

Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FIFTY-FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Volume LI | FIRST SESSION | Number 51

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Paul Lane, MHA

Thursday November 19, 2026

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

SPEAKER (Lane): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

I will now rule on a point of order raised by the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair on Tuesday, November 17. The Member stated that the Deputy Premier commented that the Official Opposition was not telling the truth.

I have reviewed *Hansard* and it does not reflect that the Deputy Premier made the statement claimed by the Member. As such, there is no point of order.

I do remind all Members, though, to continue to be careful of the language we use in this hon. House and to remember our obligation to address one another in a respectful and parliamentary manner.

Yesterday, our Legislature commemorated, for the ninth consecutive year, the Moose Hide Campaign, a grassroots movement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians committed to protecting women, children and gender-diverse individuals, and speaking out against gender-based and domestic violence.

Yesterday morning, Members stood in ceremony and solidarity with reflection and prayer here in this Chamber, where they were presented with the Moose Hide Campaign pin. On behalf of all Members, I wish to extend sincere appreciation to Jenelle Duval of First Light for sharing her thoughtful reflection and song.

Our Legislature's participation in this important initiative provides an opportunity for Members to take meaningful action against gender-based violence, to support reconciliation, to honour Indigenous traditions and culture and to encourage healthy masculinity.

On behalf of the Newfoundland and Labrador Legislature, I also wish to congratulate the Moose Hide Campaign on its growth and success and its positive progress toward the vision of distributing 10 million moose hide pins across Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Today, I would like to welcome to our public gallery, Mr. Con Parsons, who is the subject of a Member's statement.

Welcome, Mr. Parsons.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: We also have individuals visiting the public gallery today from the Portugal Cove-St. Philip's Royal Canadian Legion Branch 10 which is the subject of a Member's statement. They are Comrade Moses Tucker 2nd Vice-President; Comrade Douglas Copp, Executive Committee member; and Sergeant Leslie Churchill, CO retired veteran member.

Welcome to our Chamber.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Also in the public gallery, as part of a Member's statement today, is Dr. Sarah Hutchens who is accompanied by her husband Colin Pennell and her parents Dwight and Mary Beth Hutchens.

Welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Visiting the public gallery today, as well, are individuals from Emmaus House which is the subject of a Member's statement. They include Rudy Singleton, House Chairperson; Heather Thomson, House Vice-Chair; and David Mercer, Treasurer.

They are joined by Reverend Gail Dick, Reverend Derrick Bishop, Alma and Rudy

Singleton, Heather Thomson, Donna Hoskins, Audrey Wood, Gary Sooley and Shirley Hearn.

Welcome to our gallery.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: I would also like to welcome members of the St. John's Regatta Committee who are visiting today in relation to a Member's statement.

They include Edgar Williams, Nancy Hollett, Ken Butler, Candace Moakler, Paul Rogers, Megan Brown, Shannon Brown, George Wade, Jack Fagan, Lewis Stoyles, John Snook, Noel Conway, Campbell Feehan, Don Kelly and Gail Malone.

Welcome to our Chamber.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: That's a crowd.

Statements by Members

SPEAKER: Today we'll hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of St. John's East - Quidi Vidi, Placentia - St. Mary's, Virginia Waters - Pleasantville, Waterford Valley and Conception Bay East - Bell Island.

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

S. O'LEARY: Thank you, Speaker.

I stand to recognize a resoundingly compassionate inter-denominational food bank organization in my district. Emmaus House is a food bank administered and operated solely by volunteers and operates under the auspices of the Anglican Parishes of the Cathedral and St. Thomas and the Basilica Roman Catholic Parish.

Emmaus House was founded in 1992. The word "Emmaus" symbolizes the movement from despair to faith and companionship through doubt, confusion or spiritual journeys. Originally founded by Reverend Dean Harvey of the Anglican Cathedral and Sister Katherine Bellamy of the Roman Catholic Basilica, it operated in the Basilica complex until its recent relocation to Canon Wood Hall, 8 Military Road, Monday to Friday from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

With our changing demographic, there is a vast increase in numbers and complexities of patrons' needs. Dietary, cultural and religious guidelines necessitate hamper provisions with specific requirements. Since January 2026, Emmaus House has had 2,650 visits with 3,746 people served.

Emmaus House, like all food banks, is experiencing challenges and strategies are required to meet these growing needs. Emmaus House acts as a bridge of human compassion, not meant to be the sole provider of food, but rather to provide dignity, respect and vital relief to people in need.

I ask all hon. Members to congratulate and thank Emmaus House members.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

S. GAMBIN-WALSH: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Con Parsons of Fox Harbour, whose remarkable musical journey spans over 65 years of entertaining audiences, sharing his talents and bringing people together through music.

Con was born in 1938 in Clattice Harbour and moved to Fox Harbour in 1959. His love of music began at an early age. His father taught him to play the accordion, while he learned the guitar by listening to Hank Williams on a 45 record.

Con married Mary Dreaddy in 1964 and, together, they raised their daughter, Cheryl. Throughout his remarkable musical journey, Con has recorded eight CDs and 3 cassette albums. At an age when many would have retired, Con is still doing what he loves, continuing to play in a band and entertain audiences.

Beyond his musical accomplishments, Con has made an incredible contribution to his community. Through countless fundraising performances, he has helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for individuals and families facing difficult circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, 65 years of music is an incredible achievement, but Con's generosity and willingness to help others make his legacy even more meaningful.

I ask all Members to join me in recognizing and congratulating Con Parsons.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to recognize the 208th running of the Royal St. John's Regatta, the oldest continuous sporting event in North America.

For more than two centuries, Regatta Day has brought families, friends, neighbours and visitors together to celebrate athletic achievement, community spirit and a shared heritage. While the races are the heart of the Regatta, its success depends on so much more. It reflects the dedication of athletes that train year-round, the tireless efforts of volunteers who work behind the scenes and the generosity of sponsors and community partners who help sustain this remarkable tradition.

The Regatta also provides an opportunity to bring people together, welcome visitors to our capital city and showcase the spirit, resilience and hospitality for which Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are known.

Mr. Speaker, the Royal St. John's Regatta is more than a sporting competition. It is a symbol of community, connecting generations and reminding us of traditions that make our province so special.

We are honoured today to have several committee members join us in the gallery today, along with two Members from the House of Assembly. The Member for St. John's West serves as president of the Regatta Committee while the MHA for Cape St. Francis is also a valued member of the community.

I extend my congratulations to the championship winning crews and sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to the success of the 208th Regatta. May this treasured tradition continue to thrive for generations to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Waterford Valley.

J. KORAB: Speaker, I'm happy to be able to stand here today to acknowledge Dr. Sarah Hutchens and the Vision Development Centre on being this year's recipient of the Trailblazer Award for the Newfoundland and Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs. This was presented during their 2026 Entrepreneur of the Year Award Gala in October.

Entrepreneurship is an admirable and risky pursuit that has its valleys and its peaks. This, Speaker, is certainly a peak. In NLOWE's own words, this award recognizes a pioneering business owner who has shattered barriers and sets new standards of excellence in their industry.

With the critical role your eyes play in your overall health, Dr. Sarah Hutchens and the team specialize in pediatric optometry and are well-equipped for all our optometry needs.

Whether it's flying down south to help the Toronto Blue Jays players with their eye exams or starting a study to see if there is a correlation with goalie's visual performance skills and their save percentage, Dr. Sarah Hutchens is always moving quicker than you can blink.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating Dr. Sarah Hutchens and the Vision Development Centre team for their well-deserved Trailblazer Award.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

F. HUTTON: Thank you, Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to note a remarkable achievement by the Royal Canadian Legion across this great country, which is represented by Branch 10 in my home community of Portugal Cove - St. Philip's.

This year the Royal Canadian Legion is celebrating its 100th anniversary. The Legion in Portugal Cove - St. Philip's has been in existence since 1948. The Branch 10 Legion held its first meeting in a house in Portugal Cove on October 17, 1948 – 78 years ago. The meeting was conducted by Veteran Comrade Daniel Churchill. Meetings continued in various houses until the current location was built in 1965.

In addition to hosting annual Remembrance Day parades, of course, marking July 1 and the Battle of the Atlantic, service Branch 10 supports local veterans, Canadian Armed Forces members, the RCMP and many other community groups. Of course, Mr. Speaker, the foundation of all this is making sure that the sacrifices of veterans and those who are still serving us are never forgotten. The official motto of the Royal Canadian Legion is: We Will Remember Them.

This weekend, Branch 10 will hold a gala dinner on Saturday night to celebrate its milestone anniversary. I can't wait to be there.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to rise and join me in thanking the members of the Royal Canadian Legion, not just Branch 10, but all Legions across this province, for the positive impact the members have had on our community and for the organization's 100th anniversary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Well done.

I also have here on my list that the Member for St. John's Centre would like to do a Member's statement with leave of the House.

Does the Member have leave?

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

SPEAKER: Leave has been granted.

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Tom Furlong has been a Commissionaire for 10 years here in the House of Assembly. He joined the Commissionaires after retiring from his career at the Delta. He works all over the metro area, but his two main locations are Environment Canada in Donovans and, his favourite, the Confederation Building.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. DINN: He is dedicated to the Commissionaires. They are the only thing

he would change family plans for. When they call, he is there. He never says no.

His wife, Jackie, who is in the public gallery at this point in time, worked 40 years at Bell Aliant. She volunteers at Ronald McDonald House, with VOCM Cares and for the Unifor executive board as well as their retirees committee.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. DINN: They have two daughters, Adele and Jillian, and they dote on their grandson, Alexander. Every Christmas since his grandson arrived, Tom dressed as Santa, visiting Alexander's house first, and then he visited all the other children on Alexander Street.

Tom and Jackie were introduced on November 18, 1975, when Tom was 25 and Jackie was 22, at the Bella Vista. They married exactly a year later, November 19, 1976.

Today they celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. DINN: While you've done it, I'll ask hon. Members to offer congratulations to Commissionaire Tom Furlong and his wife Jackie following this speech.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: That was nice.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

That was well done, MHA Dinn. Congratulations, Tom.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Speaker. That was one of the better ones. Congratulations and happy anniversary.

Speaker, World Fisheries Day is a day for us to reflect on the importance of the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador and the profound impact it has on our province.

Observed on November 21, World Fisheries Day highlights the valuable role sustainable fisheries management plays in maintaining healthy marine ecosystems, strengthening coastal communities and supporting the people whose livelihoods depend on the ocean.

Here in Newfoundland and Labrador, we know the value of the fishery. It has been the cornerstone of our heritage, culture, way of life and economy for generations.

Our fishery is one of our province's greatest strengths, and our government is focused on supporting harvesters, processors and communities that continue to drive this vital industry forward.

From the renewal of the Atlantic Fisheries Fund to our seafood sector generating over $2 billion, we are building on this success and continuing to create opportunities for our fishery.

To celebrate World Fisheries Day, my department held a creative writing contest for our province's kindergarten to Grade 6 students, and I am eager to read the imaginative stories they have written.

Speaker, I ask all Members of this hon. House to join me in acknowledging World Fisheries Day.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I join the minister in recognizing World Fisheries Day and acknowledging the generations of harvesters, plant workers, processors and fishing families whose hard work has helped build Newfoundland and Labrador. Our fishery remains one of the foundations of our economy and an essential part of life in coastal communities throughout this province.

While today is a day to celebrate, it is also a day to reflect on the challenges facing the industry: harvesters continue to face rising operating costs; processors are grappling with labour shortages; and many coastal communities are concerned about the long-term sustainability of key stocks in the economic uncertainty that comes with changing global markets.

The strength of our fishery is not measured only by the value of seafood exports, but by whether fishing families can build a secure future and whether young people can see opportunities to remain in their communities.

On World Fisheries Day, let us renew our commitment to supporting a sustainable, prosperous fishery that works for harvesters, plant workers, processors and the communities that depend on it.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

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

I take this opportunity to call on this government once again to engage more actively with the FFAW in its quest to attract young entrants into the fishery. This industry is culturally and economically significant to us and has long served as our historical and economic backbone.

It will not continue if we fail to take action and replace those who will soon retire.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker, I rise to acknowledge November 22 as National Housing Day, which raises awareness about critical issues of housing and homelessness in our country.

In our first year as government, we have moved deliberately toward our goal of 10,000 new homes in five years through a combination of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation homes and private and community sector development.

We committed $31 million to build Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation homes and are engaging municipalities to identify areas for development.

We committed another $31 million to the Affordable Rental Housing Program, helping private and community sector developers build up to 344 new homes.

We also advanced projects stalled in the final year of the Liberal government, with over 80 homes under construction in St. John's and Corner Brook.

We have seen early returns from these efforts: housing starts up 21 per cent from last year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. TIBBS: Over 300 repairs completed, on pace for a record year. I'm pleased to report that, for the first time, a dedicated crew went to Labrador this week for repairs to our housing there, and I couldn't do it without my colleagues from Torngat Mountains and Labrador West for their advocacy for Labrador. Our wait-list is down 10 per cent from this time last year.

Speaker, we welcome the federal government's commitments to address housing and homelessness and look forward to using available funding to support the people of this beautiful province.

This issue will not be solved in one year, Mr. Speaker, but as we mark National Housing Day, I stand behind the work under way and the progress still to come.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

S. GAMBIN-WALSH: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, National Housing Day is an opportunity to reflect not only on how many homes are being built, but whether those homes are meeting the needs of people struggling to find housing.

The minister has spoken about housing starts, construction targets and homes built but those numbers alone do not tell the full story. We need to know how many homes are available to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. How many are intended for people experiencing housing insecurity? How many are actually accessible to those who need them the most?

At a time when housing costs continue to rise and more people are struggling to afford a place to live, we cannot measure success solely by the number of houses going up. We must measure it by whether people can actually afford to live in them.

Speaker, housing progress must be about more than supply. It must be about affordability, accessibility and ensuring no one is left behind.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

I thank the minister for the advance copy of the statement.

Without a comprehensive plan and resources to back it up, the housing crisis will persist indefinitely. The City of St. Thomas, Ontario has eliminated homelessness in their city because they had a clear vision and plan.

I, therefore, urge the minister to collaborate with the community-based providers and develop a coordinated, non-market supportive housing strategy and support it – and this is the key part – with predictable, multi-year funding.

The solutions are out there; let's use them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. DINN: Speaker, I'm happy to rise today to recognize National Child Day tomorrow, November 20. This day marks Canada's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which recognizes every child's right to be safe, healthy, educated and heard.

Since 1993, National Child Day has been celebrated every year across the country. The day is an opportunity to learn about children's rights, celebrate children and youth as valued members of our communities and take action to make those rights real in everyday life. This year's theme is Every Young Person Deserves a Safe Place to Belong.

Speaker, our children are our greatest resource and the future leaders of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Ensuring that our children have safe and inclusive environments, whether at home, in early learning and child care centres, at school or while participating in after school programs or extracurricular activities, is crucial. Every young person deserves to feel safe, accepted and respected at home, at school and throughout their community.

National Child Day is a time to celebrate children and youth, their rights to learn, play and participate fully in their communities while reaffirming our commitment to creating safe, inclusive spaces where they can belong, grow and thrive.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. PIKE: Speaker, I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

The Liberal Opposition also recognizes tomorrow, November 20, as National Child Day. Our national commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which recognizes every child's right to be safe, healthy, educated and heard, is something I am sure we will all embrace.

While these are goals we all accept as standards, that all youth should experience on a daily basis, we recognize that is, unfortunately, not so. That is something we must all individually and collectively work diligently to achieve.

Our children are our greatest resource and we must ensure that every young person deserves a safe place to belong. That is something the Official Opposition takes to heart, and tomorrow, as with every day, it is something we remain committed to.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Speaker, the working conditions of our ECEs, our early childhood educators and teachers, are the learning conditions of our children. We use this opportunity to call on government to work with early childhood educators and develop a package of pensions and benefits, such as paid sick leave, that would actually help to retain the ECEs we already have and attract more people to this career path. A decent living wage is another.

We cannot meet our goal of universal inclusive education if we do not have professionals in place to offer quality learning.

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.

Speaker, the ability to get answers in this House of Assembly has become impossible. There is no accountability and there is no leadership. We asked questions in Committee about Churchill Falls and the Minister of Finance said ask in Question Period. We asked in Question Period and the same minister said there is no need for questions about Churchill Falls.

