll have to get the answer for you.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

**P. DINN:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

In relation to that, I mentioned earlier about, as an example, the Atlantic Vet College in PEI, and for a Newfoundlander to go over there and avail of that, they have to reside for 12-consecutive months prior to their studies request for admission and excluding time as a full-time student and at post-secondary.

So, my question is: In coming up with this – and I understand it was already an established definition by MUN medical school – was there any discussion around having a more consistent definition that applies to, as we've seen, an exchange of seats with other provinces?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** Right now, we've confirmed that this is a definition that Memorial University has been using and we looked at it in two parts. The first of which would be

our domestic students that are already here and then, the second part would be for those individuals who would have been working or living in the province and then decided to make a career move and move into the faculty of medicine. So that's how we've established the two portions of breakdown for our definition.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

**P. DINN:** I guess what I'm highlighting there is the fact that, as an example, for a Newfoundlander to attend Vet school in PEI under the purchase agreement, we're under a little stricter guideline than vice versa. So that maybe something that we need to be considering.

When I go to the six seats, as I noted earlier, on the website it noted those seats as other or international. You've corrected that. It is what it is now, six others. So where do international students fall when it comes to MUN medical seats?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** You would have to be a permanent resident of Canada; anybody who had come from another country in the world, would have to have a permanent residency or a citizenship in order to qualify for Memorial University's School of Medicine.

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

**J. DINN:** Thank you, Chair.

Why is the legislation being introduced now and not, say, five years ago? I guess the question is basically asking: What's changed?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** Five years ago, I was working as a registered nurse and had no idea about

this information at all. It's come to light since I've been part of the department. I know that my predecessors had this as an important conversation, but as we've worked through some of the things in the department, now was the time.

There's no better time than the present to get these things done. I can't speak for what happened in the past but given some of the conversations we've had and how our health care system has been challenged, we want to make sure that we're supporting Newfoundland and Labrador residents with an availability and accessibility to medical school right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**J. DINN:** Are there people who try to claim the residency requirement that aren't really entitled to it, either by the current definition or through some bureaucratic loophole?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** I wouldn't be able to speak to that specifically, but I would imagine that that is the premise of enshrining the definition in legislation, is to ensure that Newfoundland and Labrador's bona fide residents are those who benefit from being defined as a resident and acceptance into the medical school.

**J. DINN:** (Inaudible.)

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

**J. DINN:** Sorry, Chair.

Then that is the problem that this legislation is trying to address, which is that basically people are improperly claiming residency requirement. Would that be it?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** That's a question that would be better directed to MUN, because as I said, I don't know who claims to be what when they apply, but I know that it's important for this government to ensure that we've enshrined a definition that gives Newfoundlanders and Labradorians the best possible access to the seats that are available in the medical school.

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

**J. DINN:** I guess what I'm saying is that for the province to take that step then of bringing in the legislation it, too, must be aware of the problem in something. It must have a reason for it; it's not just today the minister woke up and decided to bring in the legislation. That's what I'm assuming; that's what I'm trying to get. What is it trying to fix?

But as far as you know, you're assuming that it's to make sure that people don't falsely claim residency. That's not something your department is aware of, but that's something that MUN medical school would have. Have they expressed that concern to you?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** Not to me directly.

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

**J. DINN:** Have they communicated to officials in your department then – in the minister's department, sorry?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** These are always questions and comments come up as you're talking about availability of student seats in Newfoundland and Labrador. We always talk about making available and accessible the best possible education to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. To say specifically if it came up as tagged with the

medical school, I can't speak to that myself, but I do know that we always want to make sure that our Newfoundland and Labrador students are getting the best access.

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

**J. DINN:** Thank you, Chair.

I think the minister said that the government took what the medical school is using as a definition of Newfoundland and Labrador residency and basically enshrined into legislation. Would that be fair – get that confirmed?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** That's correct. This is the definition that the school of medicine already applies to students who are looking to get seats in the school of medicine and we wanted to make sure that there's no ambiguity, that there's a clear and concise definition, that there's not the one-offs that may slip through. We wanted to enshrine it in legislation so that we know Newfoundland and Labrador students have access to the seats at our medical school.

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

**J. DINN:** If I understand it correctly, up until now then the definition as used by the MUN medical school has been working. I guess what I'm saying is there's no real major changes but up until now that definition has been working.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** Up until now that definition has been working, and we want to ensure that it stays that way. So by enshrining it in legislation, we are defining who would be able to apply for seats that have been delegated for Newfoundland and Labrador students, capping it off after 66 residents and making sure that those seats are

available to individuals who have contributed, who have been part of the Newfoundland and Labrador as defined by the two proposed definitions.

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

**J. DINN:** I guess that's where I'm going with it. From what I gather from this conversation here is that there hasn't been any indication that there's been a problem that the minister can identify. The MUN medical school does seem to have some pretty rock-solid definitions. There is a concern that people – non-residents – may be using it unfairly, but we don't have any proof that that's the case.

I guess that's where I'm going back to: What is the problem that we're trying to fix here, exactly? Usually legislation is in response to, but that's my concern with this.

Why would the medical school not be trusted to set its own definition of residents in this province as it has done already for decades before, and I'm assuming without any major concerns if I'm hearing the minister correctly?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** Look at me over here being proactive with my legislation.

We wanted to make sure that it is in place, so that there is no ambiguity, that any demand for seats in the medical school are clearly defined for who would have access as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and as the demand increases in Newfoundland and Labrador for physicians, we want to ensure that Newfoundland and Labrador residents are considered for those seats.

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

**J. DINN:** Chair, I would assume the MUN medical school was being proactive for decades, as well.

Was the medical school consulted or even notified about this legislation, and I mean consulted more than just an hour before, hey, we're bringing in legislation next week?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** There have been discussions ongoing with the university about this definition, yes.

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

**J. DINN:** What is the nature of those consultations, or those discussions, and the concerns that they have raised?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** As I said, this is the definition that Memorial already uses, so it's something that they've been deploying regularly when they consider who is a Newfoundland and Labrador resident.

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

**J. DINN:** So have they asked that this be enshrined into legislation?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** Not to me, they haven't asked me, but as I've said, this was a discussion that was ongoing before I got here. The fact of the matter is that we don't want to be in a position where we have seats that are being availed of and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians didn't get a look in. So by enshrining this definition, we want to make sure that into the future there is a clear definition of who a Newfoundland and Labrador resident is and who can have access to these seats.

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

**J. DINN:** Have they had these discussions with your predecessor or with officials in your department?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** You'd have to ask my predecessor that question, but I know that the officials in the department are in routine conversation with Memorial University on this and many issues.

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

**J. DINN:** So I can assume then that there's no formal request from the MUN medical school to have this brought into legislation.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** As I said, proactive legislation. We want to ensure that this does not become a problem for Memorial University, that down the road they are not caught looking for an answer to a question that could have been proposed years prior, as was suggested by his first questioning, why now.

So to save the person who comes behind me that conversation, I'm already taking action here today.

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

**J. DINN:** Would it not have been better then to amend legislation to give the Minister of Education the power to set the criteria in consultation with Memorial in the regulations instead? I say that because on one hand having something enshrined in legislation is positive, but if at some time things need to be changed to respond to changing conditions, bringing it back into the House of Assembly, especially where we sit twice in a year, can be a cumbersome process.

So I'm just wondering if that would have been a better compromise that would have allowed for ongoing conversations with Memorial medical school, with the Minister of Education, whoever that is at that time.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** I think that enshrining it in legislation ensures that moving forward we have the same process that's applied across the board and that all students will know what the expectation is and Memorial University will have the template by which they can operate for years to come, and should the time come when it needs – if it needs amendment, then that's what the House of Assembly is for and we can always bring it back to this floor so that all 40 Members can have a contribution and discussion as we're having here today.

