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Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Before we start today, I'd like to welcome a new page here today. Her name is Amber Rideout. Amber has just completed a Bachelor of Arts with a major in French at Memorial University. She is also our tour guide for this summer, and will be assisting as a page this afternoon. And I may add she's from the beautiful and scenic District of Lewisporte - Twillingate.

Welcome Amber.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

SPEAKER: Today we will hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Terra Nova, Ferryland, Burin - Grand Bank, Placentia - St. Mary's and Mount Pearl North.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Everything we do affects the world we live in. We do not have limitless resources, and we have the power to destroy or create. We need to teach children to create, care for and respect our world.

The kindergarten and Grade 1 classes at Holy Cross School in Eastport learned ways to take care of our Earth when they returned to class after Easter break. They worked very hard to clean up garbage left behind by others who – I quote from one of the students – don't take care of our Earth.

They were not pleased with the mess left around the schoolhouse and trails and would like to see that their efforts were not in vain.

These kindergarten and Grade 1 students put on their gloves with garbage bags in hand and set out to make a difference for their school and community. They spent the day making the school grounds clean and a tidy place to both live in and play.

Small changes can add up over time, so it's important that we look at the small things. These students are to be congratulated for making a change.

Teach them young. They are our future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Speaker.

I rise today to recognize and congratulate Sullivan's Songhouse, who have been awarded the Cultural Tourism Award for 2022, presented by Hospitality NL and Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism.

The award recognizes the offering of an advanced product and/or experience that celebrates the inherent value of a community culture, heritage and lifestyle.

Mr. Sean Sullivan owns and operates Sullivan's Songhouse in his hometown of Calvert on the Southern Shore. Sean provides his guests with a two-hour musical getaway with some good Irish-Newfoundland folk music, up close and personal in his old-fashioned outport kitchen in Irish heart of Newfoundland.

Sean is usually joined by a special guest musician at every session, where they will serve up an authentic song session that is both engaging and entertaining.

Sean brings with his memories and experience of growing up in a house where songs and stories were a major part of his Irish-Newfoundland heritage.

Speaker, I ask all Members in this House to join me in congratulating Sullivan's Songhouse on their Cultural Tourism Award and wishing them much success in the future.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. PIKE: Speaker, the Burin Peninsula and the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has lost a true visionary, an effective and innovative leader and a strong advocate for his community, Grand Bank Deputy Mayor Clayton Welsh.

Clayton passed away on Friday, April 29, surrounded by the love of his life, his wife Marjorie and his daughters Cawley and Kelli.

Clayton spent his working career as a recreation and sports consultant with the provincial government. He was very involved in designing and promoting recreation programs including involvement in the Canada Games.

Clayton grew up in historic Grand Bank and was very active in soccer, hockey and golf. As a matter of fact, Clayton was a founding member of the Grande Meadows Golf Course. He served as mayor and deputy mayor for 20 years, a member of the Schooner Regional Economic Development Board, a board member with the Community Youth Network, a member of the joint towns and community councils on the Burin Peninsula and many other volunteer organizations.

Clayton was a friend to all who knew him. He will be remembered for his heart-warming laugh, his love for his family and his kindness and sincerity.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in extending sincere condolences to his family.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

S. GAMBIN-WALSH: Speaker, the Placentia Area Historical Society was incorporated in 1972 and celebrated its 50th birthday on March 27. It took on the role to promote the study, knowledge and preservation of the history of the Placentia area. Placentia's history goes back to the 16th century with many nationalities including: Basque, French, English, Irish, American and Canadian.

The Historical Society's flagship in promoting this history has been the O'Reilly House Museum, open seasonally and housing artifacts going back over 450 years. The society recently acquired the former St. Luke's Anglican Church. Both the former church and the O'Reilly House have heritage designation.

The new activities this year for the society will be adapting the former church, now known as the St. Luke's Cultural Heritage Centre, into a performance centre and museum. Events being planned include the escape room game based on Placentia's history and called Placentia Plunder, a speaker series and musical performances.

The Placentia Area Historical Society has a membership of 28. This is Come Home Year and the society looks forward to a very active year guided by its board of directors. The present executive consists of President Tom O'Keefe, Vice-President Anita O'Keefe, Secretary Winnie Barry and Treasurer Ann Devereaux.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

L. STOYLES: Speaker, I rise in this House to acknowledge Mrs. Ida Leonard.

Mrs. Leonard passed away on April 12 of this year at the age of 100. She was born in Scotland. She joined the Royal Air Force during World War II where she met her husband and moved to Newfoundland as a proud Scottish war bride. She moved to the community of Shoal Harbour where she raised nine children.