I ask the Premier: In all seriousness, why are you and your ministers afraid to answer questions about the deal that you say is good for our province for the next 50 years?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, my ministers are ready and quite able to respond to any questions about the new and better deal that we have signed. The challenge we have is the challenge of what exactly it is they want us to answer. We have answered questions over and over in the House of Assembly. We've explained exactly what we've done.

For the last two days, they've asked the same question eight and 10 times, repeatedly, and we have answered that. We will continue to answer questions on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, not only about the Churchill Falls agreement –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: – but also about access to health care, about the cost of living and about safer communities. When we want to talk about the cost of living, let's talk about the great announcement we made this morning.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: The Premier should check *Hansard* from Tuesday evening and read what his Finance Minister actually said in this House of Assembly.

Speaker, the PCs are blaming us for the gas tax bill not being passed. Now they control the House of Assembly, they failed to bring it in until the last minute, they chose to shut down debate on Tuesday night and they chose to seek a ruling from you saying that we are not allowed to ask questions about Churchill Falls.

The Premier is simply afraid to answer questions and, by not answering questions, people can only conclude he is actually unable to answer them and, therefore, does not understand his own deal.

So I ask the Premier: What are you afraid of and why won't you answer questions?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Speaker, legislation in this House gets passed through co-operation. There are agreements made between House Leaders and there is always a plan to move things forward.

We brought this legislation in and we admit, fully, that when the Minister of Finance spoke outside the scope, it expanded the

scope in Bill 22. They have decided to hijack this bill. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador know what this is about. It's about an 8.5 cent reduction in gas and they refuse to give it to them.

They know how this works. They've done it in the past and they're doing it again now. They're trying to change the narrative and blame it on us over here. If this bill doesn't pass, it's solely on the Leader of the Opposition's shoulders.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

J. HOGAN: The Government House Leader said yesterday – and I quote – he has no appetite to bring forward the gas tax bill unless he can control what questions we ask. Speaker, you have already ruled that we can ask Churchill Falls questions in this debate.

So why is the Government House Leader threatening to hold up gas tax relief just so he can control what questions are asked of him in the House of Assembly?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Speaker, I'll say the same thing that I just said in the media scrum outside. When we come in here and debate, there are conversations that are held between House Leaders and other people. There are agreements made and we have absolutely no reason to believe that they are going to let this bill move forward. We have no reason to believe, based on the behaviour that we've seen over the last couple of days, that we can move this forward. We have no reason to waste time in this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

L. PARROTT: We can bring the bill forward but if they don't want to talk about the bill and pass it for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and give them the 8.5 cents off the gas that they want, that's up to them. It is entirely on them – 8.5 cents people don't get. It's the Liberals of Newfoundland that have done it.

SPEAKER: The minister's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: I say to the Government House Leader, if he calls from the Order Paper this bill at 3 o'clock and we're willing to debate it for just two hours, will he do that? We will vote yes for the gas tax bill. We will follow the rules of this House. We'll follow the *Standing Orders* and we will follow the ruling of the Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Speaker, we made it clear that we will bring this bill forward. We made it clear that if we are debating the bill, as it is written in the clauses, we will keep to the debate. If they want to do that and give the people of Newfoundland and Labrador the 8.5 cents off the gas that they deserve, we are here all day to do it.

If they don't want to do it, it's on them that the –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Energy and Mines.

L. PARROTT: – 8.5 cents doesn't come into effect on December 1, and they can wear it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: Speaker, he's not willing to debate the gas tax bill and we all know why. He is afraid of Churchill Falls questions.

So what *Standing Order* or precedent can he point to that states that he gets to control what questions are asked in Committee of the Whole?

I will say, again, if you bring the bill from the Order Paper at 3 o'clock, we will debate it for two hours or less and we will vote yes and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians get to have that tax relief.

So why won't you do it and why are you trying to control what happens on this side of the House?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition didn't listen to the people while he was the premier and he doesn't listen to what was said in the House just then. I said we will bring the bill forward. They can debate the bill. If we debate the bill, we will pass the bill. If they don't want to debate the bill, we won't pass the bill and it will be on them.

They want to drag this out. They're trying to filibuster it based on their own agenda, based on them not agreeing with a deal that's better than the deal that they had before, based on them not wanting Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to have prosperity.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

L. PARROTT: They're voting against a better deal and they're voting against 8.5 cents for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: I think the problem is the Government House Leader does not necessarily understand the rules. A filibuster is when there's no end to a debate and we carry on and we carry on. I am proposing to the Government House Leader two simple hours of debate under the rules of this House, under the precedents set and under the ruling of the Speaker.

So will the Government House Leader give us two hours to ask appropriate questions about the bill so Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can get the tax relief that they deserve? Two hours, not a filibuster.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, just like the Churchill Falls DCIA that we brought forward, they already have their mind made up on the bill. They had their mind made up when we brought the DCIA forward. They knew they were going to vote no.

He just admitted he will vote yes to the gas tax –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

L. PARROTT: – but he doesn't want to debate the gas tax. We will bring Bill 22 forward. They can set the tone for the debate. We will bring it forward, pure and simple.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: We don't rubber-stamp bills just because the government asks us to. We're doing the work of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: The deadline to pass Bill 22 is today in order to get the gas tax put in place by December 1. This is day 12 of this sitting of the House of Assembly.

So how did the Government House Leader manage to make such a mess of the House proceedings that he's in a position where the one bill that has a deadline hasn't passed yet?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, shameful. We had an agreement in place that he didn't trust his House Leader with so he went to the Deputy Premier. Now he's here accusing me of not having control of the House. I know exactly how this House runs and I'm doing a good job at it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: He decided. We actually decided to allow him not to ask questions yesterday –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

L. PARROTT: – he could not be in the House. Now he's pulling this here in the House.

He should stand up and be honest to the people of Newfoundland and tell the people of Newfoundland and Labrador why the bill is right where it is.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: Speaker, the Minister of Energy said in this House about Churchill Falls back on January 7, 2025: "So if anyone wants to question my knowledge on how that stuff works, I'm open for questions any time whatsoever." I guess he means except since he became the minister.

Why won't he answer substantive questions and demonstrate this great knowledge to us in the House of Assembly?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll go back to what I said a little while ago, he didn't listen to the people while he was the premier and he don't listen in the House. Yesterday, the same question was asked, I think, 13 times. I answered the question exactly how it was asked 13 times and he's here today saying we don't answer questions.

We answered the question when he said December 31 to March 31. We provided the information. The information was public since day one, when the DCIA was put out there, and he doesn't understand it. So he should not stand on his feet and accuse us of not knowing what we're doing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: Speaker, given that we're up against a deadline, why did the PCs choose not to debate the gas tax bill last night, rather than go to their $500-a-ticket fundraiser?

Please tell us why you chose your political financial situation over the financial situation of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Speaker, this is pretty easy, because his House Leader and him had an agreement with us to not have the House open last night. They had an event last night. We seen the tumbleweeds falling out of the republic. They had an event. They didn't want to sit last night.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

L. PARROTT: So here we are saying that and now he's trying to pull this – unreal. We had an agreement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I heard from people who were at that fundraiser and the feedback was the Premier spent more time talking about the Liberal Party than he did about his own work and his own deal. It seems based on this and their social media posts that we're clearly living rent free in the Premier's head. I guess, the Finance Minister is at least pleased with the cost.

In all seriousness, why can't this government and this Premier focus on the work of the province rather than the Liberal Party?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Speaker, I'm very proud to stand up in this House and talk about what I exactly talked about last night, which is the amount of benefits that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador will get from the new and better deal that we have signed with Quebec.

Yes, I did talk about the federal Liberals and the significant contribution that they're making to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: I'm proud to stand up and talk about the federal Liberal party, who are –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: – prepared to step up and help the people of Newfoundland and Labrador be part of it. It is unfortunate that the Leader of the Opposition doesn't take that same approach.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

L. DEMPSTER: Speaker, the Government House Leader said the Opposition are obstructing the government.

Can he tell us how we are obstructing because, surely, he can't be asking questions that the Speaker has already ruled are relevant?

Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Speaker, in reference to Bill 22, an 8.5-cent drop in gas for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, the crowd across the way want to drag this on; they've done their best to do just that. Now they're trying to change the narrative and put it back over here.

The reality of it is, when we talk about anything in this House, whether it's obstruction or co-operation – which is the word we should be using – it comes down to people working together. We could have had this bill passed two weeks ago, absolutely, and it is not passed. It is not passed because it doesn't matter to them. They don't care that people are paying more at the pumps.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

L. PARROTT: They don't care that people are paying more at the grocery stores. They don't care about Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

L. DEMPSTER: Speaker, in addition to you ruling that it was relevant, they have the numbers. They shoved the DCIA down the people's throats here because they have the numbers, so they know they can pass the bill.

Why did the Government House Leader incorrectly tell the media that the gas tax bill was off course because the Opposition Leader left to go to a funeral Wednesday morning, when we had an agreement, three House Leaders had an agreement to continue to go there to debate it, to go into Committee Wednesday morning?

We have more than one person on this side of the House, Speaker. Then, the Government House Leader came in and opened up with a point of order, which was no point of order and we lost 2½ hours in this House of Assembly.

SPEAKER: The Minister of Energy and Mines.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Speaker, we did have an agreement, absolutely, but do you know what? She hasn't kept her word on agreements, so here we are. We got no reason to trust it.

I'll tell you something else, it wasn't about the Opposition Leader going to a funeral. We were accommodating on that. At the end of the day, we had an agreement. She's the one who stood up yesterday and argued that it gets done right away. She's the one that closed the House down yesterday. We accommodated her. She wanted the ruling immediately and we said yes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

It's very shameful to see the Government House Leader in his very unparliamentary conduct here in the language he's using – shame.

Speaker, the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Association is reporting that police officers are leaving the profession at unprecedented rates.

Can the minister tell this House what her plan is to reverse this trend and ensure that the RNC has the officers it needs to keep our communities safe, like they promised during the election?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Speaker.

I can say, first of all, that the RNC currently, as of October of this year, has 420 police officers, and it is the highest number of sworn police officers in the history of the RNC.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: And there is still more coming. The RNC currently has 19 cadets at the academy for the July 2026 class and an additional 18 seats for January 2027.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

Yes, as the minister points out, that's because of the work that the Liberals did before they took office.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. PARSONS: We're seeing it flow now and they get to cut the ribbon, good for the minister.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I would ask that you address the Chair.

P. PARSONS: Speaker, the members of our provincial police service are highly trained and deeply dedicated to protecting the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. The RNC needs to retain these experienced officers.

Can the minister commit to targeted investments and recruitment, to continue the recruitment as the Liberal Party did and the Liberal government and retention initiatives, to ensure the RNC has the officers it needs to meet the national average for police-to-population ratio?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Speaker.

I will speak to her preamble. Over 10 years of that former Liberal government there were less officers on the street to keep us safe. Let me look at some statistics. Active duty RNC officers, as of December 31, for each year for 2015 and 2024, the numbers had dropped from 394 in 2015 to a low of 372 in 2022.

Speaker, their record speaks for itself. Our record is evidence that we are progressing and we're doing very well with our RNC officers.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

K. WHITE: Speaker, people who live, work and operate businesses in downtown St. John's want to see more police officers on the street, not just hear promises.

Will this minister commit to working with the RNC to increase foot patrols and ensure a visible police presence in downtown St. John's?

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

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Speaker.

Again, I'll repeat, Speaker, when this former government was in place, there were less officers –

K. WHITE: (Inaudible.)

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask the Member for St. John's West for your co-operation.

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: There were less officers on the street. That was the Liberal record – period.

Our government is committed to ensuring that we have safer communities, and that is exactly what we have been doing with the RNC investments that we have made and all of the efforts that we are putting in working with the mayor of St. John's and others in the downtown area.

Our record speaks for itself, Speaker.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

L. STOYLES: Speaker, this week, the Minister of Health said someone had reached out to a constituent of mine about her serious health situation. I tabled an email from her saying that this is not accurate.

Why did the minister say someone had reached out to her when this is not the case?

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.

The individual in question, her constituent, has been working hand in hand with officials in my department. I don't know why the Member opposite doesn't know that. I had an email and I've had many phone conversations from officials in my department who are working with her constituent and solving the problem. I have no problem saying that. I have no problem speaking with the Member opposite and to share what is going on from the department.

I can assure the Member opposite and this House that officials in my department are speaking with her constituent, solving her health problem and we're committed to doing it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Gander.

B. FORD: Thank you.

Speaker, we see cruise lines cancelling port stops in Nova Scotia due to homelessness and drug addiction on display in their downtown.

In his previous role, the Minister of Tourism committed to solving homelessness in St. John's but it, along with drug paraphernalia and drug use remains a problem for the city.

What is the Minister of Tourism's plan to get ahead of this potential interruption to the cruise ship industry's support of St. John's as a point of destination?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

I'll speak in my role as Deputy Premier today. I chaired a round-table discussion with the City of St. John's, Municipalities NL, a lot of officials, the Minister of Health and Community Services, the Minister of Social Supports and Well-Being, the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, along with myself and Mayor Breen, and we're going to engage all municipalities and we formed a working group to work on those exact issues, not only in St. John's, but throughout the province.

I also want to make a point about what the Member for St. John's West said when he made a reference that the $500 per needle was a poor expenditure of money. I think he should get up and apologize to this House and the people of this province for his shameful comment because we are trying. The Minister of Justice is trying; this government is trying. Comments like that are not helpful and the mayor of St. John's feels the same way.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

S. GAMBIN-WALSH: Speaker, the minister has repeatedly highlighted the number of new homes being built in the province as evidence of progress towards his government's commitment to build 10,000 homes and end homelessness.

Can the minister provide a breakdown of the 874 homes he reported were built between January and August of this year, including how many were privately developed, market-rate homes; how many were affordable housing units; and how many were built or supported through provincial government funding or programs?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

We can get a breakdown. I can go back to my department and get a typical breakdown if that's what the Member wants, but this government, Mr. Speaker, over the past year: construction of new Newfoundland and Labrador Housing homes, $31-million investment; Affordable Rental Housing program, $31 million-investment. We are building homes on record levels.

Not only building homes, we are repairing homes that this Liberal government let go into disrepair over their past 10 years. We're going to continue to build homes, we're going to continue to repair homes and we are going to put people in homes on a record level, and this government is going to do just that.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, we'll just take a regular breakdown – typical or not. We'll take a regular breakdown.

The Virginia Park Community Centre has been closed for an extended period of time, forcing the organization to reduce its programming. This centre provides critical programming, including after-school homework programs, youth programs and programs for seniors. The loss of the dedicated community space has disrupted delivery of these services and has been felt throughout the community.

What action has the minister taken to support Virginia Park Community Centre and ensure these programs and services can continue to meet the needs of our community?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

If anything, I'd like to start off by thanking the Member for Virginia Waters for asking a question about his community for the first time in 12 days. That's what we need in this House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

C. TIBBS: In addition to operational funding, we provide funding for the alternative space that is being used right now until that community centre can be built and up and running again. We know how important it is to the people in Virginia Waters there and the Member knows, as well, and I look forward to when that day comes.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Please pass your sentiments on to the Deputy Premier who admonished me for asking the question the last time about my community.

Mr. Speaker, our government committed funding towards a new Virginia Park Community Centre, including up to $1 million towards construction and the land for the facility.

Will the minister commit to honouring the funding committed and support a new community centre for the people of Virginia Park?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. TIBBS: Again, I thank the Member for the question, Mr. Speaker. The short answer is yes, absolutely, we will because that's how we do things in the House of Assembly. This isn't political. We seen it in their platform years prior, Mr. Speaker. We're going to carry that torch forward for the people of Virginia Waters - Pleasantville because we know how important it is to the people of the province, not this party or that party.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Corner Brook.

J. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

A couple of weeks ago, I asked the Minister of Health about the ongoing capacity problems at Western Memorial Regional Hospital. People are in hallways,

conference rooms, they're using stretchers instead of beds, surgeries are being cancelled. This week staff received an email saying that they have – and I quote – an extreme occupancy issue.

Can the Minister of Health give me an update on progress for short-term solutions for this problem?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. WALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I do thank the Member opposite for the question because it's an important one.

We have been dealing with this since we came into government, Mr. Speaker, as early as yesterday dealing with overcrowding issues. My department and I are on it, working with NLHS to try to find solutions. I'm happy to provide those when we come to that.