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

**J. DINN:** Is this legislation supposed to help the recruitment and retention of physicians, maybe Newfoundland and Labrador physicians, and if so, how?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** As with almost all of the efforts that we put into any of the health care disciplines, the intention is to recruit and retain our qualified professionals. By ensuring that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have access to these seats, we know that if you live and study in the province then you are more than likely to work in the province.

So by providing that opportunity for Newfoundland and Labrador students, then the expected outcome is that many of them will choose to live and practise here as well.

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

**J. DINN:** And just because a person is from the province doesn't mean that they're going to stay and practise here, and I can think of a number of doctors who've moved on who went to university here and went to medical school here but are practising because they cannot get a job here to begin with. So, those are the concerns.

When deciding to enshrine the definition of resident for the Newfoundland and Labrador pool, why did the government not opt to do the same for the Indigenous pool of applicants?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** Right now, our primary concern was the definition of Newfoundland and Labrador students and as the bill enacts, we can look at the definition for other faculties as we move forward, or revisit this if indeed it is required.

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

**P. LANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I thought I understood this bill, and my colleague got me a little confused here now, so I just want to clarify it for my own mind. Because what I'm reading in this bill is that we're enshrining the definition of what is a Newfoundland resident. But there's nothing in this bill that's putting these numbers of 66, and three, and four, and all that in legislation, because listening to the questioning that time from my colleague, it gives the impression that – because he said what about if we want to change the numbers.

Well, those numbers, those actual numbers, that allocation is at 80 seats. That's not in the legislation, is it? I mean, my understanding is that that's just an allocation that MUN has in place, and that could change. I would assume that they would go to you before they would change it; I would hope they would. But next year

they might say okay, we're going to change 66 to 70 or we're going to change 66 down to 50 because we don't need as many doctors, or we don't have as many people applying here and they could change those numbers around. Like, that's not enshrined in legislation; the only thing enshrined in legislation is the definition of what is a Newfoundland and Labrador resident.

Is he right or am I right on that?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** This particular piece of legislation is just aiming to enshrine the definition. It doesn't lay out how many students are allowed in each of the different designations. That is a decision that is made by the administration at Memorial University. I would hazard to say they wouldn't fool with those numbers, certainly without having a discussion with the Department of Education, given the amount of funding that is provided through the Department of Education, and Health, to keep those seats open and operational. I can very well assure that there would be conversations with the departments before that was changed.

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

**P. LANE:** Thank you, Minister, so I did have a good understanding then, okay.

Minister, on that then, just on the numbers, why would these numbers not be set in the regulations? Because I know – it's fair to say, I'm sure they would contact you, I'm sure they would have that discussion and all that kind of stuff. Not to be too negative but some of the stuff that came out of the Auditor General's report I would have been sure wasn't happening until it came out.

I'm just wondering why would we not have those allocations in the regulations that it would be the minister could change based on consultations, that they couldn't just go

ahead and just change it on their own or choose to ignore those numbers.

Because it's one thing for us to enshrine in legislation what the definition of a resident is; it's totally another thing for them to decide to say, yeah, this year we don't like 66, we're only going to give 60 to Newfoundlanders, not 66, and we're going to have some more seats open to other people or whatever the case might be. They're not necessarily required to go through the department. So if it was in regulations, then they'd have to go to the department to have the regulation changed. I'm just wondering why that's not the case.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** I'll certainly take that note from the Member, but it would have been deemed that it was unnecessary right now to focus on that. Our primary concern right now is to enshrine the definition of Newfoundland and Labrador students. As we continue to have the conversations with Memorial University about their budgets, their allocations and how they do those things, those are items that regularly come up. While they're not, certainly, outlined in a regulation, it is a discussion point that continues between the departments.

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

**P. LANE:** Thank you, Minister.

Minister, on the 69 seats and really, I just want to get clarification on the 69 versus 66 because it says 66 Newfoundland residents, and then three Indigenous, and then it's being inferred, at least, that those three are also Newfoundland and Labrador residents. But just for argument's sake – and maybe it would never happen, I don't know, but what would happen for argument's sake if nobody who was Indigenous in Newfoundland applied for one of those three seats?

Would those seats then be Indigenous, as in Indigenous Canadians, or would those three seats then be 69 non-Indigenous permanent residents?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** So the three Indigenous seats are prioritized for Newfoundland and Labrador Indigenous, and in the event that those three applicants don't come forward, the three seats then go to Canadian Indigenous.

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

**P. LANE:** Okay, thank you.

Minister, thank you for the clarification. Again, my concern remains the same. Actually, I do have a question. You talk about reciprocity agreements and so on, and at one point you said there were agreements and at another point you said implied agreements. I understand there's an agreement with PEI, for example, that they're paying for four seats, and we're paying for veterinarian college seats or whatever. So, to me, that kind of is trade one for the other and we're all paying our own way, so to speak.

But these other six and up to nine potentially open to anybody that, again, taxpayers here are subsidizing, which I do have an issue with. Are there actual agreements with other universities, or is this just sort of, like you say, implied, that every university just sort of says, oh, we're all going to throw open a few seats for anybody? And if that's the case that that happens, and that's what you mean, there's no actual written agreements, then wouldn't I be upset then if I was in PEI and saying, well, gee whiz, you're going to give a few free seats to someone in Alberta, so why are we paying for our four?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.



**K. HOWELL:** I can't really speak to anybody in PEI; all I can speak to is the fact that there are six seats at Memorial medical school that are reserved as part of an implied reciprocity agreement. There's no formal written agreement, but as I mentioned before, if we had to seek out every possible program that is offered throughout Canada that is not offered here in Newfoundland and Labrador, and pay for those specific seats on the chance that somebody from Newfoundland and Labrador may wish to apply for them in the next 25 years, that would probably be an exercise in futility because we can't predict who may want to be what.

But we know that by opening the six seats for reciprocal seating arrangements for our students in other provinces, that the potential is then that our students can avail of programs in other provinces and then we can take a few from other provinces into MUN school of medicine.

That's not to say that they are definitely from another province. As I said, there may be students who don't meet the specific requirements to be classified as a Newfoundland and Labrador student, who may have a historical attachment to Newfoundland and Labrador or who may wish to be part of – who may have some connection to the province and come back here.

So, while there are seats available for other provinces, it doesn't eliminate those who may also have an attachment to our province, which would be preferable, given that we want people to come here and live and work. With this suite of incentives that have been outlined by the Department of Health, we think that it's a very real reality that people may wish to come home and live and work. So we're hoping that this is part of the plan for recruitment and retention.

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

**P. LANE:** Thank you, Minister, for all the answers.

I do appreciate that you've been very forthcoming with them. I understand the rationale; I'm still not quite there, I don't really agree with it. I still think that those 75 seats should be for Newfoundlanders and if there's anything left over, then open it up to whoever. But at the end of the day, that's not part of that legislation, technically it's not. It's about residency definitions and I have no problems with the definitions or enshrining it in legislation so I'll support the bill.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** Thank you.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

**P. DINN:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I actually had a couple of questions on the reciprocity agreements, but the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, I think, asked enough on that.

Just the one question for clarification, and I'm looking at section 69(3)(b). It says: "For the purposes of paragraph (2)(b), a person's permanent address is considered to be located in the province where ... the person resides in the province for less than 10 months a year but is employed in the province and the person physically resides within 100 kilometres of the person's employment and does not attend a post-secondary institution on a full-time or part-time basis."

