

Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FIFTY-FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Volume LI FIRST SESSION Number 49

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Paul Lane, MHA

Tuesday November 17, 2026

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

SPEAKER (Lane): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Before we begin this afternoon's proceeding, I have a very important piece of business I want to get out of the way first. I would ask all Members to join me in wishing the Minister of Jobs and Growth and Rural Development a very happy birthday.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: I'm not going to tell you his age. At a certain point you're glad that you're having a birthday, that's how I'm starting to feel.

Visiting our public gallery as subjects of a Ministerial Statement are from SmartICE: Carolann Harding, CEO and Emma Dalton, Manager of Marketing and Communications. As well as from Avalon Holographics: Wally Haas, Founder and President.

Welcome to our Chamber.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: I would also like to welcome guests from the Royal Canadian Legion Mount Pearl Branch 36, which is the subject of a Member's statement today: Calvin Smith, Jim Healey, Dave Lewis, Hedy Giangrande, Doug McCarthy, George Rideout and Fred White.

Welcome to our Chamber.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

SPEAKER: Today, we'll hear Members' statements from Members for the Districts of Humber - Bay of Islands, St. George's - Humber, Lake Melville, Lewisporte - Twillingate and Mount Pearl North.

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

E. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, for over 30 years, Katie's Konvenience in Halfway Point has been a fixture in the community, building a reputation for personal service, reliability and strong social ties with neighbours.

Earlier this year, Linda and Larry Edmonds, owners of this family-run business, received the Outstanding Independents Award Canada, a national program that recognizes single store owners and small operators who play a vital role in their communities and the broader convenience retail landscape.

Their journey began in their family home, building their business one step at a time and, eventually, buying a building which has its own history as the Shoreline Club. A true mom-and-pop convenience store, this business has grown over the years, catering to the needs of the customers, including a gas bar, takeout and a Liquor Express outlet.

When asked why they continue to do it, Linda replied it's because they love the people and they love the Bay of Islands. Linda and Larry are always there for the community to support local fundraisers, community initiatives, sports teams, celebrations or families who are struggling at the time.

I ask all Members to join me in extending congratulations to Linda and Larry on receiving this national award and well-deserved recognition. Well done, my friends.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. George's - Humber.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CORMIER: Thank you, Speaker.

I rise today to recognize former premier and honoured friend, Tom Marshall, who recently celebrated his 80th birthday.

Tom grew up in Corner Brook, built a distinguished legal career and went on to represent the people of Humber East through multiple elections. He served in several Cabinet roles, including Finance and Justice, before becoming Newfoundland and Labrador's 11th premier in 2014.

Speaker, I'm one of the lucky ones who got to share in his journey, working on his campaigns. His mentoring allows me to best serve my constituents and be a valuable contributor in this House. I cherish our friendship every day.

Throughout his career his love for the West Coast and our province remained clear. When he became premier, he promised the people of this province his full attention, his best judgment and his tireless service. Those words speak to the responsibility that comes with serving others and the trust people place in us.

This milestone is an opportunity to thank Tom for his years of service and to help celebrate with his family, friends and former colleagues who shared in his journey.

I invite all hon. Members to join me in wishing Premier Marshall a happy 80th birthday.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

K. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, today I rise with gratitude to honour the first responders who serve in Lake Melville.

When tragedy strikes and when families face their darkest moments, these are the people who answer the call. Our firefighters, paramedics, police officers, search and rescue volunteers and emergency personnel put others' safety before their own.

Labrador's vast distances and unforgiving weather make that commitment simply remarkable. These are our neighbours, friends, family members and they leave their loved ones behind to protect people they have never even met. They witness heartbreak and carry burdens that do not disappear when their shifts end. Yet, when the next call comes, they answer.

These are the people who stand beside us when we need them the most, who give so much of themselves to keep our communities safe and who remind us of what it means to look after one another.

Their families deserve our gratitude, too, and I ask all hon. Members of this House to join me in thanking the first responders of Lake Melville for everything they do and for the sacrifices they and their families make every single day. We're fortunate to have them. We cannot thank them enough.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

M. BUTT: Speaker, I rise today to recognize the important contribution of DieTrac Technical Institute in Lewisporte and the vital role it plays in developing our province's skilled workforce.

Dietrac is a registered post-secondary institution that has been serving students and industry for many years. In 2012, the institute was acquired by the Lewisporte Community College, Inc., a registered not-for-profit organization. Since then, the

college has continued to grow under the guidance of the Board of Directors representing the business community, the education sector and the community at large.

This unique, not-for-profit model has strengthened partnerships with industry and businesses, helping to ensure that students receive practical, relevant training that meets the needs of today's workforce. These partnerships have enhanced learning experiences and created valuable opportunities for the graduates.

The college's focus on skilled trades is particularly important as Newfoundland and Labrador, and the rest of Canada continue to experience strong demand for qualified tradespeople.

Dietrac currently offers training in carpentry, construction, industrial electrician, heavy duty equipment technician, powerline technician and welding.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members of this House to join me in recognizing Dietrac Technical Institute for its commitment to education, workforce development and the economic growth of our province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

L. STOYLES: Thank you, Speaker.

Several weeks ago, I had the privilege to attend the 70th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 36 Mount Pearl.

It all began in 1956 when a man named Jim White and a few of his buddies drafted a plan to build the building on 65 Park Avenue in Mount Pearl. That was the start of what was known as the Park Glendale Legion.

Several years later, the name was changed to the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 36 Mount Pearl and since then they have moved to their new home at St David's Field in Mount Pearl.

Under the leadership of Calvin Smith, they have 96 members. They are very active in our community, especially on Remembrance Day and Canada Day, as they host both of these events. They also host regular meetings and activities throughout the year for their members.

The Legion honours those in uniform, both past and present, who have dedicated and sacrificed for our freedom. We must never forget their sacrifice. We must continue to honour their legacy.

Speaker, I ask all Members to join me in thanking President Calvin Smith and his team as we thank them once again for their service, especially on their 70th anniversary.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Jobs and Growth; and Rural Development – the birthday boy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PADDOCK: Speaker, last month, Newfoundland and Labrador proudly showcased its defence, aerospace and security capabilities at the Canadian Defence Security and Aerospace Exhibition in Halifax, commonly known as DEFSEC.

Today, I am especially pleased to recognize two Newfoundland and Labrador companies honoured at the 2026 Atlantic Canada

Aerospace and Defence Association Industry Excellence Awards.

Avalon Holographics, which is developing leading holographic displays for 3D visualization, received the Innovation Leader Award.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PADDOCK: SmartICE received the Workforce Culture and Leadership Excellence Award for its work using innovative ice-monitoring sensors, satellite mapping and Indigenous knowledge to provide real-time ice condition information.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PADDOCK: With Newfoundland and Labrador companies receiving two of the four awards presented, their success reflects the innovation, expertise and leadership found within our province's growing aerospace, defence and technology industries.

DEFSEC also provided an important opportunity to showcase Newfoundland and Labrador's strategic North Atlantic location, skilled workforce, military infrastructure and expertise in aerospace, marine, ocean technology and harsh-environment operations.

Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador is truly built for defence.

These strengths position our province to support Canada's defence priorities while strengthening partnerships, attracting investment and helping Newfoundland and Labrador companies grow and succeed.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Avalon Holographics and SmartICE on this well-deserved recognition.

Full speed ahead.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters - Pleasantville.

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Speaker, and I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

Speaker, I join the minister in recognizing Newfoundland and Labrador as the proud home of a tech sector that punches far above its weight class. It's rewarding to see the well-deserved recognition from two fantastic companies that we've supported previously, Avalon Holographics and SmartICE, as they are both excellent representatives of the entrepreneurial community that our province is becoming increasingly recognized for at a global level, as well as its expanding defence industry.

It's important to keep in mind that behind each of these companies are brilliant minds that are fundamental to their success. I encourage this government to continue to foster an environment that will aid them in continuing this incredible work that each of them are doing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

S. O'LEARY: Thank you, Speaker, and I thank the minister for the advance copy, and happy birthday.

The NDP congratulates the companies for receiving distinction at DEFSEC Atlantic.

Avalon Holographics, the Innovation Leader Award for the NOVAC holographic table display with transformative potential, not only in defence, but in health and environmental protection.

SmartICE, the Workforce Culture and Leadership Excellence Award, doing pivotal work on ice and sea change due to climate

changes and in collaboration with Indigenous communities. SmartICE has built a culture where they put people first.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Speaker, I rise today to recognize November 15 to 22 as Restorative Justice Week. This week provides an opportunity to reflect on approaches that address the harm caused by crime while holding individuals accountable for their actions.

Restorative justice brings together those affected by crime, including victims, offenders and communities, to identify needs, promote understanding and support meaningful outcomes. Our government is committed to looking at best practices in other jurisdictions to strengthen the justice system in our province. By visiting wellness and community courts in Ontario, we gained valuable insight into approaches that could be beneficial for Newfoundland and Labrador and complement programs already in place.

These models offer community engagement to address ongoing challenges in the justice system, hold individuals accountable, reduce the likelihood of future contact with the justice system and help victims and communities heal from the impacts of crime.

Speaker, our government recognizes the value of innovative approaches that improve access to justice. Through the efforts of the Provincial Court Working Group, work is progressing to look at proven methods that can be implemented in this province to make our justice system more restorative.

I ask all Members to join me in recognizing Restorative Justice Week and supporting continued efforts to promote accountability, healing and positive outcomes for all those affected by crime.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, restorative justice is an important part of building a fair and effective justice system. It recognizes that justice is not simply about punishment, but also about accountability, rehabilitation and addressing the harm caused by crime. It brings victims, offenders and communities together, giving those affected an opportunity to be heard, to participate in meaningful outcomes and to begin the process of healing.

It is also important that we recognize the role restorative justice can play in addressing some of the systemic challenges within our justice system, particularly the disproportionate representation of Indigenous people in correctional facilities. Restorative justice is not about being soft on crime. It’s about being smart on crime, holding individuals accountable, reducing reoffending and finding meaningful ways to strengthen our communities.

I welcome the minister’s recognition of Restorative Justice Week, and I encourage the government to do more to expand restorative justice opportunities and to ensure these approaches are accessible to communities across our province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

S. O'LEARY: Thank you, Speaker, and I thank the minister for an advance copy of the statement.

The NDP is pleased to join in recognizing Restorative Justice Week. Restorative justice is about more than responding to harm; it's about supporting people, strengthening communities and creating a more equitable path forward.

We need more than recognition; we need commitment to action, and that is why I wrote the minister calling for a round-table discussion with community groups, advocates and MHAs to talk about how we can meaningfully implement restorative justice in our province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

This morning, the Premier said he is – quote – prepared to be patient with Quebec while they decide on Churchill Falls, yet he refuses to be patient with Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and hold an independent review, a referendum or a debate before the final agreements are signed.

Why won't the Premier extend the same patience for Newfoundland and Labrador as he does for Quebec?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, the Member opposite continues to be focused on Quebec. I am focused on the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: That's why we went out and negotiated a new and better deal. That's why we initiated an Independent Review Committee. That's why we took the recommendations of that Independent Review Committee to form this new and independent review and new and better deal that we currently have, Speaker.

That's why we made sure that the material terms that are negotiated are not simply placeholders. They are the things upon which our definitive agreements will be based and, as I said before, there will be no renegotiations.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: Speaker, when the Premier announced his deal in August, he said time was of the essence and he needed to move quickly because of things like trade wars and the Trump presidency. As far as I know, we're still in a trade war and Trump is still the president. But now the Premier is saying we have to be patient, take our time, wait for Quebec.

I ask the Premier: How can Newfoundlanders and Labradorians trust you when you constantly change your narrative about this deal?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador can

trust that we have a new and better deal. All you have to do is look at the numbers. The Member opposite said yes to $225 billion and said no to $273 billion. How is that an improvement for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

The Premier also confirmed this morning that the deadline of December 31 is no longer but, instead, is now March 31. When he refused a referendum and broke his promise, he did so because he blamed the urgency of the old December deadline.

Now that he's lost that excuse, why is the Premier still refusing to hold the referendum that he promised? Is it because he knows Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will vote no to his deal?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, as I have said, the deadlines that were set in the definitive agreement, the agreement that we have in place, our new and better deal, has up to March 31, that's why we put that in there. That's why it's there. We knew there was an election in Quebec.

We're allowing the Quebec government to review, just like we did our review, and that's to be expected. As I said in this House before, when the premier of Quebec gets an opportunity to review this deal, he will see the same thing as the federal government sees, the same thing that Newfoundland and Labrador sees, that this is a win-win-win for all.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: The Premier is very confident that the premier of Quebec will like this deal, I think that says a lot.

Yesterday the Premier told the media that the deal is done; however, not only is the Quebec government saying it's not done, the PC's deal itself says so and we still know there are 17 final agreements left to negotiate.

Is the Premier claiming that his deal is done just to avoid bringing the agreements to the House because he knows the House might actually vote no to this deal?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, as I said a few minutes ago, the material terms of our agreement are not simply placeholders. They are negotiated material terms, unlike the previous deal that the Member opposite supported which was nothing more than an agreement to negotiate. There was nothing in there that is of any substantial amount. The former premier campaigned on a deal that delivered less for Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: He voted yes for less and no for more.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: The Premier says there's nothing left to do. The material terms are done.

Can the Premier explain to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians why

section 6.1 of his deal says that the deal will be subject to negotiations? Why is the Premier telling a different story than the words that are actually written in his agreement?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Energy and Mines.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, we've got a lawyer who wants to negotiate out in the open. The definitive agreements are coming and they are coming based on the DCIA. The DCIA lays out the material terms for the contract. This is all pretty simple stuff.

Does that mean that there's no small language or language to be worked out? Absolutely. We know that. He knows that and instead of getting on board with a deal that was way better than what he had, he's trying to mislead the public of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you for the minister acknowledging there's still lots left to negotiate. We've been asking that for a long time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: We got one answer after 1½ years – amazing.

We've been asking technical questions about this contract and there's nothing political in that document and nothing political in the questions. The deal itself makes no reference to the past government, the Official Opposition or the last deal.

So why is the Premier and why is the minister unable to answer technical, non-political, legal questions about their deal?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Energy and Mines.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Once again, Mr. Speaker, I'll say, nobody but nobody negotiates in public. That is a very clear principle of any deal that you do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: He knows that. We know that. He shouldn't be asking questions about it. It makes no sense.

They negotiated for years and they didn't even negotiate. The former premier, before he was the premier and did nothing, went and did a deal, brought it to the House unannounced, didn't offer anyone a technical briefing, brought in old information and said that this is the best deal for Newfoundland and Labrador. It is pure politics.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

Does the Premier stand by his commitment to let all his ministers answer questions?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Energy and Mines.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would say this, the Premier stands by all of his ministers and all of his Members and if you look around this House on a daily basis, people all throughout this side are

answering questions. But if you look at what's happening over there, there's only one person. He is the only one asking questions. None of them make sense. It's all about politics, so he's the one that's stymying his own people.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's.

S. GAMBIN-WALSH: Thank you, Speaker.

When the PCs voted yes in September, they voted to endorse the DCIA, the non-binding MOU. Nowhere in the resolution did it say that they were voting on the 17 final agreements that still don't exist.

I ask the Minister of Social Supports and Well-Being: When you voted for the Churchill Falls resolution in September, did you know then that the final agreements would not come back to the House of Assembly for debate before they were signed?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Social Supports and Well-Being.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. TIBBS: What we voted for in good conscience, Mr. Speaker, was prosperity; what they voted against. What they voted against, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. TIBBS: We have issues in this province, Mr. Speaker, that need money to be addressed. I know that with these definitive agreements and with this deal that this Premier has been champion of and this minister has been champion of and this party has brought to Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, we are going to put Newfoundland and Labrador on the road to prosperity. I cannot wait for that day to come.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

I ask the Minister of Justice and Public Safety: When you voted for the Churchill Falls resolution in September, did you know then that the final agreements would not come back to this House of Assembly, the people's House, for debate before they are signed? Tell us.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Speaker, I'm very proud to stand here today in this House of Assembly to say that I voted for prosperity.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: This is a good deal for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I believe in it 100 per cent and I'm proud to be a part of this government that is representing to the people a good deal finally for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

L. DEMPSTER: Speaker, perhaps we should ask how they feel about sitting on a side full of broken promises that they made to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I ask the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation; and Labrador Affairs: When you voted for the Churchill Falls

resolution in September on behalf of the people of Labrador, did you know then the final agreements would not come back to the House of Assembly for debate before they are signed?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation; and Labrador Affairs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. EVANS: Speaker, when I voted on that deal, I voted for more. Also, on this side of the House, not only are we bringing more, we're bringing more delivery of health care services; we're delivering more for actually making sure that the people of Labrador have a voice.

This is the first time that we've had so many ministers go up to Labrador in the first year, Speaker, for Housing, for Health, for Social Supports and Well-Being, looking at children in care, looking at our seniors who are taking up the beds in the hospitals and it's forcing my people to be medevaced over to Lab West and down to St. Anthony because there's no space in the beds, Speaker. That's when I voted.

Also, Speaker, one thing is we're going to continue to deliver more.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters - Pleasantville.

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Minister of Jobs and Growth: When you voted for the Churchill Falls resolution in September, did you know then that the final agreements would not come back to this House of Assembly for debate before they would be signed?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Jobs and Growth; and Rural Development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PADDOCK: Speaker, when I voted, I voted for prosperity.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PADDOCK: More importantly, Speaker, I voted for certainty over uncertainty. I voted for more value – $48 billion. That's B for a billion. I voted for more power; power to unlock mining, power to unlock defence spending, and I voted for more transmission.

Speaker, we collectively voted for more, a better deal for Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Speaker.