But I will say, had the hospital been built properly, proper size for the area, for the people who are there, we wouldn't be having these issues right now.

Mr. Speaker, having said that, we are working through that. We are committed to serving the people of the province, especially on the West Coast. We do not want to see what's going on there now with people in hallways. I've lived it with my family members; I'm sure Members opposite have as well. We will come to a solution, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to work with the Member opposite on it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, I ask the Premier: Will he inform this House on progress with Innu Nation regarding the Churchill Falls deal and whether he will have their support before any final agreement is debated in the House of Assembly or signed?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm more than happy to stand up and talk about the new and better deal that we have for Churchill Falls and the fact that we have had meetings with the Innu, just this past week, our negotiating teams working together and we will continue that. Today, a couple of my ministers had meetings with the Grand Chief.

We look forward to partnering with the Innu Nation and look forward to getting this deal completed.

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.

We continue to hear government Members talk about crime in downtown St. John's and the conditions at Her Majesty's Penitentiary, but none seem to be willing to work with the actual Member for the area to address these issues. Despite government's talk about collaboration, I've asked the Minister of Justice multiple times to bring Members together for a round-table discussion on restorative justice and how we can make all communities safer, with no interest from the minister.

I ask her: Does she believe she has all the solutions and that there is no need to work with other Members of the House?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Speaker, I stand here very proud of the work that we are doing with respect to restorative justice in our province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: We have a vision and we are going to see that vision come to fruition.

I can say that we have gone to other places, other jurisdictions in this country. In Ontario, I've looked at the Kenora courts. I've looked at the London courts. I've been speaking with Chief Judge Fowler, who is a leader on restorative justice. He is leading the Provincial Court Working Group who are also looking at this.

We have an excellent group that are analyzing all of this and we're looking forward to implementing these important principles in our court system in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

We have Minister of Justice not interested in a round table; a Government House Leader who wasted 2½ hours of debate in a futile effort to shut down debate while accusing Opposition Members of not working together; a Minister of Housing who had tried to amend our PMR on grocery pricing so he didn't have to collaborate with Opposition Members; a PC caucus who did not believe a collaborative all-party Committee was necessary and voted against the PMR; and government Members who, rather than staying to finish debate on their gas tax bill, rushed off to attend a $500-a-plate fundraising dinner for the PC Party – priorities.

I ask the Premier: Why should we believe his government's rhetoric about collaboration when it seems to be more interested in power, control and playing politics?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Pretty rich coming from the Leader of the Third Party who missed 25 per cent of the whole sitting to go chasing around the country looking at other jurisdictions – pretty rich.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

L. PARROTT: Pretty rich, I got to say, for an individual who voted against the red tape reduction PMR. Pretty rich for a bunch of people that tie their hitches to the federal NDP and want oil and gas gone. Pretty rich for the same guy who voted yes for less and no for more. He said no to the one thing he hangs his hat on, the unions, Labrador West. He voted against oil and gas and he voted against power. He is pretty rich standing up in this House accusing anyone of anything.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Methinks, the minister doth protest too much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. DINN: I obviously struck a nerve, Speaker. If the shoe fits, wear it.

Speaker, last year, the Premier's office used MCP funds to hire a special adviser at an annual salary of $275,000 to work on improving health care in this province; yet, ATIPP shows his attendance at meetings was to be unrelated to health care. We deserve answers.

I ask the Premier: Will he invite Dr. Des Whalen into the House of Assembly to explain to the people of the province the work he has done to improve health care since being hired and paid through MCP?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: Speaker, if the word tasteless fits, wear it. That's what you're dealing with here now. You're gone to the lowest of the lowest, cheap shot after cheap shot. You try to get in the House of Assembly and debate the issues.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

B. PETTEN: Nobody is talking about safer communities or lower taxes or better health care. They want to talk about a great individual who is doing great work for this government, is advising us well in health care, is an outstanding individual and you have to try to destroy this man's name and drag it through the mud for your own cheap shot for a party of two that will never get much bigger. To stand in the House of Assembly to do this is absolutely ridiculous.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Order, please!

The time for Question Period has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Speaker.

I give notice that I will on tomorrow introduce a bill entitled, An Act to Amend the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act, Bill 42.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to move the following resolution: Be it resolved by the House of Assembly, as follows:

WHEREAS section 4(2) of the *Elections Act, 1991*, provides that on resolution of the House of Assembly, the Lieutenant-Governor in Council appoint the Chief Electoral Officer;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Travis Wooley will be appointed Chief Electoral Officer.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Speaker.

I give notice that I will on tomorrow move, in accordance with Standing Order 11(1), that this House will not adjourn at 5:30 on Monday, November 23, 2026.

Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move the following motion: That in accordance with Standing Order 11(1), that this House will not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 24, 2026.

Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move the following motion: That notwithstanding Standing Order 9, this House not adjourn at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, November 25, 2026, but shall continue to sit for the conduct of Government Business and if not earlier adjourned, the Speaker shall adjourn the House at midnight.

Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move the following motion: That in accordance with Standing Order 11(1), that this House will not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 24, 2026.

SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

Answer to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters - Pleasantville – I was saying Placentia Waters

B. DAVIS: That sounds like a pretty nice district, though, too, Mr. Speaker.

I stand on a petition. These are the reasons for and background of this petition:

WHEREAS deaf-blindness is a distinct disability that creates unique challenges related to communication, mobility, access to information and participation in community life; and

WHEREAS these needs cannot be adequately addressed through services designed solely for individuals who are deaf or individuals who are blind; and

WHEREAS communication is recognized as a fundamental human right under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it is imperative that individuals who are deaf-blind must also have access to supports and accommodations necessary to communicate, access to information and participate in society on an equal basis with others; and

WHEREAS without appropriate supports and services, individuals who are deaf-blind face an increased risk of social isolation, safety concerns, declining health and diminishing quality of life; and

WHEREAS given an aging population and the high incidence of complex hereditary conditions, it is likely that additional Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will experience a combination of hearing and vision loss and encounter the same barriers;

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 engage immediate communication with the CNIB to explore potential pathways to establish appropriate deaf-blind supports for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand here today to support this petition. Individuals have come forward with this. I've had the pleasure of meeting individuals and working with CNIB on hearing their concerns. Individuals face a significant disadvantage when we don't have this, so I'm urging the

government to meet with them as quick as they can to try to put things in place to support those individuals that we all represent. Because it's not just in my district; it's in all 40 districts around this province that are affected by individuals that are deaf-blind, and those services have to be available to those individuals.

Having those appropriate services – I don't have all the answers, but there are people in the community that have a significant experience dealing with this. I'm sure the minister is not familiar with this as well. He is familiar with the issue but not familiar with all the answers to it. That's why we talk to community leaders, such as the CNIB, and I thank Duane from CNIB for being here today and for the work he's doing not just for people in my district, but for people right across this province.

We need to do more. I ask the government to do more, and I table this petition here today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Social Supports and Well-Being for a response to the petition.

C. TIBBS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member across the way.

We note the importance of a Disability Advocate, and that's exactly why we put it into our legislation for the first time in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. TIBBS: I thank my hon. colleague for that.

We understand the challenges in the disability community, Mr. Speaker. I will take the petition back to the officials in my department. We will reach out to community groups. We will get more information about it, and I will return with a better response or a more robust response for the Member opposite.

I thank him very much for bringing it forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Before I recognize the next Member, I just want to welcome to our public gallery His Worship, the mayor of the beautiful and incredible City of Mount Pearl, Mayor Dave Aker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker, and welcome to Mayor Aker.

This petition is about unacceptable conditions in the emergency department and area at the Carbonear General Hospital. These are the reasons for and background of this petition:

WHEREAS residents of Newfoundland and Labrador deserve access to safe, clean, sanitary and properly maintained health care facilities, particularly in hospital emergency departments; and

WHEREAS concerns have been raised regarding unacceptable conditions in the emergency department at the Carbonear General Hospital, including non-functioning public washrooms, an out-of-service vending machine and a lack of accessible garbage and recycling containers; and

WHEREAS patients and their families are often required to spend several hours waiting for emergency medical attention, making access to functioning washrooms,

drinking water and clean waiting areas is essential to their health, comfort and dignity; and

WHEREAS these conditions may cause additional distress and hardship for patients seeking medical care and may result in individuals leaving the emergency department before receiving the medical attention that they require.

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 investigate and address the conditions in the emergency department at Carbonear General Hospital to ensure functioning washrooms, access to drinking water and adequate garbage and recycling containers are available, and implement measures to ensure that the facility is maintained in a sanitary and safe condition for all patients, families and health care workers.

Again, for this one, I would call on the Minister for Transportation and Infrastructure, as it is his department, to make sure that buildings are all maintained, whether it's schools, hospitals or whatnot. It falls under the responsibility of this minister and that department.

I hear from constituents in my District in Harbour Grace - Port de Grave but also outside of my district, in the neighbouring District of Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde calling my office for help and assistance on this matter, as well as to other surrounding communities.

Again, I will remind this House that it's this government who planned on fixing everything, making it better for everybody, for all of us in their blue book, whether it's safe communities, better health care for everybody. They were going to fix it all but, unfortunately, a year into government, over a year into office, we're seeing things get worse on their watch.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

P. PARSONS: The minister is over there chuckling, if he wants to stand up –

SPEAKER: I would ask the Member to address the Chair.

P. PARSONS: – and comment on what I'm saying, by all means we'll sit and hear him speak over there. He's awfully chirping and noisy over there and laughing. I don't know if he's auditioning for Yuk Yuk's or whatever he's doing, but he's interrupting my speaking time now.

Therefore, I'm calling on this government, take action and do what you promised to do. The people deserve better in this province and they're waiting to see the results which they have not yet.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. WALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Member opposite for the petition. The question was asked; I'm happy to stand to answer it.

Mr. Speaker, that issue came to my attention on November 10. Immediately, I forwarded it off to NLHS and it was acted upon that day. There was an issue with water in the emergency room. There was an issue with the garbage containers. There was an issue with the vending machine. There were issues with cleanliness.

Mr. Speaker, it's unacceptable and I'll stand here and say that, but those conditions have been rectified. The water shutoff was repaired. The garbage receptacles have been replaced. The vending machine is being replaced, there is one on order.

I'm happy to try to solve any issue, happy to speak to the petition and happy to work with Members opposite for the betterment of their constituents and for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

As long as I can know about the issue, Mr. Speaker, my team and I, in conjunction with NLHS who handles the day-to-day operations of the facility, are happy to make those changes, make things better for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

We are working through it, Mr. Speaker. It does take time. The Member opposite said we're in for a year. Yes, we have and our record for this year stands for itself.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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 due to severe winter weather, isolation risks and the heavy reliance on this route for emergency services and supply chains, 24-hour snow clearing is critical in Southwestern Newfoundland, particularly along the Trans-Canada Highway and routes leading to key marine links such as the Port aux Basques ferry; and

WHEREAS Southwestern Newfoundland serves as a vital transportation corridor, that includes the vital ferry connection to Nova Scotia with an excess of 300,000 passengers each year, many are for medical care, around-the-clock clearing ensures ambulances and emergency responders can reach hospitals without dangerous delays during overnight storms; and

WHEREAS the TCH and regional connectors are the lifeline for food, medical supplies and freight entering the Island, overnight plowing prevents heavy transport trucks from getting stranded or losing traction on treacherous, uncleared roads; and

WHEREAS many shift workers, local drivers and commercial operators travel early in the morning or late at night, continuous plowing and proactive salting reduces spin-outs, collisions and closures on high-exposure stretches and enables residents who have to travel to do so with a higher degree of safety; and

WHEREAS Southwestern Newfoundland frequently experiences high winds, blowing snow and sudden drifts that can render a clear road impassable within a few hours if left unattended, continuous shifts ensure accumulation is managed proactively rather than playing catch up after a storm peaks;

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 ensure that the area from Port aux Basques to Stephenville receives 24-hour snow clearing during the upcoming winter driving season. This area is critical for all residents of the province, especially those who live in that area, that it has to be a priority for the 24-hour snow clearing.

Speaker, I'm having many conversations with residents in my district again with the winter season coming up about how important this is for them. As I mentioned a number of times in my petition here, we have folks in communities surrounding Port aux Basques and that area that travel that route, many early mornings and late at night for work or medical reasons. We have to access a lot of services in Corner Brook for medical care as well. So there's all hours of travel.

We have a lot of commercial vehicles that go that route. The Marine Atlantic ferry is right there, all hours of the night as well.

Residents are asking me to bring this on their behalf and that is why I'm here standing, presenting this petition.

I know that last year I think the minister did speak about how they were reviewing the routes and stuff. So I hope that the minister will give consideration to this route. It's very, very vital for the folks in my area and for the corridor for this province with the ferry and all that commercial traffic and our passenger vehicles, as I've mentioned. We're seeing more and more people visiting this province all year-round now through Marine Atlantic.

I certainly appreciate the minister taking consideration to this route for 24-hour snow clearing for the people in my district.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

Yes, just a quick response to that petition. I guess the Member will have to stay tuned. That's going to be announced within the next week what our plans are for this coming season. I think I spoke with VOCM last week, as well. That's coming soon. So I guess stay tuned and, like I said, you'll find out next week.

We are following through on our commitment to safer communities, which means safer roads. Our commitment last year is remaining the same as this year. We are committed to returning the 24-hour snow clearing that was cut by the current Opposition when they were government in 2016.

We believe the roads in our province are not safe during the winter. We've committed to 24-hour snow clearing. We will have safer communities and we'll increase upon that this year coming. I'll have more to say on it next week.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Seeing no more petitions, Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Speaker.

Motion 3.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Premier, pursuant to Standing Order 11(1), that this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 19, 2026.

SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that this House do not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. today.

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.

The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

You have so many titles, it's hard to keep track.

B. PETTEN: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Social Supports and Well-Being and the former minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, that Bill 29 be now read a third time, Order 7.

SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that Bill 29, An Act Respecting Certain Cities in the Province, be read a third time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

The motion is carried.

CLERK (Hawley George): A bill, An Act Respecting Certain Cities in the Province. (Bill 29)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act Respecting Certain Cities in the Province," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 29)

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

B. PETTEN: I think Mayor Aker will be happy to see that is finally done, Sir.

SPEAKER: I'm sure he will be.

B. PETTEN: I think Mayor Chaisson may feel the same way.

Speaker, I also call from the Order Paper, Order 8, An Act Respecting Registered Professional Planners in the Province, Bill 30, be now read a third time, and that will be seconded by my hon. colleague, the Government House Leader.

SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that Bill 30, An Act Respecting Registered Professional Planners in the Province, be now read a third time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting Registered Professional Planners in the Province. (Bill 30)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act Respecting Registered Professional Planners in the Province," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 30)

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Speaker.

Order 12, 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 22.

SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair and

that this hon. House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 22.

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.

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're now considering Bill 22, An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act No. 3.

A bill, "An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act No. 3." (Bill 22)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

I'm wondering if the minister can tell us why they chose the $89 US a barrel in terms of the threshold for the average days, please.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Chair.

We did an analysis of what the returns would be and what it would cost for the provincial coffers. We know that the only other jurisdiction in Canada that had such, we'll say, a threshold related to gas tax in the country was the Province of Alberta. Theirs was at $90.

So between doing an analysis of what the return would be and what tax dollars would have to be accounted for in our financial picture and that $90 for Alberta, then those were the two items of which we settled in at $89.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

That amount will be in regulations, I understand. It's interesting because there's a formula now to decide whether or not gas tax will apply, but the threshold will be regulations. Cabinet can still, at any time, decide to change the threshold. Cabinet still holds the power, dynamically, to decide what the threshold is to decide whether or not tax will be applied or not applied.

Am I understanding that correctly, Minister?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: That is correct. I would agree with the hon. Member when she stated in the past that I think government's responsibility is to be able to be nimble and move accordingly. If we had it in the regulations, we do have the ability to change it but like the conversation we had about the Future Fund, we have no desire to change what we're looking at, $89 per barrel.

We have no desire, but we will have the ability with the regulation, but the price will be determined and under the spirit of transparency, we let you know in advance what that figure would be. I know we could come in here today and we didn't have to

announce what that dollar figure would be, but it is $89.

Will it be a desire to change it from $89? No.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

In considering the formula – and I struggle a bit because we already have very complicated gas pricing. I welcome if the government can streamline our gas pricing, that's great, but we have a very complicated gas pricing system and now the government is adding this very complicated tax system on top of the already complicated gas price model.