My question here is: What was the logic for the 100 kilometres, given that we're trying to promote more virtual employment?

Someone could be residing on one end of the province and actually the employer be

located in St. John's and work virtually. I'm just curious, actually, if the 100-kilometre piece is necessary because all we need to know is that they reside in the province. Just your comments on that.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** The intention for that particular piece was to ensure that people who have to be out of the province for more than two months of the year do have an opportunity to be considered, have their permanent residence considered in Newfoundland and Labrador as well.

The example we typically use is, if there was an individual here who was a registered nurse who had to go back to PEI, because that's where their parent lived, for two months of the year to take care of them in event of sickness and then return back to the province again. We would not eliminate that person from enrolling or applying as a resident when they went to apply for the medical school.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

**P. DINN:** Thank you.

No, I understand that logic. It makes perfect sense. I'm just curious as to how we came up with the 100-kilometre distance within the province. There are people that now work more than 100 kilometres from their work, given the movement to virtual employment.

That's just my question on that is how we came up with 100 kilometres and, actually, do we really need it there, other than to say that person has a permanent address in the province?

Do you see where I'm going with this?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** Anybody who is outside the 100 kilometres would have already been covered in part (a) definition anyway. It was primarily put it there to ensure that we have an attachment to a permanent address here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

**CHAIR:** Good?

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

**J. DINN:** I have one last question with regard to these regulations: Are these changes about restricting the autonomy and the academic freedom of Memorial University so it can no longer make the definitions?

Is this what this legislation is about, because I haven't heard a reason as to why, so I'm just wondering if that is the rationale here?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** The rationale for this legislation is to enshrine the definition of a Newfoundland and Labrador resident to ensure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have accessible opportunities to be considered for seats at Memorial University.

**CHAIR:** Any further questions?

Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

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

**CHAIR:** Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

**CLERK:** An Act to Amend the Memorial University Act No. 2.

**CHAIR:** Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

**CHAIR:** Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

**L. DEMPSTER:** Thank you, Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 69 carried without amendment.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 69 carried without amendment.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

**SPEAKER (Bennett):** Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

**S. GAMBIN-WALSH:** Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 69 carried without amendment.

**SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and directed that Bill 69 be carried without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

**L. DEMPSTER:** Now.

**SPEAKER:** Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

**L. DEMPSTER:** Tomorrow.

**SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

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

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

**L. DEMPSTER:** Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 13, second reading of Bill 67.

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

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

I'm going to see if I can remember now how to move and second this.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Bill 67 be now read a second time.

**SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 67, An Act Respecting Recognition of the 75th Anniversary of Confederation, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act Respecting Recognition of the 75th Anniversary of Confederation." (Bill 67)

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

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

It's great to have the opportunity this afternoon to speak on the *Confederation 75th Anniversary Recognition Act*.

As, certainly, everybody in this House realizes and a lot of people at home, 2024 will be the 75th anniversary of Confederation for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Throughout history, we marked, obviously, the 25th anniversary, the 50th anniversary and now the 75th anniversary. I think this one becomes a little more important because if you think about Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that would have been born in 1949, 75 years ago, they're getting up there in age now and

the number of people that were born Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in 1949, obviously, is becoming more and more limited as we move forward.

So in recognition of that this year, as a government, we've taken some initiatives, and I'll take some liberty in my opening to talk about a few things that we've already done as a department to help recognize and mark the 75th anniversary of Confederation.

Back early in the new year or, I think, it was late in the old year, in 2023, we announced the Confederation 75 program. It was a cultural funding program. I'm happy to say that program closed on February 29, and we've received applications from 130-plus communities throughout our province who will now receive funding to mark the 75th anniversary of Confederation.

Sixty-plus heritage organizations from around the province have applied for funding through the Confederation 75 cultural funding program. That is one program that we want to get some grants out to municipalities and heritage groups to enhance their celebrations and to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Confederation this year.

When we think back to earlier celebrations of Confederation, my colleague, the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair, pointed out to me a few days ago the heritage or the beginning of the Labrador flag. The Labrador flag was actually an idea that was generated from the 25th anniversary of Confederation. At the time, government went out and asked for ideas of things that could be done to mark the 25th anniversary of Confederation and that is one of the legacy pieces from the 25th anniversary of Confederation.

Some other things, Mr. Speaker, that we are planning for next year, I know working with the House of Assembly, we've recently approved a project that will take the mace on tour of schools around this province and

talk about the civics of the House of Assembly and the history behind it.

This will be a great opportunity for schoolchildren throughout our province to learn more about the House of Assembly, the mace and the historic significance and the changes that Confederation brought to our province.

We'll be providing education tool kits to schools throughout the province as well to talk about the 75th anniversary. Programming at Provincial Historic Sites around the province this year to also commemorate the anniversary. We're working on projects with the Heritage Foundation and others to take that opportunity, this year, to remember, to reflect on 75 years of Confederation.

One of the things that we're actually in contemplation right now and we're looking for expressions of interest and we'll be soon going at, if we haven't already, is a commemorative book. At the 25th anniversary and the 50th anniversary, there were books produced that showed Newfoundland and Labrador's progression from Confederation through, obviously, the first 25 years, then it's progression through the next 50 and, again, now 75 years later, here we are remembering 75 years of Confederation, the changes that it brought.

Ironically, I think it was just last year or the year before we reopened the Colonial Building which also shows –

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Oh, oh!

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**S. CROCKER:** – the birthplace of Confederation, actually, at that facility. Obviously, there will be opportunities, this year, as well, to highlight that.

Mr. Speaker, this bill also creates 75th Anniversary Medals which will go to deserving Newfoundlanders and

Labradorians who have made contributions to our society; the 75th Anniversary Scholarship fund; provide for honorary Members of the Executive Council; and there will be a piece of this act that will do the honorifics for people who served. So there are lots of things happening in 2024 as we commemorate the 75th anniversary.

In remarks made earlier last week or late last week, I talked about the Year of the Arts and we will find lots of ways to incorporate the Year of the Arts into this. As well, we're going to celebrate a significant anniversary in 2024 on July 1, when we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National War Memorial here in St. John's. This spring, summer we will return the remains of a Newfoundland and Labrador soldier, who fought in the First World War, back to this province – the only sub-national government in the Commonwealth to actually bring back the remains of a soldier, Mr. Speaker.

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

**S. CROCKER:** I think that's a testament to Newfoundland and Labrador and the Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who served as a country back then. I think it's very fitting that this will also be done as we mark this 75th year of Confederation in Newfoundland and Labrador.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat.

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

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

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Speaker.

It's always a pleasure to stand in this hon. House and represent the good people of my district. Today, I have the opportunity to speak to Bill 67, An Act Respecting Recognition of the 75th Anniversary of Confederation.

Speaker, this bill is being created in recognition of the 75th anniversary of Confederation by doing three things: anniversary medals, anniversary educational scholarships and the honorary title "The Honourable" to previous and existing Members of Executive Council who are presently living.

Speaker, individuals within this province who have provided significant contribution will be awarded anniversary medals as selected by a committee appointed by Executive Council; establish an education Anniversary Scholarship valued at \$1,000 for 75 students to a maximum of three per electoral district, and these will be awarded above and beyond any educational scholarships presently given like the Electoral District Scholarships given out by the Department of Education; to provide for honorary Members of the Executive Council; and authorize Members of the Executive Council, including honorary Members, to use the honorific "The Honourable" and the initials "E.C.N.L."

I was pleased to hear the hon. minister mention about the tour of the mace to the schools in the province. Many schools in my district, Speaker, would be welcome to that and I would hope that all MHAs, when the mace is in their district, would have an opportunity to attend that as well, to speak to all our students and to impress upon them the importance of their provincial government and what the mace represents.