I ask the Minister of Finance: When you voted for the Churchill Falls resolution in September, did you know that the final agreements would not come back to the House of Assembly for debate before they are signed?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. PARDY: Mr. Speaker, as Finance Minister, as Member for the District of Bonavista, supporting and representing the District of Bonavista and all the residents therein, I stand by a very good deal in the DCIA that was signed. I believe in it.

The Leader of the Opposition often questions what's different between this, and he said, you're a government now, you make the decisions. One big difference is

that we're not spending wildly on this side on money that may materialize. But I can tell you when we took over –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

C. PARDY: – from the previous government, I know the debt you created: doubled the debt in the last 10 years for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, but not this government, Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

K. WHITE: Thank you, Speaker.

I ask the Minister of Health and Community Services: When you voted for the Churchill Falls resolution in September, did you know then that the final agreements would not come back to this House of Assembly for debate before they are signed?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. WALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member opposite for the question.

When I voted for this new and better deal, I thought of many areas: First was the Department of Health and Community Services and what more can we do to serve the people of the province; I thought about the departments within government, of what we can collectively do, but, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you, first and foremost, I thought of my granddaughter, Bobbi Elizabeth Wall.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER: One year of age.

J. WALL: One year old, and I thought about the children and grandchildren on the other side of this House that are represented here as well. That's going to make a better life for them as we move forward.

I'm happy to have voted for it. I'm happy to represent the constituents of the Cape St. Francis District and I can tell you I'm happy that we're going to have a new and better deal under this Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. PIKE: I ask the Minister of Education: When you voted for the Churchill Falls resolution in September, did you know then that the final agreements would not come back to the House of Assembly for debate before they are signed? Did you know?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. DINN: I thank the Member for his question.

I think I answered that during the debate when I stood in this House. I took copious notes through all four days. I have tons of pages. I spoke that day about the youth of our province. I spoke about a young man who is no longer with us, and I spoke about the opportunities that our youth would have with this MOU, with this DCIA that would provide those opportunities where kids and children could stay home and work in their own province. That hasn't changed. I took

into account my own District of Topsail - Paradise.

This is a good deal with more power, more value, more jobs, more transmission and more prosperity.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The crowd opposite seems to find some humour in these questions but, I'm telling you, the people of the province are not finding humour in these questions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

E. LOVELESS: So I ask the Minister of Fisheries: When you voted for the Churchill Falls resolution in September, did you know then that the final agreements would not come back to the House of Assembly for debate before they're signed?

That's a serious question on behalf of the people of this province.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Speaker.

I certainly took it very serious as well. I was here for four days and listened to the experts for four days. When I voted, I took into account my grandchildren and certainly thought about them very much in those four days. It's a very serious question that he asked and I took it very seriously. I 100 per cent agreed with the agreement.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

F. HUTTON: Thank you, Speaker.

I ask the Minister of Energy: When you voted for the Churchill Falls resolution – and this is a yes-no answer; it's simple – back in September, did you know then that the final agreements would not be coming back to the House of Assembly for debate before they were signed, before those final agreements were signed? Yes or no, Sir.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Energy and Mines.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

He don't get to decide how we answer questions over here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

L. PARROTT: When I voted for this deal, I voted for the future of this province. I voted for the children. I voted for the men and women. I voted for our Indigenous partners. I voted for every single person who lives in this province.

I voted for iron ore. I voted for mining and other sectors. I voted for more power, more transmission. I voted for more money and more jobs. I voted for a chance for secondary resources and a future for this province. I did not vote against prosperity. They voted yes for way less and now they're voting no for more.

They had their minds made up before the four days were over. They didn't want this to go to any kind of a review because they already decided they didn't want to vote for it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

L. STOYLES: I ask the Minister of Forestry: When you voted for the Churchill Falls resolution in September, did you know that the final agreements would not come back to the House of Assembly for debate before they were signed?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. FORSEY: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm very proud to stand here today as Minister of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands. Very proud to stand here to represent the District of Exploits.

When it comes to broken promises, the District of Exploits heard two broken promises in 2019 and 2021 and they know what that broken promise was. But I'm here proud to stand up for those people of Newfoundland and Labrador and I was proud to vote for a new and better deal under this Premier and under his leadership to bring more prosperity to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Corner Brook.

J. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

I ask the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure: When you voted for the Churchill Falls resolution in September, did you know then that the final agreements would not come back to the House of Assembly for debate before they were signed?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

Sounds like a repetitive question here this afternoon, Speaker.

I will tell the people of this province what I voted for. I did vote for prosperity, but I voted for the future generations of this province. We've been too long – for many years in most of our generations – struggling under a '69 contract. It's in our DNA.

But I will tell you now, with this new deal, this better deal, it's a brighter future for the people of this province. It's not about the next election. It's about the future generation of this province, and I will stake my reputation with this Premier and this government any day of the week as opposed to the other side.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Gander.

B. FORD: Thank you, Speaker.

The questions are repetitive because the answers are repetitive and non-answers.

I ask the Minister of Tourism: When you voted for the Churchill Falls resolution in September, did you know then that the final agreements would not come back to the House of Assembly for debate before they are signed?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

M. GOOSNEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm fully aware and understand what the Opposition's job is to do and that's to discredit the work that we've been doing over here in the last year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

M. GOOSNEY: Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of work to do because of the mess we've been left. You want to talk about why we need the revenue from this project, Mr. Speaker? Because we have people lying in hospital beds, on gurneys in hallways that I'm dealing with today personally and a lot of phone calls –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

You asked the question; let's get the answer.

M. GOOSNEY: If we don't have prosperity that this group didn't want to vote for, we'll have that continue and I'm not going to see it allowed in my district.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

M. KING: Mr. Speaker, let's be clear here. We, on this side of the House, are for long-term prosperity for this province, for a deal that has significant implications for this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. We want the best deal for Newfoundland and Labrador. That's why we're asking these questions. That's why it's important to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and we'll continue to stand up and ask those questions. So we'll try one more time because we cannot get an answer from this government.

I ask the Minister of Environment: When you voted for the Churchill Falls resolution in September, did you know then that the final agreements would not come back to the House of Assembly for debate before they are signed?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. BARBOUR: Thank you, Speaker.

I thank you for the question. It's a very original question. I haven't heard it today.

I would just like to say that I did vote for options. I voted for prosperity and I voted for my beautiful, intelligent daughter and for the future for her. Because I didn't have any hope in this province until this government came in. Now I see future and I'm here.

AN HON. MEMBER: What about your TikTok page?

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask the minister – I'll give you 10 seconds because of the interruption. Go ahead.

A. BARBOUR: I would just love to thank this government for being here for our province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: Speaker, we asked the same question 13 times and didn't get an answer – zero for 13. So it sounds like, to me, if they're not answering that question, that they all knew, the entire Cabinet deciding the future of Newfoundland and Labrador, all knew when we voted in September that the final deal was not coming back to the House of Assembly.

So I ask the Premier: Why did you and your Cabinet hide that from Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and why weren't you upfront with Newfoundlanders and Labradorians about what you were doing behind the scenes with the most important decision in the history of Newfoundland and Labrador?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, we know exactly what we were doing and that's why we turned around and ordered an independent review of the deal that they all voted for. We wanted to see if it was the best deal we could get.

That independent review told us no, that we should make improvements to it. They gave us a series of recommendations. We took those recommendations and we went out and got a new and better deal.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: When we think about opportunities, Speaker, they don't come along all the time but we have an opportunity in this province now to do something that we've never had in a long, long time. We talk about prosperity and consistency. We have a new deal that not only involves the Province of Quebec, but we've got a federal government who's invested significantly.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier's time is expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: I will agree with the Premier on this. I think he did know what he was doing exactly, and what he was doing and what he knew he was doing was hiding the truth from Newfoundlanders and Labradorians about what they were doing behind closed doors with regard to this deal.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: The point of this House of Assembly is to have all the facts on the table and we now know that only 20 people had all the facts. We certainly didn't and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians didn't.

In five, 10 or 50 years, if we look back and we find out that this was a good deal, great. But the Premier has to live with the fact that if this is a bad deal and they look back on his legacy, all they will see is us asking questions and him refusing to answer about the substance of this deal for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

So I ask the Premier: Will he be proud of the legacy he leaves behind that he showed no leadership and did not stand up for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians when it mattered?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, as I have said previously, we have stood up in our place to negotiate a new and better deal. What they will remember is the Opposition who stood up and told us that they had the best deal, that this was a done deal, that we should sign it and vote for it.

We went out and got an independent review done that showed us a different way. We went out and did that review.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: We followed those recommendations. We got the involvement of the federal government, which they weren't able to do. We have delivered more power, more jobs, more transmission and more value for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: It won't come off your time, I say to the Leader of the Third Party.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

J. DINN: Thank you.

Speaker, the Minister of Social Supports and Well-Being stated in an interview this morning that we need to have a clear vision if we are to succeed in ending homelessness. The federal government has established a 10-year vision to end homelessness backed by significant investments. In other words, putting money where its mouth is.

I ask the minister: Will he do the same and commit to establishing a provincial strategy to end homelessness with measurable targets, clearer timelines and the financial commitments necessary to achieve them?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Social Supports and Well-Being.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. TIBBS: I'm not sure what the Leader of the Third Party is actually talking about, Mr. Speaker, because that's exactly what we've been doing. We've put targets in place of 10,000 homes being built across this province. I had great meetings on Friday with the federal minister, my Atlantic counterparts all across this beautiful country.

We do have a lofty goal of ending homelessness in 10 years. That's what the federal government has committed to, Mr. Speaker, and we are going to work our butts off meeting them on that challenge.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

I have a funny feeling that they're not going to meet their targets at the rate they're going.

Speaker, Build Canada Homes presents Newfoundland and Labrador with a significant opportunity to expand supportive and transitional housing; however, realizing this opportunity requires provincial commitments to fund ongoing operations and support services.

Will the minister commit to working with organizations such as End Homelessness St. John's, Connections for Seniors, Stella's Circle, Raising the Roof and other community-based providers to develop a coordinated housing strategy backed by predictable – and this is the key point – multi-year operational funding?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Social Supports and Well-Being; and Housing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. TIBBS: Mr. Speaker, the leader across the way may not believe in Newfoundlanders and Labradorians getting this job done and the construction crowd that are going to get this job done, Mr. Speaker, but we've worked closely and collaboratively with every single group that he's just talked about. We'll continue to do so, Mr. Speaker.

But make no mistake, in order to get this done, we need all hands on deck and we need people to actually believe that it can get done. If you're not going to be part of the solution, you're only part of the problem. So get out of our way and let us do our job.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

S. O'LEARY: Speaker, I'm seeing the vision and I'm not seeing the vision. I'm not sure.

This week is Restorative Justice Week, a time to recognize the important role that restorative justice plays in building safer communities.

The NDP government in Manitoba has recognized the value of this approach, recently breaking ground on a facility that will bring together rehabilitation, addictions, treatment, job training and therapeutic programming, alongside traditional accountability measures.

I ask the Minister of Justice: Will this government follow Manitoba's lead and ensure that the replacement for HMP puts restorative justice and rehabilitation at the heart of its design and approach?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Speaker, and I thank the Member opposite for the question because it's very important, especially given this is Restorative Justice Week.

Restorative justice models are innovative models which actually look at our system and look at ways to address some of the issues in a holistic way. We have not been doing that in our criminal justice system over the last decades or ever, really.

This is something that we are looking at because it is groundbreaking. We've seen gold-standard models in Kenora. I went with the chief judge of the Newfoundland court to Kenora and to London. We see these models. We're working at implementing a Newfoundland and Labrador version here.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

S. O'LEARY: Speaker, restorative justice has been around for a very long time in Indigenous communities, and addressing the root causes of crime is not solely about policing. It's about prevention, education and giving someone the support they need to thrive in their community. This is well-known by many community groups across our province that work towards advancing restorative justice measures. The minister would not commit to this working together approach when I wrote to her previously.

So I'll ask the minister again: Will she collaborate on a round-table discussion on restorative justice?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Speaker.

I can say that we have been meeting with many groups throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. We are getting important insights from groups across the province and in Labrador. We're working with our Indigenous partners as well.

We are committed to engaging with all of the partners that we need to, ensuring that we have a restorative model of justice in our province that we will be proud of.

I can say right now that we are committed to this, it's going to take some time. We have the court working group also addressing these issues and looking at ways that we can implement it in a pragmatic way in our province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The time for Question Period has expired.

The hon. the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker, a point of order.

During Question Period, the Minister of Energy and Mines referred to our leader as misleading the people. That is unparliamentary to directly say it to an individual. I had time to double-check so I would ask that the minister withdraw the comment.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Energy and Mines.

L. PARROTT: Withdrawn.

SPEAKER: Okay.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

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

L. STOYLES: Thank you, Speaker.

I ask leave to table a document from one of my constituents, an issue that was raised yesterday here in the House of Assembly. The Minister of Health talked about a lady in my district who I've been seeking a meeting for and looking for help. I sent her an email while we were here in the House of Assembly yesterday and she responded and I'd like to table her response here in the House today.

SPEAKER: Do we have the consent of the House here for the Member to table the document?

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

SPEAKER: Leave granted.

Thank you.

L. STOYLES: Thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER: The Page will come collect it.

Any further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

S. O'LEARY: Thank you, Speaker.

This petition is for advancing non-profit public grocery stores and these are the reasons for this petition:

One in four households in our province is food insecure because pay and pensions haven't kept up with inflation; and

Despite the growing need and unaffordability of basic food, grocery chain profits continue to rise; and

A public, non-profit grocery network and supply chain would drive prices down by competing with the big corporate grocers and grow our economy by developing local supply chains, employing unionized staff with good pay and job security and keeping more money in the province; and

The provincial government already has experience as a retailer through the Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation;

Therefore, we, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to study the viability and benefits of creating a publicly owned, non-profit network of grocery stores.

I table this petition, Speaker, and just a few words. Obviously, we're going to have an opportunity to talk with our PMR on this particular issue, but we are hearing it loud and clear on the doors and emails from many of our constituents about the exorbitant cost of groceries. Everybody is impacted. It's not just the lower socio-economic sector any longer. It's every member of every family of every home.

This food insecurity is something that certainly has to stop. Of course, we here with the NDP caucus continue to talk about the unbelievable need for food bank use and the escalating rates. So on that note, I will say that Emmaus House is one of those incredible food banks showing compassion. There's going to be a food drive on Saturday from 12 to 2 at St. Thomas Anglican Church for Emmaus House. These are the things that we would prefer not to have to do in order to ensure that all the people of our province are food secure.

Thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to respond to the petition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. PARDY: I thank the hon. Member for bringing the petition forward on behalf of her constituents. I think we all realize that we do have food insecurity in our province, and I think we all realize that the price of groceries have increased. I know there's a myriad of reasons why that would occur at this point in time, one of which would be the price of diesel and the extreme high price of transporting food onto our Island. I'm sure that has an impact.

I know part of the petition was looking at us conducting studies that would better serve Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We would look at any study that would provide a greater affordability for the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I come from the area of George's Brook - Milton in Bonavista, and I was on the board of the Clarenville Area Co-op Society, which was a co-operative amongst all the residents in that peninsula and in that area of which all dividends were paid out to the people. It's a good model. The Fogo Island Co-operative, which my hon. Member brings up and represents in his district on Fogo Island - Cape Freels, it's another great model of a co-operative. Those that would be in Southern Labrador, the Southern Labrador Shrimp Company, and look at what that does for the region.

There are models out there that I think that we can learn from and models that I know that I've got experience with one that I would think that they are good studies.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I have a petition here to present today, I'm going to say on behalf of the entire province who travels on the stretch of highway between, I guess the last stop is Port Hope Simpson going north and Happy Valley-Goose Bay coming south. That is on bathroom accessibility on that stretch.

These are the reasons for and the background of this petition:

WHEREAS once you depart from Port Hope Simpson, there are no public restrooms along the 400-plus stretch to Happy Valley-Goose Bay on the Trans-Labrador Highway; and

WHEREAS a significant number of travellers, particularly seniors and individuals with medical conditions travelling to Goose Bay for medical appointments, utilize this highway. These travellers are often left to search for private places to relieve themselves, which is both unacceptable and degrading.

This particular petition, Speaker, is signed by residents from L'Anse au Loup, Forteau, West St. Modeste, all the way north down to Charlottetown.

Speaker, more than 400 kilometres with no washroom and all kinds of extreme weather conditions as I had a difficult time myself getting home constituency week and getting back. I actually broke down on the Trans-Labrador Highway in a snowstorm. I was in my vehicle about 11 hours the other day.

That's just an example and the traffic is increasing. As we've got a road connection now people needing chemo treatments and going for medical appointments, they're actually able to leave the coast and go to Goose Bay and maybe only one night's cost and get back. Predominately, they are elderly people.

I've got people emailing me increasingly. Poor road conditions, often, makes that 410-kilometre stretch much, much longer. We did have a proponent that had a couple of proposals on the table when we were in government. I would ask the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure if he could update this hon. House. We had someone who was interested in putting out washrooms, a little vending machine, just because – I mean we've seen it done in places like Alaska when you're going on long stretches. Don't get up and tell us we had 10 years. Of a stretch of road of 620 kilometres, we only had 80 kilometres paved when we took government. You had to do things step by step.

Coming out of Happy Valley, the section to Muskrat Falls was paved and nothing else was paved all the way down to Red Bay and, in the Labrador Straits, we had to redo the entire 76 kilometres because it was over 40 years old. You couldn't drive an ambulance; you couldn't drive a bus.