I know the CFIB, for example, they have a problem with Alberta's model, which this is modelled off of; the words I believe they use are it relies on backward-looking averages, because there could be a blip. We're looking at the most recent 20 days.

I'm wondering if the minister can, I guess, speak to why they thought that this was the right approach.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

When I look over, I'm looking for who is going to be answering the question. So I would ask that you raise your hand or give me some kind of gesture as to who is going to answer the question, please.

Thank you.

C. PARDY: Duly noted, Chair. As long as I don't forget going forward, but I'm going to try my best.

I would say to the hon. Member, we have never ever used that we have a formula. I know maybe in the lightest sense, it could be called a formula, but we don't use the word "formula.'

What we have is that before the 16th of the month prior to the quarter, we take the simple average of the 20 business days before that. Now, I know that, by taking the average of those 20 days before the 16th, we can call that a formula, but that is as least complex, I would think, as to what we could get.

I think you have a question, why the 16th? Between the 16th and the end of the month, we need to make sure that we give the PUB the notice that the price will be known by the time of the first of the next quarter.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

The minister said business days, but it's trading days. So I'm wondering if the minister can tell us – like, is that United States trade – what exactly a trading day means, please?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: The trading days would be on the US stock market where Brent crude trades. That's to the best of my knowledge. Secondly, it would be from Monday to Friday. My understanding, to the hon. Member, is that there is no trading on Saturday and Sunday. So it would be the 20 weekdays prior to the 16th.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

The government are putting this thing in place where the minister doesn't want to use a formula, but they're taking 20 trading days, finding the average – this sounds like

a formula – the value of 20 days and finding the average of that day, to decide whether or not the threshold, which is in regulations, means the gas tax or not gas tax on top of the already complicated gas pricing system that we have.

How does the minister envision this working in relation with the existing gas pricing system?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: I think the hon. Member is conflating taxation with price setting. The Public Utility Board will use their formula to regulate the price of gas. That is a formula that has a degree of complexity to it. The PUB does not have any role in the taxation within gas. We inform them whether to drop it or what the taxation level would be. We will have that simple formula of a simple average of 20 weekdays before the 16th of the preceding month.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

I can understand what the minister is saying, but really all people want to know is what the price of gas will be. They want to know what the amount at the pump will be, what the maximum price at the pump will be. The maximum price at the pump that is allowed in each zone in Newfoundland and Labrador is comprised of the taxation but also all of the other elements.

When members of the public, gas price advocates are trying to interpret and guess and come up with an analysis of what the gas price might be, they will be doing this formula on top of the other formula and this will be integrating into it.

In terms of simplicity and clarity, if Cabinet is maintaining the power to decide, using the threshold in regulations whether or not taxation is applied or not applied, why wouldn't the government just decide – it would save you six clauses on your red tape regulations measure for the CFIB Report Card just for Cabinet to decide whether or not there's taxation or not taxation on the gas prices.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: I say to the hon. Member that it is simplicity and it has to do with affordability. We wish to make sure that we can have savings on diesel, which we had said yesterday, that contribute to the inflated cost in food. Because we are an island and in order to get much food to us, then it is often through truck and we're looking at a reduction this tax bill of 10.925 cents, that would be including HST, or on the gasoline for those consumers and residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, of 8.625 cents.

The goal of removing the tax is to provide some affordability at a time when we are all aware, all 40 of us, that we are in a time where the cost of living is tough for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. It is tough for Canadians. It is tough for people in other countries. We are not alone. But this is one affordability measure that we would put in place to do that, one of many that we've had.

So when I say about simplicity, I would be comfortable in saying that it's probably as simplistic as we can possibly make it. I would say to the hon. Member for Mount Scio, before the 16th of the preceding quarter, just do the straight average of the Brent crude for those 20 weekdays before the 16th, and you will know between the 16th and the end of that month, whether the tax will be coming off for the next quarter.

Now, I would say most people can do that. I know you referred to it as a formula, but I

would think that's a pretty simplistic formula, and to repeat, you would take the 20 days before the 16th, do a simple average and on that 16th, you're going to know as to when that next quarter comes in, whether the gas tax will be exempt.

Your other thing that you had mentioned, again, not to conflate it with the PUB. The PUB is not in this bill. The PUB doesn't have any role in the taxation. This is strictly within the House of Assembly. The 40 of us here in the House decides that, not the PUB. Remember when I say simplicity, I'm just referring to this Bill 22, not the price setting of gasoline in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

A few questions on that. I agree 100 per cent with what the minister said about the PUB, but the PUB sends out the overview to all the retailers across the province to tell them what the price of gas to charge is and how much.

So will the PUB be the primary vehicle of communicating this to retailers, or will retailers now be getting information from the PUB and also from the Department of Finance every quarter?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: I'm not sure if everyone is aware, but I know that you had mentioned it, probably at some time when you spoke on second reading, the hon. Member, if I remember correctly, you talked about it being confusing for the retailers and we are layering on some more confusion for the retailers.

Now, number one, we think it's an affordability measure for the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. I can tell and inform the hon. House that the PUB is in daily contact with the retailers. It's not once a week. It's not twice a week. There's daily communication with the PUB and the retailers.

On the 16th of the end of each quarter, when you do the simple average, the PUB, on one of those communications to the retailers in Newfoundland and Labrador, will let them know that effective the first of the month, tax will be removed from the sale of gasoline in Newfoundland and Labrador if it's $89 and above. That's pretty simplistic.

I can say with certainty that the benefits of that happening in our retail locations are pretty positive. If I was a retailer in a gas station knowing that there's going to be cheaper gas that I'm going to be selling, I would say they would love it.

Remember, it is not – I use the word taxing – too much of an ominous thing that you let them know on the 16th as to what it is and they've got those days between the 16th and the end of the month knowing that it's going to happen.

We think that we can have Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, they would do the math on the 16th. Maybe the news media, which is of great value for getting information out, maybe they will, on the 16th, let residents of Newfoundland and Labrador know and compete for the news to say, if we're first with the news, they'll let them know on the evening of the 16th. Because they'll know what Brent crude is that morning, on the evening news, they're going to let people know that, at the start of next month, gas tax in Newfoundland and Labrador will be removed for a period of three months, the next quarter.

A very good thing that I'm sure every Member of the House is in favour of and that's rather exciting. I think it's a model in collaboration that we're talking and debating this bill. That's good and we're proud. We –

all 40 of us – stand with it. Right? Every one of us called for it and I'm saying that we can all unite and say, it's a good thing.

CHAIR: The Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Minister.

I do agree. I guess the other thing is the flip side is also true. So if gas taxes are applied, and as the CFIB mentions, because it is a backward-looking average, if there was a blip – and this is the same problem that they have in Labrador, when the gas goes on the ship and it's priced at the price when they put the gas on the ship. It's not about what the price is every day.

So, I guess, I 100 per cent agree with you, but if the flip is true, that if tax is applied and it drops rapidly, then the public, and rightfully so, will be calling for the government to remove tax, but they won't, or your Cabinet can, but you will have a tax then for the three months until the next quarter kicks in. So while there's a benefit some quarters, there will be a hindrance some quarters and the public will be calling for the opposite. But fair point.

I also want to ask the minister, it's based on the average of the Brent Europe spot price, is that a publicly available data point? Because I know sometimes historically the method used originally in the regulations was a proprietary measure that the government actually paid for. Is this a publicly available data point or is this a proprietary, the Brent Europe spot price?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: It's the Brent Europe price, but the US Energy Information Administration, I think – I say I think – they're the ones that regularly inform the world of what that price is. So I'm assuming that, yes, it's the Brent Europe, but, again, it would be the US Energy Information Administration of which you would get the information.

I know you would ask is it readily accessible? I think most of us and a lot of us, we don't have to look it up because often we watch the news or we read and usually we're told what the price of Brent crude would be.

I would say when we do this measure, I say to the hon. Member, we're at a period of time where Brent crude is high, and if you know the affordability measures that we've put out – and we've put a lot of them out, we're pleased to put them out. I'm sure that every resident of Newfoundland and Labrador is pleased with the affordability measures. That is 20 per cent of the oil revenues that we have. The 80 per cent from the oil revenues we've got, I look forward to Monday to discuss what impact those dollars have in the fiscal update, which will come on Monday.

I think sometimes people might not be aware that it is the 20 per cent envelope that allows us to do it. By determining $89 a barrel, keep in mind that the price of oil is not going to stay up forever, I think that's a safe assumption. The only thing we don't know is when it's going to drop. Is it conceivable that it drops down to $50 and $60? Well, listen, if it drops down below, the $89 is there and we know the tax is on.

All I can say is that, in the situation that we find ourselves in, we need the tax to be added on to make sure that we can conduct and help the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador as best we could within the revenues that we acquire.

So no magic in the $89, back to you previous point. No magic in that, even though we did our best analysis to make sure it was a fair amount. Again, we used Alberta's $90 as a benchmark.

We have a lot of value in the CFIB and we're hoping to take any information at all,

but what was driving this was to provide affordability to the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador and this had one measure. Anything else, really, a really distant second.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you very much, Chair.

I'd like to just circle back. I thank the minister for the questions. I know some of my colleagues also have questions. We also have Churchill Falls questions.

I did just want to speak, I guess, for a minute about the overall process. I know we have leave to talk about Churchill Falls, and it is important to do the gas tax. It is important to ask gas tax questions, but the Churchill Falls deal is very important to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and it's relevant. As you mentioned in your opening remarks in second reading, it's very relevant to affordability, very relevant to taxation of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

It's not usually my style but I'm going to tell a little story. So this morning, I woke up early and I thought I'd go to the gym. I went to spin class this morning. Canadian pop songs was the theme of the spin class I went to this morning. I was on the bike and the song "Complicated" by Avril Lavigne came on. I don't know if you can hum it in your head, but it's like, "Why'd you have to go and make things so complicated?"

Anyway, I was spinning this morning in the gym, it was Avril Lavigne and the only thing in my head – I wish it wasn't – was the Minister of Energy's first name, "why'd you have to go and make things so complicated? Because we want to talk about the gas tax bill. We want to reduce gas tax for people in Newfoundland and Labrador but we also want to talk about Churchill Falls.

We're desperate. We're hungry. We have been hungry to talk about Churchill Falls. I know the minister mentioned as well in his second reading comments, the Minister of Finance, that he wanted to talk about it. He was desperate to talk about Churchill Falls.

This wouldn't be a problem. We wouldn't be here desperate and hungry to ask Churchill Falls questions and get answers if we could have had a debate like we wanted about Churchill Falls. There are so many questions that are unanswered that because we have not had a satisfactory debate and gotten the answers that we need about Churchill Falls, this is why we're in this situation today.

If we had had that, we would be just talking about gas prices and this wouldn't be a problem. We wouldn't have to do a point of order. The Government House Leader wouldn't have done a point of order. None of this would be happening if we had had a full, wholesome debate on Churchill Falls.

I spent a lot of time and then after, I was in the car and I put on Avril Lavigne's "Complicated" and I was listening to it and it was getting me pumped up. All I could think about was, why do you have to go and make things so complicated? Then I was also thinking other parts of the song and then I'll pass it over to the next speaker, Chair, but one of the chorus was, trying to be cool and you look like a do, do, do, do – anyway.

This has been in my head all morning, since I was in spin class and the thing that stuck with me, was that the government is making this overly complicated because we have not had a satisfactory debate on Churchill Falls. So, as Opposition, we're using the legislative tools available to us to get very important questions answered that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians want answered and we also want the gas tax eliminated, absolutely, and we're fully supportive of that. We have to use the

legislative means available to us to get there.

Those conclude my questions right now.

Thank you, Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

S. O'LEARY: Thank you, Chair.

I want to thank the hon. Member for Mount Scio for some of the questions and, some of them, I may run over some of the questions that were asked, but I think that this is an important enough issue that we make sure that people are fully clear.

As always, the NDP are very supportive of cost-of-living reduction opportunities that will help people with a regular expense. So I just wanted to mention that.

First of all, I wanted to ask what is the estimated loss of revenue for December 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027, period, assuming that the price of oil stays over the threshold? Do you have estimated losses calculated per quarter after March 31?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: When we say what it costs – and I'm careful in using what it costs, because I know, really, we often said that it's the people's money – what I often say is that we are returning the people's money to them. So what we're returning to the people over that period would be $25 million.

I know I had stated earlier that we need a start date and an end date to be fiscally responsible with the costs we've got. I know that we have many programs that I think you've spoke of many times, thresholds and programs that we've got, and we know that our expenditures have been, for some time, greater than our revenues. The only thing, we're trying to stay within the budget that we've got to make sure that we can continue to maintain the programs we have.

So some would say why not start it earlier? Why not go later? We're being fiscally conservative in monitoring the time period, and $25 million is what we have allocated in that time. Remember, that's an estimate. There might come a time where you might run to $22 million or might say, well, all of sudden, you're up to $28 million or $29 million. That's the risk we have. We don't know whether it's $25 million. All I can tell you is that that's the assessment and the projection that we have.

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

S. O'LEARY: Thank you, Chair.

Again, to reiterate – and I know that this was discussed but I want to make sure that it's very clear – how will quarterly decisions regarding the tax rate be communicated to retailers and the public? Just for clarification.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: That's appropriate, to make sure that we've got a handle on that.

On the 16th at the end of each quarter, to the hon. Member, I don't think we'll have to communicate. I think it will be the news media that will be communicating and monitoring this. I think there will be a big splash as to whether the gas tax will continue to apply in the next quarter or not.

On our communication plan, we certainly will communicate it through whatever communication sources we have, as a government. We'll put that out, but I would think that the story will be out there long

before because I would think the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador would be doing the simple averaging of those 20 days before the 16th.

Between the media, between the government sources, we'll do what we can to let people know on the 16th, as to what they would have come.

Again, to restate, the previous Member had asked, it is public and it is daily. I don't think we can miss, I think you've probably been watching what the price of Brent crude would be and you haven't got to look lots of times, it's coming up on different sources, so it's daily.

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

S. O'LEARY: Thank you, Chair.

The cost of oil is one factor determining the cost of fuel at the pumps. Were other measures considered to serve as the threshold for applying the tax break? Why not map it directly to the price of fuel? Just if you could discuss that a little.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: I think we have allocated it to the price of fuel. When I say the price, because the price of fuel is indicative of what a barrel of oil costs. If a barrel of oil goes low, then we see the benefits at the pump. The reverse would be true, if the price of a barrel of oil increases, then we see the increase at the pumps. I guess the foundation of the pricing would be the price of the Brent crude that we utilize in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I know that Alberta would use West Texas, that's a totally different one that would be utilized. Just a little bit of tidbit. Ours, Brent crude, would generally about $11 more expensive a barrel than what West Texas would be. There's a difference between the two.

Yes, the foundation of it is that barrel of oil. That indicates what the price is going to be at the pumps and we know on a regulated entity, which is the PUB, that we don't have this in this bill, then they're the ones that try to shelter us from the shock of it going up. Then often we wonder, when the price drops quickly, why we don't see that price quicker. What it is, is they're regulating to avoid price shock, in a lot of cases.

It is the price of the barrel. It wouldn't be at the price at the pump because that's hard on a regulation and that could stretch over a week or two by the time the right price is calculated via the formula which has a degree of complexity to it.

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

S. O'LEARY: Thank you for those answers. Chair, thank you.

What methods were applied in determining the $89-per-barrel threshold and will the methods be described in the regulations?

C. PARDY: We will list the price in the regulations –

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: My apologies to the Chair. I get a little excited sometimes – most times.

I say to the hon. Member, I'm not sure what it's going to look like, what the regulations would be, but I would think that we'll make sure that we've got clarity when that's included, clarity on the price. I think you're familiar with that. I think we probably stated how it's calculated.

But you're asking will that be in the regulations, how it will be calculated? Yes.

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

S. O'LEARY: Okay, thank you, Chair.

This will be my final question today. Actually, no, maybe one more.

Have you considered how and when this threshold will be reassessed over time?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: We've had no reflection on any perceived thought of adjusting and moving the dollar figure of $89 per barrel, and that's fair because we have no intention of it moving. I would say to the hon. Member, if it came to a point in time that budgetary-wise, we're in a position that it needed to be, we would gladly discuss that in the House as well and the need for it to be adjusted.