Speaker, I'm pleased to speak to this bill. I have many questions when we come up in Committee and I look forward to continuing that then.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

**L. EVANS:** Thank you, Speaker.

I am not sure if I should have my glasses on or off.

I am just going to speak briefly to Bill 67 as well. This is about the 75th anniversary of Confederation, Newfoundland and Labrador joining.

Speaker, looking at the bill, there are grants for celebration. There are medals, scholarships and a licence plate. When Newfoundland and Labrador joined Confederation, it was a pivotal time, especially for residents in Labrador and rural Newfoundland, as well.

What joining Confederation did in a lot of these areas, it was the first time that many people actually could access money, other than having to rely on the fishery. The fishery made you servants to the merchants.

The reason why I speak on that is I can speak from personal experience, of hearing the stories. My grandmother was widowed at an early age. I was telling the Member for Bonavista, who I consider, not only an ally in the House of Assembly, but a friend, a true, honest person who believes in making the province a better place. We were sharing stories of when our province joined Confederation, my grandmother was widowed at an early age and when I was talking to other people in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, people said the same thing happened to them.

When somebody was widowed, you were expected to give up your kids, give up their children, marry again, start another family. Because you couldn't support the kids that you had, because of the financial burden, because you had no way of accessing support. So joining Confederation is something that we need to celebrate. It allowed my grandmother and other people in rural Newfoundland and Labrador to keep their families together.

Another thing, too, is I heard stories about people growing up being afraid of starving. In Newfoundland and Labrador, before we joined Confederation, people were at risk of starving to death in our province, and that's the truth. That is the truth. So it's so important to honour joining Confederation.

I know when I stood up, I think people were bracing themselves against what I was going to say because I stand in the House and I criticize government a lot of times. I say government should be protecting our most vulnerable, people on low incomes, our children, our elders, our seniors. But when we joined Confederation, it changed the life of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and that is true. And I support that. I'm glad that there are grants out there that are going to be made available to help in the celebrations; I'm glad there is going to be a medal honouring, recognizing the significant contributions made to people in our communities. That's really, really important.

At the end of the day, I always go back to what's important, and what's important now is 75 years later, how are we treating our most vulnerable? Are we looking after our kids, our children? Are we looking after our elders? Are we looking after people who have fallen into addictions, who need support, who are suffering from health issues, mental health issues? Are we supporting them? They are the most vulnerable.

We talk about Canada being a leader and we look at our health care system and we look at our social supports, compared to our neighbours to the south. But in actual fact, if we don't do democracy properly and if we don't make sure that we are a government that will actually help the people of our province and in Canada, if we're not making sure we're not making decisions on what's best for our country, for our province, then we are failing our people.

The only way we can truly celebrate Confederation is if we're learning from the past and moving forward. At the end of the day, there are people out there who are falling through the same pitfalls that families have fallen into. It's so important, Speaker.

I'm not going to belabour the point. I do have questions about this bill and I'll be bringing them up shortly.

At the end of the day, like I said, we have to make sure we're looking after our most vulnerable and out there past the overpass in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, what's at stake. We see the huge cost of oil. We see the huge costs going up for the cost of food. We see the cost of housing. This is impacting families, it's impacting communities. We see a Tent City. But what is past Tent City is the thousands of people out there in our province who are one or two paycheques away from being homeless. There are people out there, our elders, who have to turn down the heat.

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

I just want to remind the Member to stay relevant to the bill.

**L. EVANS:** Thank you, Speaker.

**SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**E. JOYCE:** It is about the bill (inaudible).

**L. EVANS:** It is about the bill; it is about joining Confederation.

**E. JOYCE:** (Inaudible) talking about Confederation.

**L. EVANS:** Yeah, exactly.

For us to celebrate Confederation, to be proud as a province of Canada, we have to ensure that we are taking steps so that our most vulnerable can afford food, can have access to safe housing, warm housing, can raise their families and not be at risk of

having them taken away from them or traumatizing them because they don't have the income or the supports to be able to deal with the cost of living.

Speaker, I will save my questions for later.

Thank you.

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

**P. LANE:** Thank you, Speaker.

I'm glad to have an opportunity to speak to Bill 67, regarding the 75th anniversary celebrations of Confederation of Newfoundland and Labrador with Canada.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, listening to my colleague there from Torngat – I was born a Canadian, obviously because I was born in '67, but my parents were born Newfoundlanders. I can remember my mother and my father telling me stories like the Member just recounted, what it was like growing up in Newfoundland and Labrador prior to Confederation. We heard the same stories about their Water Street merchants.

There are many people who would argue that they may not be called Water Street merchants anymore, but that phenomena still exists to this day, maybe not to the same degree. But they were tough times back then. My mother, in particular, she grew up in rural Newfoundland in Wesleyville, which they now refer to as New Wes Valley, and came to St. John's to work, when she was only 15 years old. They used to call it in-service back then. They were tough times. People lived a subsistence lifestyle. We didn't have a whole lot here in this province, back in those days.

Of course, in 1949, when we joined Confederation – and, again, just sort of recounting it as my mom and dad would say to me – everything changed. All of a sudden, we had the Trans-Canada Highway, we had the baby bonus, we had

Memorial University, better health care, better education and so on. It had a huge impact, at that time, particularly, on the regular families, families who were not part of that elite class that existed back then.

It's interesting because my parents, both of them, they always voted Liberal their whole life and they weren't necessarily voting for the Liberal Party, they were voting for Joey Smallwood. My aunts and uncles and so on, same thing. They all voted for Joey. Long after he was dead, they were still voting for Joey. We had that creepy, old picture of Joey in our hallway when you came in, that one that, I'm not sure, if it had some kind of a coating over it, when you sort of look at it one way it's like he was moving or whatever. I know Members probably know the one I'm referring to.

If you went down to Wesleyville, down to my aunt's house – I had a number of aunts and uncles and so on down there, and cousins, whatever, and you go down there, and everybody had that same creepy picture of Joey, and he was worshipped. He was like a god, basically. They credited him with all the benefits that came from Confederation.

There's no doubt that we've had a lot of benefits that have come from Confederation. I will point out, though, that we gave a lot, and continue to give a lot to Confederation, to Canada. It's not just a one-sided affair as some people may like to think. We know what's happened with our fishery, under the auspices of the federal government, and the destruction of a lot of fish stocks because of mismanagement that has happened because of Ottawa.

We know what we've given to this country in terms of resource revenues, whether it be through mining revenues or through offshore oil and gas and the revenues that – certainly, Ottawa did quite well, off Hibernia and that. So it's been, I guess, a reciprocal relationship. There are people to this day in Newfoundland and Labrador, if you talk to some people – I hear from them from time



to time; maybe other Members do as well – that will question whether we would not be better off on our own. That we shouldn't be part of Canada.

There are people that will point to that infamous vote for Confederation that was like 49.8 to 50.2 or whatever it was. It was less than a percentage, and there are people to this day who would say that that was rigged. Who knows? There's a lot of history there. But at the end of the day, I think that despite the fact that we have given a lot to Canada, we have indeed received a lot back.

Now, I have concerns about our relationship with Canada, with the federal government, and not because of this particular – it doesn't matter if it's Liberal or Conservative or whatever the case may be, the bottom line is that we have seven Members from Newfoundland and then you've got 100-odd Members from Ontario sat across the table, and another 60 or 70 or whatever it is from Quebec, so right off the bat being a small province, we'll never be priority one.