This is a really serious matter. It's impacting a lot of vulnerable people, and I really hope that the government of today, now that the road is paved and we're looking at next steps, that they're taking a serious look because there are options. When you look at other northern places, you can see that they have found solutions and it's a really important issue.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

M. KING: Thank you, Speaker.

These are the reasons for and background of this petition:

WHEREAS fish processing plants have played a vital role in the economic and social development of rural Newfoundland and Labrador; and

WHEREAS the closure of fish plants has left some rural communities with abandoned and deteriorating industrial properties; and

WHEREAS these properties can create public safety concerns, environmental risks and potential barriers to future community and economic development; and

WHEREAS many small municipalities do not have the financial or technical capacity to assess, secure, remediate or demolish large industrial properties; and

WHEREAS responsibility for abandoned properties may be unclear when former owners are insolvent, corporations have dissolved or ownership has changed; and

WHEREAS these sites may have the potential to be safely redeveloped for fisheries-related activity, housing, tourism, small business, community infrastructure or other productive uses;

THEREFORE, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to develop a dedicated program to assist rural municipalities and Local Service Districts with the assessment, securement, remediation and demolition or redevelopment of abandoned fish plants, with priority given to properties presenting the greatest risk to residents, surrounding land and coastal waters.

Speaker, I will note that I have a lot of signatures here from the communities of Rose Blanche and Burnt Islands in my district, and this has been something that we've been discussing since elected and before. Because, actually, I am a resident of Burnt Islands and there has been a plant there that has been not operating for a number of years now that is in very serious condition. It is becoming a hazard to the community environmentally and especially with our weather-related events that are increasing. Pieces of material of the building are blowing around, and windstorms especially are causing some concerns for the neighbours and stuff around those properties.

Also, Speaker, obviously as mentioned in the petition, a lot of these communities are small rural communities throughout our province. They don't have the financial means to address these issues in their communities. We've seen some stories over the past. My colleague has talked a lot about the St. Mary's plant and those issues there. We hear stories – I think I saw a story a couple of months ago probably about an abandoned building in Musgrave Harbour, I do believe. It wasn't plant related, but the town was basically saying they had no means to deal with these issues.

So it's becoming more of a conversation in my district. We're trying to work with these municipalities to address these issues, address these concerns because I do think this is an important issue to these communities and it will help with attracting tourism to their communities, creating more options for development within these small communities and giving them more opportunities.

I know this is a kind of new, different approach here but it's something that I've been talking to the municipalities about; something that I would like to see the government undertake because, like I mentioned, it is important for the communities to grow, develop and to address some of these serious safety concerns in their communities.

I appreciate the government's attention to this matter and I thank you for the opportunity, Speaker.

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

P. PIKE: These are the reasons for and background of this petition:

WHEREAS social workers play an essential and significant role in our communities; and

WHEREAS we see their work through our health care system, child protection and addiction services, family support and seniors' services; and

WHEREAS the nature of their work is often difficult and stressful as they work with individuals and families experiencing hardship, grief, trauma, poverty, mental health challenges, addiction, family violence and other difficult circumstances; and

WHEREAS it is important that we value their profession and ensure social workers receive the support, resources and professional framework they need to perform their jobs effectively;

THEREFORE, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to immediately provide paid work terms for social work students throughout their chosen program.

Speaker, the majority of the field placements at Memorial's school of social work are unpaid, but not only are they unpaid, those students also have to pay full tuition while completing hundreds of hours in the field.

Paid placements are rare, but they typically occur with specific host organizations. Most often provincial or federal government or departments hires a student as an official employee or a targeted, paid position. Our student union and social work groups at Memorial University have actively protested and lobbied government for paid work terms for some times now.

Speaker, added to that, I want to talk about rural Newfoundland students. Rural Newfoundland students should get paid work terms. Just think about the added cost to our children, us who live in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, when they go to university. It's not only tuition, but it's housing, it's extra costs with transportation, groceries. This will go a long way in promoting people to go into those professions.

Right now, we need paid work terms for those that complete interim teaching as well as nursing students. If these are areas that jobs are hard to fill, well, this will help. It will really help those who are wanting to go into these professions but find it very difficult due to financial reasons.

Again, I'll say, the influx of money that we're getting –

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. Member's time has expired.

P. PIKE: – that we look at these.

Thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters - Pleasantville.

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand on a petition. I won't go through the full body of the petition but I will go through the highlights.

It's petitioning the hon. House of Assembly: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to reduce the number of preventable opioid-related deaths in this province.

I know the minister did get up and speak about this once before. This is another petition that has come in with some 150, almost 160, signatures on it that they wanted me to present. I do it happily.

It's asking the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure publicly funded, take-home naloxone kits

are available sustainably through all community pharmacies across Newfoundland and Labrador, establishing the appropriate renumeration for pharmacy professionals for dispensing the naloxone and providing patient education and training on its use and adding a naloxone provision to the MCP ailments and conditions list that will enable pharmacists to bill for this essential service.

There are, as I said, some 150 to 160 signatures. I'm sure the minister will take that under advisement. I know this organization made up of doctors in the community and students that in health services, social work, pharmacy, medical students as well have been lobbying for this for a little while. They're very organized and they see this as a very strong benefit, and I'm pleased to rise on this in the House.

We know the impacts of opioid-related overdoses and they're continuing to be felt by individuals and families in communities right across our province, in every nook and cranny of our province. Naloxone is a proven life-saving intervention that can reverse an opioid overdose and prevent unnecessary loss of life. While a lot of this important work has already been done, making Naloxone available, but there are still barriers that remain particularly in rural communities.

Community pharmacies are among the most accessible health care services and can play an important role in expanding access to Naloxone.

I support this petition and call on making publicly funded, take-home Naloxone kits available through pharmacies across our province. It's equally important that pharmacy professionals receive that appropriate support and compensation for their services for providing these kits as well as educating patients on their use, which is an important piece.

I did pay attention to the last time the minister did get up and speak on this. He did say he had a very good meeting with this group. I'm going to continue to present this as many times as they'll come with petitions for us to present, until this is put in place.

I'm hopeful that the minister will find it in the budget to advocate very strongly for this. I think it's going to increase access. Any one of these opioid-related deaths are preventable with this life-saving medication –

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

Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

I make the following motion, pursuant to Standing Order 11(1) that the House not adjourn –

SPEAKER: Is this off the Order Paper?

Motion 1, is it? Okay, go ahead.

B. PETTEN: Try it again.

Pursuant to Standing Order 11(1) that this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 17, 2026.

SPEAKER: Did you name a seconder? You're supposed to name a seconder, I thought you did but the Clerk is saying she never heard you.

B. PETTEN: Seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

SPEAKER: It's a technicality but we have to get it by the rules.

It's been moved and seconded that the House do not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on today, Tuesday, November 17, 2026.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion is carried.

The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 11, second reading of Bill 23.

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

M. KING: Thank you, Speaker.

It's certainly a pleasure to stand here on behalf of the good people of Burgeo - La Poile to speak to Bill 23, An Act Respecting Regulatory Improvement and Efficiency. It's certainly been a good conversation lately on this bill and something I think both this side and the other side, of course, being government and former government, everybody talks about red tape and everybody talks about efficiency in government. It's something that I'm certain that everybody here strives for because we know that we have a lot of businesses, a lot of community organizations and a lot of communities in the province that have issues when it comes to trying to navigate the system.

Speaker, as a Member here that represents a number of rural communities, I know the challenges that it takes to navigate the system when it comes to different parts of government and different departments. The Minister of Energy and Mines and I, we certainly understand about quarries, when it comes to quarry permits. That's a significant issue for a lot of businesses, a lot of communities to navigate the system. It's very complex and we don't want to see those safeguards, of course – and that's been mentioned here a number of times – weakened. But we want to try to make sure that the system is working for the people and working for communities in our province to make sure that we can move things along, to make sure that we can see that development.

Quarries is something that in my previous life, when I served as an assistant to a minister in that department, I know it was significantly challenging for a lot of businesses and companies and municipalities, as I mentioned, to navigate that system to try to move things along. It's very technical. There's a lot of environmental aspects to it as well, permitting, of course.

So we want to make sure that those safeguards, as I mentioned, and those things are in place, that we have a system that operates appropriately. But we also want to make sure that we're being responsive to these communities and businesses, that we're making sure that government is responding to the questions that they have in a timely manner so that we can keep moving things along.

When it comes to other different departments, when it comes to Crown Lands, of course, I know the minister knows there are challenges there in Crown Lands and I'm looking forward to discussing that with him soon in some of the areas of my district and how people face challenges trying to get through that system. Something that people feel that should take a very quick manner, but it takes, sometimes years, to try to navigate that process. It's very challenging for people. So we recognize the need to make things more efficient in this manner.

Also when it comes to municipalities, capital works, too, I know these are just some things that I have conversations with in my district and communities in my district. I

think I had one community tell me recently it took about six years to get through one of these processes. That's a very, very long time, as I mentioned, to try to get things moving.

All of these small communities are looking at opportunities for economic development and for growth in their community. So we want to make sure that these projects and these processes are moving along for them. I'm hoping and hopeful that this bill and the Red Tape Reduction Office and the Red Tape Reduction Minister, these are the things that they will be looking at. I think a couple of these examples that I've mentioned are some of the bigger examples that people deal with on a daily basis in the system that need to be addressed and that need to be more efficient.

I will say it's quite a conundrum, I guess you could say, or however you want to put it, that they're trying to say that this is a stand-alone Minister of Red Tape Reduction, but the minister is also the Minister of Energy and Mines. The minister is also the Minister of Government Services, and that has a very legislatively heavy department and a lot of processes and permits. So I would argue that it's not really stand alone but, at the same time, this individual, this minister probably could be well positioned to address some of these concerns in the departments, as well, being that minister too.

Hopefully, working with the office that we established, we can start to see some of these improvements. One of the things that was mentioned, obviously when you try to create a Red Tape Reduction Office and a Red Tape Reduction Minister, you hope and pray that it wouldn't also create more red tape. That's something that we don't want to see in this process that's being created here in this legislation.

One of the good things I will say I heard during the briefing – and I did attend the briefing and I did attend the announcement on consultation that will take place with a number of groups in the province. The CFIB and MNL was there, and the Board of Trade as well, and I'll just speak to the great work that they do in our community and our province, for sure.

I want to thank them for the work that they do on behalf of businesses and communities in this province; because these groups are certainly vital advocates. They're a great resource, and I know they also do help a lot of municipalities when it comes to MNL for sure. They have a lot of great staff that helps smaller communities in this province get through some of the processes and get to the right contacts that they need. So I certainly just want to say thank you to those groups for the work that they do.

They were there, a part of that announcement as well, speaking to how important the consultation process will be for them in this venture that the government is undertaking. I do appreciate it and I wanted to be there in person to hear from them because, as I mentioned, I'm hearing a lot from individuals, communities, businesses and groups about how we can make government more efficient, how we can make it work better for the people of this province.

Here on the Opposition, we're certainly hopeful that this is what will happen with this bill. There will be a lot of reporting that will take place and a lot of, I guess, looking at government reviewing in different departments, processes and regulations and permits that we can improve on and look at. So I'm very hopeful that we can get to that part and we hope this is not just an exercise of saying they're doing something. We want to see some action with this as well.

If the bill is obviously passed, then we'll be looking and watching over the years to make sure this office is doing as is intended in the legislation as pointed out.

One thing I was getting to in the briefing was talking about trying not to create more red tape. I do understand that there will be employees that are being pooled, I guess, from one division in government and placed in this office of red tape. So that was great to hear that we don't have to go through a process of trying to find individuals and creating a new office and creating a new set-up to address some of the concerns that are here in the legislation and what we hear from community.

As I mentioned, in the previous department that I was in as an executive assistant to the minister, we did work with a lot of businesses. The Minister of Jobs and Growth and Rural Development would know that as well because it's under his portfolio now. I'm sure that he hears from a number of businesses and companies and individuals who go through permitting and licensing and regulation in this province about some of the challenges that they face in that process and how we can improve and make things more efficient.

I will say that something that the previous government did that I thought was an excellent idea and I know that it has been successful because I've heard from people about it is the Business Navigators. I think that was a tool that was established. They do exactly that. They help businesses navigate the government. They help navigate the permitting process, the application processes, helping them set up small businesses throughout the province.

Those folks have been incredibly helpful, I know, to a lot of businesses and companies throughout Newfoundland and Labrador to get them to grow, get them to start up, which is what we want to see in this province. We want things to be moving. We want things to be growing – our communities.

I talk about it in this House and I talk about wherever I go in my district about the great opportunities that rural Newfoundland and Labrador have, and especially when it comes to tourism. We know that the more people we have visiting our communities, the more opportunities for small businesses to open up, seasonal businesses or year-round businesses. These are the folks, like Business Navigators, that help them get through this process that make it more efficient.

We don't want to give the perception that nothing has been done as well. There have been things that have been great and I think both sides could agree on that and I'm sure the minister would agree that the Business Navigators have certainly been very helpful to the province and to the business community.

I am hoping that those folks could be involved in this as well because they have had to face those challenges with red tape. I am assuming they will be able to work with the Red Tape Reduction Office that will be established to make sure that they relay their experiences and what they see that we can improve on as well. There's always room for improvement, and that's what we want to do is to help businesses and communities throughout our province grow and succeed.

I appreciate the opportunity. I just wanted to take a moment to speak to this bill because, like I said, I do hear a lot from my communities. I do hear a lot from businesses that I talk to and discuss about the challenges that they face trying to get through the system.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this bill and I look forward to more conversations here in the House.

Thank you very much.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

R. BALSOM: Thank you, Speaker.

I am pleased to rise today in support of the *Regulatory Improvement and Efficiency Act*. This new legislation is part of our broader effort to build a more responsive and efficient government and reflects our government's commitment to improving the way government works. By removing barriers, streamlining processes and reducing unnecessary administrative requirements, we are making it easier for individuals, businesses and organizations throughout Newfoundland and Labrador to access services, pursue opportunities and contribute to a stronger economy.

This new legislation is another step toward a more modern, efficient and responsive public service. Speaker, this proposed legislation demonstrates that we are not simply talking about red tape reduction, we are acting.

Since taking office, in October 2025, our government has made regulatory improvement a priority. In *Budget 2026*, we established a Red Tape Reduction Office within the Department of Government Services to lead a whole-of-government approach to reducing unnecessary administrative burden, improving service delivery and supporting economic growth. We also took the important step of appointing a Minister of Red Tape Reduction to provide ministerial leadership and accountability for this work across all government departments.

Speaker, we understood from the very beginning that reducing red tape is not accomplished through one change or one announcement. It requires a coordinated team effort across government and that work is already under way. Government is establishing baseline measurements so progress can be tracked and publicly reported over time. This is important because success must be measured not by intentions but by results.

Our work on red tape has already started. We have already taken action to make services easier. We had advanced the one-project, one-review approach with the federal government creating a more streamlined and predictable environmental assessment process while maintaining strong environmental protections; simplified the fish processing licence application process; simplified the application process for home repair and accessibility program; launched an online driver's licence photo renewal service through MyGovNL.

We have also been supporting our federal, provincial and territorial colleagues by expanding direct-to-consumer alcohol sales, improving labour mobility, aligning trucking regulations and advancing occupational health and safety harmonization.

Speaker, collaboration has been a key part of this work from the beginning. Government has established partnerships with the Atlantic Chamber of Commerce, Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador and the Board of Trade. We are engaged and listening directly to those who have first-hand experience and encounter government processes every day.

We are also working closely with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, an organization that has long advocated for reducing unnecessary regulatory burden across Canada. The CFIB has identified a significant opportunity for Newfoundland and Labrador to improve its performance on red tape reduction and we are responding with action.

Our actions represent meaningful progress toward the provincial government's goal of transforming Newfoundland and Labrador from one of the lowest ranked jurisdictions in Canada for red tape performance to one of the best. Our government is committed to moving from an F to an A in the Canadian Federation of Independent Business's annual Red Tape Report Card.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

R. BALSOM: Speaker, this proposed legislation is the next phase of that work. The new *Regulatory Improvement and Efficiency Act* establishes the permanent framework needed to ensure these efforts continue, not only today, but well into the future, by formally establishing the Red Tape Reduction Office in legislation.

Publicly reporting each year on progress and requiring service standards for new permits, licences and authorizations, this is not about eliminating regulation; this is about improving regulation. It is about ensuring government requirements are clear, processes are efficient, decisions are timely and services are responsive. It is about helping an entrepreneur start a business with less frustration. It is about helping employers spend less time on paperwork and more time creating jobs. It is about helping residents access government services more easily and more predictable and it is about ensuring government remains accountable for delivering results.

Speaker, our government made a commitment to tackle unnecessary red tape and improve how government serves people and businesses. Since October 2025, we have established the structures, leadership, partnerships and foundational work required to make meaningful progress.

Today, through the new *Regulatory Improvement and Efficiency Act*, we are putting in place the legislative framework that will ensure those efforts continue, evolve and deliver measurable benefits for years to come. This new legislation demonstrates that reducing red tape is not a slogan; it is a long-term commitment to better service, greater accountability and a stronger, more competitive Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters - Pleasantville.

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll take a play out of your book, I'm going to stand up for a couple of moments and talk about Bill 23, but I'm actually only going to talk about it for a couple of minutes. You can breathe easy now that you're not going to have to listen to me for 20 minutes.

Thank you, and I'll thank the hon. Deputy Government House Leader for his comments as well.

I am pleased to stand on Bill 23, the *Regulatory Improvement and Efficiency Act*, and I know the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay, in one of his bills earlier, talked about how it was a red tape reduction. I'm still waiting for him to explain to me exactly how that bill was a red tape reduction, but this is actually a bill that deals with red tape reduction or at least the start of it.