But, right now, we've got a consistency. The Future Fund, we have no intention on doing anything with the money that would be in the Future Fund, as we stated when we debated it; we don't have any intention on changing $89.

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

S. O'LEARY: Thank you, Chair.

This is my final question. It's actually on the broader scope of the Churchill Falls MOU and budgeting, again, speaking of the gas tax and the financial aspects.

The $8 million that has been held back for the referendum, I'm just asking a question regarding what happens to that $8 million that is earmarked for the referendum at this point in time? Are we seeing that going to go into any kind of cost-savings kind of measure because there was some discussion about that in the House, recently?

Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Corner Brook.

J. PARSONS: Thank you, Chair.

First of all, again, I'd like to thank the minister for opening up this to talk a little bit about Churchill Falls. I think he made it pretty clear that he was somewhat displeased with how muddy the information has been about the deal. So I do get the sense that he is eager to clarify and answer some specific questions.

I do have a number of questions. I don't know if we'll get all through them but I'll start with talking about transmission and specifically transmission lines, the NLH Transco.

The Finance Minister mentioned that we don't pay necessarily anything for this deal, Hydro-Québec is funding it, but who is paying for the transmission lines from Gull Island to the Quebec border and Churchill Falls?

CHAIR: Seeing no further speakers –

J. PARSONS: Wait, wait, I asked a question.

CHAIR: But there are intervening speakers. If there's not a response, then it has to go to an intervening speaker.

The Chair recognizes the Member for Lake Melville.

The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Official Opposition.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance a question that I asked, I think, a couple of times before. I'll try to, again, get an opportunity to see if I can get an answer.

It's in relation to section 4(f) of the deal, which, just for clarity so everybody is aware, it talks about the expiry of the CHPE and NECEC contracts. I can't remember off the top of head how long those contracts are for. I think maybe 25 years or so. So they will expire during the lifetime of the 50-year contract on Churchill Falls.

What it says is, when they expire, obviously you need to renegotiate prices, and it says that they will renegotiate it if NL Hydro and Hydro-Québec come to an agreement. Barring that, it will be based on whatever strategy Hydro-Québec decides to implement. So I guess there's a concern there that Hydro-Québec is deciding to implement the strategy about how they will pay for Churchill Falls power.

Can the minister explain if my assessment of that is accurate and, if it's not, can he explain why and how NL Hydro will participate in setting that price?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Corner Brook.

J. PARSONS: Thank you, Chair.

I have a lot of respect for the minister and I think that he does sincerely want to weigh in on this and clarify this for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I think that we've made our intention very clear here that we will support the gas tax removal and the bill in front of us, Bill 22. But I also find it astounding that these are very basic questions about the deal that haven't been answered. They allow government and give government a chance to clarify this for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. These are not gotcha questions. These are very specific technical questions about the deal.

Again, it is clear in this agreement that transmission for Gull Island is to be owned and paid for by Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro or an entity thereof, NLH Transco. So it isn't while we can use some of our equity that Quebec is providing, we cannot actually get them to pay for it. We have to put that equity back into Gull Island.

Can the minister explain exactly why or how much equity we are going to have or NLH is going to have to put forward to pay for transmission lines in Labrador?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Mount Scio.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

I have another gas tax question, but I think what is happening now is – just for anyone watching – we do have a clear ruling from the Speaker that the Churchill Falls and affordability in general is in order, as that's the scope as was outlined by the Minister of Finance in his second reading. So that was confirmed in the point of order decision yesterday.

So we are asking questions about the gas tax bill and about the Churchill Falls. But so far it seems like the government are not answering any questions. They did answer the questions about the gas tax, and so far it seems they are not answering questions about Churchill Falls. So we will see how this goes. We need intervening speakers, so we will keep asking questions and if no one on the government side answers or attempts to answer, then we will keep asking questions.

Just a few minutes ago when we were talking about gas prices, I asked the minister about the Brent Europe spot price in terms of the formula of the 20 trading days. The minister mentioned a few times how that's the number that comes up on the TV. So I just had a quick look and the number used in Canadian media when they refer to the price of Brent is the ICE Brent crude future price, which is different from the Europe Brent Spot Price.

I'm wondering if the minister can confirm how residents get the Europe Brent spot

price. I also want to just mention for the discussion that it will not be the number that comes up on the news when they're in the market segments, as per my understanding, unless the minister would like to correct the record.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: I can't tell the hon. Member what the difference would be on the Brent Europe, what it would be, but I know that what we access would come from the U.S. Energy Information Administration. The difference between what that would be and what may be of some other media source who is using a different one, then I'm not sure what the variance would be between those two.

My understanding is that when I've accessed it and looked at it, then it is coming from the U.S. Energy Information Administration and that's the one that we follow.

Again, can't speak to the variance between the two, but I wouldn't expect it to be too great.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Corner Brook.

J. PARSONS: Thank you, Chair.

We'll get back to, again, an important topic. I think we have a lot of information and thank my colleagues for clarifying a few things we have on this gas tax bill when it comes to the price setting.

I'll go back to Churchill Falls. I would urge the minister to answer. This is not a gotcha; I'm trying to get the answer here. I don't believe that the government actually knows these answers. I don't know that they actually understand this deal. I'm serious, and I think that the shenanigans that we've seen over the last couple of days, I'm continually surprised by how this House is run. It's very strange.

As I said, we are on the hook and Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro is on the hook to pay for the transmission lines for this project. By my calculation and by the estimates that government has provided, we would need approximately $1.4 billion in equity to pay for the lines associated with Gull Island. That's assuming the 25-75 per cent debt-equity mix. Also, of course, we have the line the Lab West, which is a very important part. It's not part of this deal specifically, but it is a very important part of this project.

We know that the federal government has committed $1 billion to that but the overall cost is about $2.6 billion, it's estimated. I have to wonder, Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, how they're getting this money and how they're raising this equity, and will electricity rates for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have to increase to pay for this?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: I spoke to the past Finance minister last night. I reached out to a previous Finance minister – not the previous one to me, just to make sure, it was not that one but one prior – and I asked about the DCIA. The response from the gentleman was I read it thoroughly – I read it thoroughly – and I'm in favour of the DCIA. I asked could I state that. That was last night and I asked. He's also a fan of the 80-20. He likes it a lot. He said no matter what pressure you got, stick to the 80.

If I had a little more prep time, I'd give you the citing passages of what the expert who was in – several reflected on it, but I know Barry Perry from in the House had stated the past Finance minister read the whole

DCIA. I don't know but he read the whole *Hansard*, what he had. Barry Perry had stated clearly in this House that the transmission associated with Gull Island is within the Gull Island cost of service model. It is to be paid for by the off-takers.

I think a question you may have asked, or someone asked, was that, well, look at the declining price of Gull Island. Well, that is what happens with the cost of service model over a contract, which I think you're nodding to acknowledge that's what it is. Within in that cost of service model are the transmission lines that you refer to. They are the ones from Gull Island to Churchill Falls and from Gull Island to the border. They are all part of that cost of service model.

You also mentioned the Lab West one. Lab West alone is stand-alone. That's a fair question, where is Newfoundland? What our commitment would be? The funding on the Labrador West, which we've declared, we're in on that one. To what amount, I say to the hon. Member, I can't tell you what exactly that amount is but we are in on that with the feds and with proponents. That is in the works.

At the same time, are we waiting for that to be settled or are we going ahead with the planning for that line to be constructed? I would say to you, planning is ongoing for that line to be constructed because it has to go head.

I would say to the Member, don't conflate the Lab West one with the Gull Island transmission lines. Barry Perry, I think in a response to the Leader of the Opposition, his answer contained that information through the cost of service model.

You were saying about the equity. The equity piece in that is that it is only the cost of service model, the only costs would be associated by the off-takers. We're 16 per cent of the off-takers that we've got on Gull Island, 16 per cent. But Barry Perry, if you had heard him correctly in the House, had said that if there are cost overruns in that 16 per cent, we can opt not to take the 16 per cent.

Let's say that, like some other projects that we may have talked about in the past, the $30 billion becomes $38 billion. We have the ability of not taking the 16 per cent off-taker. Keep in mind and if I'm asking you a question, who do you think is going to take that power if we don't take it? As Barry Perry would say, Quebec would take all of the power, all of the risk, all of the overruns. We wanted to make sure that we were risk free in Gull Island.

I tried to capsulize that for you to know that, yes, it's 16 per cent, but Barry Perry had stated in this House and I think more than once, that we have the ability, in the occurrence of a large overrun that would cost the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador, then I would say then we don't take that 16 per cent.

Now you also mentioned, I say to the hon. Member, you also talked about the equity. I think those in the gallery, this might be something that might be news to some in the gallery and those watching at home, on Gull Island, Quebec builds Gull island – $30 billion estimated cost – paid for under the cost of service model by the off-takers, primarily Quebec.

We do have equity into Gull Island. Quebec are going to give us $3.5 billion equity for our part into Gull Island. Note: it is the Province of Quebec or Hydro-Québec, now one or the other, Hydro-Québec or the Province of Quebec, we get $3.5 billion as our equity stake. Not only do we get $3.5 billion, but taxpayers don't pay one cent on the equity piece. Here's a nice little caveat, as well. On that $3.5 billion, we get an 8.5 per cent equity return on the equity.

So I know that the hon. Member has read that pretty thoroughly and he would know that the return coming back to the people

and to the Treasury on that 8.5 per cent return is $7 billion – $7 billion. Quebec gives us the $3.5 billion. We've negotiated 8.5 as our equity return on the money they gave us. We get $7 billion over the course.

I know that the hon. Member who asked the question, he talked about the '69 deal in his closing speech. He referenced that. He was one of the ones who referenced the '69 deal, which this has no, zero resemblance to the '69 deal – zero.

So the only thing I would say in my limited time that I've got left to the hon. Member is that in the Finance Minister's position, where I stand, I think that's a pretty good deal.

Another thing that hasn't come up, which you may not have read because it's not in there a whole lot, even though Barry Perry when he was in the House stated it, we know that we're in a time where climate change is real. We know that we had the Colorado River that nearly went dry down there. What has that got to do with the Labrador river, the Churchill River? If we have hydrology or technology risk with this development, if we have those risks with this development, and the water supplies go down that we don't generate the electricity that we were expecting to get or what we were thinking, we have first out-of-plant dibs and rights on the power, not Hydro-Québec. We get our share first. When we get our share first, then Hydro-Québec gets their share. I'm not sure I've heard too much of that because that's another clause that's in there that I think is a win-win.

So the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, when they worry because in their past they've wondered about the cost of hydro projects we've had in the past, this one, in the Minister of Finance's opinion, has very little to no risk, even though we're a 16 per cent off-taker, but the agreement that was negotiated by Barry Perry and the team, it made sure that we were in the driver's seat to say we're not taking it because we're not interested in paying any money from Newfoundland and Labrador.

In the last 15 seconds, well, what happens to that? What happens is that, when the PPA is up, we – we get 60 per cent of nearly a debt free resource – 60 per cent.

CHAIR: Order, please!

I remind the minister that his time has expired.

The Chair recognizes the Member for Corner Brook.

J. PARSONS: Thank you, Chair.

It's really unfortunate that the Finance Minister doesn't understand equity versus the cost of service model. This cost of service model here, yes, it is very straightforward. The PPAs associated with Gull Island, with the Churchill Falls upgrades are all following a cost of service model. It's the same model that is used by our own Newfoundland Hydro to do projects like the expansion of Bay d'Espoir. That model, of course, is to get the best price for the ratepaying customers.

Of course, we know, as mentioned, the vast majority of this energy from Gull Island is going to Quebec. So we are not seeing the benefit from the lowest cost price here.

I asked about the equity. The minister is talking about return on equity, but you have to actually put the equity in first. So this asset is being built 75-25, or at least the Gull Island one is. The NLH Transco has to be done that way and we have to actually have cash to put in there.

Where is that cash coming from? Where is Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro – I'm not asking this question yet because I'm not going to get the straight answer. I'm going to get an answer trying to obfuscate and run out the clock on it; I know that. I'm going to ask very specific questions and I'm going to

ask the minister for very specific answers on these questions.

First of all, I didn't get an answer on where that equity is coming from. The equity is not coming from Hydro-Québec. Like I said, it can be used for either project, but it has to end up so that we fulfill our equity obligation in Gull Island. That is up-front equity to build the asset. We need to build power lines before we can draw revenue on the back end over the 50-year period or whatever period. That has not been clear exactly how that will work.

The other thing is the rate of return on those assets, the transmission assets, I believe is being set by the PUB. In terms of the rate of payback on our equity, we don't know that. That's something that I would love to hear about.

I'm going to ask now about the resale power. Government has talked about this as transmission and talking about selling to other markets: New England, New York, wherever, optionality. Currently, Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro has the ability to sell 265 megawatts to export markets, and they do that and they've done that for a number of years now. Last year, in the fourth quarter of 2025, Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro reported the average price that they sold that power for was 10.4 cents per kilowatt hour.

Now, of course, looking at the documents provided and looking at the payment schedule provided in the DCIA and the payment schedule and the energy allocation in Annex B, we're seeing a dramatic rise from less than two cents up until 2041 and then it goes, more or less, a straight line from there and it's 2.5 per cent. I've seen some documents, it's 2.6 per cent. Again, when I put the numbers in a spreadsheet, it comes out at 2.5 per cent increase every year, but that number at 2041 is key.

Again, looking at the amount of energy and the payment schedule that's provided, the price per kilowatt hour, at that time, ends up being close to 11 cents, almost 11 cents. Last year, in the fourth quarter, Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro got 10.4 cents. So 15 years from now, we're only going to get 11 cents. Obviously, that doesn't seem like a good estimate or a fair estimate at that time.

Now, does the minister know about the NECEC and CHPE contracts? I don't know, but the rates that we are getting or that Hydro-Québec is getting under those agreements – and remember, they're, like, long-term agreements. NECEC and CHPE both started this year. NECEC is a 20-year agreement and CHPE is going to be a 25-year agreement. That power is being sold by Quebec at 7.17 cents per kilowatt hour roughly in Canadian right now for the NECEC, and it's about 13.58 cents in CHPE. Of course, the CHPE contract includes a lot of transmission, too.

So we know that in 2041, we're going to start off at 11 cents. Last year, we got 10.4 cents for Churchill Falls power. For Gull Island power, however, we know it's going to start at around 17 cents in 10 years from now, and then it's going to decrease. When will we reach a breakeven point so that we can actually buy power from Gull Island and resell it to NECEC and CHPE through Quebec at that price? That's what I'll ask the minister now.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: The hon. Member had quite a few questions there, but I'll be as succinct as I possibly can. I'm certainly not trying to run out any clock. I'm just trying to share with you – you've asked a question and I want to share the detail.

One of the things I mentioned to you in my answer the first time, my response to you the first time was the equity piece and you said I missed the question. The $3.5 billion

comes from Quebec to us to put the equity into it; $3.5 billion, that is what we put into it. We earn our equity on that, 8.5 per cent. I know that our equity got to go in, which is your question, you said it's $3.5 billion. That's our equity. It's not coming from the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. We put it in.

When you ask about transmission, transmission that's coming from Gull Island to the Churchill Falls or whether it's to the border, that's included in Gull Island. There's nothing different than what I said in my first 10-minute segment. We own it. It's in the cost of service model that would be in that.

So the only thing I would say is if the hon. Member has read the DCIA and it's different from what I'm saying, then cite where it is in the DCIA or where it is in the *Hansard* where we had the experts in to find out for clarification. Because when we say that we didn't have time to ask questions, we have Question Period every day of this House. We had questions that you could ask the experts on what you asked them. Some of you asked questions, you received the answers, but lots of times you're asking the same questions over again when the answer was provided.

The only thing I would say to you, it is best to have the experts here, or you hear from them when they were here. If you read through the *Hansard* to find out the information there and whether it's valid or not, *Hansard* would be good information.

If those experts are the best of the best, which I think we all agree that they're good – I would agree with the hon. Member on your team that I think they are the best of the best. One gentleman said last night that he thought Barry Perry is the best of the best. So whatever he had said, he's the chief negotiator. I would think that we ought to listen to what he had said on the official transcript of the *Hansard* in the House.

When you talk about getting power, we got 16 per cent of the power eligible from Gull Island that we can access. If we don't wish to take it, we don't take it. So you say the price gets lower, which it does on the cost of service model because they're paying their principal off. We're going to do a little something similar to that on Monday with the fall fiscal update to try to tackle the debt that we've got in debt management.