We're always going to be up against it. No matter who we send to Ottawa, we'll always be up against it because we are so small, have such small numbers and everybody knows that the priority will always be Central Canada because they hold the numbers. It's a numbers game and that's it. That's a disadvantage for us and for small provinces – for all of Atlantic Canada, quite frankly, in terms of benefits and so on.

That things are – we would argue – always going to be done to benefit Central Canada, perhaps sometimes at our expense. But at the end of the day, it is a great country; one of the greatest countries in the world and we do play an integral role in it and it is something worth celebrating.

So, of course, this bill here is looking at taking a number of initiatives to recognize our 75th anniversary in joining Confederation with Canada, which

happened in 1949, of course. There are a few things that we're going to do here that the minister has outlined. I certainly like the idea of the scholarships. Any time that we can do something like that to help our youth and our best and our brightest to further their education, so they can hopefully graduate at some point in time and hopefully stay here and contribute to our great province, then I think that's something that is absolutely worthwhile doing.

Mr. Speaker, 75th Anniversary Medals: Again, I don't have any issue with recognizing Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who have done great things and who have contributed to our province in many ways. I think that's a nice touch as well. The licence plates, no issue there. I think someone mentioned licence plates.

The only one, I got to be honest, and I'm not exactly sure how that one is going to work, is this whole idea of authorized Members of the Executive Council, including honorary Members, to use "The Honourable" and the initials "E.C.N.L." and that's even after you are finished office. That you would carry that with you, I guess indefinitely, until you pass. I'm not sure if that just applies to Cabinet Members or if it applies to all Members if the House of Assembly or how that works.

Quite frankly, I have no interest having E.C.N.L. after my name or being called honourable. I can tell you that I'm probably not going to call anyone over here honourable; not that I have any problem with you, but I'm not going to go around, after retiring, calling you honourable this or that and I certainly don't want it, don't need it. But if it is not costing us any money and people want to go around with a few letters after their name to make them feel good, hey, it's all good.

At the end of the day, I will support the bill. I guess my question would be, from a taxpayer point of view, people want to know what's this going to cost us. I guess that will be a question that will come up now in

Committee: What is all of this going to cost when we add up the bill for all of this stuff?

I'm sure there's more going to be happening besides what we're contemplating in this. There's going to be all kinds of advertising, I imagine, and functions and grants and whatever. So I think taxpayers would like to know what it's going to cost them. But, at the end of the day, there's also a benefit from a tourism point of view. I hope, and I'm sure the minister will make this into a big tourism draw and hopefully get that ferry traffic over here.

It will be a good reason for more Come Home Years again and to get people over here, expatriates and others, to celebrate our province, and hopefully, any expenses that would be incurred would be offset by new dollars coming into the province if we market it right and we do it right, and I'm sure that's probably the intent.

At the end of the day, these are things that are being done to celebrate what is a great province in a great country and to celebrate this milestone. As long as the costs are not too out of wack and I don't think it will be too bad and I think the benefits will be there, I will support the bill.

Thank you.

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

**E. JOYCE:** Thank you.

I'm just going to stand and have a few words.

I just got to say one thing about it first of all, the 75th anniversary. I know a lot of people 75 years old right now in the Corner Brook, Bay of Islands area who would love to have a family doctor. I know a lot of people who would love to have a nurse practitioner so they don't have to pay out of their pockets.

When we're up here now and celebrating the 75 years, we got to look back at some of the people who helped us to get where we're at today, that were born before Confederation and the hardships that they're going through.

I feel, in many cases, the government is neglecting these people that you're saying now that we got to go out and honour, which we should, but they're going through a lot of trials and tribulations right now.

So when we want to go out and celebrate the Confederation – and my colleague, the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, mentioned some of their stories and I remember stories my dad used to tell me, how bad it was before Confederation.

He used to fish in Labrador and when he used to go down, there were a lot of people that struggled during the winter and couldn't make it. They never made it during the winter because the first fish merchants, they never had enough food or they only had to bargain for so much for food that they had to try to sustain them over the winter and some didn't make it.

Confederation, there's no doubt, was a good thing, but we can't forget the people who were born before 1949, who are struggling now. We can't forget that. It's nice to have a big celebration. We can have a big spread, have Come Home Year again. We will have many tourists. I'm sure this is going to be a lot of good photo ops, but we have to keep in mind the people who helped us to bring us to this day, us in this Legislature, are suffering as we speak – are suffering as we speak. We can't let that go because we need another photo op for the Department of Tourism around the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

If I never had the opportunity to speak on this today and I didn't bring that up, a lot of people would be upset because the easiest thing to do is stand up and say, oh, yeah,

everything is great, everything is good, but it's not.

I will be supporting this but I do have some concerns about it, of course. I know the Executive Council is going to set up a committee now who were recognized. Who are they going to set up? How are they going to set up this committee? A lot of people I know that I'm pretty confident helped bring us to Confederation won't even be recognized because they're not in the inner circle. This is where I just hope the government and the minister don't make this a political issue. I really don't.

**P. LANE:** Wouldn't even invite him to the hospital.

**E. JOYCE:** Oh, yes, the Member just brought it up, one of the people that they're going to be now out probably supporting as an outstanding citizen, who's in his 80s, wasn't even invited to the opening of the hospital. Now we're going to go out and recognize all these people. This is how the politics steps into this.

I'll say to the minister, yes, Sir, I'll even say his name, Israel Hann, if you want to know his name, he wasn't even invited to the hospital. He was on the action care committee. He's in his 80s; wasn't recognized. Now we have to go and recognize people who made a contribution, who were born before 1949 and this person here may not even – because it's all according to who they put on the selection committee. We know how politics steps in, and it shouldn't. This is something that's too important. It shouldn't.

By the time they sit around and say, okay, let's get a committee together. Okay, who do you know? Let's start putting our little buddies on to it and the people like Israel Hann will never be recognized because right now they're on the outs with the party and wasn't invited to the hospital. I think he's 87 or 88 and he wasn't even invited to

the opening and we're going to recognize the seniors now.

We're going to recognize the people before Confederation. We're going to recognize some of the people right now who don't have a family doctor. We're going to recognize people now who are up past 75 years old, who are calling me that they have to go in and see a nurse practitioner and they've got to pay out of their pocket. Yet, we've got to recognize them; we've got to thank them for their contribution.

Let's thank them for the contribution by getting rid of the bills that they have to pay to the nurse practitioners. Let's recognize them that way. They'd be much more appreciative.

I'm going to support the bill but I'm going to be cautious on it. I heard the minister saying they're going to go around with the mace to be an honour in this House of Assembly. I'm assuming that's what he meant or the mace of the House of Assembly, which all of us Members got.

You've got to have respect in this House, Mr. Speaker. Don't you agree that every Member should be treated equally in this House? If we're going to go around this province and say: This is where everybody here are equal; this is where we make our decisions and everybody has the equal voice; everybody's rights should be protected. We should mean that, Mr. Speaker. Don't you agree? I'm sure you do. We should, if we're going to go around with the mace because, Mr. Speaker, this is what we fought for. In 1949, we won our own Legislature and everybody should be treated equal.

I'd love to be in an event and someone ask me about the mace. Do you feel that all Members are equal in the House of Assembly? I'd love to have that debate. But if we're going to, actually, go out and do it, we've got to live by our actions – live by our actions.

I'll say to the minister, I'll be supporting the bill but I can assure you I'll be asking who is on the committee. I'll be asking the cost of it because then I'll just divide it by 65 and see how many people would have – if without this here being the cost, how many people wouldn't have to pay nurse practitioners who are over 75. Easy, easy math.