Our Liberal caucus supports reducing any unnecessary red tape, making government services more efficient and accessible. We all agree. I think everyone in this House of Assembly would agree with that sentiment and that's what we're endeavouring to try to do.

My colleague that spoke before from Burgeo - La Poile – I wanted to make sure I got that right because it's a beautiful district – spoke eloquently about how the partnerships are important and the great work that's being done by organizations such as the Board of Trade and others. I'm not going to stand here and echo everything he said, but I do agree that this takes an all-hands-on-deck approach to ensure that we're all working to try to reduce red tape where we can. Whether it's a business that's applying for a permit or a resident accessing government services, the process should be straightforward and timely, we all agree.

Some of the initiatives that we've taken over the past number of years to significantly improve regulatory modernization was a *Regulatory Accountability and Reporting Act* to establish a legislative framework for regulatory improvement back in 2016. MyGovNL introduced a platform that made everyday government services more available and easy to utilize. I know there were some individuals, obviously, when something new like that starts, it's challenging for some, but I think on the overall it's been very, very positive. A number of individuals in my district are singing the praises of MyGovNL. That's just one of those initiatives that helps reduce red tape.

The Atlantic Physician Registry helps reduce barriers for physicians practising across Atlantic Canada, with the initiative receiving recognition from CFIB in 2024; Business Navigators, that my colleague from Burgeo - La Poile mentioned, helping businesses navigate permits, licences and government requirements, makes it a little easier. A former premier of ours said to me one day, we were sitting in the House in 2016, I think it was, and he said, Bernie, we're not just the MHAs for the constituents that are in our district, we're also the MHAs for the businesses that are within our district.

So those are constituents of ours as well. Even though they may not reside in our district, it's very important that we listen to their concerns, help them navigate a very complex system. We live it every day and it's complex for us, so you can imagine what it's like for a constituent and/or a business that's trying to get a permit for X, Y and Z. It's incumbent upon all of us to try to make that as easy as possible, help them navigate where we can and perform those standards and make it timely as best we can for their services for the constituents we all represent.

This bill establishes responsibilities for a Red Tape Reduction Office and requires annual reporting. That's a good thing. It does not establish mandatory province-wide numerical targets for reducing processing time or administrative costs. I think that's an opportunity, that we can expand on this legislation after. It's something that we should keep on our radar, and I encourage the minister to do that.

We want to see these measurable results, including shorter application times, reduced costs and transparent reporting on government performance. I think those are all desirable for people on this side of the House, and I'm sure for people on the other side. The bill introduces service standards for certain new licensing and permit requirements but does not require equivalent standards for existing processes where delays may already be occurring.

So I look to my colleague responsible for Crown Lands, and I know he spoke about it an awful lot when he was on this side of the House. I'm sure he's focused with what he called the most important issue in government, when he was on this side sitting just up here, and I'm sure he's seized with Crown Lands and trying to make it more efficient.

P. FORSEY: (Inaudible) stay tuned.

B. DAVIS: Stay tuned is what he is saying in the background. So I'm happy to stay tuned and I'll be listening and paying attention for how he's going to reduce red tape for Crown lands applications.

We must always ensure that reducing red tape does no weaken things like public safety, environmental protections, workers' rights, Indigenous rights, and I think my colleagues in the NDP have said that on numerous occasions.

We don't want to confuse red tape with reducing any protections. We want to make sure we reduce red tape that makes sense, where regulations are not required for things that don't make sense and not to the benefit

of the taxpayer or the constituent or the business. If it adds no value, I think those things can move; but if it adds safety and protections for organizations or people, we want to make sure that we maintain those measures in place.

Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, and I do have some questions that we'll have when we get to Committee, we support Bill 23. We want the success to be measured and real improvements for the residents and businesses that we all represent and not an additional bureaucracy, which is always good.

I will say look at the time, Mr. Speaker. I did what you most times couldn't do when you stood up and said I'm only going to take a minute.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Touché.

AN HON. MEMBER: Challenging the Speaker.

SPEAKER: He's right, though.

The hon. the Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Speaker.

This is one of my favourite things to talk about. So I'm very happy to talk about red tape today in this Legislature.

I fully support the government's effort to reduce red tape – absolutely. It has been very challenging. It is challenging to actually pragmatically make things better and easier. It's a very labour-intensive exercise to actually take a process and re-engineer the process and the application forms and all of those steps to actually reduce steps that, as other speakers before me have said, still allow the same amount of public confidence, safety and all of those things and actually make it easier and better.

I have been very proud of the transition to many services online, and the process of transferring those services online have delivered that in many instances. That process happens where the team goes through in minute detail. Some would call it user experience testing or user experience design, where you design a process to be as efficient and clear and easy as possible for users and for businesses.

I do want to commend a lot of the OCIO team. I know that they have a lot of those skills in-house and do work with departments and have done so when they're taking a process that's probably paper based and moving it to an online process in MyGovNL or for businesses.

Reducing red tape and making it easier for people and businesses is incredibly important. I do find it very interesting – we talked about this in PMR. I believe it was last week or a few weeks ago, so many of my comments today are the same because I think they are both similar. I know the government is hanging their hat on the CFIB Red Tape Report Card, and I'm going to talk a bit about that some more.

I'd like to highlight some of the things that I'm proud of that we've done in terms of making things easier for people and businesses to work with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and then I'd like to talk specifically about the CFIB Red Tape Report Card. None of this is anything I haven't said before, but I think it is incredibly valuable and relevant to this bill. So, Speaker, I'm going to add that to this.

One of the first issues that I encountered previously was with Motor Registration. There were lineups, people were waiting in the wintertime in the lineups and getting appointments. We brought in an internal team, actually, and did a full Lean Six Sigma review of Motor Registration, which I

was very proud of, to make things easier for people and businesses to get in faster so that people weren't waiting in lineups. There were a lot of resources in that department, and it was just how do you streamline and make that easier.

So there is the customer, business-facing application side, but then, also, the internal processes, and both of those elements together, I think one could call that red tape, but you could also call it process or business process engineering or any of those types of things.

As speakers before me have talked about, MyGovNL, when we launched renew your vehicle online, we had a 98 per cent adoption rate across Newfoundland and Labrador. So 98 per cent of vehicle owners were renewing their vehicle in MyGovNL, which is incredible and an amazing, I would say, red tape reduction.

Those people didn't have to go to the Motor Registration office. They didn't have to wait in line. They didn't have to take time out of their day to drive to Mount Pearl, although Mount Pearl is a lovely place to visit. They could do it online from their home. They could do it at night, in the middle of the night, or while they're at work – any time of day. I'm very proud of those accomplishments.

We did streamline the lottery licence process. Organizations could apply for a two-year and, I believe, five-year lottery licence, where they get an ongoing licence if they're in good standing, and if they submit their reports. We did kind of a significant overhaul, actually, of the lottery licencing. I'm very proud of that.

We did invest over $10 million into the OCIO for five years to help with all of those extra things, with the user experience, with re-engineering all of the processes with that kind of customer-facing and business-facing lens in terms of making things easier and better for people and how they interact with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We also put in a $500-million new health information system, which I saw this week, in *allNewfoundlandLabrador*, it has been reported that they have transitioned a significant number of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians now to the new system, and that's working really well and making things significantly easier for doctors. In terms of the communication, it is significantly cutting down on the amount of time and effort taken on the administration of the flow of work that happens within the health care system. So I'm very proud of our very expensive investment in, I would say, the Cadillac of health care systems globally but for the benefit of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Some of the things I was proud of in terms of all of the regulatory financial service professionals that are regulated within the now Department of Government Services, all of their interactions with government were streamlined and made online. They can apply for their licences online. They can renew their licences online. All of those processes which were paper based and kind of clumsy transactions were streamlined and made online. I'm very proud of a lot of the changes that we made.

Also, I guess a pet project of mine, was the NLVaxPass. That was a very interesting public policy initiative, but also a technical execution of that, which allowed people and businesses to very quickly identify and validate who had the vaccine and who could then enter a business, who could enter a restaurant. That was quite a significant challenge that we overcame and a very eloquent, technical solution to the policy problem, which took that policy and made it into a very efficient servicer or transaction between entities in figuring out how we manage through COVID-19.

I guess in terms of the CFIB, I do want to talk about this. I find this very fascinating.

The CFIB obviously has a Red Tape Report Card and I know that government likes to tout how poorly we did. I would like to go through the breakdown of the CFIB Report Card.

I do wish the government all the best in their aims to get an A on that Report Card. I'm not quite sure how they're going to manage to do that.

I encourage every Member to read the Red Tape Report Card. It's available online. It's an easy read. I encourage everyone to read it so you actually understand what you're signed up to deliver.

There are three parts of the Red Tape Report Card. Regulatory accountability is the first section, which is worth 40 per cent of the score. That's a measure of the regulatory burden set targets. I think having a bill, sure, will get them towards that in terms of regulatory accountability. I know this bill introduces the ability for departments – they have to publish. I'm sure that they built this legislation in mind with meeting the CFIB's regulatory accountability section.

I guess departments reporting how many processes they have, does that really reduce red tape? I hope it does. It doesn't exactly, specifically and explicitly reduce red tape but it's fine, if the government wants to count the number of processes and count the number of steps it takes, that's fine. There will be a burden associated with doing that and reporting on it, but that's okay.

The next section is the regulatory burden and this is actually how many regulatory requirements exist per processes and how many regulations and clauses in bills exist for the government as a whole. This is fascinating.

The regulatory burden makes up 40 per cent of the government's Red Tape Report Card measure. In the CFIB Report Card – I'm looking at the 2026 Report Card and it's on page 16 if anyone wants to look – they actually take the entire number, so Newfoundland and Labrador as per their page 16, we had 20,937 requirements in regulations; 31,470 requirements in legislation; add that up to 52,407. That's Newfoundland and Labrador's as of 2026, total requirements in legislation. Then they divide it by the number of people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Speaker, because we have such a small population, comparatively to other provinces in Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador, I don't believe it's feasible to ever do anything other than an F on this category. We have the third fewest regulations in Canada.

Quebec, they have 145,000; Ontario, 139,000. We have 52,000. We have a significantly smaller – we have the third largest, PEI has the least with 36,000; New Brunswick is next with 51,000; we have 52,000 total requirements in regulations in legislation. The third lowest – we're the third best in terms of the third lowest number of regulations.

This bill actually adds to this. This bill and all the bills the government is now adding, they add to the number. At the end of this sitting, this number is going to go up to, maybe, I don't know, 52,900 perhaps. I haven't counted all of the clauses, but all these bills add to this number which then get divided by the number of people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Unless the CFIB is completely rehauling this, which maybe they are, but I don't see how the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador can achieve a good grade on the 40 per cent of the CFIB's Red Tape Report Card score regulatory burden. It says "The province with the best performance (i.e., the lowest number of requirements in regulations and statutes per 10,000 population) receives the maximum score of 10, while the province with the worst performance receives a score of 0. All other

scores are based on the scale formed by these two values."

Unless the government is significantly wiping out most of the legislation and regulations that they have, which I don't think they're going to do because that would not be prudent, then I don't see how the government is going to achieve anything other than a very low grade on the regulatory burden section of the CFIB Report Card. I certainly look forward to the government enlightening us on that, or when they do achieve their A on the Red Tape Report Card.

Then the last section is worth 20 per cent is political priority. So, obviously, having a minister responsible for red tape, absolutely, that definitely shows a political priority so I'm sure the government will do very well on the political priority element.

In terms of meeting the CFIB's Red Tape Report Card, I think they'll do okay in the regulatory accountability. They'll do, probably, really well on the political priority element. The regulatory burden, 40 per cent of the grade, they are going to do very poorly, unless they significantly remove the number of regulations or they significantly grow the population, which I really hope they can do that as well. Otherwise, the regulatory burden element will still be very low and then let's think about which of these elements actually make things easier for people and businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador because that is what we really want to do.

So counting the number of rules we have, I understand that that might introduce a rigour which encourages people to think about how to make these processes easier. Then, actually, counting the number of requirements and regulations in legislation, really, these bills and the bills we're going to do today, add the number of regulations and legislation. I understand the government has to do that, but I don't see how they can do better on this element. Then political priority, sure.

I do wish the government all the best in reducing red tape and making things easier for people and businesses. I do, personally, strongly believe that following the CFIB Report Card is not the way to make things easier and better for people. I do not believe the government will be able to achieve an A. I do wish them all the best in their efforts to achieve an A on their Report Card, but given that 40 per cent of the weight is based on just counting the number of regulations in legislation that we have, given that this bill makes the number higher and the bills we're going to introduce today and in this sitting make the number higher, than it was before this sitting, I don't see how the government can do anything else other than get a very poor score on the regulatory burden element of the CFIB Report Card because we have 500,000 people in Newfoundland and Labrador, with 52,407 plus many more requirements in regulations and legislation.

It's an interesting approach the government has taken and I do wish them all the best in making things easier for businesses and people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I look forward to asking some questions in Committee. As well, I look forward to hearing and seeing the next CFIB Report Card when that comes out and learning about the how the government is making changes to ensure their A grade on the CFIB Report Card.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Seeing no further speakers, if the minister speaks now, he will conclude the debate.

The hon. the Minister of Government Services, at the moment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, I'm not going to prolong the second reading very long. I had the opportunity to listen to a lot of what was said, but not all, so I would be remiss if I stood up and commented on it.

At the end of the day, we believe that this bill is a bill that's going to help small businesses, large businesses, everyday citizens and to be frank, government.

Our goal is to achieve an A with the CFIB. I will say after what I just heard, we don't have to go very far to improve what we were left with based on the previous score from the previous years.

We're excited about moving this bill forward, we're very excited about achieving higher marks and we're very excited about the results and the cost savings that businesses and men and women in this province will see as a result of this legislation.

I'll take my seat now and will answer questions in Committee.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Are Members ready for the question?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

The motion is carried.

CLERK (Hawley George): A bill, An Act Respecting Regulatory Improvement and Efficiency. (Bill 23)

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

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

L. PARROTT: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act Respecting Regulatory Improvement and Efficiency," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently. (Bill 23)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 23.

SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair and that this House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 23.

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.'

The motion is carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Dwyer): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 23, An Act Respecting Regulatory Improvement and Efficiency.

A bill, “An Act Respecting Regulatory Improvement and Efficiency.” (Bill 23)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John’s West.

K. WHITE: Thank you, Chair.

A few questions for the minister.

Can the minister explain what mechanism his department will use to determine which regulations and requirements are generally unnecessary and which are necessary protections for the public?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Chair.

Obviously, as we go through consultations with our community stakeholders, we’ll start to understand exactly what it is they expect and want to see from a policy standpoint. We have also reached out to every ministerial department in government to ask them to take a deep look inside, and we would hope that Opposition weighs in on the MyGovNL, or come and talk to us directly, I’m more than open to that.

It’s a process and, as we move forward, obviously, all of those layers will be exposed pretty quickly.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John’s West.

K. WHITE: Thank you, Chair.

Reducing unnecessary bureaucracy can help businesses but de-regulation can also have consequences for workers, consumers and the environment. Will the minister commit publicly to reporting which regulations are being changed or eliminated?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: As I stated yesterday in my opening remarks, it is our goal to make sure that this has no effect on the environment or anything. This isn’t about elimination of any policies; this is about how we strengthen them.

We will do an annual report, obviously, to show what we’re doing. As a government, as I’m sure the public would want, every time there’s an improvement they would want to know what that improvement is and how it affects them. So we will have a detailed communication plan when we make changes and we’ll look at them to make sure whether or not they’ll work and we’ll do consultations internally and make sure that those things are addressed.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John’s West.

K. WHITE: Thank you, Chair.

The CFIB called for a permanent regulatory improvement structure with the ability to review and inform Cabinet decisions. Why has the government not delivered on that recommendation?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: Can you repeat that?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John’s West.

K. WHITE: The CFIB, they previously called for a permanent regulatory improvement structure with the ability to review and inform Cabinet decisions. The question was, why has the government not delivered on that recommendation?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: I would say I don't think that's good governance. At the end of the day, once decisions are made through Cabinet and they go through the House of Assembly and they're voted on, we're open to listening to anything the CFIB or anyone else has to say.

Through the consultation process, they would have the same opportunities to consult with government while we're making changes. But if we were to open the doors of government to an outside agency to scrutinize and have a look at Cabinet, it compromises your right as an MHA.

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

K. WHITE: Thank you, Chair.

Can the minister tell us how much it's costing to establish and operate the Red Tape Reduction Office?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: The current budget is $568,800, and the office is going to oversee and monitor the implementation of the charter. It's staffed by existing resources, so the reality of it is that it's not going to be a huge cost because those people are in place.

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

K. WHITE: Thank you, Chair.

What additional reporting requirements will be placed on departments and how will the government ensure that the cost of administering this framework does not outweigh its benefits?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: We will do an annual report scorecard, as will the CFIB, and the goal of this is to absolutely streamline things. The problem with red tape is a lot of the costs are hidden and, as I've said and I've heard Members across the way say, when a business is trying to move forward and they're tied from a regulatory standpoint or an application standpoint and an individual is bogged down trying to do this themselves, I mean most of these small businesses that are out there, that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have, it's one or two people with a staff and they don't have the wherewithal – I shouldn't say wherewithal, but they don't have the capabilities and people there to help them through the process.

We're simply trying to make this process simpler and trying to help these businesses succeed. In that process, we're hoping to make sure it's less cumbersome and that individuals want to do business here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

K. WHITE: Thank you, Chair.

Just wondering how this legislation will influence permitting and regulatory timelines for major resource development projects.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: As a part of what we're doing, we've signed on to – it's something that the previous administration supported, the one project, one review.