They are using this model. You conflated that model to we're using the same model for Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro. So we're using the same model for Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, but we are the off-takers. I am, you are, so it's us paying.

The only thing I would say to you is that if we find that the price of power is too high from Gull Island at any period of time, or if there are cost overruns, we do not have to be the off-takers – we do not have to be the off-takers. Barry Perry stated that. We do not have to be the off-takers.

When you talk about Bay d'Espoir, similar cost of service model; it's not similar. While the model itself is the same, but we pay. My hon. colleague, he pays because the cost of service model, the off-takers pay and that's of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Gull Island cost of service model, it's the off-takers. Who's the majority of the off-takers? Quebec. If the price of power that we pay is much higher than what we get from CF, do we, in Newfoundland and Labrador, have to take that power? We don't have to take that power in Newfoundland and Labrador. That is an option, we don't have to take that power. If it's not economical for us, we don't take it.

I think the Premier said many times about the optionality part. We like that. If it serves us well, take it. If it doesn't, well, any time whether it be the start of that contract or whether it be the end, and we know that you're paying a good price at the start, but

then it drops down. If you were telling me, and I don't have the experience that the experts who were here, but if it's financially advisable for us to take the power in the eighth year or in the 12th year, then let's take it because it's economically beneficial for us to take it.

We determine when we take the 16 per cent. The kicker would be, Barry Perry had stated, when it's paid off with a minimal debt, we are the majority owners of the resource. He envisions at that time in the PPA, that that power will be cheaper than what the CF may be. He stated that, too, but we then determine, we take the cheapest power. Is it Gull? Is it Churchill Falls? Who's in the driver's seat? We, all of us, 40 of us as legislators, people in the House, we're in the driver's seat.

So I just wanted, in my little limited time, so you don't ask me the same question a third time.

J. PARSONS: I didn't ask you the same question.

C. PARDY: Oh, yes, you did. It was the equity piece. You said I failed to answer the equity piece. So $3.5 billion comes from Quebec. That is the equity that we're putting into Gull Island. It's not coming from the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. There is no risk to it because we are in the driver's seat as an off-taker, 16 per cent. We are in the driver seat.

You asked about the transmission. The transmission, those two lines, Quebec are building it. They're good at building transmission lines. They're going to build it. But that is in the cost of service model in Gull Island – cost of service in Gull Island. We pay for the Labrador West one, we're in that one. We are in the Labrador West, which we are doing whether it is the Churchill Falls agreement or whether it's not. We've got to power Lab West, I think you all agree, we've got to power Lab West.

AN HON. MEMBER: We're building from the feds.

C. PARDY: We're thankful for the federal contribution, but I think we've got some dollars that are going to be in play there, but that is being worked on.

So I just want to make sure we're clear on that and if there's anything I said that is to be corrected, then by golly, find it somewhere and let me know.

CHAIR: Before I move to the next speaker, I just want to let all Members know that we need to address the Chair when we're speaking. We speak through the Chair to each other.

The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Official Opposition.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Chair.

I'm just going to read to the minister some comments he made when he opened this debate at second reading, so these are his words: "So here's the way Gull Island works." The important part here is it's talking about Gull Island. "The Opposition states we're losing market-based pricing, even though our experts say we've got market-based pricing. Our experts said it was too complicated; therefore, their recommendation was quit it and have something that would be an escalator, like we're talking about, that would give a definitive increase on Churchill Falls power."

So he started those comments with Gull Island and finished the comments about Churchill Falls, and he's talking about having an escalator. So I ask the minister to clarify or tell us which of the pricing structures does he believe has an escalator, is it Gull Island or is the Churchill Falls PPA or is it both?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: If I conflated the two, the escalator is with the Churchill Falls power. That's the escalator.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Official Opposition.

J. HOGAN: Thank you.

I just wanted to clarify that. I mean, obviously, we speak a lot in the House, but you opened by saying Gull Island. So I guess you can confirm then that there is no escalator for the Gull Island pricing. The price actually goes down.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: I'd like to confirm that because that is the cost of service model.

I'll just slip this in to the hon. Member. When we're looking at the market-based pricing, I think it was Chee-Aloy who said, from Power Advisory, that he believed we've got market-based pricing included. I think you might have recalled when he stated that as well. I'm sure that's in *Hansard*. Where in *Hansard,* I'm not sure, but I think I recall that's what he had stated. So you referenced the market-based pricing.

The only thing, to the hon. Member, we had J.P. Morgan, that when we looked at the escalator that was included in Gull Island. In the 2024 contract, that's where J.P. Morgan said they had suggested to you, the government at the time, that they didn't advise that you use the 2 per cent escalator clause that you had on Gull Island. They started that.

I think you tuned in and you heard that as well. He stated that that was advised that you didn't do it. I asked those questions to him and I wanted him to restate it. He said that had to go. Barry Perry, who we all agree was probably the best of the best, said that had to go. We had to get a more simplistic model with an escalator and that's what we talked about the escalator for Churchill Falls, which Chee-Aloy thought it was great.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Official Opposition.

J. HOGAN: Thank you.

So I'll just ask some questions about the market-based pricing that you and Mr. Chee-Aloy – again, we'll check *Hansard*, but anyway, we'll take it that there was a position that there was market-based pricing. That's certainly your position that there's market-based pricing on the Churchill Falls component.

How many megawatts would be exposed to market-based pricing from the Churchill Falls PPA?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: I don't have that answer.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Official Opposition.

J. HOGAN: So a lot of talk about having market-based pricing and the minister is saying that he doesn't know how many megawatts of the Churchill Falls PPA will be exposed to the markets.

Now, I would remind the minister that this is the big issue to me, and I think a lot of our caucus Members, that we aren't exposing Churchill Falls to market-based pricing, which we had that in 2024. Mr. Chee-Aloy actually said that was a great thing to have. Ms. Williams said it was fundamental to the deal. She also said it was lessons learned from 1969.

My position was it should be the starting point for any negotiations with Hydro-Québec that we get market-based pricing.

While the minister feels that this deal is not the same as 1969, it's the same in that neither of them have market-based pricing for all of the sales between NL Hydro and Hydro-Québec. We don't want to go through what happened in 1969 again, but, unfortunately, we might be on that road.

How can the minister tell Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that they should be confident in his financial position on this financial analysis of this deal if he doesn't know how many megawatts are exposed? He said that they are exposed to market-based pricing.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: I just want to state I don't know what the megawatts were, I just know that Mr. Chee-Aloy had stated that he included that we have market-based pricing within the system. What he was referencing, that would have been a good question for you to ask Mr. Chee-Aloy at the time when he was here.

But let me tell you –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

C. PARDY: If you did ask it, you wouldn't be asking the question a second time. All I'm saying is that now you're asking the question. If it was asked before, you're asking it again.

Let me state what I stated yesterday. We thought that Mr. Chee-Aloy was an expert. We all agreed he was an expert, but again, let me read what he states on the deal, the DCIA. I'm sure that you checked *Hansard*, because you looked at a quote what I had there before, and I'm sure you checked it from yesterday. I want to read it to make sure that we truly understand what the director of Power Advisory said in relation to the current deal.

He might not have drilled down on how many specific definitive agreements there were going to be or that nature, but from what was worked on in this House, that you heard and we heard, here is what he had said. Let me read it into the record again today: "Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, they're at the plate. I don't think you're swinging and missing; I think you're hitting the ball for a big time base hit, home run. Then the second thing is, frankly, there's just a lot of money at stake."

Now, we should all be excited about the money. Every one of us got a lot of ask that would be in this House. We know what the debt is. Money is important but it's not the factor in the deal. But is it important? I say the hon. Member for Mount Scio would state in 2024 when she stated: We need the money. Everyone would like to have the money. This deal provides it.

Here's what Mr. Chee-Aloy says: "It's gone from in nominal dollars $227 billion to $270-something billion, and at the height of this agreement, there's an additional $4 billion to $5 billion a year …."

Let me repeat that. You can talk about whether market-based pricing, how much or how many megawatts it applies, you could talk all that. Just let me repeat it again for the hon. Leader of the Opposition who asked the question: "… at the height of this agreement, there's an additional $4 billion to $5 billion a year on a $10-billion budget …." Every year generated $4 billion to $5 billion, half of what our expenditure and our economy and our yearly would be. That is what we've got to look forward to.

You can say chump change. You can say that it should be more, but don't dispute what the best of best had stated for this House: "… $4 billion to $5 billion a year on a $10-billion budget in Newfoundland and Labrador." Here's what he said, the managing director of Power Advisory, which we all in the House said we have a lot of respect for, for his expertise, because he's

an energy expert: “That’s generational wealth; that’s outstanding benefit; that’s outstanding value.”

Leader of the Opposition, I’m tempted to repeat it a second time, but I don’t need that, I just want to make sure that it’s not the Minister of Finance saying it. These words that are on page 2,414 of *Hansard*, they’re what the expert who you stated and I stated, and I think we all believe, to be true electricity generation experts in the country – internationally renowned – but your questions that you ask, how many megawatts? What is the market-based pricing? Look at the value of what we get as a province.

I would say to the hon. Member – and I know it might not be the place for it, but I have to say it again – we’re going to tackle our debt. Your government contributed the most to the debt of any government since 1949 and, I would say to you, I find it disconcerting that we’re here today talking about, well, whatever your questions would be, when this value is what is coming to the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. It’s our resource.

The only thing I would say to you, it has generational wealth, outstanding benefit and, in the words of Mr. Jason Chee-Aloy, managing director of Power Advisory, “that’s outstanding value.”

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Official Opposition.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Minister, for that answer.

The reason I’m a bit surprised that he didn’t know the answer to how many megawatts are exposed to “market-based pricing” because I don’t agree to this market-based pricing. But in any event, I would have thought the answer would have been very clear. It should have been 720 megawatts.

If you look at section 4 of the deal, it talks about 280 megawatts for the synthetic price, 240 megawatts for the CHPE price and the 200 megawatts for the NECEC price. That adds up to 720 megawatts, which is a pretty important number because it’s the number that the government keeps saying gives them the optionality. So the Minister of Finance not knowing that is a bit distressing, to say the least.

I will say that when we talk about market-based pricing, if you want to quote Mr. Chee-Aloy, this is what he said as well. “Mr. Speaker, the changes are that there is no more Schedule F. There are no blocks that would be used to price or reprice Churchill Falls power contractually on an annual basis and adjust that based on those blocks. The main change has been a fixed price” – so if the minister wants to know why people think 1969 looks like his deal is because Mr. Chee-Aloy said the main change has been a fixed price – “under the new agreement, that will be adjusted per annum by way of an inflation index.”

I know the Member for Corner Brook is going to have some questions about the inflation index but my question would be: If there’s market-based pricing, is the minister taking the position that it’s those 720 megawatts that are exposed to the markets and, if so, will the minister confirm that NL Hydro actually has no ability to get pricing itself and negotiate pricing itself for those 720 megawatts?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: When he referenced the fixed price, I think it was stated in the House by Barry Perry on no less than two occasions, that he talked about while sometime you had questions about whether we could have a direct market and sale to New York and New England, but we do have transmission to those states which we have and what

price we get in this DCIA will be the price that Quebec gets for their power.

If someone had to ask me – and keep in mind I'm not an electricity expert – your question when you asked Chee-Aloy or asked Barry Perry, they're the experts, I'm not an electricity expert, but I would tell you the biggest thing that the Opposition Leader conflated it to is that he was thinking the fixed price was back to the '69 fixed price. What he is missing is that we get the price that Quebec gets.

Now you might say, oh, Quebec may not be getting that best price. We have transmission costs that we would have, which would be a standardized transmission cost. I can't tell you what those costs would be, but we get what Quebec gets.

For me, not being an electricity expert, I'm good with that. A lot of people would say, boy, they'll get the best price they possibly can because they've been into the electricity business for some time. We've got over 7,000 megawatts in Newfoundland and Labrador; Hydro-Québec are over 40,000 megawatts. They have hydro facilities that are paid off. They have hydro facilities that they can take the revenues from and subsidize – subsidize – what residents and businesses pay.

We're not there but we'll get there. Once we get Gull Island, that all of sudden we've got the majority ownership of, we have cheap power, then we can talk that we have the hydro asset that we've got. Muskrat Falls, probably online in a future time, we're starting to compile hydro assets that we can certainly subsidize more for the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

So, as Finance Minister, without being a power, electricity expert, if Quebec are getting the price in New England and New York, and if that's what they negotiated, that Barry Perry was good with it; if Chee-Aloy was good with it; if Dr. Chris Loomis, the chair of Hydro, was good with it; if Jim Haynes, who has worked as a Churchill Falls engineer his whole life, if he's good with it; if the two from Natural Resources that were here are good with it; if they're good with it, I would say, I'm good with it. I think we believe what the experts brought to us. We believe that it's good enough for us.

I know that I got in trouble one time when I seemed like I was being flippant when I said the Jerry McGuire, "Show me the money," and I mean it in a way, if you can show what money we're getting from these resources to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and if that money comes in that we've got generational wealth, I'm in. We're all in. I'm not sure why others are not in. It mystifies me why you're not in.

Ask some technical questions that you're going to ask now or whatever. Number one would be, what does it mean for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the residents, that we're all concerned about the cost of living? Every one of us in this House are concerned about the cost of living. But we have technical questions that are asked that we know what the dollar value is coming to us. Why would you overlook the dollar value in Annex D and say, let's ask some other questions. Never did you ask, what is the benefit for the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador? Nobody asked that question.

The Leader of the Official Opposition said today when he stood up, he said the Finance Minister on Tuesday night didn't answer any questions on Churchill Falls. He said he wasn't answering any. Ridiculous. My response on Tuesday night, for those watching at home and those in the gallery, was ask it during Question Period as much as you want – ask it in Question Period.

I got four questions that next day. Today, your first 20 questions that you asked had nothing to do with the economic benefit of Churchill Falls. Zero. Look back on *Hansard* to find out your questions.

Are you interested in Churchill Falls or not? We look at the benefit it would be for the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador and that's why we're excited about the deal. On your end, I'm not quite sure. Either, one, you're still not clear on what it is or, number two, you don't want to ask what the economic value is for the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

So I can tell you, boy, you really gave us a whole lot of debt. We're government and we'll deal with the debt. We've got to do that. We've got to deal with it because that's what good governments do.

The Member said yesterday, we are flush with cash. Oh, we are flush with cash. We're flush with debt. What are you missing? When we're talking about flush with cash – spend more, spend more. I sit here as the Finance Minister in the House of Assembly and everyone is asking for more. We may not have been too different, I say that, but I was always sensitive to know that money was tight.

I know you can bring up stuff from *Hansard.* I was always respectful that things are tight but you're asking for money, lots of times in a very forceful manner – a very forceful manner. You're flush with cash. There were some things that you're very, I say, forceful in that we should provide more funding. You missed the fact of the financial position that we're in, but, as government, we're intent on looking after it and I think that on Monday, you'll see a glimmer of things that we're doing for debt management.

You would say, why are you so focused on debt management? Why are you so focused on debt management? Three bond-lending agencies told us that we are on a watch. We are negative and we are on a watch. If we don't get our debt management under control, they're going to downgrade us. We're already the lowest in the country and we go down lower and, all of a sudden, we pay more interest on what we got and what we got to borrow.

I got carried away there a little bit but I just wanted to get that in for the record.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Third Party.

J. DINN: Thank you, Chair.

This is a question, but just a bit of a lead into but it deals with affordability as it relates to the Churchill Falls deal.

I've heard my colleague from Lake Melville speak about the challenges with the addictions and so on and so forth in his district and the impact on the lives of families and on the community. With any increase, when the Churchill Falls deal goes ahead, and I'm sure it's going to go ahead, regardless, it will, I think Quebec will see that. We talk about the effect of prosperity and I would agree, but it's also going to have an impact on the influx of people coming into the area, whether that's Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador West, any of these places. It's going to have an impact on the number of people coming in. I guess it comes down to the preparation.

In the context of certainly what my colleague from Lake Melville pointed out, here are some interesting statistics, I guess, concerning statistics from the federal government website that men experience the highest rates of opioid overdoses in Canada. Trades workers are more impacted by substance use and addiction than any other fields of work. Three in four opioid deaths are men. Thirty per cent of those men were working in the trades at the time of their deaths. There's a cost to this.