This Second World War veteran of the Royal Air Force lived an extraordinary life filled with challenges and joy. She raised her children with fierce determination and unconditional love.

Moving to Shoal Harbour was a culture shock for Mrs. Leonard. In Scotland they had running water and indoor toilet facilities; it was a modern life for the time. In Shoal Harbour she adjusted to a different life, having to go outside

to use the outhouse, carry water, work hard in the vegetable gardens and keeping animals.

Later in her life she moved to Conception Bay South and then to Mount Pearl – God’s country. She was a proud and active member of her district legions and often spoke of her life stories. She was laid to rest in the Field of Honour in Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

I ask my colleagues to join me in tribute to the life of Mrs. Ida Leonard.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

I wish to inform the House that an airlift of 166 Ukrainian refugees under the hand of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador is on its way from Poland.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER A. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, as atrocities of war are inflicted on Ukraine by Russia, the people of this province are standing up and standing tall. We stand with Ukraine.

The world has been reminded of what is the true face of courage and resolve in Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. As his nation fights for freedom, we all do what we can to support and ease the burdens of Ukrainian families.

When the crisis hit Ukraine, our province stepped up immediately with a made-in-Newfoundland-and-Labrador solution.

To our knowledge, we are the first state actor in North America to organize a humanitarian airlift of Ukrainians to our shores. Our understanding and our place on the world stage is reflected in this deliberate act.

Of course, none of this work would have been possible without the tireless leadership of our good friend, the Minister of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills – well done!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER A. FUREY: What he and his department continue to accomplish is incredible. Other provinces and indeed the federal government are looking now to follow our example thanks to their tireless work.

I am reminded, Mr. Speaker, of each and every time Newfoundlanders and Labradorians stepped up to help, often in times of local or international crisis. Disasters at sea, sending our own during the First World War when we could least afford it, 9/11. When people are in need, Newfoundland and Labrador is there.

Mr. Speaker, today, our long, staunch history of supporting people in times of crisis, we are carrying on. I wish to thank this House for its continued support for our collective efforts and to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador for their incredible generosity that they have laid out during this time of crisis.

Much work remains. Slava Ukraini.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker, and I thank the Premier for an advance copy of his statement.

On behalf of the Official Opposition, I extend a warm welcome to the Ukrainian refugees who are currently en route to our beautiful province. It is my hope that these individuals and families who are fleeing from the atrocities and horror of war will be met with a generous and encouraging community where they can feel safe and supported.

I look forward to getting to know them and listening to their stories. I can only imagine the struggle, the fear and the emotional turmoil that this needless war has inflicted upon the residents of Ukraine. While I welcome those who are en

route to our province, I continue to think of those who are still facing danger and I hope for a resolution to the senseless invasion.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: I, too, thank the Premier for an advance copy of his statement and congratulate the government on this initiative.

We would also like to welcome these new arrivals to our province and let's do our best to make sure that this is the place where they want to stay and thrive. We, therefore, call on government to redouble their efforts in immigrant retention, invest in the necessary supports so that these new arrivals feel truly welcome and supported, as they become part of our communities.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you, Speaker.

I rise today to acknowledge National Nursing Week and to recognize the contributions of those in the nursing profession.

The theme of National Nursing Week 2022 is We Answer The Call. This theme reflects the determination and dedication nurses continue to show while rising to the occasion for their patients, the public and colleagues alike.

Speaker, our government understands the impacts of the nursing shortage in our province. It is an issue that is being seen across this country.

We continue to work collaboratively to increase the capacity in our educational programs by increasing seats in the Bachelor of Science in

Nursing Program by 25 per cent and graduation numbers in the Practical Nursing Program by 40 per cent. As well, we are working to strengthen recruitment and retention strategies across Newfoundland and Labrador. While a career in nursing is focused on caring for others, we appreciate the need to care for our nurses by enhancing the quality of nursing work life.

The pandemic further brought to light the pressures that nurses and all health care workers experience every day and showed the crucial role that nurses plays in the community.

Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me as we once again thank nurses for always rising to the occasion.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I am honoured to rise in the House today to commend the hard-working, dedicated, courageous nursing staff of our province during National Nursing Week.

This year's National Nursing Week theme is We Answer The Call and we, the Official Opposition, cannot agree more. When COVID-19 struck, they answered the call. As our hospitals are facing backlogs, they answer the call. When our seniors require attention, they answer the call.

Speaker, we are privileged to be able to stand in this hon. House and recognize our nursing staff because they answer the call. I encourage the people of our province to say thank you. Thank you to all our dedicated nursing staff for their tireless efforts today and every day.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: I Thank you minister for an advance copy of his statement.

We also take this opportunity to thank nurses for the extraordinary efforts they make to give us the care that we need. It is time for this government to reciprocate. We love our nurses, so show them the love. Ensure that nurses have all the supports they need to do their jobs so that they are no longer pushed to their limits and we stem the tide of burnout and resignations in the system.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Are there any further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, gas in this province is now approaching the \$2.10 per litre mark.

Speaker, is the Liberal government planning to continue providing excuses while seniors and families suffer?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

This is a national issue – in fact, it’s an international issue, as we addressed in *Budget 2022*. We’re addressing that with \$142 million provided to the people of the province in a holistic approach. As opposed to just tackling one specific issue, this is a holistic approach to the cost of living, Mr. Speaker.

We appreciate the anxiety that the rising fuel costs are causing with people and families in particular, and businesses. This is an international problem sparked of course by supply issues, largely driven by the externalities

of the Russian war in Ukraine, Mr. Speaker, and I can’t control that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We applaud \$142 million, but the people of this province are saying it’s not enough and it’s not going in the right areas.

Speaker, the Premier says this is a global problem, but I remind him that he has been elected to help fix problems affecting the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Why does the Premier continue to force people to choose between groceries, gasoline and medicine?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

We, of course, recognize that this is a problem, but we don’t control inflation, Mr. Speaker, and it’d be wrong for any state – subnational – to think that they could. That’s how you lead to poor decision-making, which compounds the problem, frankly.

What we are doing is taking a holistic approach. I’m not saying that this is the last set of measures; we’ll see where all this goes in terms of a world stage. But we believe that we have a holistic approach that has touched many people in this province, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to look at other avenues. But to think that we can control inflation is frankly wrong and really irresponsible from the Member opposite.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

But you do control a fair bit of the taxation on gasoline and fuels. That does have an impact on the cost of inflation in Newfoundland and Labrador particularly. It costs more than \$2 per litre of gasoline in this province right now. That's too much. People simply can't afford this. Alberta has taken action; Ontario has taken action.

Premier: Why are other premiers taking action while you allow the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to suffer?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER A. FUREY: First of all, Mr. Speaker, we have taken action: \$142 million worth of action. We've also addressed the cost of living, by the way, by controlling electricity rates with the rate mitigation deal. All of that contributes to inflation locally, but again, we don't control the externalities that are at play at the geopolitical tension on the world stage. We are doing our bit within the restrictive fiscal envelope that we were left with, because of – say it with me now, gentlemen and ladies – Muskrat Falls.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What we're hearing from the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, particularly our seniors and our most vulnerable, is that it's not hitting the mark. It's not doing what it needs to do to help the people of this province.

Speaker, it's not just driving we're talking about. The cost of increases are seen on the grocery shelves. Sugar costs \$3 a bag. Milk is now \$2 a tin, shocking increases, yet the Liberals continue to make excuses for why they can't help.

I ask the Premier: While other provinces act on the cost of living, why are we pricing seniors out of their next cup of tea?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

Other provinces are also struggling, Mr. Speaker, as are other countries. This is a combination of push-pull dynamics within the inflation environment. We don't control the global economic forces at play. There are a large number of externalities, not the least of which is the war in Ukraine, which is impacting not only the supply chain directly, but indirectly through the price of gas.

We don't control that. What we are looking at is ways internally within our fiscal restraint that we can responsibly look after, through a holistic approach, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to look for innovative ways, recognizing the challenges in front of us.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

All we're encouraging the Premier to do is use what he can control to help the people of this province. What they've used right now isn't helping the people of this province. That's what we're hearing from our constituents.

Speaker, as we ready our province to receive tourism this summer, the provincial government has made sure the cost of living for tourists gets a help by eliminating the fees to enter provincial park sites.