So, I will be supporting it, but I can tell you, if we're really going to be concerned about the people 75 or older and recognizing a contribution that they made to the province and their families made to this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, we can do it by our actions. I've always said actions speak louder than words; words are cheap. But when a minister stands up, the Minister of Health, and says, he could sign off tomorrow for people who are 75 or older, who are going to a nurse practitioner, can sign off, either paid it through Western Health or bill it some way through MCP, and won't do it, it's almost a disservice to the people that we're going to represent here before Confederation. That's what's happening.

I'll say it again, it's much better to give them the services that they need, the services that they and their parents fought for so we can be in this Legislature on our own, we should give them those services now. The government has an opportunity to do that. By going out and giving them a pin to put on their shoulder and they have to walk around tomorrow and pay \$65 to pay a nurse practitioner or can't go to a doctor – I have one lady 90-years-old – she can remember this – 90-years-old, 24 hours in the emergency department in Corner Brook, 90-years-old. The family had to bring blankets in for her – 90-years-old. This is the kind of stuff, I say to the government here, it's nice to recognize, but it's much better to do things that are more tangible for the people that helped Confederation.

I'm a firm believer that it was great for us to join Canada. I'm a firm believer in that, listening to the stories from my dad and

other people that fished, at the time, on the Labrador. We fished a lot in Henley Harbour and all my family fished in Henley Harbour. My older family, uncles and that, fished, even some of my brothers, fished down there also.

I feel we're much better off by joining Canada. I think Canada's a great place. Newfoundland is a great place to live and we do have our trials and tribulations. I just have to bring it up about the seniors that are being neglected today and now we're going to go out and say: We're going to give you a pin, thank you for everything; too bad about your suffering that we could change. We could change your suffering, but we're not going to do it, but here's your pin. Hopefully, you'll forget about your suffering now and here's your pin.

I'm calling upon the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to do what you can for the seniors now so that when they don't have to pay that \$75, \$65 for nurse practitioners, when they can go in and see a doctor, they'll wear that pin with pride.

I'll say it again, and I'll end off once more, that people like Israel Hann who would be feeling good that he was appreciated by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for standing up for the people of Western Newfoundland, standing up for all the people who needed radiation, standing up for all the people who needed health care and pushed and pushed about 10 years – nine years, actually – to have the hospital built in Corner Brook and wasn't even recognized, wasn't even allowed at the building when they had the opening of the building.

If this is the way we're going to treat people pre-Confederation, let's start off with someone picking up the phone, the Premier of the province picking up the phone, phoning Israel Hann, thanking him, thanking his committee so we can see that when we go out and want to recognize people pre-Confederation that we mean it and it's just

not words, Mr. Speaker. Israel Hann deserves a phone call from the Premier. He was part of the pre-Confederation. He would remember it very well.

For us to not phone him, the Premier of this province should phone him, apologize, recommend that he come up and make sure he's at the next celebration for the hospital so we have that done, so that actions would mean much more and much better than words so that we can really say we thank you for the people that brought us into Canada, because we are in the greatest country in the world.

Thank you.

**SPEAKER:** Seeing no other speakers if the Minister of Tourism, Arts and Recreation speaks now, he will close debate.

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

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

Speaker, I want to thank the Members who contributed to the debate this afternoon: the Member for Cape St. Francis, the Member for Torngat Mountains, the Member for Mount Peal - Southlands and the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

The comments this afternoon actually were quite fitting because we've all heard the stories of joining Confederation and what Newfoundland and Labrador brought to Confederation, which was a lot actually. Again, nothing more fitting than the correlation this year between the 75th anniversary and the return of the remains of an unknown soldier.

It is a great opportunity to reflect on our relationship with Canada. It always hasn't been rosy and I would suspect that as we go into 100 years and 100 years beyond, it won't always be a rosy relationship, but I think, as one of the Members opposite did

say, we do live in the best country in the world and I think, often, we need to reflect on that.

Again, Mr. Speaker, thank you to everybody for their contributions to the debate this afternoon and I look forward to questions in Committee.

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

**SPEAKER:** Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 67 now be read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act Respecting Recognition of the 75th Anniversary of Confederation. (Bill 67)

**SPEAKER:** This bill has now been read a second time.

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

**L. DEMPSTER:** Now.

**SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act Respecting Recognition of the 75th Anniversary of Confederation," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole, presently, by leave. (Bill 67)

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

**L. DEMPSTER:** Thank you, Speaker.

I move that this House do now resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 67.

**SPEAKER:** And a seconder, please.

**L. DEMPSTER:** Seconded by the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation.

**SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into Committee of the Whole.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

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

### **Committee of the Whole**

**CHAIR (Gambin-Walsh):** Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 67, An Act Respecting Recognition of the 75th Anniversary of Confederation.

A bill, "An Act Respecting Recognition of the 75th Anniversary of Confederation." (Bill 67)

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I do have a couple of questions here in Committee, so I'll ask the minister: Why has

government chosen to develop this legislation to create these awards? Is this a common practice?

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

**S. CROCKER:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Yes, I don't know about a common practice, but I know when we do look at some jurisdictions, I think Alberta and Saskatchewan recently did jubilee celebrations and yes, they did create the legislation. They did create the bill just to stimulate debate, obviously, like this has done this afternoon and it gives us that piece of history now that we did mark the 75th commemoration with a bill.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Was there any legal requirement for government to create legislation to provide the recognition and the establishment of the awards?

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

**S. CROCKER:** It's my understanding there wasn't a legal requirement, but, again, we wanted to bring it to this House of Assembly to allow the opportunity for Members of the House of Assembly to have the debate that we had this afternoon and talk about Newfoundland and Labrador and our Confederation with Canada and the significance of that.

As Members said earlier, noted by a number of Members, this relationship hasn't always been a rosy relationship. Like I alluded to, I'm not sure it will always be smooth going forward, but again, it's a partnership between Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada. I think it's important that we took the opportunity this afternoon

in just some debate here to talk about our relationship with Canada.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, how will the committee members be determined?

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

**S. CROCKER:** As outlined in legislation, it will be a decision of the LGIC, but I can assure Members of this House that we will certainly make sure that this committee is a committee that, for example, could be Members of the House of Assembly, could be members of the community, but that's something that we will now, if this act receives third reading, we will proceed to quickly implement.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, when can we expect to see the regulations associated with Bill 67?

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

**S. CROCKER:** To the Member – and I thank the Member for the question – I think expect to see them really soon. Obviously as you look at the bill, it's not a big bill, and it's something that we would want to move on quickly, because obviously we're into the 75th anniversary of Confederation, and it's something that we certainly want to move on expeditiously.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

We've been told that Executive Council will select the committee to select those who have made a significant contribution to our province. So will the Executive Council be seeking recommendations of individuals from His Majesty's Official Opposition, from the Third Party, from independents? Will this be open to all Members of the House of Assembly?

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

**S. CROCKER:** That's certainly my anticipation.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Will this committee be given any selection criteria or guidelines by the Executive Council on who is to be selected, or will the committee be tasked with developing the criteria and guidelines themselves?

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

**S. CROCKER:** I would see it as, obviously, likely some high-level guidance from LGIC, but again I think it would be important for the committee of peers, of people who are doing this selection to have an opportunity to set out criteria. Because I think we are all going to know many, many, many, many people in our province and in our constituencies and our communities that are deserving, but obviously making decisions about these types of recognition is never easy, so I think there would have to certainly be some set of guidelines.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, what budget has been allotted for this Bill 67, and what is the cost related to encompass all of this?