In an article by Eileen Hoftyzer, she talks about "Rates of Opioid Toxicity Deaths Highest Among Construction and Trade Workers, Study Finds" on the Ontario Drug Policy Research Network.

The top 10 jobs, with the highest rates of addiction – and this from the addiction centre – number one, mining, quarrying and

oil workers. Number two, construction workers. Interestingly enough, the politicians don't make the top 10 list.

Two articles from *The Globe and Mail*, the Opioid crisis from February 2026, "The opioid crisis is hitting skilled Canadian tradespeople. Now's our chance to support them." Another article again talking about the particular death of an individual, "How opioid deaths are hollowing out the construction industry." That was the title.

As we move forward with this age of prosperity, before we get caught unaware, I'm just wondering, since this deal is not signed yet, what are the plans to get ahead of this potential problem? It's a long-standing problem. It's a tragic outcome. It's about making sure that we know in Labrador the housing is an issue.

We also know when it comes to the supports that we need for people in terms of making sure that before we see the increase in housing and demand and people moving in, I think that those are good things, but they come with that dark side that we've got to be ready to address so that we're bring proactive rather than reactive.

I hear the stories from Lake Melville. So we're not hearing where people are trying to catch up with that runaway train because it does have tragic consequences. I'm looking at here, Minister, if his department or the various ministerial departments have actually started to wrap their head around this as to how we can get ahead of this problem. Because it's going to have a significant cost to the families, to the workers and I would say to the health care system as well, and to the economy.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: I say to the hon. Member, if I just can have 30 seconds, I know that when I was answering my last response, someone shouted about the Future Fund. I just wanted to have 30 seconds on that and then I'll leave it.

The Future Fund, we had a wonderful debate in the House on the Future Fund, and I think that was great. We all saw the value of it and I think we all agreed – I think we did anyway – that we didn't want to borrow more money than what we needed and we knew the pressures.

Well, the price of oil is up this year and if you know what the Future Fund would be and what we would have to borrow, then if we had the old model and had not changed it, we would have to borrow an extra $1 billion on what we have for the Future Fund.

But let me say this to you, we all see the value of the Future Fund, but we cannot borrow an extra $1 billion. We don't have the capacity. That's from the Finance Minister telling you, and Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, it would be a tight squeeze to add another $1 billion on to debt that's coming back to us next year. Debt that never had sinking funds that would come back that we've got to borrow again and now, this time, add sinking funds.

Anyway, I think the hon. Member, we have not put anything related to the Churchill Falls in any budgetary documents or any forecast. That's not there. We've got no provision. It's not in our fiscal forecast. On Monday, when we give the fiscal update, Churchill Falls will not be a part of that. So I say that to you.

Are we being proactive and getting ahead and knowing what the issues you've talked about with the concerns that would be in Labrador, then we've got to utilize whatever resources we've got now to make sure that we address those issues.

I think you or your colleague asked a question at some point in time about whether we commit to the federal project as

far as their initiative now with end homelessness for 10 years. I don't know the details, but I am assuming that whatever dollars we can put in to match federal dollars, we've got to find. If our goal is going to be to end homelessness, which is the root of a lot of the issues which you've adequately and clearly stated lots of times, we've got to make sure that we take full advantage of whatever federal money we've got. If it's matching funds, we've got to make sure we budget for that.

But the bottom line is – and I said to the hon. Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi this morning at the session – we need revenue. We need revenue to come in to enable us to able to support the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, especially those that are in critical situations that you highlighted.

We need to be advanced to know that if Labrador, this is coming – I know that the hon. Member you referenced mentioned before that we ought to learn from the previous one, and he's correct. If we can't repeat ills that occurred with a future development, we need to have insight to make sure that we're ahead of that and where we went wrong or what we didn't address at that time, we have got to do that.

But I would say to you, we are doing it then at a time where a project, we've got money coming in. We're not giving away our crown jewel. We're not doing that. Whether we're maximizing our crown jewel or not, or whether we're getting the best of the best, that's up to what the experts – I'm pleased with the amount of revenue we get from Churchill Falls power. I'm pleased with that.

But never forget that the primary part of the power is to create economic development in Labrador. That we have to prepare for. That is where the real money is. It is where the employment is. And yes, in 2024, I think you did an economic analysis through the Finance Department and I don't know what that was. I know what ours is, what we've done for the DCIA, that's where the money is, is in the industry.

I would think us moving ahead with that, we had to make sure we're really prepared for industry in Labrador to make sure that we avoid pitfalls that may have occurred in the past or what we can envision.

Now, when we're talking about the collaboration piece, I think we need to collaborate on what direction we are but the bottom line is, if we sign the deal, we know the revenue stream when it comes in and using some balance with the debt management, then yes, we need to make sure that we're prepared for that.

I'm sorry if I didn't answer the – but I can't get specific as to what it is. That's where the team effort comes in.

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Chair.

Specifically, what I'm asking is not necessarily the commitment or the amount of money but I'm looking for, have you turned your heads toward as the Finance Minister, as the Health Minister, as the Housing Minister and Social Supports and Well-Being, to at least start, okay, we get our heads wrapped around this as to what a plan would look like so that we're going lockstep with it. That's what I'm interested in here. Whether the deal on the balance sheet – or even the Justice Minister on this – when it comes to it, I'm looking at here, have you turned your heads, okay, let's get ahead of this now, assume that this deal is going ahead, what would a plan, a strategy, look like in advance? That's the first thing with that.

That's the key thing I'm looking at because there is a cost. I'll give you an example. There's a gentleman I met, he's down staying at the Ches Penney Centre of Hope. He's in his 50s or so, he had a life, married,

children and family. He worked in the trades. He lost it all. Part of it is because construction workers, you think about it, there's a reason for it, you think about the hard physical labour, the pain that comes with it, the taking of maybe opioids to manage the pain, because you've got to get out there and work in all kinds of weather, more so than a politician, I guess, would.

My concern here is not to take simply, like we need to have a response, like we need to bring in police or anything else, but let's get a head of it. That's the key thing I'm after. I'm not looking for in your fiscal update. I'm wondering have you started a process? This is coming, not just Churchill Falls, but even if the offshore comes –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

I want to hear the speaker.

J. DINN: – the critical minerals, anything along those lines because if we're going to bring in a lot of workers, in with it comes – there's going to be a lot of support needed, if that makes sense.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: Number one is, we're looking at what we can do in Labrador, currently, under our current budget. Labrador needs assistance, so we're looking at currently. I know I've been part of conversations with that as to what we can do.

I would say to you, when we added the fuel supplement for the seven coastal communities in Labrador and when the Department of Finance did an analysis of the cost of living and looking at the market, that was almost tearful. That was bad. There's nowhere close in Newfoundland and Labrador, other than those coastal communities. When Minister Evans talked in Opposition, I'm not sure if I really knew the concern and the numbers, but now in this position, I do know – nowhere really close, I say to the hon. Member. So the needs are great in parts of our land that we've got.

If your question is saying, are we looking at Labrador now, what we can do within our budget? Yes, we are. Have I been part of what we need to do on a deal that we haven't signed? I have not yet. To be totally transparent, I have not yet.

I just know that if a deal is signed, for any economic development, it has to be probably three years away. I think what Barry Perry said, we got three years to ramp up for a mine to become activated. At that point in time, it would be dereliction of duty if we didn't look into what is coming and what we're going to do.

I'm not sure if you think that's fair or not, but that's where it is. I haven't been part of that. The big thing is that we've got this side of the House, for the most part, not in favour of it. I think there's a narrative being spun that I think lots of times is unfair. Getting the deal through is what we're focused on.

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

J. DINN: My key point is, make sure we're not reacting after and getting ready for it. If we have a three-year window, then we should start that preparation now.

One last question on this, I have a bunch of others but I'm going to – I've heard the minister speak about the expertise of Mr. Chee-Aloy. I guess this goes to the heart of my trust issues or one of the issues, because this gentleman, this expert, who provided such a glowing report, approval, of the deal, the 2026 deal, also said much the same about the 2025 deal.

I always expect experts then to be objective. There was no qualification in the 2025 assessment of the deal. It was the same

kind of approval of this deal as well. In the end, I think the minister knows, he and I have spoken, in the end, I don't think either deal was a repetition of 1969. I remain to be convinced. I think both deals had their merits.

In the end, I'm just looking for some independent, which is why I looked for that independence to say, okay, don't take my word from it, don't take the minister's word for it, don't take the previous government's word for it, but something that will reassure us.

So I'm asking here, why should I put my trust in or why should you put your trust in an expert, who in 2025 was saying one thing about that deal and another about now? I guess it would undermine my confidence a little.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Chair.

I look forward to answering, at least giving my opinion on what you had just stated and I understand that.

So if you were a homeowner two years ago and you were selling your house in St. John's, at that time. I'm sure whoever sold their house two years ago in St. John's probably were pleased with the return they got. You go two years later and you're selling a house in the east end of St. John's and, all of a sudden now, you've got bidding wars that are going on where people are paying ridiculous amounts over and above the price.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's market price.

CHAIR: Order, please!

C. PARDY: So when you're looking at what the return would be; two different parts of time are different. The hon. Member that said that's market-based pricing, he assumes that the price only goes one way. I may be a little more senior than he is, but I've known for a long time that, boy, they drop quickly, too.

If someone said the price of oil keeps going up. That's incorrect. The price of real estate keeps going up. That's incorrect.

So to compare two times with a response and say, they're two different eras, even though they're close together – 2024 and 2026. Lots of things and deals you make are situational on the time that they're being conducted.

Did the federal government have a really big interest in getting involved and spending money into a project that we had? Maybe at that time they weren't. Maybe at that time if we never had the American president who is changing the water on the beans this time.

Someone had said one time on Facebook: time is not our enemy. I, just personally, not my party, I disagree strongly with that. I think timing is everything. I really do. To compare those two, we've got rapid change, geopolitical strife that was occurring – two different times.

Is it conceivable that, at that time, without the vision of 2026, as to what the world would become, didn't think that would be a good deal? That's conceivable.

Remember, the return on that deal is nothing to be sniffed at. That was a pretty good return on that deal. It's just that this one is a better one because of where we are in 2026. That, I would say to you, timing is everything.

So the hon. Member that talked about the market-based pricing – listen, no. If he ever thinks, check to see, more often than not, yes, CPI is going to go up. Does it drop down very low? On occasion, but, yes, mostly. But when you look at electricity, the

electricity hasn't always gone up, like I read yesterday. It hasn't always gone up, it drops.

So I'm not sure if the hon. Member addressed that, but I think it's just different times. If someone said I don't know what next year or the year after or the year after brings. No, we don't know what that brings. Wait until '41; you heard everyone of those experts: Don't wait until '41. I, not being an electricity expert, would not wait and take my chances on '41, certainly not, I can see that much.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Official Opposition.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Chair.

It's interesting that the Minister of Finance referred to selling houses in St. John's today versus two years ago and you would get more today. There was a little bit of chirping over my shoulder here from a former real estate agent who said, yeah, that's because market-based pricing would dictate that you would have made more money because the markets have gone up, which really sums up our whole point, is that why we believe market-based pricing was an important part – is an important part, is the most important part –of the Churchill Falls deal. Because I bet you, if anyone who sold a house two years said, well, can you give me the money back for the market increase and I'll give you CPI instead. They would take the market-based pricing and not the CPI. That's the point we've been trying to make and it certainly seems like that's not sinking in on the other side of the House.

I will get to a question, but I want to just talk about the loss of market-based pricing between 2024 and 2026. The Premier's review panel said that the block-based structure, which would have included export market pricing, domestic market pricing and replacement cost, was too complex. So we certainly talked about that in the House during the debate. That was a recommendation from the IRC.

I just want to talk about Mr. Chee-Aloy because he's been raised a lot here this afternoon. What he said was: I can't comment on the loss of market-based pricing because I don't know if the negotiation team had tried to negotiate anything else in terms of a market index or anything like that.

So to give the Leader of the Third Party maybe some comfort about the difference between the two deals and why Mr. Chee-Aloy could say 2024 was a good deal, as opposed to 2026. He didn't know the status of negotiations about why market-based pricing was dropped. He was very clear while he was here in 2025 that market-based pricing was a great idea. I think the Member for Mount Scio reminded me that it was Mr. Chee-Aloy's idea, actually, to implement market-based pricing, but he had no say in the fact that it was dropped. He had no say in negotiations, but it was dropped.

Again, the review panel said you should drop it because it's too difficult. Now, just to remind everybody, despite the Minister of Energy saying there was no work done on this file, there was work done and it was confirmed here in the House of Assembly because a market-based pricing block structure was put together by NL Hydro to send to Hydro-Québec.

Some of the criticisms of that, I think in the IRC report, was that it was too heavily involved, not in the markets, but in replacement cost. Well, sure enough, that was a pretty good idea because Hydro-Québec said just a couple of weeks ago, that they will not be selling as much power to their export markets. They will be building their own energy infrastructure, which is where the value of that replacement cost would be, which is why it was good – sorry, the Minister of Energy might have something to say.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR: Order, please!

J. HOGAN: No.

Which is why it was good that it was heavily favoured on the replacement costs. Anyway, just some commentary on that, but I will get to my question about the loss of the market-based pricing.

The Independent Review Committee, as we said, said don't even try, too complicated, can't figure it out, confusing for us, we don't understand it. The Oversight Chair said it was given up during negotiations.

Now, if the Review Committee says don't do it, my confusion is why were they doing the negotiations, which would have been against the recommendation of the IRC?

The third person, Mr. Perry, said it was given up early because it was complex. So don't do it was one thing that we heard. It was given up during negotiations was the second thing we heard. The third thing we heard it was given up early because it was complex, which is a bit of a mix of both.

Can the minister tell Newfoundlanders and Labradorians which of those three versions is the correct version as to why and when market-based pricing was given up by this government?

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: On that question, I'm sure Barry Perry had spoke that when he first was engaged to negotiate on behalf of the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, his comment in the House of Assembly here was that he knew that had to go.

Now, I can't give you the page that was on in the *Hansard* but I know that's what he said. If I take the man at his word, he knew from the get-go that that had to go. It was too complex. I guess he might have realized – I think you were the one that stated in this Chamber – why give it up after 10 months of effort? If you put a whole lot of bright people in a room for 10 months to figure something out and, at the end of 10 months, you haven't figured it out, I'm more inclined to listen to Barry Perry to say, it may have been just too complex, if you couldn't do it in 10 months.

Remember, 10 months is almost from one fiscal to another, from one budget to another, that's only 12 months. They were 10 months. So if you're asking me where in the process that market-based pricing be dropped for the cost of service model, I can't tell you exactly when it was dropped, but I can tell you from the get-go what our lead negotiator said, that that had to go.

From my knowledge of Barry Perry, I can say to you he was consulting with experts that he would have in his circle, I'm sure. I know you're going to ask me who was he consulting with? I'm not sure who he was consulting with as a friend, like I haven't told my colleague here, the Minister of Health, that I was consulting with the Leader of the Opposition yesterday, did I?

J. WALL: No.

C. PARDY: But does it really matter?

J. HOGAN: (Inaudible) Barry Perry should tell (inaudible).

SPEAKER: Order, please!

C. PARDY: I'm not sure.

To say that the head negotiator would need to make public everyone he spoke with, friends or friend circle, I'm not sure about whether that would be typical in any hydroelectricity deal. I don't know.

Maybe a lawyer in a court of law might look at it and say, chronologically, we need to

make sure every little detail is here in this, and when it's not, it might delay a trial because there might be something missing.

The outcome of this deal speaks for itself. I think the outcome speaks for itself and I would say, and I've said it before, if anybody in the District of Bonavista is watching – I think MHA Glen Little is watching from home and he is enjoying the debate and what we're doing, the discussion and the Q & A – I would say to the people in the District of Bonavista, I believe this is a good deal.

If it wasn't a good deal and I didn't think it was, you can rest assured that I wouldn't be standing here to support a deal that I did not think was a good deal for Newfoundland and Labrador. I stand in this House as a Finance Minister; I know the financial and the fiscal situation in the province. I welcome Bay du Nord, I welcome Churchill Falls and I welcome the other industries that are occurring.

Why do I welcome that? The affordability measures that you talk about, helping residents increasing thresholds, we can do it with revenue. Without revenue, all we do is talk, because we need revenue to make meaningful change in Newfoundland and Labrador. That's the bottom line.