I ask the Premier: Will parking at hospitals around our province also be made free of charge?

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

S. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. Member for the question.

Mr. Speaker, what we've done is eliminated the fees for provincial historic sites for the entire province. He said for people visiting, but it's

also for residents of the province. As the Premier has said and the Minister of Finance has said, there were measures in our budget, and we realize the challenges that are being created right now, but we will do what we can to help support and rebuild the tourism and hospitality industry in this province. It was the one that was most devastated.

The Member opposite stood here on Thursday afternoon and talked about how important the tourism industry and hospitality industry is to this province, Mr. Speaker, and I thank him for that. We will continue to support that industry, as that rebuilds too.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

And there's nobody on this side of the House who doesn't support the tourism initiatives in this province, and we're very supportive of it. What we're talking about here is if we're going to do something for the tourism industry, when we have people suffering after six, eight or 10 hours in emergency, to come out and still have to pay fees, that's the last thing on their mind, the last thing they should have to face.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: Speaker, all we're asking is for the Premier to consider the hardships faced by the people living here in Newfoundland and Labrador. Food and fuel is getting more expensive by the day. The last thing people need to see, when they head out of a hospital, is another bill for parking.

Speaker, when will the Premier take real action to help the people of Newfoundland and Labrador?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

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

We have taken real action, and I'll reiterate, Mr. Speaker, \$142 million directly to the people of the province. We believe that this holistic approach touches a lot of people –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER A. FUREY: – in this province, Mr. Speaker. It touches people who own homes, it touches people who own cars and it touches people on low income, people who are on income assistance, Mr. Speaker. We're touching a lot of lives with that, but we also recognize that we still have fiscal challenges –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Premier.

PREMIER A. FUREY: We still have fiscal challenges in this province, Mr. Speaker. We're still booking a \$350-million deficit, Mr. Speaker. We are interested in a holistic approach that contemplates the future of the province not just –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER A. FUREY: – short-term political rhetoric, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

Premier, I'd say, say it with me: Upper Churchill. That's how lame your excuse is.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: Speaker, the mayor of Baie Verte has quit over frustration with treacherous roads and complete lack of response from the minister's department. Speaker, the town has been told they must upgrade infrastructure

which is below the provincially owned road before any repairs will be made.

Speaker, why is the minister using pressure tactics to delay the needed repairs?

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

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not using pressure tactics; I'm using responsible tactics. When I met with the mayor a year ago, I asked him to provide a blueprint of the town's infrastructure under the roads, because I did not want to invest taxpayers' dollars putting pavement on the road when we know there may be a possibility that the infrastructure needed replacing under.

That's what I asked for; I haven't got a totality in terms of a blueprint of that. Until I get that, we really can't have a serious conversation about what we will invest in the Town of Baie Verte. But I will continue to work with the MHA that represents the area very well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

The minister needs to help this town; they need help. They're having trouble financially; that's what the real crux of the problem is here, and he knows that.

Speaker, the Baie Verte Peninsula has two operating lines and health centres that are on a constant diversion, which has increased traffic significantly. Residents are actually driving on the wrong side of the road to avoid bad sections.

Why is government ignoring these serious safety issues?

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

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I take exception to the fact of ignoring, because I drove the area with the MHA, the deputy minister was with me, when the LaScie road was facing many challenging conditions due to weather, because the freeze and the thaw was taking havoc on their roads. Even the assistant deputy minister went up to get into the car with the MHA to drive and see it first-hand.

There are many challenges; there are many roads in the province that have challenges. But we have to stay within our fiscal envelope as well and be responsible for all taxpayers in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, the town submitted an estimate over a year ago and has not heard from the minister. In the meantime, the former mayor wrote the Premier saying: The sheer level of ignorance and lack of respect exhibited by the minister is unexplainable and unacceptable.

Why is the minister offering insult as opposed to help?

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

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Sometimes that Member goes to areas that don't need to go, as far as I am concerned. Talking about ignorance, I am not being ignorant to the Town of Baie Verte. We had an estimate that was presented last year in the department. It is not an application. They didn't apply for anything. Until they do, I am willing to work with the Town of Baie Verte.

This is not about the mayor. This is not about the minister. This is about the Town of Baie Verte and finding a way to help them out. I am trying to do that, along with the MHA, and we, hopefully, will come to some kind of resolve but being responsible always to the taxpayers' dollars of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

I am sure we all look forward to a quick resolution for the people in the Baie Verte region so that that can be solved and they can take care of their roads, and I am certainly looking forward to the improvements in my district.