Just as a good example, the one project, one review looks at nameplate capabilities from a mining sector standpoint. I believe, I'll say it sets the service standards. Anything over five million tons annually had

to go through a federal review also. Now if it's over five million tons, it will be a joint review by the province and the federal government and there will be no need to do two separate applications at the same time.

Again, it would be the greater of the two from an environmental standpoint, any of the federal regulatory issues that are put in place. We're not looking for a way to approve a project without it going through all of the regulatory processes. We are looking for a way to make those processes work faster, to streamline them, to make sure they're less cumbersome and to make sure that the answers that have to come from the departments come back faster.

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

K. WHITE: Last question for the minister. Can you tell us how will these objectives, how do they reconcile or defer to the Inuit Land Claims Agreement in event of any conflicts?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: It's a good question and Indigenous partners are more than welcome to weigh in on consultations. Obviously, we don't trump their land claims. At the end of the day, we will work with everyone and when I say Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, that includes our Indigenous partners.

The reality is that when we talk about our Indigenous partners, they face the same red tape as everybody else. This process is to help them move forward, too.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

S. O'LEARY: Thank you, Chair.

Starting from scratch here, in section 1, in drafting the legislation, who exactly did you consult with?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: Stakeholder engagement was with Municipalities NL and with the Chambers of Commerce throughout the province. We've consulted with other jurisdictions, with our provincial partners, with Atlantic partners. There is a consultation process happening right now that was launched on October 30 to get us through our policy creation and where we're going with this.

We did direct consultations with Nova Scotia, Alberta and Ontario. We looked at the previous legislation from 2016 and utilized a lot of that. The bigger differences are, we created an office now and a reporting process and we've eliminated the sunset clause, which we think is important. The elimination of the sunset clause puts us in a position where we've committed to an annual report every year. The annual report is not for us to tell on people; it's for us to find ways to improve our systems for people. It's a report card where we're looking internally and saying, we're doing this wrong, how can we improve it. I think it's a great process.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

S. O'LEARY: Thank you, Chair.

Certainly recognizing coming from the municipal sector, the importance of efficiencies; however, did you have a chance to consult with labour, environmental groups or community groups in this effort? These are certainly people who would be impacted by this red tape reduction potential as well.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: As I have stated, we made a public announcement and consultations are ongoing. They have every opportunity to weigh in on what they think.

This should not have any effect on labour. This isn't us looking for ways to streamline in order to get rid of people or have less people employed. This is simply a way for us to make sure that we're making things easier for everyone.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

S. O'LEARY: Thank you, Chair.

Understood, but some received specific invitations, I guess, to engage, while others did it in a more public consultation process. I'm just trying to get some clarity on how people were actually invited to this process.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: What I would say is that the red tape that affects people in labour – the labour is working for a business. The business is the one that faces the red tape, if that's the question. It was the businesses that were invited in through the consultation process.

Labour has an opportunity, through public consultation, to come in or reach out to my office at any time – more than open. We want to hear from everyone.

On October 30, we held a public event and we invited all the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador to weigh in and, to be quite frank, if we have businesses from outside of Newfoundland and Labrador who have tried to come here and do work, I'm more than open to sit down and listen to them also.

This is about labour. This is about people who work in Newfoundland and Labrador. This is about keeping businesses operating.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

S. O'LEARY: Thank you, Chair.

Understanding that, of course, we're very interested in standing up for labour rights, consumer protections, health and safety, environmental standards, that is the concern that we would have and the red tape reduction. So I just prefaced that and I know that Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador was especially involved with the public consultations process.

What, specifically, is in the bill that will lead to a reduction in unnecessary tape for municipalities?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister for Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: As we go through our consultations with Municipalities NL, the Atlantic Chamber, the Board of Trade and everyone who is directly engaged, our direct stakeholder partners, and everybody else in Newfoundland and Labrador who's been invited to weigh in on this, we will put out what our objectives are.

We have done a few things to date. So we've done the driver's licence photos, new website that's up and operating right now and the one project, one review, but this is a living, breathing piece of legislation that will evolve over time with the consultations and the stakeholders.

As we move forward, you can rest assured that this does not change anything. In no way does a piece of legislation override the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the Department of Environment or any of the things that you have stated you are concerned about. We are not looking to change that. We're looking to strengthen that. We're looking for ways to get people – and I'll say, from discovery to production or from an idea to a sale or from the opening doors of a restaurant to a plate of food on

the table or from a tourism standpoint or from a municipality's standpoint as quickly and easily as possible.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

S. O'LEARY: Thank you, Chair.

I notice the bill doesn't define red tape. I brought this up when we had discussions about the PMR. Why leave out such a crucial definition – arguably what this bill is all about – out of the act itself, what red tape means?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister for Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: I would argue that red tape means different things for different people. So, at the end of the day, if you're applying for a quarry permit, that's not the same as trying to open up a restaurant.

Our whole overview of this is how do we streamline the processes to help people operate in our environment easier? How do we help individuals go through an application process, a permitting process or simply going into Government Services and trying to get a birth certificate or a driver's licence? Red tape is what holds us up.

I don't like the word red tape to be quite frank. I think that there are different things that could be utilized. But at the end of the day, red tape seems to be what everybody uses across the country and it's all about streamlining things.

The definition of red tape will absolutely evolve every day in the life of this bill.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

S. O'LEARY: Thank you, Chair.

Precisely why I'm asking that question because it is important to actually have a definition when we're dealing with an act.

The word efficiency also appears throughout this bill but doesn't have a definition. We've heard governments use the word countless times as a euphemism in the past for cuts, so what does that mean here? Can we provide a definition for efficiency for us in this?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: This is about efficiencies. It's about best practices and it's about how we looked at other jurisdictions and how they were doing things better. It's about the businesses that have made complaints over the last, I don't know, maybe 50 years. It's about a quarry program that hasn't worked and it's about Crown lands that needs to be adjusted. It's about everything and every way that government operates and the people who depend on us for services.

This is not about cutting anything. This is about finding a way to help Newfoundland and Labrador prosper. I said it in my speech in second reading, I said it in the PMR last week, which you voted against, and I will say right now, this is specifically about helping municipalities, it's about building houses, it's about attracting businesses and it's about making sure that the individuals in this province get the best service and the service that they deserve from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

S. O'LEARY: Thank you, Chair.

Have you already drafted a version of the Charter of Governing Principles? That, too, was discussed in the PMR. If so, why can't we see a copy? When Nova Scotia introduced similar legislation last month,

they made a public draft charter to go along with it. So I'm just wondering where the transparency is in that?

Thank you.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: I wouldn't necessarily strive to be Nova Scotia because I believe theirs is based on policy, not legislation. We are introducing legislation and it is evidence-based decision-making; the use of regulation, only when necessary; importance of efficiency, transparency, accessibility, regulatory assessment is all very important under the charter; ensuring regulations are proportionate; that they're accountable and it's easy to comply with, while also considering their impact on the economy and our trade.

So the charter will be outlined when the policy is written and it comes out and we have the consultations finished. Consultations started on October 30.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

S. O'LEARY: Thank you.

You just answered my question about what principles will be in the charter. That's still yet to be seen as a result of the engagement.

Year after year as part of the Estimates process for the budget, we hear of large numbers of vacancies across departments. To what extent is the lack of timely service the result of a lack of staff to process applications, permits and licences? Again, efficiencies or is it filling positions? Just a question on that.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: What I would say is I would argue it's probably a combination of both. After the bill is implemented and we understand where the deficiencies are, it will identify whether or not it's a paper exercise and that it is a deficiency within a program or department or if it is a staffing issue.

There's no doubt that we have staffing issues throughout government. It's a long-standing thing. I suspect it will always be a long-standing thing. Unfortunately, some of that boils down to a skilled workforce who don't want to work in government, and it also boils down to geography and locations.

So a lot of our shortages are more in rural Newfoundland than they are in urban. But as this stands, when we do our review after year one and we do our report, it will certainly help us understand if staffing is an issue.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

S. O'LEARY: Thank you, Chair.

This will likely be my final question. I'm just wondering about the plans mentioned about when the red tape reduction plans are finally solidified, how will they be made public? Will they be made public and how will they be made public?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: They'll absolutely be made public. They'll be made public on their website and we'll have a full comms plan to put that stuff out.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave.

P. PARSONS: Thank you, Chair.

Just one question: What work has been done to apply a GBA, a Gender-Based Analysis Plus lens to this legislation? It's

something that we had in government and it was applied to every piece of legislation. Can you tell us what has been done in that regard for this new legislation?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: We utilized the exact same lens on every piece of legislation.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave.

P. PARSONS: Can you elaborate exactly what has been done; because, obviously, as we know, legislation of all kinds impact minorities different than they do of those who are not minorities.

Has staff done anything and can you outline what they've done just to safeguard? As we know, this is a first of its kind in legislation and it's important that that GBA Plus lens is applied.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: Through part of the consultations, we absolutely talked to female entrepreneurs, immigrants and other people living here in the province. That window is still open for consultation. It has gone through the department and it has come back with no concerns.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, in terms of red tape reduction, I think we all want and strive to have less red tape, no matter what the department is or the application.

I want to speak to a change that has happened recently under the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation Home Repair Program. I mean, it's difficult in rural parts of the province. Anybody representing rural parts of the province knows it's hard and you don't have the availability of two or three or four quotes for a project.

There was a change made that you need more than one quote, and that is creating more red tape and more stress in terms of those that are available to do the work in the province. Therefore, seniors and others who are vulnerable, they're going to suffer because the work is not going to get done.

Are you willing to take a look at that and reverse that change? Because I think it should be changed.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: What I would say is, not only are we willing to look at it, but we are looking at it. Those are the exact types of changes that need to be made.

I'll even go further and say that we put different lenses on everything, and I've long said that we should be putting a rural lens on everything we do. So we're working with every department. It was very clear, we went to every single department and told them we wanted the ideas that came back, even made suggestions that people talk to their CAs and their EAs because, to be quite frank, sometimes that's the first line. They get the questions and then it comes up the line.

We absolutely will look at that. That's absolutely the exact type of thing we're looking at. We're looking at making things easier and what you just highlighted is exactly the type of thing that we need to do better.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

E. LOVELESS: Thank you for that answer, Minister.

Yes, it needs to happen yesterday, and hopefully it will.

In the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, you have a use-it-or-lose-it policy in terms of growing fish in sites and everything. You may confirm this, or the minister can confirm it, that's a two-year process. When I was there, I think it was a two-year process.

There has been some ask, I guess, of not necessarily the industry but those that are on the outside, whether that's towns or whomever, that are asking should that use-it-or-lose-it time frame be shorter because you want companies to get on with it.

You mentioned not eliminating but improving and you're looking to strengthen. I think that should be looked at. Because I tried to explain the two-year development process and operational process for a cage site is a lengthy process, not just about forming a ring and throwing fish in the water. I'm hoping that's something that can be looked at and can you confirm if that will happen?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: What I will say, I'm not familiar with the process but I will take that away and try and find out. I'll also say my door is open and if you want to come in and sit down with the department, I'm more than willing to be there and we can sit down and have those discussions. You've made two comments so far that I'm more than welcome to look at and I think are great suggestions.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

E. LOVELESS: Just on that too, Minister, just one final question – actually two. In terms of approval for aquaculture sites, growing of fish, there's a requirement that you get feedback from DFO. To be honest with you, on a couple of instances, I was impatient and I'm like I'm not waiting. I think it's just a tactic that is used sometimes to – you're stalling progress.

I think that's something that should be looked at as well in terms of the time frame of an outside agency or requirement of it. As you said, you're not looking to get rid of what's in place to protect the industries but to streamline. I think that's probably something that should be looked at. Again, I'll be happy to send you that email to set up an appointment to come in and sit down, because these are instances where you can improve the industry as such.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: I will tell you right now, I will have my department personally engage with Fisheries and Aquaculture here provincially in order to look for those answers. The other side, I would say, is that I talked early about one project, one review. So one project, one review is specifically for land-based projects, but we have indicated to the federal government that we would like to find a way to cut red tape when it comes to offshore, working with fisheries, working with, obviously, oil and gas. But there can't be any compromise.

It's not an elimination of the C-NLOER, it's not an elimination of DFO, but it's a way for us to find a way to protect the environment and move a project at a speed where it doesn't get stalled. That doesn't mean we want to take a 30-day statutory review time frame and compress it down into five days. It means we want to make sure it happens in 30 days. It means that we're trying to keep the process moving. I'm sure you're used to it, things get stalled, just as you said, whether intentional or unintentional. Between the federal and the provincial government sometimes, it's a big hiccup.

So we'll have Fisheries and Aquaculture have a look at it and, like I said, I welcome you to come in and have the conversation.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Chair.

I will say that we've been looking at that upon instruction from Red Tape Reduction, and we looked at the two-year thing. We are looking at that. I just wanted to throw that back to you to let you know that we are looking at that for sure.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, I'm glad the minister listened to me.

Minister, you referenced, in terms of the removal of the sunset clause. Can you just give a brief explanation, because there are advantages of having the sunset clause versus not having it? Can you justify in terms of your explanation of why you're doing it, how will that improve what we have in front of us today and how it will improve, I guess, industries within Newfoundland and Labrador?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: What we've established is a permanent office inside of government. The previous framework was the *Regulatory Accountability and Reporting Act*, and it was signed between the Atlantic provinces. So it wasn't a piece of legislation, it was guiding principles, we'll say. There was a sunset clause that, when the time expired, you could either carry on with it or not. We didn't carry on with it, so there's the issue. I mean, when you have a sunset clause, it stops or you consider going on.

We believe that this is an opportunity for us to grow as a province and as a government and be accountable to the people who depend on our services. That includes everyday Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and it includes businesses and stakeholders throughout all of industry.

The national standard right across the country, there is no sunset clause. We did a jurisdictional scan and we thought it best to remove that. If you feel it's important enough, and not just bringing it in as some kind of a policy or a charter, that you'd put it in legislation – I think that putting a sunset clause in a piece of legislation sometimes makes it less credible, I don't know.

I just think that we're not looking at doing this for one year for props. We're looking at doing this and making sure it helps people achieve what we want businesses and people to achieve in the province.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

I'm wondering if the minister can confirm that this will take effect when it receives Royal Assent?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister for Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: Once Royal Assent has come and policies are put in place, then it will take place.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

So the government will, I guess, proclaim this act into force at a later date?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister for Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: We're working on this now, obviously. We're doing things behind the scenes. The office is established. The budget is there. We're in the consultation process. This is something we're very serious about. Once it receives Royal Assent, it will be proclaimed and moved forward.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Okay. Thank you very much. That is clear.

The bill says that the government may have regulations. I'm wondering if the government are planning on having regulations imminently when the bill comes into force, when it receives Royal Assent?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister for Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: Regulations will come but it won't hold anything up.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

I'm wondering if the minister can tell us what, I guess, the government is envisioning that will be in the regulations?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister for Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: So from a regulatory standpoint, we'll look at our charter. We'll have a score card as to how we assess the bill on an annual basis. Again, we'll make sure that this doesn't affect anyone or anything and they'll come from consultation.

I mean, the reality of it is, we need to understand what the key stakeholders with the departments and everybody expects from this. The charter is a great example of what one of the regulations will be included in the regulations.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

So the minister mentioned there is going to be a new Red Tape Reduction Office. I'm wondering if that is made up of the people who are currently the Business Navigators. Are they moving from one department into Government Services to make up the new Red Tape Reduction Office?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister for Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: Their office is staffed by six employees, located in St. John's, Clarenville and Corner Brook, including Business Navigation services and BizPal.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Okay, thank you very much.

I'm wondering if the minister can tell us how the government plans to get an A on the CFIB Red Tape Report Card?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: We're going to implement legislation, as we're doing here today. We're going to look at the past practices and make sure we don't make the same mistakes. We're going to show CFIB that we're serious about it.

I understand your concern about what you said earlier, but the reality of it is, we'll never achieve an A if we don't try. It is an important part of, I believe, the services that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians deserve.

Will we achieve an A in year one, I don't know, I hope so, but we're serious about it and we're going to try pretty hard to do it. The fact that this legislation is here on the floor today proves that.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

Just wondering, is the minister anticipating a revised grade in the next upcoming CFIB Red Tape Report Card?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: What I would say is the CFIB does that assessment and they will grade us as they see fit based on the progress we've made over the last 12 months.

We have a new website. We have a new office. We have a piece of legislation. We've shown from a policy standpoint that, not only is the Premier serious about it, but he's appointed a stand-alone minister.

We're going to work hard at it and our goal is to improve that mark. I don't think it's a far stretch to say that it should it get improved this year.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you very much.

That concludes my questions. I do wish the government all the best to make things easier for people and businesses. As I've mentioned, having a website is great, legislation is fine, an office is fine. None of those things make things easier for people, residents and businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador. I wish them all the best and look forward to the next CFIB Report Card and upcoming Report Cards.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Sir.

My colleague just asked a question in terms of where the offices would be. I think you said St. John's, Clarenville, Corner Brook, was there another?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: No, it was just those three.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

E. LOVELESS: Minister, you said earlier that you think that all legislation – and I agree with you because we did as well, in terms of looking at it from a rural lens. Would you entertain in terms of those three locations, having arms of those locations extended to rural parts of the province in terms of an office? I'll give you an example, down in the Coast of Bays region?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

L. PARROTT: I'm not against anything. What I'd like to see is how successful this is after consultations come in and we move things forward and we do our first report next June or July. There are lots of great examples out there of how communities, municipalities and businesses in rural Newfoundland have to do things differently in order to succeed.

A great example is Southern Harbour – and I think you were around when that happened – they did their fire station and town hall pretty much without assistance of government because it was cheaper. Again, Clarenville, same thing. They built the exact same fire hall for a fraction of the price. They took a risk in order to do it, but I think government needs to understand that it's not the same everywhere. It's no different

than doing businesses in Labrador. We know it's a lot more expensive to do things in Labrador and it's more expensive to ship things in. Again, same in your district.