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

**S. CROCKER:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Celebration 75 cultural funding program that we announced, I think last fall, the deadline for submissions was February 17. In that announcement that day, there was \$1 million allocated for communities and heritage groups around the province. I think from the number of applications that we received we probably won't hit that number. For example, other projects have been budgeted, and again I say to the Member all in due time. I think next Wednesday will bring more information on what's in this year's budget.

But again, projects like the House of Assembly project that I alluded to earlier, that project is approximately \$50,000. The medals themselves, we're looking at an estimated budget of around \$10,000. We're putting numbers on this but obviously, as we go through the process, the numbers will become more refined.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**J. WALL:** Okay, you just answered my last question, Minister, so I thank you for that.

With respect to the educational scholarships, how will they be selected? Is this being determined solely on academic achievement or will other criteria be involved in that decision-making?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** Thank you.

The scholarships will be done on academic merit. It will be awarded based on a scholarship score determined by the

Department of Education to the 75 students who have not received any other provincial scholarship. So if somebody has already been in receipt of an Electoral District Scholarship, they wouldn't get the 75th one, and a maximum of three scholarships will be awarded to any electoral district.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Executive Council members may now use the title honourable. Are there any other rights, privileges or obligations that they will receive?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

**J. HAGGIE:** Thanks for the question.

No, these are purely honorary. You don't get any money. You don't get any title other than the title; you don't get to do anything. You can enjoy your retirement in peace.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**J. WALL:** I thank the minister for his open and honest answer.

Minister, with respect to time frame on Bill 67, is this for one year? Is this going to be over a number of years with respect to the scholarship? What is it going forward?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** The scholarship portion of this bill will just be implemented for this year.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

So, the scholarship portion is for one year. With respect to the medals and other



recognition, with respect to that, what is the time frame on that, Minister?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation.

**S. CROCKER:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

The medals will be one year medal, similar to what we would have seen with jubilee medals, I think, there were two in my recent memory around the Queen's Jubilee, as an example. That's a broad example, but they mark a specific period in time and that period in time is the 75th anniversary.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Through history we have seen many honorary members who will receive this designation. Will there be any honorary members not entitled to that privilege of using the words honourable and how will that be communicated to all members?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

**J. HAGGIE:** Anyone living who has been a member of Executive Council and anybody currently and in the future who becomes a member of Executive Council would be entitled to use this, even after their term had expired. The only caveat is listed in the act, in actual fact, it's 5(4): If you've been dishonourable, you lose it and you can't get it back again, so an indictable offence.

**J. WALL:** Thank you, Minister.

**CHAIR:** The Member for Harbour Main.

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

So with respect to Executive Council members may now use the title, "The Honourable." I'll just direct you to section

5(4) of the act, which says: "Where a person who is designated as an honorary member of the executive council under this section is convicted of an offence that could have been prosecuted by way of indictment, the person immediately ceases to be an honorary of the executive council and is disqualified from being designated as an honorary member again in the future."

I'm just curious about this clause and the fact that it's been described as intended for offences that are prosecuted by way of indictment. So is that an intentional omission to remove offenses that are proceeded by way of summary conviction? If that is an intentional omission, what would the reasons be for that?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

**J. HOGAN:** I don't know what the intention is behind it. I think what the Member was asking was that if they could have been prosecuted by way of indictment, but they're done by summary conviction rather than indictment, then, even despite the fact that they went by summary conviction, if they could have went by indictment, then this section would still apply and the individual would not be allowed to use that designation. That's my interpretation of it.

**CHAIR:** The Member for Harbour Main.

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** That would mean that anyone who had been convicted of an offence that was proceeded by way of summary conviction, which is generally a minor offence, compared to matters or offences that are by indictment, they would still be eligible to receive this designation.

**CHAIR:** The Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

**J. HOGAN:** Yes, as long as it's not an offence that could have proceeded by indictment. I was going to say, as you know – I don't know because I didn't practice a lot

of criminal law – but there are offences that could go either way and the Crown has to make that election. So if they're just a summary conviction offence and there's no opportunity for the ability to make that election for indictment, then, yes, my interpretation, I guess, would be that section wouldn't apply.

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Thank you for the clarification.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

**L. EVANS:** Thank you, Chair.

The Member for Cape St. Francis asked quite a few of my questions, so that should speed things up a bit.

Just looking at the budget, I was wondering how much of the budget is going to be used for advertising and promotion.

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

**S. CROCKER:** We haven't allocated, quite honestly, anything for advertising and promotion. In a way, I guess, the licence plate was a form of advertisement, advertising. The logo, I think, there was a cost associated with the logo that we're using, but nothing really has been allocated for any type of full-on advertising campaign.

We will use the logo. We will use it in other ads and other programming we're doing this summer, whether it's around tourism, whether it's around Year of the Arts, but you won't see a direct advertising campaign around Confederation 75.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

**L. EVANS:** Thank you, Chair.

My question was partially answered about, I guess, it's not a legal requirement to

distribute these one-time medals, but are there any defined criteria as to which government awards require legislation and which do not?

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

**S. CROCKER:** Again, I'm not 100 per cent certain. If you think about medals and orders of precedence, this medal wouldn't be at the same order of precedence as the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador, as an example.

I think, again, one of the drivers behind the idea of making this a bill and a piece of legislation is primarily around the idea of us having this conversation here this afternoon and raising the profile of the significance of the 75th anniversary.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

**L. EVANS:** Thank you, Chair.

How many medals are going to be awarded and what will be the total cost? Will there be 75 medals being awarded or will there be 40, one for each district?

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

**S. CROCKER:** That's certainly not a number that we've arrived at yet. I think some guidance will come from LGIC to the committee, but, again, I would anticipate that the committee itself will have an opportunity to feed into what we see or what a said committee would see as an appropriate number of medals.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

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

**S. CROCKER:** Sorry, I missed part of the Member's question. The estimated budget today around the medals is approximately \$10,000.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

**L. EVANS:** Thank you, Minister.

Which leads me to my next question: How will Cabinet establish the committee to award the medals and how many people will be on the committee?

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

**S. CROCKER:** Certainly, that's not a conversation that we've fully fleshed out yet. Once the bill receives Royal Assent, we'll have that discussion and fairly quickly put a committee together to get this framed up, to get the application available to the general public.

I envision this will be a process of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians having the opportunity to nominate Newfoundlanders and Labradorians for this award and that's how I see this process going forward.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

**L. EVANS:** Okay, but there will be such criteria for establishing the committee?

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

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah, so high-level direction or some direction will come from LGIC and then the committee itself, I would envision, will sit down and work through their criteria.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

**L. EVANS:** Will there be any more detailed criteria for awarding these medals? Like, will there be certain categories like art, science, technology, business, community advocacy, et cetera?

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

**S. CROCKER:** Again, that's a piece of work that's left to be done.

A lot of the individual disciplines, whether it's sports or arts or heritage, already have medals associated. I think this medal is a medal for absolutely everybody you mentioned but also for people who may have not contributed in that manner of being an artist or being an athlete. So I think there is some work to do here to make sure that we encompass the regular person who has contributed to our society in a lot of different ways.

I wouldn't want to pigeonhole it or put it in the slots of somebody who has a profession in this or an extreme athlete or something.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

**L. EVANS:** Yes, thank you, Chair.

My last question is why did you opt to create the honourable member category in this legislation and not in the *Executive Council Act*?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

**J. HAGGIE:** This was part of a package, really, to celebrate the 75th anniversary. There is no contemplation of reopening the *Executive Council Act* for any other reason. This is not unique to this province in terms of enshrining the ability to continue with that title outside of office. It is in a couple of other jurisdictions and it's not uncommon in Westminster practice. It was, simply, this was the opportunity and the vehicle by

which we could do it now rather than putting it off. It's part of the package.