Speaker, I ask the Minister of Finance: How much money does the provincial government, her Liberal government, collect on a litre of gas in terms of taxes?

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Speaker, for the question.

It is a very important question and I will give it on a global basis. The provincial gas tax collects \$141 million a year. That's the provincial gas tax. We have provided \$142 million in cost-of-living assurance to the people of the province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, the minister keeps telling us what she has done. In case she is not aware, they are collecting approximately 43 cents a litre. That's how much the provincial government is getting per litre in gas taxes right now in the Province of Newfoundland.

I ask the minister: Do you believe that's fair to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador who continue to struggle to make ends meet?

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

S. COADY: Speaker, the Member opposite does understand that we do have a provincial gas tax that collects 14.5 cents per litre – 14.5 cents a litre. I can hear him muttering under his breath across the way. Please be respectful. I did not do that to him.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

S. COADY: Again, 14.5 cents. In aggregate, that works out to be \$141 million. I believe the Member opposite is misinterpreting the carbon tax and the HST in saying that the province controls those. As I have stated in this House, the HST is a harmonized tax with the federal government.

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, I'm having a challenge because the minister is refusing to be honest with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I asked her how much does the Liberal government collect in taxes on a litre of gas. It is not just carbon tax and HST and gasoline tax, and that roughs out to 43 cents a litre.

Can the minister confirm that number? That's all I want.

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

S. COADY: Mr. Speaker, this is an hon. House and we have a right to a respectful workplace. I ask the Member to withdraw calling me dishonest in this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

S. COADY: I take quite offence to that.

He asked the question about how much is levied on a litre of fuel and, as I said, the provincial gas tax is 14.5 cents. If he wishes to rephrase his question to ask about carbon tax, I can certainly get him those numbers. Or if he wants to know how much we get on the harmonized sales tax, I will certainly be happy to get those numbers.

But I do ask for a respectful workplace.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, I certainly take back if the minister thinks I said she was dishonest, I have no problem taking that back. That is not my point.

My point is I would simply ask the minister to tell us, exactly, at the end of the day, on a litre of gas, how much do you collect on carbon tax? How much do you collect in HST? How much do you collect in gasoline tax? Maybe you can add those numbers up and tell us what the amount is.

Thank you.

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

S. COADY: Thank you.

I appreciate the withdrawal of that inflammatory comment by the Member opposite, I really do, and I do appreciate a respectful workplace.

I will say to the Member opposite, I'd be very happy to break down the carbon tax and the HST on a per litre basis and provide it to him. I have provided him what the provincial government levies on a litre of gas.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Speaker.

We'd like a real answer rather than a pat answer that we get every single time that we get an answer.

Speaker, our office has heard from a number of landlords who are being forced to evict tenants rather than keep renting where oil heat is provided. The cost of fuel is so high that the heat savings from an empty apartment are greater than the money taken in from rent.

Why is the Liberal government contributing towards our housing crisis by pushing people out on the street?

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

J. ABBOTT: Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Member.

Certainly, the government is not in the business of forcing anybody out on the street. Within the ambit of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, we support our tenants through a heat subsidy and other landlords can do otherwise if they so choose.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Well, they're looking for a break on home heating rebate, and we haven't got that yet either. So hopefully somebody can do something to help out the people of this province.

Speaker, furnace oil has doubled in a year. People who rent properties with heat included are talking a huge loss, which puts pressure on the landlord and tenant alike.

Why is the government forcing landlords into bankruptcy and tenants out on the streets?

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

J. ABBOTT: Again, Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to respond.

Again, the government is not forcing any landlord to evict anybody based on any factors, whether its cost or other issues. We work with landlords, we have a rent supplement, which we provide to many landlords to support our tenants across the province, and we have not heard from any landlord suggesting what the Member is putting forth.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Speaker, all we're asking is that you look at the taxes that are on gasoline in this province, and all those prices have risen since the budget has come out. That's what the people are looking for; they're looking for a break.

Speaker, I talked to a landlord yesterday who just filled his own tank for \$2,000. It's costing landlords more and the tenants are feeling the pressure to stay away from the thermostat.

I ask the minister: Why is your government forcing tenants to choose between heat and home?