So once we get through this first stage of growth, once the department is open and running in the way it needs to be running, then we'll look at what we need in other places. But the department will be accessible to everyone. There will be 1-800 numbers in order to gain access and they'll have access to our department. We're hoping – we're not hoping, I believe that this is going to make a difference. Do I believe it's going to make a difference overnight? I'm not that naive. We know and I'm sure everyone knows it's not. But every time it makes a difference and that difference changes the process, that will help people going forward.

That is the goal. The goal is to make sure we don't affect anyone or anywhere from any kind of a safety, environmental or cost standpoint, and that we help streamline these processes in the best way for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

E. LOVELESS: It's not another question as such, only a statement in terms of, you know, I say the Coast of Bays from an aquaculture perspective. Then there's a mining perspective in other rural parts of the province. So I don't think it would be a good investment in terms of, we talk about front-line workers. These are front-line people in rural parts of the province. So I hope that will certainly make its way into the intent of all this today.

Thank you.

CHAIR: I appreciate the analogy with what happened in Southern Harbour because that's in my district and I give full credit to the mayor of Southern Harbour and the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands because that was before my time.

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 13 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 13 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 13 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: A bill, An Act Respecting Regulatory Improvement and Efficiency. (Bill 23)

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.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Chair.

I move that the Committee now rise and report Bill 23 without amendment.

CHAIR: Is it the pleasure of the House that I rise and report Bill 23 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 (Lane): The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue and Chair of Committee of the Whole.

J. DWYER: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that the Committee recommends Bill 23, An Act Respecting Regulatory Improvement and Efficiency, without amendment.

SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and recommends Bill 23 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

L. PARROTT: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the said bill be read a third time?

L. PARROTT: Tomorrow.

SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

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

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 14, Bill 35.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services that, An Act to Amend the Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act, Bill 35, now be read a second time.

SPEAKER: The motion is that Bill 35, An Act to Amend the Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, “An Act to Amend the Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act.” (Bill 35)

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. WALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased today to rise and introduce Bill 35, An Act to Amend the Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act. Protecting the health and well-being of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians is a top priority for our government and we are taking meaningful action to build a healthier future.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments will play an important role in our efforts by banning non-tobacco flavoured vaping products and requiring vapour product retailers to be licensed.

Tobacco and nicotine use are significant public health concerns in Newfoundland and Labrador. Vaping presents additional challenges. Nicotine in vaping products is easily inhaled, rapidly absorbed and highly addictive. Nicotine use remains higher in the province than it is nationally and, unfortunately, that continues to rise. In Newfoundland and Labrador, we are now tied for the highest daily vaping rate within Canada.

The emergence of vaping products has introduced new issues, especially among young people. Youth perceive vaping as a safer alternative than traditional cigarettes. Also, industry tactics, such as the availability of fruit and candy e-cigarette flavours, make vaping more attractive to youth. Speaker, 40 per cent of people who vape say they do so for the flavour.

Not only does earlier nicotine initiation increase the risk of severe dependence, but it also leads to other substance-use disorders and adverse effects on attention, learning, memory, coordination, mood and impulse control during their brain development.

Vaping is not considered an adequate smoking cessation tool. I am advised by the officials in my department that the Canadian Task Force on Preventative Health Care advises against the use of vaping for smoking cessation. As no therapeutic products are approved, long-term safety data is lacking and continued use of vaping products maintains nicotine addiction.

Our province has among the highest mortality rates of cancer, heart disease and respiratory disease in all of the country. All of which we now know, conclusively, are linked to smoking. We have learned a great deal from the long fight against tobacco, and so while we await long-term data on the health impacts of vaping, we are taking a precautionary approach to reduce the youth appeal of vaping products, avoid outcomes similar to those we have seen in the past and protect the health of our young people.

With these amendments, our province would join a growing number of other Canadian jurisdictions that have taken action to reduce vaping related harms by banning flavoured vapour products. This includes Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, the *Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act* currently outlines specific controls regarding the sale of tobacco and vaping products here in Newfoundland and Labrador. The act also establishes an enforcement process by enabling the minister to appoint inspectors and provide offences for non-compliance within the act.

This bill would amend the act to ban vape flavours, with the exception of tobacco flavour, and to require all premises selling vaping products to obtain a licence under the act. Licensure requirements are already

in place for tobacco retailers. We know that flavours are especially attractive to children and youth and so banning non-tobacco flavours will specifically target youth sales.

Mr. Speaker, this bill introduces vapour product shop license requirements and authorizes inspectors to examine and test products where reasonable assistance is required and with a warrant, seize evidence of a suspected offence. Currently, vapour product shops have a registration process but do not need a licence to sell vapes like they would with tobacco.

As with tobacco products, licensing of vapour product retailers and wholesalers will keep track of where vaping products are sold. It will also provide leverage for enforcement as licenses can be suspended for violations within the act. This will ensure that there is no distinction between enforcement for tobacco and vapour products under the act.

This bill increases fines and penalties available under the act as well. The bill also prohibits the sale of tobacco and vaping products through vending machines. Yes, Mr. Speaker, there are still vending machines in our province that sell cigarettes and vapes. It makes miscellaneous language changes and incorporates gender-neutral language.

Mr. Speaker, my department held public engagement in 2024. The support varied depending on the proposed public health measure and background of the participants. Not surprising, industry representatives tended to view the ban on flavoured vaping products negatively, whereas Public Health and other health groups tended to view the proposed changes in a positive light.

The proposed amendments will come into force upon proclamation to allow time for impacted parties to adjust. It is expected that it will be approximately six months or more before coming into force.

This bill is a significant lever to improve population health. Vaping is highly attractive and highly addictive for our youth.

This bill shows that we value the health and well-being of people in our province. We want to protect youth from the harms of the highly addictive substance and we are committed to a healthier life for everybody.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support this important bill and I ask that all hon. Members of this House join me in supporting these amendments to Bill 35.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm happy to have the opportunity to get up for a few moments and speak to Bill 35, An Act to Amend the Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act. Some of this, as you will probably hear from my colleague from Placentia - St. Mary's as well, was housed in CSSD at the time we were there. We both have a good degree of familiarity with it.

Speaker, I do appreciate the opportunity as the critic right now for Health in the province to speak to this legislation. I think that what we're discussing here on the floor of the House today is an important public health issue, particularly when we look at the impact that nicotine addiction is having on young people in our province. Not only nicotine, today, we're going to talk about vaping, but it starts you down a road of all kinds of nice products, shiny and you say yes to the first and the second. We all know too many sad stories, sometimes even close to home, of the end result, which is not a very nice one.

I want to start by acknowledging, as I said at the opening, this is not a new conversation

for us. Back in 2016, our Liberal government introduced legislation to prohibit the sale of flavoured tobacco products including menthol cigarettes.

That legislation came into effect July –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

L. DEMPSTER: Pardon me? The Health Minister is trying to help me out here so it's good, I have that backup.

That legislation came into effect on July 1, 2017. At the time, we recognized that flavours were making tobacco products more appealing, particularly to young people. We knew that preventing people from becoming addicted to nicotine in the first place was an important part of reducing smoking rates. Almost a decade later, Speaker, we are having a very similar conversation but the products have changed.

We have seen a significant shift from traditional cigarettes to vaping products, particularly, again, among our young people. The question before us today, Members, of us parliamentarians in the hon. House, is how do we respond to that changing landscape and how do we protect the next generation from nicotine addiction?

We've been through this before with traditional tobacco products. We understood that flavours could make tobacco products more appealing and less harsh for someone experimenting with them for the first time. We are now seeing a similar concern with vaping products – fruit, candy, dessert and other sweet flavours – that can make vaping products particularly attractive to young people. There is also a perception that vaping is somehow harmless because it does not involve burning tobacco. Speaker, we need to challenge that perception.

The purpose of restricting these flavours is not to punish people who already smoke or vape. It is to reduce the appeal and acceptability of these products to people who might otherwise never start. This is really, fundamentally, what is at the heart of the conversation we're having here today in Bill 35 on the floor of the House, is about prevention.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that concerns me is that we are still learning about the long-term health consequences of vaping. These products have not been around for nearly as long as traditional cigarettes and we simply do not have decades of research to understand what repeated exposure does to the human body.

That does not mean we know nothing about the risk. We do know that most vaping products contain nicotine which is highly addictive. We know that nicotine exposure during adolescence can interfere with brain development. It can affect attention, learning, memory and the ability to regulate emotions. Brain development continues into early adulthood, meaning young people are particularly, once again, vulnerable, so we're hitting young people with every box here.

We also know that the aerosol produced by vaping is not simply harmless water vapour. That also is a myth. It can contain chemicals such as formaldehyde. It can contain heavy metals and contaminants. Exposure has been associated with coughing, wheezing and worsening asthma symptoms.

There are also concerns about the cardiovascular and respiratory effects of prolonged exposure. While we often hear people comparing vaping to smoking, we have to remember that less harmful does not mean harmless. We should not have to wait another 20 or 30 years to discover the consequences of widespread nicotine use among our young people. We have an opportunity to take preventative action now.

I do want to, Speaker, pause for a moment to make an important distinction here. We need to separate the issue of young people

who have never smoked taking up vaping from adults who are already smokers and are trying to quit. Somehow, out in society, a myth quickly grew some legs that vaping was harmless.

I think, as I understand it, if you're a heavy smoker – as the old folks back my way say if you're a chain-smoker; I don't know if people still use that language but if you're a chain-smoker, maybe lifelong and you need to get off, maybe vaping will help. But if you're a young person who's never smoked, the vaping is certainly not harmless. Those are two very different public health circumstances.

I have spoken with people who have successfully moved away from traditional cigarettes to vaping. We do know – there's lots recorded, lots of research – that smoking is extraordinarily harmful. It is associated with cancer, heart disease, stroke and serious respiratory illnesses, and it does remain, sadly, one of the leading causes of preventable disease and death.

For an adult who smokes, switching completely to vaping can reduce exposure to many of the harmful chemicals found in combustible cigarettes. We also have evidence that nicotine vaping can help some adults quit smoking. In 2025, update to the Cochrane systematic review, one of the most comprehensive reviews of smoking cessation, evidence found that nicotine e-cigarettes helped more people quit smoking for at least six months than the traditional nicotine replacement therapy such as patches or gum. For every 100 people using nicotine e-cigarettes to quit, approximately eight to 10 successfully stopped smoking. That compares with approximately six out of every 100 using traditional nicotine replacement therapy.

So we have to be careful not to send a message that every person who vapes is doing something equivalent to smoking cigarettes. At the same time, vaping is not an approved smoking cessation medication in Canada and it is not without risk.

The ultimate goal, Speaker, should be to help people move away from combustible tobacco and, where possible, eventually away for nicotine altogether.

We also need to recognize that using both cigarettes and vaping products at the same time is not the same as completely switching away from smoking. I've seen people doing that and it just makes me not fully understand it. This is why education and access to professional cessation support are so important.

Mr. Speaker, there is another aspect of this legislation that I do think deserves some attention. That is the impact that this move could have on small businesses right across Newfoundland and Labrador. We have a number of independent businesses in this province that specializes exclusively in selling vaping products. These are small businesses often locally owned and operated. They employ people in our communities, pay commercial rents, contribute to the local economy and provide a livelihood for their owners and employees. For some of these businesses. selling vape products isn't just one part of their operation, it is their entire business. Perhaps you have some in your riding; I believe you do.

Now, when we look at what this legislation proposes, particularly the prohibition on the sale of non-tobacco flavoured vaping products, we have to consider what that actually means for those businesses. We can reasonably expect that a significant portion of the inventory in these speciality vape shops consist of flavoured products, fruit flavours, dessert flavours and other varieties that are a major part of the vaping market. If these products can no longer be sold, what does that leave these businesses with? For a retailer whose business is exclusively vaping products, losing the ability to sell the majority of their inventory

could make it extremely difficult if not impossible to remain open.

I have heard concerns that we could see small, locally owned businesses close as a result of changes like this. That would mean lost jobs, lost investments for business owners who may have put their savings into establishing these businesses and it means another challenge for small businesses trying to operate in rural communities and smaller population centres across our province.

But I want to be clear, recognizing the impact on these businesses does not mean we should ignore the public health concerns. Protecting young people from nicotine addiction is so, so important.

We also have a responsibility to understand the economic consequences of the legislation that we introduced. I will have some questions for the minister in Committee, specifically around the impacts this legislation will have on local businesses. Because we certainly do support this bill from a health impact but I believe we do, in our role in Opposition, have a responsibility in this House to discuss the economic consequences of changes we make in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we have a responsibility to protect young people from becoming addicted to nicotine and I strongly support taking steps to reduce the appeal of vaping products to our youth. We recognized that responsibility nearly a decade ago when we introduced a flavoured tobacco ban back in 2016. I believe it remains just as important today.

Legislation, in and of itself, on its own, is not going to solve this problem. We need to invest in prevention and education. We need meaningful smoking and vaping cessation supports for people who are already struggling, today, with addiction.

I would encourage the minister and his government to look beyond the restrictions in this bill and consider the broader responsibilities that come with addressing nicotine addiction. Because, at the end of the day, our goal should not simply be to take products off store shelves. Really, it should be to help people live healthier lives, prevent the next generation from becoming addicted and make sure that those who want to quit have the support they need to do so.

Just as I'm standing here in real time, I'm thinking about my former colleague, the Health minister, Minister Haggie and I, we did a number of things when I was in CSSD and some of the folks down at the Health Sciences had reached out to us and we met with them.

They talked about someone who may be a heavy smoker and then they're admitted to the Health Sciences and they're there for perhaps two or three weeks. So we introduced a pilot program that would support them while they were there to help them quit smoking. A little bit different from what we're talking about today, but we are talking about the powerful addiction and the hold that nicotine does have on people and the positivities of banning those flavoured vaping products to hopefully really reduce the number of our young people that have been going down that road.

That is the work that needs to accompany this legislation and I encourage the government to look a little deeper into that. I also applaud them for coming forward with this bill today. I will certainly be happy to support it.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

M. BUTT: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to offer remarks in support of Bill 35, An Act to Amend the Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act.

The minister offered an excellent account of the risk posed by vaping. In addition to the practical evidence mentioned by the minister, showing increased vaping rates throughout the province, I'm sure every Member in this House has witnessed the growing prevalence of vaping among people we interact with each day.

Speaker, vaping has not been proven to be an adequate tool to help quit smoking. There are no approved therapeutic products, long-term safety data is lacking and the continued use maintains nicotine addiction.

Provincial increases in both smoking and vaping further suggests vaping is not reducing tobacco use.

As noted by the minister, it has been the trend across the country to ban flavoured vapour products in response to the increased use of these products and the health risk associated with using these products.

I have every confidence that the minister and his department will continue to work diligently to ensure the health and safety of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's.

S. GAMBIN-WALSH: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, the health and well-being of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, particularly our young people, must always be a priority. Vaping has become an increasingly significant public health concern in our province. We are seeing more young people exposed to nicotine, developing addictions and becoming dependent on products that were never intended for them. This legislation is an important step towards addressing that concern. The Liberal Opposition will be supporting Bill 35.

I regress and remember back 10 years; it seems like only yesterday that we were discussing this and the flavours around tobacco and the flavours around vaping that didn't really exist at that point in time. At that point in time, if I had to have my way, I would have put legislation around it then but, of course, we didn't have any evidence or any documentation. We really didn't know what we were talking about like we do today.

One of the strongest reasons to support this legislation is the impact vaping is having on young people. Newfoundland and Labrador had the highest rate of any province. Young people are particularly vulnerable to nicotine addiction and this exposure during adolescence can affect many things and brain development is one thing it has proven to impact negatively. Addiction can develop quickly and it's making quitting extremely difficult. We have a responsibility as a government to make sure that our laws keep pace with the products being marketed and sold in our communities.

The bill prohibits the sale of non-tobacco flavoured vaping products. This is an important measure because flavours play a significant role in attracting young people to vaping, and the research shows that the majority of students who vape report using fruit-flavoured products.

I regress again because I'm going to age myself here now. When I think about when you say fruit flavoured, I think about Chiclets and the different flavours of Chiclets. You're more attracted to them than you are to plain Chiclets. I know that probably ages me, but it's the truth. If you're going picking gum,

you're more attracted to the flavoured product and that's exactly what the issue is here, is that the youth are more attracted to the vaping with the fruit flavoured. These products can make vaping appear less harmful and more appealing than they really are.

We know from our previous work on tobacco control that restricting flavoured products can be an important part of reducing youth access and appeal. In 2017, our Liberal government banned the sale of flavoured tobacco products, so it was a big supporter of that. That work recognized the importance of preventing young people from developing nicotine addiction in the first place. We see Bill 35 as a continuation of that public health approach. Newfoundland and Labrador should be taking meaningful steps to protect young people as well.

This issue is more than simply about regulating a product because it's about protecting the long-term health of our population. While vaping generally exposes users to fewer harmful chemicals than the traditional cigarettes did, it still carries a very significant health risk. Vaping products contain nicotine that is very addictive. Vaping can expose users to substances that may damage their lungs; we know that now. It has been associated with coughing, wheezing, worsening asthmatic symptoms and the list goes on.

We are particularly concerned about the long-term effects because the products have not been around long enough for us to fully understand their consequences. But we should not wait until we see the full extent of the damage before taking preventative action. Prevention is an important part of health care and this was the objective and goal of the Health Accord that was about prevention. Every young person who is prevented from developing a nicotine addiction is potentially a future person who may avoid years of health complications.