Now, the gas tax here today, this is going to help the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It's one measure. Just to repeat, on the gas tax, we had to have a start date, which we hope to be December 1; we had to have an end date because we want to make sure that the amount of money, the $25 million we got accounted for, generally around $25 million, we will monitor that as it starts, but we know that it will not be stopped until the end of March 31, then we'll know exactly as to where we are, where the oil is $89 a barrel.

I do thank the Members for the questions and I think that was good.

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

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Chair.

I just, of course, want to speak about Labrador to the Finance Minister. I think you did share some information that, until you go there, until you converse with the people who live there, it always broadens your knowledge.

There is a tremendous need across Labrador, economically and socially. We've seen in the past where big projects even bring big social issues. You can meet with the chamber and they'll tell you one side and you can meet with another group and they will tell you another side.

So I think, if I heard you right, I wouldn't put words in your mouth, you said, I have not yet been a part of a conversation on the things that Labrador needs. You'll have a chance to answer.

We know there was a Team Labrador and there was concern expressed that agreements would be back to the House and this will be signed and wrapped up. It does take time to go out into communities and do consultations and things and that have not yet been started.

What I'm hearing across Labrador is – and we know this is the last chance. We talk a lot about Churchill here in this House, we talk about Muskrat Falls, but this is the last opportunity. It's really difficult for a lot of people when you think about the magnitude of this deal when we're talking about it increasingly on a national stage. It's really difficult to think about the destruction. Again, I've flown low level over Muskrat a couple of times, I don't ever want to do it again, to be honest. It's really hard to see all the flooding and the things that came with that. However, it is more palatable when we know there's something.

So I guess what I would ask the Finance Minister is, one of the things that folks have reached to me a lot about is when we talk about a project that's about $250 billion, $270 billion, will your government be looking at a Labrador legacy, recognizing that those closest to the resource will stand to lose?

I had a conversation with someone actually from Happy Valley a couple of nights ago and they said, I think people think we get cheaper power, like it's subsidized but the reality is – because they're so close to the resource it's cheaper to deliver. There's the transmission line issue down to the south that keeps coming up. So just wondering about a Labrador legacy, is that going to be part of a northern strategic plan?

In my final thought, because then I won't get to come back to the clock anymore, is when you reference the seven Labrador communities, Norman's Bay, which is the most vulnerable in our province, was left out. I did ask a couple of times so maybe you can comment on that as well, because I know when we did the coastal supplement, we didn't pick a number of communities, we said north and south coast. When we did air access, let's bring in the north, they're isolated. We always tried to be fair, but I'm particularly interested in sort of what is here for Labrador, beyond the jobs?

Minister, I'm asking because every day someone says to me, what's there for Labrador beyond the jobs? Actually, some stats were shared with us at the chamber meeting the other day and it seems like we might not have 15 per cent of the jobs to offer this project and most of that will probably be people from Quebec because a lot of our people are working, unless more comes home and things like that.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

C. PARDY: Great questions I say to the Member.

I'll be as succinct as I can and focus in. Number one, you said about the planning, my answer to the hon. Member for St. John's Centre was that we're planning now for Labrador within the budget that we have. I know that the two Members for Labrador that we've got here, I can tell you, even this morning we were talking about it.

I reference to the Member that when we did an analysis, not Norman's Bay, but when we did an analysis of those seven communities that were serviced by Woodward on the boat, which was the way that we can get Woodward and subsidize before it ever reaches them, was Woodward only. Other than that, we never had no ability to find out as to what oil was being consumed, we didn't.

So those seven communities, when we did the economic analysis of those seven communities, in Minister Evans' district, in a lot of them we found food insecurity and the cost of providing food was far exceeding any other part in Newfoundland and Labrador. I ought not to be surprised, but it was very high compared to any other part that would be in Labrador.

So Woodward's Oil was a subsidy that we were tackling and that is the ones we served. I know Norman's Bay was serviced by Charlottetown. I'm not sure where Charlottetown gets it, but it's not Woodward's. I don't think it is. I know we looked at those.

The final one would be –

L. DEMPSTER: The legacy piece.

C. PARDY: Yeah, the final one was the legacy piece. That has to happen. I would say to you that has to happen. If we've got communities in Labrador that, all of a sudden, are not electrified at this day and age, where we are, we're talking about

climate change, which we acknowledge, we've got to electrify. Whatever we can do to do that, because this money is being created in Labrador, what we've got, it will help the province.

Anyway, that was the three quick ones.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you for that, Minister, I appreciate that.

C. PARDY: You're welcome.

CHAIR: Not seeing any more speakers, 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 and 3 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 and 3 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 3 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 Revenue Administration Act No. 3. (Bill 22)

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 amendments?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Chair, I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 22 without amendment.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 22 without amendment.

Is it the pleasure of the House?

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 22, An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act No. 3, without amendment.

SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and recommends Bill 22 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: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

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

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that Bill 22 now be read a third time.

SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that Bill 22 now be read a third time.

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

Motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act No. 3. (Bill 22)

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

On motion, a bill, “An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act No. 3,” read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 22)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 17, second reading of Bill 38.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member for Labrador West, that Bill 38 be now read a second time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 38, An Act Respecting the Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act Respecting the Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance." (Bill 38)

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

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Speaker, it is with pleasure that I stand today to begin debate on Bill 38, the *International Recovery of Child Support and Family Maintenance Convention Act*.

The introduction of this bill aims to provide a framework for those who have family maintenance orders where parties to the agreement are in different countries. It was adopted on November 23, 2007, by the Hague Conference on Private International Law, and it came into force on January 1, 2013.

The 2000 Hague Convention is an international treaty that provides a legal framework for the cross-border recognition and enforcement, establishment and variation of child and spousal support orders when one party lives in another country. Essentially, the convention helps countries work together to collect and enforce child and family support payments when people live in different jurisdictions.

With this legislation, this province will join six other provinces in enacting legislation following Canada's ratification of the convention in October 2023. The 2007 Hague Convention was ratified by Canada in 2023. It came into force in 2024, when British Columbia, Ontario and Manitoba implemented legislation. Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan have proclaimed legislation and Quebec has enacted legislation to adopt the convention, but this is not yet proclaimed. It is up to individual provinces to enact legislation for the 2007 Hague Convention to apply in their specific jurisdiction.

Support orders made in one participating country can be recognized and enforced in another without rehearing the case, and countries must provide effective enforcement measures, such as wage withholding and benefit garnishment. It covers most child support cases, certain spousal support claims and it can be extended to other family support obligations.

This legislation would be in addition to and complement the existing *Support Orders Enforcement Act, 2006*, as well as the *Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act*. These acts govern child and spousal support orders within Newfoundland and Labrador between this province and other provinces and territories and between this province and select international jurisdictions where Newfoundland and Labrador has a bilateral agreement.

To just explain a little bit about the *Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act*, what that does, it allows the provincial government to make bilateral agreements with other countries to enforce child and spousal support orders, but this is currently limited to just 13 countries. New agreements would need to be negotiated and introduced with each country, one at a time.

So adopting the 2007 convention, what it will do is, it will open automatic access to 57 countries with more joining every year. While Newfoundland and Labrador may continue to negotiate future bilateral agreements under existing legislation, some countries such as the countries of the European Union have decided that they will not enter into new bilateral agreements for support orders outside of the 2007 Hague Convention so limiting this province's options for future bilateral agreements.

If approved, Newfoundland and Labrador will also need to notify Justice Canada of the intention of us to join the 2007 Hague Convention. Justice Canada has to then, it's required, to notify the Hague Convention on

this government's behalf. Officials in the Department of Justice and Public Safety will work, then, with an Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat to communicate to Justice Canada. Those are the processes involved there.

The Support Enforcement Division in the Department of Justice and Public Safety will accommodate convention applications from other countries within its current operations and will act as, what's called, the Central Authority. You will see that referenced in the convention. It will act as the Central Authority for convention matters.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the important and, at times, challenging work the staff and our Support Enforcement Division do on a daily basis to support families in our province. We have a fantastic team working in Corner Brook who regularly show dedication and commitment to their work and I just want to thank them.

This legislation is important. It's important for the children and families who currently rely on family maintenance orders to support themselves and to ensure their families are healthy and secure. Adopting the 2007 Hague Convention would give Newfoundland and Labrador families faster, simpler, international child support enforcement through automatic recognition of court orders and also a global co-operation system that protects children's best interests. Also, it would align this province with best practices in other Canadian jurisdictions and it would ensure families here receive the same level of support and consideration.

Speaker, I look forward to hearing the perspectives of all my colleagues in this House as we go through debate.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 38, An Act Respecting the Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance. At the outset, I want to say that we support the intent of this legislation. Ensuring that children and families receive the support that they are entitled to is something that should transcend borders and this legislation represents an important step in making that process more accessible and effective for the people here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

When we think about child support, we often think about arrangements between two parents who live in the same community or at least the same province. But families don't always fit neatly within those boundaries. Sometimes the person responsible for paying support is living in another country. When that happens, pursuing support can become significantly more complicated.

A parent who is trying to ensure that their child receives the support that they are entitled to may find themselves navigating unfamiliar legal systems, different rules, language requirements, additional paperwork and potentially significant costs. For someone already managing the responsibilities of raising a child, those additional barriers can make what should be a straightforward matter, incredibly difficult. That is the problem this convention is intended to address.

The Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance establishes an international framework for countries and jurisdictions to co-operate in the recognition and enforcement of support orders. It creates a system through which authorities and participating jurisdictions can work

together to help people pursue support when the person responsible for paying lives elsewhere.

In practical terms, it means that a parent in Newfoundland and Labrador may be able to seek assistance through our provincial authorities when the person responsible for paying child support lives in another country where the convention applies. Rather than having to figure out how to navigate foreign legal systems on their own, there is an established process for authorities to assist with applications, exchange information, locate individuals and facilitate recognition and enforcement of support decisions. That is an important improvement.

Speaker, the convention has been a long time in the making for Canada. Canada signed the convention in 2017, but ratification did not happen until October 2023. That delay reflects the reality of our federal system. Provinces and territories needed to put the necessary legislative frameworks in place before Canada could move forward with ratification and begin extending the convention to jurisdictions. Manitoba and Ontario were the first provinces to implement the necessary legislation. BC followed and Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan have also taken steps to join the framework. Here in Newfoundland and Labrador, officials have indicated that work on drafting this legislation has been under way since 2024 so I'm happy to see this moving forward today.

The convention currently provides a framework involving dozens of countries and jurisdictions that includes countries with Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have significant personal family and economic connections including the United States, the United Kingdom, France and other countries across Europe, as well as countries such as Brazil, Columbia, New Zealand, Norway and the Philippines. For families with connections to those jurisdictions, having a more consistent framework for pursuing support can make a real genuine difference.

I want to highlight France, in particular, because I think it is an especially important example for our province. During the briefing on this legislation, officials highlighted that Newfoundland and Labrador currently does not have a bilateral agreement with France for the reciprocal enforcement of support orders. I think that it is noteworthy, considering the long-standing relationship that exists between Newfoundland and Labrador and France because of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon. Yet, despite those connections, we do not currently have a bilateral agreement in place for the reciprocal enforcement of the support orders.

Officials also highlighted that the European Union has signalled that it is not looking to negotiate further bilateral agreements in this area, relying instead on the framework established through the Hague Convention. That makes participation in this convention particularly important for our province. I understand that this convention does not mean that every existing bilateral agreement becomes unnecessary overnight.

Our province currently has a number of bilateral arrangements relating to reciprocal enforcements of support orders. The convention provides a broader framework for participating jurisdictions, but there may still be circumstances where existing agreements remain unnecessary to address specific requirements between jurisdictions.

For example, different jurisdictions may have different requirements around the language of documents submitted as part of an application. There may be arrangements or procedures that will be maintained to ensure that applications can continue to be processed appropriately. While the convention can reduce reliance on individual bilateral agreements in jurisdictions where it applies, we need to ensure that existing arrangements continue to be accommodating where necessary. That is something that I would be interested

in hearing more about from the minister and officials as this bill proceeds in Committee.

I would also be interested in understanding what the implementation process will look like once the legislation passes. So we'll ask those questions in Committee because passing legislation is only one part of the process, as we know. Ultimately, what matters is that the system is functioning, that people understand how to access it and that families who need assistance are able to receive it in a timely and effective manner.

I would also hope that the department monitors the implementation of the convention, including the number of applications being processed, the success of enforcement efforts and the time it takes for families to receive support. This information will help us understand whether the convention is delivering the improvements that we expect it to deliver.

Speaker, at the end of the day, this legislation is about making sure that children and families are not disadvantaged simply because the person responsible for providing support lives beyond our borders. A support order should not become meaningless because someone moves to another country and a parent should not be expected to shoulder the burden of navigating multiple foreign legal systems simply to ensure the support their children are entitled to received.

The convention provides a framework for countries and jurisdictions to work together to address those challenges. It promotes co-operation, improves access to enforcement mechanisms and provides a more consistent process for pursuing support internationally.

We support the intent of this legislation and we will be looking forward to seeing it implemented in a way that delivers meaningful benefits for families right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I thank the minister and the officials who have worked on bringing this legislation forward and I look forward to further discussion, of course, on the bill in the House and in Committee.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

S. O'LEARY: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm pleased to stand in this hon. House to speak on Bill 38, the *International Recovery of Child Support and Family Maintenance Convention Act*. Certainly, this is welcome news for the NDP caucus. We look forward to having further discussion about this, but just for a little bit of clarification around it again.

What does this mean? What does this bill refer to? It means that if a person from Newfoundland and Labrador owes payments, child support and family maintenance payments, ordered by the courts and they move to another country, that the order can still be enforced and conversely a person from one of those 13 countries because, as the minister so aptly discussed about the bilateral agreements with 13 international countries, if they move to a province and reneges on these payments, the court orders can be enforced there as well.

This is very welcome news for families. Child rearing is a tough job and we all know it, many of the hon. Members in this House are parents and not all families stay together and it can be very conflicting. Of course, the reality is, whether or not there's a single parent or otherwise, custody arrangements and the cost of supporting children is crucial. It's a very deep and important thing. Of course, we know that there have been many laws about this and

so having this cleaned up in the House, I'm very pleased to see this come forward.

In 2007, the Hague Conference on Private International Law issued the convention the international recovery of child support and other forms of family maintenance. It's a multilateral treaty governing the enforcement of judicial decisions regarding child support and other forms of family support, extra-territorially.

The federal government signed on to the convention in 2023; however, such matters lie within this provincial sphere of governance under the Constitution. That is why we're here to discuss this. As a result, each province must bring in enacting legislation for the convention to take effect in their jurisdiction.

As of November 2026, it's my understanding that British Columbia, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Saskatchewan have passed enabling legislation, so it's encouraging to see that Newfoundland and Labrador in the legislation and government sees this as a priority to support, not just families, but children; children who are the direct beneficiaries of these court orders in those scenarios.

This bill will enact the *International Recovery of Child Support and Family Maintenance Convention Act.* It establishes the procedures into the extents specified in the act, applications related to recognition and enforcement of the support orders under this convention.

The one thing I will say is that we will certainly have some questions to ask about this, but I did want to just mention briefly in the initial stages, I know that we've had some dialogue certainly with many of our constituents about various issues. I think I would be remiss if I didn't mention a specific case that has been in the media, Bouchra Marbouhii and her daughter Tamara, who had been kidnapped. We know that we also need to continue to expand this work as we go outside of some of those areas that we already know could be covered in those agreements with other provincial and federal counterparts to deal with other issues and conventions to protect children as well.

Just for reference, of course, you can refer to an article in *The Canadian Press* that Sarah Smellie wrote about the Newfoundland girl's disappearance and prompts for tougher laws to stop abductions. In that article, "Cross said better systems of scrutiny should be in place for people crossing borders with children, especially to countries that have not signed on to The Hague Convention."

I just reference that; I know that is outside of this particular scope, but it is something, certainly, worth meriting, because our office was very involved and trying to be supportive of this particular situation. It is a good indication, Speaker, of the need for the expansion of this kind of legislation.

So I look forward to further discussion on this particular issue. I thank the minister for bringing it forward. It's excellent work to see in this House and I look forward to the questions at that time.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice and Public and Safety, that the debate now be adjourned.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the debate now be adjourned.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. PARROTT: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Premier, that this House do now recess until 6 o’clock.

SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that this House do now recess until 6 p.m.

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.’

This House is now in recess until 6 p.m.