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Speaker.

So as part of the landlord tenant process, there are rules in place that protect landlords and also protect tenants. There are rules around when landlords can increase rates, and rules to ensure that tenants know the stability of their rent. Anyone who's impacted is welcome to make an appeal to the Residential Tenancies board. We have a tribunal, a quasi-judicial process that makes rulings in favour according to the legislation.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Speaker, a farmer emailed our caucus indicating his fertilizer costs has increased 100 per cent. The fuel bill has increased 186 per cent, grain 109 per cent and herbicides up 101 per cent.

Speaker, the dairy industry in our province is on the verge of collapse. Why is the minister sitting back and letting our milk supply dry up?

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

D. BRAGG: Mr. Speaker, I don't mean to smile, but I think we're a long ways from the milk supply of this province drying up when we

have one of the biggest dairy producers east of Montreal that's on the West Coast of this province, who are exporting milk. So we're a long ways from that drying up.

We do realize that the price this year has gone up. There's no doubt about that. Fertilizer has gone up, and not thanks to the war in the Ukraine, but because of the war in Ukraine. They're the major supplier for that.

There are some challenges no doubt, but we have a CAP program worth millions, multi-millions of dollars that farmers avail of each year, so I encourage each farmer to get out and get in an application for the CAP to help offset some of their price. If they buy machinery, we can help them through the CAP program.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Speaker, this farmer called it the scariest time in the farm's history. Instead of gearing up, they are parking equipment and sending people home.

Given our geographic isolation, is government allowing a food shortage this year?

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

D. BRAGG: Thank you very much, Speaker.

If we are to meet our goals this year, we will exceed our 20 per cent in food sustainability for this province in fruits and vegetables, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAGG: We're already self-sufficient in chicken, eggs and milk and we're looking to be more self-sufficient this year in our fruits and vegetables, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Well, we're hearing from farmers that they can't expand.

Speaker, the farmer is now paying 85 per cent fuel surcharge on everything he brings in. Here's a quote from the farmer: Animals are leaving the Island by the truckload because people can't afford to feed them.

Speaker, this is a desperate cry for help but the government has been silent. Why has government not done anything to help this industry?

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

D. BRAGG: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I would encourage that farmer to phone me direct. No farmer has reached out to my office to talk about any such instance in this province, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

D. BRAGG: So I would encourage that farmer or the Member opposite to provide me the name and I will personally reach out to that farmer, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Speaker, they've been crying on the airwaves, on the news and on the open lines the last week or so.

Speaker, the farmer goes on: Our little bit of food security we were building is now being destroyed. Closed farms, less jobs, higher prices and more products being imported.

This is a stinging indictment of the failure of this government. Why has the minister turned his back on the Newfoundland and Labrador farming industry?

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

D. BRAGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Quite the contrary, Mr. Speaker, we have not turned our back on the farm industry. We have dedicated ourselves to be out in the field assisting wherever we can. We have the facility in Wooddale in which we provide seed potatoes. We do crop transplants for those farmers. They are getting 100 per cent success with the trop – crop transplants. Sorry, trying to be a bit of a tongue twister and racing against the time.

So, again, no farmer has come to me. I'm not aware of any farmer coming to anybody in my department. Whether it was on *Open Line* or not, I would suggest they reach out to the people and reach out to the farm agriculture reps in your area, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

It is interesting to hear the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture talk about being self-sufficient in eggs and milk. That's because half of the province can't afford them. That's why. It's the cost of living. That's the cost of living and if anything is categorically wrong, it is that the prices of those items have not gone down – have not gone down.

D. BRAGG: Terrible.

P. DINN: The minister says it is terrible. I agree 100 per cent with the minister; it is terrible.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

P. DINN: Speaker, personal care homes in our province last saw an increase in the subsidy in 2017. Costs have since ballooned and revenues have been reduced, especially by slow-moving assessment and placement process.

After being ignored for years, when will personal care homes and seniors receive a much-needed subsidy increase?

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Opportunity to address a very important sector of our community supports: personal care home operators. I have met with them and my staff continue to do so on a regular basis. We have provided significant support, financially, and in kind during COVID and we have met with them on their issues around subsidies.

We have gone back to Deloitte who provided us with a report on subsidy rates. Henceforth, realizing that they don't reflect the current changes in the cost of living, I have told each of the sectors that have come to me from the personal care home division and we're working with them as we get Deloitte's new numbers, Speaker. We have heard them.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

It is great to hear them, but we need action because seniors can't wait – can't wait.