We also recognize that the legislation is only effective if it can be properly enforced and Bill 35 strengths the ability of inspectors to do their jobs, it expands the inspection powers. It includes the ability to examine and test products and seize products, when necessary – very important. It introduces licensing requirements for vapour product retailers and these measures create greater accountability for businesses selling the products. The bill also increases penalties for violations and I support these increases.

We also know that some adults using these products to transition away from smoking and we know that Health Canada recognizes that switching completely from cigarettes to vaping is less harmful than continuing to smoke, but we must recognize that reality while still working to prevent a new generation of people from becoming addicted to nicotine.

Banning flavoured vapour products must be accompanied by accessible and effective smoking cessation supports. People who want to quit need somewhere to turn. Now I'm aware that we have programs such as nicotine replacement therapies and we have the Newfoundland and Labrador Lung Association's Smoker's Helpline and we have others. We should be looking at how these programs can be strengthened and expanded. We should also consider whether additional dedicated supports are needed for young people who have already developed nicotine dependency through vaping.

Legislation is one part of the solution. Education, prevention and treatment must also be the other approach.

We will support this legislation, but our support should not mean that the work ends here. We want to see government take a very proactive approach to youth vaping. We want to see stronger prevention and education programs in schools, accessible nicotine addiction treatment and cessation programs and supports, continued public

health education for families and communities. We want to see adequate resources for inspectors to enforce these new requirements and ongoing monitoring of youth vaping rates to determine whether these measures are working. We encourage the government to continue listening to health care professionals, educators, parents and individuals who are directly affected.

At the end of the day, the legislation is about protecting the health and the well-being of our communities and our people and we cannot ignore the statistics showing that youth vaping rates in Newfoundland and Labrador are higher than anywhere else in Canada.

We cannot ignore the risks associated with nicotine addiction, particularly for young people, and we have an opportunity here today to make meaningful action through prevention, regulation, stronger enforcement and good legislation.

Our Liberal government recognized the importance of tobacco control when it introduced a flavour ban in 2017. However, we also expect and anticipate that the small businesses who are selling the products will be fully supported through this transition, that they will be given time to transition, they will be given options and support. We don't want to see the rug pulled out from underneath our small businesses here in Newfoundland and Labrador as we all work together in this House of Assembly to continue to build a healthier Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: I thank the Member for her little walk down memory lane, back when life was like a box of flavoured Chiclets.

The hon. the Member for Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

R. BALSOM: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, I'm sure all Members of this House recognize the dangers posed by tobacco and vapour products, especially when it comes to our youth. The need for the amendments proposed by the minister is clear. We have the highest rates of nicotine use and daily vaping rate in Canada.

The first benefit of these amendments is protecting our young people. By banning all vape flavours except tobacco, this bill will directly target the sale of vaping products to youth. Speaker, the benefits reach even beyond the individual. Fewer young people starting to vape means fewer young people facing addiction and experiencing serious health impacts from nicotine and vaping.

The bill also strengthens how these protections are delivered. Speaker, the minister spoke of how this bill requires all vaping product shops to be licensed, the same way as those that sell tobacco. The amendments will also lead to increased fines and penalties available under the act. These measures will ensure better monitoring and compliance, prohibiting the sale of tobacco and vaping products through vending machines will further remove another point of access. This bill takes action to protect the long-term health and well-being of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, especially our youth, and support healthier communities for generations to come.

Speaker, we simply cannot afford to wait. Protecting young people from nicotine addiction must remain a priority and these amendments are an important step towards that goal. By restricting flavours, strengthening licensing and increasing penalties, these amendments will bring prevention and enforcement together with a clear purpose: protecting public health.

Speaker, I am proud to stand in support of Bill 35, which will make a real and lasting difference to the health of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

K. WHITE: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 35, An Act to Amend the Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act. This bill is important to protect the health and safety of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and the enforcement, regulation and oversight aspects of this legislation plays an important role in this.

We support the intent of this legislation. Protecting public health must be a priority and that means ensuring we have the appropriate laws, regulations and enforcement mechanisms in place to address the sale and distribution of tobacco and vapour products.

Vaping has become a growing concern across our province, particularly when it comes to young people. We know that Newfoundland and Labrador has faced some concerning statistics when it comes to youth vaping. The 2021-2022 Canadian Student Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey found that 26.6 per cent of students in Grade 7 to 12 in our province reported vaping in the previous 30 days. That was significantly higher than the national average of 16.8.

Those numbers should concern us all. This is not simply a matter of regulating what products can be sold in a retail environment. It is about public health, consumer safety and protecting the next generation from nicotine addiction. We need to keep in mind that introducing restrictions is only one part of the equation. We also have to consider how those restrictions will be implemented, monitored and enforced. A law is only as effective as the ability of government to ensure that people are following this.

One of the key components of Bill 35 is the expansion of inspection powers under the *Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act*. The legislation gives inspectors additional authority to examine and conduct tests on products, remove or seize products where necessary and assess premises under certain circumstances. These are important changes. When government introduces new requirements for businesses, there must be a clear system of oversight to ensure those requirements are being followed. Inspectors need the appropriate tools and the authority to carry out their responsibilities.

We cannot expect legislation to achieve its intended public health outcomes if there are insufficient mechanisms to identify violations or address noncompliance. At the same time, these powers must be exercised responsibly, consistently and in accordance with the law. Businesses must understand their obligations, inspectors must understand their authority and the public must have confidence that legislation is being applied fairly.

Another important change in this bill is the introduction of licensing requirements for vapour product retailers. This is an important step towards creating greater accountability within the industry. Businesses selling these products should be operating under clear rules and standards. Licensing provides government with a mechanism to identify and regulate retailers, establish expectations and hold businesses accountable when those expectations aren't met. It also creates an opportunity for more consistent oversight across the province.

This is particularly important when we consider the prohibition of non-tobacco flavoured vapour products. The legislation is

intended to reduce the availability and appeal of flavoured vapour products, particularly among our young people. However, that prohibition needs to be supported by meaningful enforcement. Government must ensure that retailers understand exactly which products are prohibited and that there is a clear process for identifying products that do not comply.

The expanded definitions included in this legislation, including the definition of flavoured vapour products, are therefore important. Regulation needs to be clear enough that businesses understand what is permitted and inspectors have the ability to determine when a violation has occurred.

We also recognize the enforcement must be supported by appropriate consequences. Bill 35 increases the penalties for retailers who violate the legislation. For a first offence, the fine increases from $500 to $1,000. For a second offence, it increases from $2,500 to $5,000. For a third and subsequent offence, the fine increases from $5,000 to $10,000.

The legislation also increases the periods during which retailers can be prohibited from selling the products associated with an offence. These changes send an important message, businesses have a responsibility to follow the law and repeated violations must have consequences.

Mr. Speaker, stronger penalties are only meaningful when they are consistently enforced. We need to know that government has the capacity to conduct inspections, respond to complaints, investigate potential violations and follow through when businesses fail to meet their obligations.

I would encourage the minister to ensure that the department has the resources and personnel necessary to carry out this expanded enforcement role. We should also consider how government will communicate these changes to retailers. Businesses need sufficient information and guidance to understand the new licensing requirements, product restrictions and potential penalties. Good regulation is not simply about introducing more rules; it is about creating a system that is understandable, practical and enforceable.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to acknowledge that there's a broader health and safety responsibility that comes with this legislation. While we support restricting flavoured vaping products, we must recognize that some adults use vaping as a means of moving away from traditional cigarettes. There's a distinction between preventing young people from becoming addicted to nicotine and ensuring adults who are trying to quit smoking can access appropriate supports.

This is why enforcement and regulation must be accompanied by education, prevention and accessible smoking cessation programs. We should not simply be removing products from the marketplace without ensuring that people who need help quitting have somewhere to turn. The provincial Smoking Cessation Program and the Newfoundland and Labrador Lung Association Smoker's Helpline are important resources and government should continue looking at ways to strengthening those supports.

Mr. Speaker, the success of this legislation will not be measured simply by the number of new regulations introduced or the size of the fines imposed. It will be measured by whether we are actually seeing improvements in public health and safety.

Following this legislation, we hope to see fewer people taking up vaping, especially young people; retailers complying with the new requirements; and inspectors who have the tools and resources they need to properly enforce these restrictions consistently across the province, these are the kinds of concerns the government must

continue to monitor as this legislation is implemented.

Mr. Speaker, our previous Liberal government had a history of taking action on tobacco control, including the introduction of restrictions on flavoured tobacco products in 2017. We recognize that protecting public health requires government to adapt as products, markets and public health concerns change. Bill 35 represents another step in that direction.

From the perspective of government services, we support the stronger inspection powers, the introduction of licensing requirements and the increased penalties for those who fail to comply with the law. We believe that appropriate regulation, effective oversight and consistent enforcement are essential to protecting consumers and ensuring that businesses are operating responsibly.

We will support this legislation because we believe that protecting the health and safety of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians must come first.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, $531 million, that's the amount or the share of the $32.5-billion settlement of tobacco companies with the provinces for the impact of smoking tobacco on our health care systems – $531 million. That doesn't capture, of course, the impact of tragedy, I guess, on families, the loss of loved ones or the shortened lives and so on and so forth.

If you look at vaping, early on I remember reading articles on popcorn lung or bronchiolitis obliterans. The key ingredient in the vaping product is diacetyl, it did contribute to a rare, serious and irreversible lung disease. So it's already been identified that it does have an impact.

Now I was a non-smoker. I've been a non-smoker all my life. I would say just about everyone in our family was. I know our parents, early on I remember them smoking, but then I know my father quit. He never gave up tobacco. He would chew it, where he worked on the railway, which is probably why when I went teaching at a school on the Southern Shore, up in Trepassey, it didn't bother me too much when the staff, mostly men at that time, were chewing tobacco and spitting it into a Coke bottle or a Pepsi bottle. Nevertheless, while it wasn't smoking, it did have its health impact. My father chewed tobacco to keep his face warm on the train is basically what it came down to, when you're out on the train and that train is going by.

However, what I do like about this, certainly, is the ban and the sale of flavoured vaping products that basically does attract young people to that. I speak as a teacher. I speak as a high school teacher, basically part of our duty when we were on supervision duty was to make sure that students weren't smoking on the school grounds. It wasn't so much about – well it was about health, making sure that the smoke wasn't coming into the school, but, nevertheless, there was always a goodly number who smoked.

The whole purpose of vaping was that it was meant as a way to ease people or transition people away from smoking, but very quickly what came evident is it became sort of the gateway drug or gateway product to smoking.

We have the highest prevalence of people using vaping products in Canada. Youth are adopting vaping at high rates. We have the highest rate of use in Canada at 26.6 per cent, according to '21-'22 Canadian Student Tobacco, Alcohol and Drug Survey. I don't know what it is, hopefully, it's going down. But the fact is these products were never

intended for youth but that's exactly what they are becoming.

You think about it, that early use and adoption of these habits, the impact on their health, the impact on, then, the health of our society as a whole and the impact on our health care system.

I think this is positive legislation, that it does make it at least less attractive for people to take this product up. I do remember, I don't know if it was here at the Health Sciences Complex or it was called body works display, cross sections of three lungs. Lungs of a smoker, of a non-smoker and a person who had given up smoking. It's interesting to see the damage done to a smoker's lungs. It was black, that's what I remember, it was black.

Here, we know that consultations were carried out by the division of Public Health with retailers and other key stakeholders to get their input on amendments and, at least, here there is an attempt to ban these products and to remove that temptation.

I will say this, I will echo the comments that I've heard from others, my colleagues here, it can't stop there. There is going to have to be a public education campaign. I remember years ago there was an anti-smoking campaign in ads and they obviously worked. They worked on men and boys because the ads were targeted to them. Smoking rates amongst women and girls increased. So we do know that a good public awareness campaign can work, but it's got to be sustained.

Schools have that captive audience, so to speak, but it also means having the resources in which to do that. Maybe it's through the health programs and through the health courses and so on and so forth. The fact is, not just the schools, it's got to be a public awareness campaign all throughout if we're going to make this ban effective.

I guess it comes down to, we know with any products, once it's banned, people will find a way around it. So it comes to, I guess, the enforcement piece but also, again, if you want to eliminate the temptation, I guess it's about educating the public, educating parents, educating young people and more or less directing them towards healthier choices.

For us in the NDP, we will support this, not only because we're going to be decreasing the impact on people's health, but also the potential impact on our health care system as well.

Thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER: Seeing no further speakers, if the Minister of Health and Community Services speaks, he will conclude the debate.

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. WALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank all Members here in the hon. House that spoke to this bill today. I've taken a copious amount of notes but I won't reiterate everything, though I will comment on a couple.

To my colleague from Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair, she spoke about this as being an important health issue and the impact on our youth and our province and the need to protect the next generation from nicotine addiction. She also spoke about the perception that vaping is harmless, which we all know that's it not.

One comment that she made and I really take it seriously, that we are still learning about the long-term effects of vaping on the body. We are still learning about all of that.

She spoke about the adolescent brain development and the effects on the cardiovascular system and it's our responsibility to protect the youth that they're able to live healthier lives. I'm glad that she is supporting this bill. She also spoke about, of course, the impacts on small business, as many Members did.

My colleague from Lewisporte - Twillingate spoke on the growing prevalence throughout Newfoundland and Labrador that youth have on vaping and the trend across the country to be drawn to the flavoured vaping products. We see that on a regular basis. It's through all the engagement we see that and we speak to health professionals who say the same thing.

To my hon. colleague from Placentia - St. Mary's, she spoke about the public health concern in Newfoundland and Labrador that we are facing now with the youth vaping, becoming more dependent and vulnerable on taking up vaping. She also spoke about being 10 years back. Yes, we do know more today than we did know 10 years back; however, we are still here today dealing with this. She spoke about how quickly the addiction can develop with respect to our youth, and, of course, the flavoured Chiclets, that's going to be forever in *Hansard*, but you certainly took us down memory lane, as the Speaker did say with respect to that comment.

I was glad to hear you speaking of the work that was done in 2017, and Bill 35 continues that approach, why we're here today as we work together for the responsibility of our long-term health of our youth. I'm glad that she supports this bill and it gives greater accountability.

She also spoke about the legislation now and the need for education and prevention as we progress. We can certainly have those conversations with my colleague, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, and the need for public health education for families. It's a very key point and I thank the hon. Member for mentioning that.

My colleague from Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde who spoke on the strengthening of the protections that's needed, shops needing licensing, which is going to be part of this as well and he spoke about the fines and monitoring of businesses and spoke about the long-term well-being and healthier communities. His comment was that we cannot afford to wait and I think he's absolutely correct, Mr. Speaker, we cannot. Government has a responsibility for protecting public health.

My colleague from St. John's West who spoke about public health being a priority and the vaping is a growing concern, especially in youth. He spoke about the students from Grade 7 to 12 in our province that have a higher use of vaping than the national average. He spoke about the clear oversight with this legislation and regulations, and with respect to having consistent policies, enforcement and the appropriate consequences, and businesses having a responsibility to follow the law. That's absolutely correct. He spoke about the broad responsibility for continued protection needed for our youth and he will support the legislation, and I thank him for his comments.

To my colleague from St. John's Centre who spoke about the $531-million settlement with respect to health care cost recovery, that is indeed significant. Speaking with officials in my department, when a patient comes into tertiary care centre with lung cancer, it's an average of between $70,000 and $77,000 cost per patient when it comes into treatment for lung cancer here in our province. When you spoke about the settlement, it brought me back to that conversation I had with officials in my department. Not that we're putting a price on it, but it's a reality and it's part of what we're dealing with here.

You spoke about your father chewing tobacco. It took me back to when my wife and I were first courting. Her father –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

J. WALL: And it's not unparliamentary language, Mr. Speaker, but it's –

AN HON. MEMBER: It's archaic.

J. WALL: It's archaic, yes. Still nothing wrong with it, I say to the Member.

Her father at that time chewed tobacco –

AN HON. MEMBER: You did?

J. WALL: No, not myself, her father. At that time, it was most common for a lot of men to do that. You don't see it very often today, but it brought me back to when I was 15 years old. Anyway, I digress.

The Member also spoke about the higher rate in Canada with respect to vaping and the support that's needed as we move forward on our health care system. I go back to that $70,000 to $77,000 cost for lung cancer patients.

I agree, you mentioned it, as other colleagues did, with respect to public education campaign that's needed to make this ban effective. I agree with you there. His closing remark was helping guide our youth to make healthier choices.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues here in the House today for their comments. I will take my seat and I look forward to discussing this further within Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Are the Members ready for the question?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act to Amend the Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act. (Bill 35)

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

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

L. PARROTT: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act to Amend the Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently. (Bill 35)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services that the House do now resolve itself into a Committee of Whole to consider Bill 35.

SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that I do now leave this Chair and that this House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 35.

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 is carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Dwyer): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 35, An Act to Amend the Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act.

A bill, "An Act to Amend the Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act." (Bill 35)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Chair.

I have a few brief questions for the minister on this bill and I do believe that two or three of my colleagues have some questions as well. Not too much here.

So, Minister, the bill allows for exemptions to the definition of flavoured vapour products through LGIC regulations. What type of exemptions do you envision included in this and why was it necessary to include?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the Member opposite for the question.

The exemption that is not going to be within this legislation with respect to the flavoured products is the tobacco flavoured vape. So that is the only thing that is being exempted out of this. All of the other flavours are going to be, of course, part of this legislation but when we looked at and focused on the flavoured vapes, the ones that were attractive, as our hon. Member for Placentia - St. Mary's said, were the fruit flavours. These are the ones that we are targeting here and all the various assortments of those flavours.

We are looking at the tobacco-only flavour that's going to be exempt from it and that is what we're looking for here to have that exempted from this legislation.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the minister for that answer.