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

**P. LANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

So, a couple of things that have kind of been touched on. I just want some clarification, I guess. In terms of the medals, is the first one, Minister. I'm just wondering – and I think you did make mention of it, but currently in terms of an overall contribution to the province and so on, we have the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. I don't necessarily see the need – because arguably those individuals have already been decided to have been people who've made this major contribution.

So, is the plan to give all of them a 75th Anniversary Medal to go along with their Order of Newfoundland and Labrador or are we trying to get, like, different people and how do we go about achieving that?

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

**S. CROCKER:** I thank the hon. Member for the question.

I think that's the answer I was trying to give the Member for Torngat Mountains a minute ago. I agree with the hon. Member. You know, if somebody has order of precedence, the Order of Newfoundland holds a precedence that I think is above any other medal that the Government of Newfoundland issues or rewards.

So I would envision again that no, it would be trying to find that individual that is not necessarily a recipient of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador or the Premier's award for the arts or sports medals, for example. So, yes, I think this is an attempt to get down to people from an everyday walk of life who contributed to

Newfoundland and Labrador in their own way.

**CHAIR:** The Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

**P. LANE:** Thank you, Minister, and I agree. That's what I'd like to see. I don't envy anyone tasked on how you're going to go about doing that. I would just say as a commentary, more so than a question, I suppose, is if we're going to do that type of thing and it would be great to get some – quote, unquote – ordinary people who do great work in the community, wherever it might be – but if we're going to do that, I think in fairness, it would be great if we could at the very least try to ensure that there's somebody in every district, for example, as opposed to picking everybody from one particular area and then there are great people in other parts of the province who never have the opportunity to be recognized.

I guess that's more of a comment. You may want to just sort of comment on that. But I don't know, it's going to be a challenge. I can't wait to see how you're going to come up with the criteria because there are so many great people out there in the community doing things. I can think of numerous people in Mount Pearl, including the person sitting behind you, that would be more than worthy of a nomination for the great work that's done in our community. I can see that throughout the province.

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

**S. CROCKER:** Just to respond to the Member's comment. Him and I are aligned in this. This will be work from LGIC and from a committee, but my vision is this is something that would be distributed equally amongst electoral districts, as an example. I think that's a great idea. That suggestion works. We see it with Electoral District Scholarship winners, as an example. The Minister of Education talked about the 75th

Anniversary Scholarships. Not to misrepresent what she said, but I'm pretty sure she said a maximum of three per any particular district, as an example.

So these 75 scholarships will be spread quite equally, as much as possible, around the province. Certainly, every community around this province, from one tip to the other tip, has great people who have contributed and this is a way, as we celebrate the 75th anniversary, to recognize those people – to your comments.

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

**P. LANE:** Thank you, Minister, and I appreciate that you'll be taking all that into consideration because we do have amazing people in all of our communities. While it's great to recognize somebody as we do with the Order of Newfoundland, who've made this major achievement in the arts or in education or in research or whatever, really, we want to try to get down to that average person and make sure that it's not always the overly high achievers and the well-known sports people and whatever that are always tagged with all the recognition and that we try to get down to the people who are the grassroots supports in our community. So that's great.

For the Minister of Education, (inaudible) these scholarships, Minister, I understand you say there won't be any more than three per district and that's fine. But if you had three per district and you did the math on 75, just as an example, that would be 25 districts, in theory. In addition to not more than three in any one given district, is there any thought or can we get some sense that we could at least get one in every district and then some districts, obviously, could have two, could have three but every district gets at least one?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**K. HOWELL:** I think that's the general idea that's presented here is certainly not to give any more than three in one district. But it'll be attempted to broadly distribute the scholarships throughout the province.

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

**P. LANE:** Thank you, I appreciate that.

Moving on to the next piece, that's the honorary Members of the Executive Council. We're talking Executive Council, so that means that the title honourable and the E.C.N.L. That's for Members of Cabinet, not Members of the House of Assembly. I think that's correct, which is fine, I don't want it anyway, I've already said that.

How do you become an honorary Member, because you're Cabinet, obviously if you were a Cabinet minister you got the title, but then honorary means some other people get to hold that same thing. How will you determine who that is? Why would it be anybody else other than Cabinet and who would it be?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

**J. HAGGIE:** In the question is also inherent the answer. It is for people who have been Members of Cabinet, either before this legislation was passed – obviously, as long as they're still alive – or after this legislation is passed. Once they leave office, they can retain the honourable as an honorific.

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

**P. LANE:** Okay, all right I got it. It's anyone in Cabinet, but there is nobody else other than someone in Cabinet. When I was seeing honorary – okay, so honorary was going with the title once you retire, but there are not Cabinet Members plus other people you pick to be honorary. You are the

honorary, by virtue of the fact that you were in Cabinet. That's it, right?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

**J. HAGGIE:** There may be a little confusion there. There are other people who are called honorary who have that title bestowed on them for various reasons. The military has a long tradition of that with honorary lieutenant colonels and colonels of the such. This is the use of the title honourable by people who were honourable during their stint in Cabinet, who then retire and retain the title honourable as an honorary honorific to mark their tenure.

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

**P. LANE:** Gotcha, that was a bit of a tongue twister, Minister, but, no, I get the point now. Okay, that's fine.

The only other thing, I guess, is back to the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation. So, again, just for my clarification, this is the Year of the Arts, so we're not taking the opportunity to call this the 75th anniversary of Confederation as a tourist year and then maybe we could have done Year of the Arts next year so that we'd have two years' worth, where we're just kind of throwing this in with the Year of the Arts, as opposed to making this a stand-alone celebration and reason for people to come here. Is that right?

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

**S. CROCKER:** Well, I think, the 75th anniversary on itself would have somewhat of a limited non-resident tourist meaning. For our visiting friends and relatives, it could certainly have some significance, but what better way to celebrate the 75th anniversary than incorporate our arts and ways of amping up current festivals, amping up

opportunities to celebrate with the Year of the Arts.

Again, as I mentioned earlier, it coincides with the 100th anniversary of the War Memorial and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. So I think the three make a very good combination of opportunity when it comes to the War Memorial and Tomb, to reflect on our contributions as a nation, pre-Confederation, 75th anniversary and the Year of the Arts will, quite honestly, go very much hand in hand.

And if you think about 2025, 2025 in itself is going to be an extremely busy year with the Canada Summer Games and other events that are planned. This is a great way to incorporate a lot of good stuff into what will be an important summer.

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

**P. LANE:** Thank you, Minister. Well, thank you all three ministers for your answers. I have no problem with the bill. I think it's a good bill and I will be supporting it.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Seeing no further questions.

Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

**CLERK:** Clauses 2 through 7 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Shall clauses 2 through 7 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 7 carried.

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

**CHAIR:** Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

**CLERK:** An Act Respecting Recognition of the 75th Anniversary of Confederation.

**CHAIR:** Shall the long title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

**CHAIR:** Shall I report the bill carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

**CHAIR:** The Deputy Government House Leader.

**L. DEMPSTER:** Thank you, Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 67 carried without amendment.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 67 carried without amendment.

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.

**SPEAKER (Bennett):** Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

**S. GAMBIN-WALSH:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 67 carried without amendment.

**SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed that Bill 67 be carried without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

**L. DEMPSTER:** Now.

**SPEAKER:** Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

**L. DEMPSTER:** Tomorrow.

**SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

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

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

**L. DEMPSTER:** Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, that this House do now adjourn.

**SPEAKER:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

This House do stand adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, at 1:30 p.m.