I have a couple of questions on the impact to small business. I'm just wondering, has the department done any work to determine the number of small businesses that will be impacted by this change?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Member opposite for the question, it is an important one.

Of course, there has been extensive consultation done with respect to different groups and the business owners were part of that consultation. Currently, we have approximately 25 registered pure vape shops; that's all they sell is vape. We have about 25 throughout the province. That's the ones that are registered that are here in the province.

We realize that there's going to be an impact. This will take some time to come into effect, as I said in my opening statement, about six months, but we did have feedback from all groups including those business owners.

We realize that, yes, they will feel the impact with respect to the vape flavours that are taken out; however, they still have the tobacco flavour and they have six months before this is enacted.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the minister for that answer.

Has government consulted directly with the independent vape retailers about the potential economic impact that these amendments will have on their businesses beyond, I guess, accepting the written submissions that were done through the 2024 consultation process?

I know you mentioned there are about 25. I know you referenced maybe about six months before we get there with your proposed changes. We have heard some feedback that six months is not a long time, even a year, I suppose, is not a long time. My colleagues will have further questions, but some of those vape shops are maybe signed into multi-year leases and things like that.

I'm just wondering has there been any direct consultation with those, as you referred to, pure vape shops, that's what they're into?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Member opposite for the question.

Again, it's another good question. When it comes to the engagement, they were part of the written submissions. With respect to face-to-face, there were virtual sessions that took place for the tobacco and vaping industry participants. We were given their feedback because we wanted that on these proposed amendments, how the individuals and businesses were going to be impacted. Those face-to-face or virtual sessions did take place. We also had Indigenous groups and organizations; they gave theirs as well.

We met with many groups, of course. Staff also met with representatives from NLHS, the Canadian Cancer Society and Heart and Stroke. We also had written submissions from vaping associations, convenience stores, all over and above the 25 pure vape shops.

There was a considerable amount of engagement here. All that was taken into account when, of course, we're making these decisions. I hope that answers your question.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Chair.

I think what I'm hearing is you did hear from a broad group. I think we were just specifically wondering about those 25.

I'm going to move on into the section of smoking cessation and just ask a handful of questions from that area.

Would the government consider allowing access to flavoured vaping products if it were through a regulated or a controlled system for adults who use them as part of a smoking cessation effort? I'm kind of just alluding back to some of the things that I had talked about in my speaking notes.

We're always mindful that vaping is not harmless. It may be less harmful than someone who was a heavy smoker, but just wondering for that type of person, if they would consider allowing access to flavoured vapes through a regulated or somewhat of a controlled system or if you've thought about that or looked at that?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Member Opposite for the question.

That was discussed. We've had great conversations with the Canadian Task Force on Preventative Health Care. They have advised us repeatedly that vaping is

not an adequate smoking cessation tool and advised against using it because there are no therapeutic products that are approved with any long-term safety data and it, of course, continues the use of nicotine. We've had those conversations. It was not part of this legislation because we were advised by the health professionals to say that we should not, that vaping is not an adequate smoking cessation tool.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the minister for that answer.

It does lead nicely into my next one. Given the information that you just shared, will the government be introducing or expanding supports for smoking cessation programs for those who will need support when flavoured vapes are no longer available?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Member opposite for the question.

It's not part of this legislation. It's come up in discussion with respect to ongoing support. We can certainly take that away and discuss that further outside, of course, the scope of this legislation, but it's always a matter of importance when we're trying to help and assist the people of the province break this cycle. So we'll certainly take that away and have those conversations as to what we can further do to help those that are impacted.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the minister for that.

My next one may be one he's going to say he will have to take away as well. I'd be surprised if he had it readily available. Just looking to see if you do have information, statistic numbers on the use of smoking cessation programs in our province.

I think we do know the stronghold that nicotine or vaping has on individuals and we do invest and support those programs. Are we holding our own? Is there an increasing success? Do we have any feedback on that, that we do annually?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the Member opposite for the question.

No, I don't have it readily available. It is within the department. I'm happy to get that information and table it here the next time we're back in the House. I'm happy to provide that.

We do know that where vaping isn't an approved cessation, the information we have, of course, takes that into consideration. But I will get back to you with the information. I'm happy to table it.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Chair, and I appreciate that, Minister.

So I was looking for information available, I guess, on the use of those smoking cessation programs in the province, and the next one does kind of go hand in hand. Is the government aware whether those current smoking cessation programs are adequately meeting the demands? It's close but it's not the same.

I think when we are investing in different programs, maybe some are working better than others, maybe those are the ones that we can invest more in and maybe some we can drop, I don't know. But if that's something that you need to get back to me on, that's fine as well, Minister.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the Member opposite again.

That will be part of the information I will bring back to you. I'm happy to do that for you and for the House.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Minister.

Has there been any analysis done on whether existing smoking cessation programs are effective to help people quit vaping?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the Member Opposite again.

That is a very good question, one that I have not discussed with respect to smoking cessation and how it's going to assist in those who are vaping. That is a good question. I will have to take that away. I know we've discussed it with my team at the department, but I don't want to misspeak and give any wrong information. I will have that for you. Again, I'll bring it back to you.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Chair.

No, I fully respect and trust him to his word when he says he'll get back with that important information. It's better to have a fulsome answer, so that's great.

What guidance is being provided to health care professionals who are asked by patients about using vapour products to quit smoking?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the Member opposite once again.

That information being provided to our health care professionals within our hospital setting or our family care settings, that certainly comes from the department, our team there. It's also within the NLMA, the information that they do provide to their members.

Other than that, I don't have it in front of me to share. But, of course, our clinicians, our health care professionals are adequately briefed and advised on how to offer that to patients. Again, the day-to-day operations, I don't have that in front of me, but I will certainly take that away again.

You have very good questions.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

L. DEMPSTER: I must have done my homework, I say to the minister.

Now this is my final question and then I'll move on. A couple of my colleagues will participate in Committee here.

In 2024, consultations on this act had specifically said they were considering banning the purchasing of tobacco products for individuals below a certain age going forward, and/or raising the age to 21. I think what I've been wondering, Minister, for my final question, is why did government decide not to move forward with either of those? That's a couple of things that was being looked at prior.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the Member opposite for the question.

That was discussed many times in 2024 and, again, currently. PEI is the only province in the country that has set the Canadian precedent by raising the age for tobacco and vapour products to 21. Here in the province it's 19, as is every other province in Canada. No other jurisdiction has followed suit of PEI. So we have discussed it at length, many good discussions back and forth.

What we chose to do is the department continue to monitor developments across the country and to see if any other provinces do make the change. As I said, PEI is the only one right now, and we have to, of course, look at that, how it affects legislation in this province with respect to age groups of others. When we discussed it, what first came up was, would this be a charter infringement?

We had that discussion at length, but it's always before us with respect to the age because we realize a 19-year-old, are they more susceptible than a 21-year-old? Given all of that, we decided to keep the legislation with the age currently as it is now and we will monitor it going forward and if anything need-be comes up, we'll certainly change at that time.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Lake Melville.

K. RUSSELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

One quick question for the minister. It's about coming into force. I have one licensed retailer who was looking to find out whether or not this goes for assent and then it's six months, or does it, in six months, go for assent?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the Member opposite for the question.

Once this goes through the House, there will be a six-month period before it comes into effect, giving the retailers that opportunity with respect to their product and what have you. So it's not going to be immediate. There will be a six-month term before they are required to have this banned from their shelves.

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Chair.

Just out of curiosity, has the department done any analysis on how these amendments might affect or impact long-term costs to the health care system? Has there been any analysis as to what this could mean?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the Member opposite for the question.

We have had discussion with respect to the financial impact. As I said in my closing statement, between $70,000 and $77,000 annually for health care for a lung cancer patient. That is the current numbers here in Newfoundland and Labrador as to what our government is responsible for in providing that health care service. With respect to an overall analysis with respect to the banning, at this early stage, no, that has not been done with respect to how it's going to impact our province.

I can say, from conversations that we've had within the department, discussing this legislation, and I'll go back to, I think, the most current numbers are 2023 – at that time, in 2023, there were 585 new lung cancer patients admitted to our hospitals. When you look at that, that's a significant

number and you can just do the math as to the number I said beforehand.

Going forward, we don't have that analysis on the impact of the long-term impact of how our finances are going to be impacted, but I can certainly say it's going to be significant when we look at those numbers from 2023, just given the monetary value for each patient.

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Chair.

In the cross-jurisdictional scan, were you able to determine the extent to which other jurisdictions that made similar bans had successes or failures in preventing children and youth from using vaping products? How successful were they in achieving that goal?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the Member opposite for the question.

We did discuss that as well. That was looked at. I can say, jurisdictions such as New Zealand or the UK introduced similar legislation to create more of a smoke-free generation. This has certainly had a positive impact on the amount of youth vaping in those areas.

We also looked at how it would affect our health care system, of course, as I just mentioned. But New Zealand and the UK were two that we did look at and the impact for them was quite significant. We, as a government, have to have that protection of our youth first and foremost. That's why we're bringing forward this legislation today.

It's incumbent on all of us, as far as I'm concerned, to make sure that we do our part. This piece of legislation is a good step, for sure.

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Chair.

Will this legislation also apply to cannabis vaping products that contain cannabis?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, very good question from the Member opposite.

No, this does not take into effect or any control with respect to cannabis. Cannabis falls under my colleague, the Minister of Finance. That legislation is under his shop.

There will be a cannabis bill coming before this House in very short order.

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

J. DINN: I had the feeling the Minister of Finance was going to add to that, Chair.

C. PARDY: No, tomorrow morning.

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

J. DINN: I'm glad to hear that he'll be following the lead of his esteemed colleague.

How easy will this legislation make it, or how difficult, I guess, to buy flavoured vaping products online from out of the province? Will there be any ability to control that?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Mr. Chair, another great question.

We've had this discussion as well. This legislation cannot prohibit the online

shopping of anyone in the province. This has no jurisdiction over that. People still have that ability for online shopping. Again, no legislation covers that.

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

J. DINN: Just related to that then. If you come back from certain countries and there are certain products that are banned coming back to Newfoundland, would the law apply to any products that you would bring back from other jurisdictions that still have these as legalized products?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the Member opposite.

That is very hard to control; however, we can certainly have those discussions with our federal partners for the federal laws of what can come into the country and what cannot. We can certainly have those conversations there to work with our federal partners to have those discussions and to see what we can do.

Again, it's very hard to control with online orders with pretty much anything that's coming into the province, but we can certainly have those discussions with our federal counterparts.

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

J. DINN: My last question. It's obvious that the minister has had discussions, certainly about loopholes and about ways in which people might get around this. You're never going to stop that completely. In those discussions, were there any other, let's say, loopholes or factors that you considered to how people might contravene or get around this legislation in these discussions?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, and, again, I thank the Member opposite for the question.

Again, very hard to control when it comes to anything outside of legislation or outside of the law or outside of any government control. We understand and we know for years with respect to what's ordered outside of what's registered and legislated. That's a long-standing, existing issue that people have been dealing with for many years, if it's outside of the law with respect to those loopholes.

Difficult for us to try to curtail, but always happy to have those conversations with our colleagues from Justice and Public Safety with respect to our police forces here in the province on stopping things coming that shouldn't be coming here. Again, outside this legislation but it has been discussed many times.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Pearl North.

L. STOYLES: Thank you, Chair.

I have a number of questions. I have a large number of small businesses, vape shops in my district. They're very concerned about what's going to happen when this comes into effect.

Will the government meet with these retailers before everything is put in place, once this bill is passed? Will the government meet with individual store owners, especially some of these store owners who have seven or 10 stores around the province? The impact on them is going to be enormous.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the Member opposite for the question.

We discussed it many times with respect to how these amendments could impact vape shops and their bottom line and their businesses, but we come back to, at the end, with respect to the health and well-being of our people in our province, the necessary changes in order to address the high vaping rates, especially amongst young people.

With respect to your question, meeting with businesses or meeting going forward. I'm happy to meet with anyone to discuss, but right now, as of today, there are no plans to introduce any program to assist a business or employee with respect to the impact, but happy to have that conversation to take away and discuss it further.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Pearl North.

L. STOYLES: The minister mentioned six months. I know for a fact in my district alone that some of these stores have leases for two and three or longer periods because they weren't expecting this legislation to come in place. I'm wondering have the government looked at this and the impact that it's going to have to these small businesses?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the Member opposite for the question.

We have had much feedback from the businesses. I can't comment, specifically, on individual cases with respect to long-term lease. I don't recall that in conversation but I can certainly go back to the engagement and see. There was an online questionnaire, there were written submissions. I will go back and check and see if that was mentioned.

You mentioned about the six months. Yes, it's going to be six months. The date is not yet set that we're going to proclaim it, but it's going to be a minimum of six months for that.

I'm happy to take away with respect to your other question with respect to the leases.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Pearl North.

L. STOYLES: Has the government considered buying the products back because some of these retailers have a lot of supplies on hand that they bought because, I guess, if they bought more, they got it for less? Has the government looked at purchasing any of the products to help the retailers so they won't get a drastic loss?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the Member opposite.

No, that conversation has not been had with respect to purchasing any existing vape products that are currently on the shelf. That discussion has not been had.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Pearl North.

L. STOYLES: Also, a large number of those stores have workers, has there been any talk about anything put in place when they lose their jobs? I wonder if the minister did any analysis on how many of those stores are going to actually stay open. Is there anything being done to determine if they're all going to close or is this industry to just fail?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the Member opposite for the question.

No, the department has not done any analysis on businesses that were to stay

open after the legislation comes into force of banning the flavoured vaping products. There will be the lead time, as I said before, with respect to before these changes come into force and that gives time for the vape shops and the staff to make necessary preparations to adjust their business. But at no point in time are we going to consider or look at the health and welfare and well-being of our youth versus – to make sure that we do have that first and foremost.

As I said, they do have the lead-up time to that to make proper changes. Again, it'll be six months or longer before it's going to be proclaimed.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Pearl North.

L. STOYLES: Has there been any talk about enforcements once the changes are put in place, any additional inspector enforces going to be put into place because of those changes?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the Member opposite for the question.

Our analysis of that has yielded that it's not going to be a considerable amount of an extra load on the enforcement workload. So Government Services currently conducts the inspections of all licensed sellers, and adding this additional criteria, such as the flavoured vaping products that are part of this bill, is not going to have a great deal of addition to their workload.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Pearl North.

L. STOYLES: I understand there was a lot of older adults who smoked for 20, 30 and 40 years that gave up regular smoking because they thought it would be better for them, the vaping. I guess they still think that. They're still vaping.

I'm wondering if there was any consideration to grandfather some of it in for some of those older people. Like my colleague from Lake Melville asked, was there any consideration to them having any products to help them quit smoking under this program and any – I understand you said it wasn't. I'm just wondering if that could be considered, especially for some of the older people who gave up smoking, could something be considered for them?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the Member opposite for the question.

We are banning the flavoured vapes. As I said in my opening statement, the tobacco vape is still available and can still be purchased in any retailer. We are not banning the tobacco flavoured vape. We are banning the fruit flavours, the other flavoured vapes. The tobacco one is still there, and long-time smokers, as you are saying, can still purchase that one. That is not part of this legislation.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Pearl North.

L. STOYLES: So some of the stores that I've been speaking to are already now selling online and they sell flavours online. How is the government going to control this?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair.

I answered that question earlier with respect to online orders or online shopping. Government cannot currently right now prohibit that. Again, as I said to my hon. colleague from St. John's Centre, our discussions with our federal counterparts with respect to the products that are coming into the country that are available online,

those are discussions that we need to have. If they're coming from other countries, we need to have a look at what's coming in from where, have the discussions with our federal counterparts. That's the only way right now to deal with that going forward.

Right now, government has no ability to curb any online shopping.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Pearl North.

L. STOYLES: The black market is out there now for people still buying black market regular cigarettes and I would assume that because these vapes are going to be taken off the market and they're not going to be able to get them, there is probably going to be a large black market surface to sell these products.

I'm just wondering what the government is planning on doing to crack down on this once it happens, when it comes in place.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair.

If it's a black market for vaping, if it's cigarettes, if it's alcohol, it's a difficult position to be in for government trying to curb it. What we are doing here now is we are focusing on the health and well-being of our youth with respect to banning these vape products.

I cannot control the black market; government cannot control it. We can certainly work with our law enforcement but, other than that, that is a very difficult position to be in. Here we're looking at the legislation that's going to serve the youth of our province in the best way that we can with respect to legislation.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Pearl North.

L. STOYLES: I have no more questions.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's.

S. GAMBIN-WALSH: Minister, I have one question.

Some of our retailers are not going to continue in this business as a result of this legislation. If a retailer decides to close rather than apply for a licence, will there be any provisions to allow them to sell through their existing inventory if they do not sell online?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. WALL: Until this is proclaimed and comes into effect, they can certainly continue as they are currently. Once this comes into effect, then that changes. They can certainly sell their product, what they have for the next six months – going back to my colleague from Lake Melville, for the next six months or until proclaimed, they can certainly sell the product that they have in their stores. Then, of course, they have that time to make changes as they see fit.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 16 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 16 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 16 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: A bill, An Act to Amend the Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act. (Bill 35)

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.'

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

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Chair, I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 35 without amendment.

CHAIR: Is it the pleasure of the House that I rise and report Bill 35, An Act to Amend the Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act, 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 (Lane): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

J. DWYER: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that the Committee recommends Bill 35, An Act to Amend the Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act, without amendment.

SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and recommends Bill 35 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

L. PARROTT: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the said bill be read a third time?

L. PARROTT: Tomorrow.

SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, report received and adopted. Committee ordered to sit again on tomorrow.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Deputy Premier, that this House do now recess until 6:05.

SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that this House do now recess until 6:05.

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.’

Carried.