Speaker, every day we hear from seniors and their families about delays in accessing personal care homes. The process of admission to these homes is antiquated and under-resourced while seniors suffer.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

P. DINN: You talk about respect in the House. We've got the whole crowd over here talking while I am talking about seniors – seniors – and they still babble on.

When will government overhaul this obsolete, single-entry assessment system for a more

modern and efficient admission's process for seniors in this province?

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

The single-entry system has actually been a recommendation of various groups analyzing the personal care home sector. I am pleased to inform the House that placements in three of the four health authorities are well above prepandemic levels. Certainly, we have caught up on those issues.

Eastern Health has been challenged and with the ending of the Good Neighbour Agreement, Eastern Health are bringing in additional resources to process the backlog. It is, however, a situation that is improving and we will work hard to make sure that it is resolved completely.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Speaker, I recently spoke to the executive director of the Elizabeth Fry Society who expressed her disappointment in the budget. They have been lobbying several Ministers of the Crown since spring of 2021 for program funding in this budget; funding they would use to support women and gender-diverse individuals who are involved in the criminal justice system. Speaker, this organization is looking for funding to help people heal and transform their lives.

I ask either the Minister for Women and Gender Equality or the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, why did she fail to secure funding for Elizabeth Fry in this budget?

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you for the question.

Of course, we meet with all sorts of groups throughout the province and we do know it's important that people not just end up in the justice system permanently; they have to work their way out of it. And we are working with these individuals and these groups to make sure that they can do that to the best of their ability so that they become productive members of society, which is what we all want. We don't want the vicious cycle of them returning back and forth through the justice system.

One thing that we've certainly spoken about a lot lately is the construction of a new penitentiary in St. John's, to replace the 150-year-old penitentiary, which will go a long way to achieving those goals that we have and we would much appreciate if all the Members on the other side support the construction of that facility here in this province.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Speaker, that doesn't answer the question. The executive director of Elizabeth Fry said to me – quote – In the beginning, conversation was open and hopeful. However, since January 2022, while there have been meetings taking place, they are often follow-ups to previous meetings, adding little value. It seems to me that the minister is meeting just for the sake of meeting, without any intention of helping this organization help women.

So I ask again: Where is the commitment to provide funding to Elizabeth Fry?

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

And yes, I have met with the executive director of Elizabeth Fry, and was happy to go there on the opening of their new building here in St. John's as well. We will continue to work with them and answer them when they have questions about issues in the province.

But with regard to the recent budget, there was no formal funding request from that group, and we've certainly met with other groups in here that have received funding from the Department of Justice and Public Safety, and wage as well, and we'll continue to work with those groups to improve the livelihood of people in the justice system in this province.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, the Minister of Education has consistently assured us that the necessary additional teaching resources have been put in schools where children of refugee families will attend. Yet teachers in these schools tell me that they haven't seen these resources and don't know what the minister is talking about.

I ask the minister: How does he explain this blatant discrepancy between what he said and what is actually reality?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, we have put additional resources in, based on the increased enrolment in our schools, including the newcomers from Afghanistan. What's been identified by the English School District as the requirements, Mr. Speaker, we have seen to in this year's budget as well. We are voting on the budget in the very near days and there will be additional resources based on the budget put into our K-to-12 system as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

As Ottawa works toward a national pharmacare plan I ask the minister: Has he been in talks with

Ottawa about NL being the pilot project, as pharmacare was in their 2021 election platform?

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Certainly I have discussed with federal officials. Following, maybe, in PEI's footsteps where they have such a program currently. We were very actively engaged before. Quite frankly, it has been sidelined a little bit during the current wave of Omicron, as staff were diverted to deal with that. But that is one of the things on our agenda for our next FPT call. I look forward to informing the House of what progress we have been able to make.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

In the 2021 election, the Premier came to Labrador West and campaigned on changing MTAP.

I ask the Premier: Was that just another campaign tactic, as Labradorians are waiting to join the province in equal access to health care?

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

The Medical Transportation Assistance Program stacks up extremely well against other jurisdictions. Indeed, it is the broadest in terms of the ability to get coverage.

From the point of view of changes, we have made significant changes to the policy, which help people from the Big Land. We are certainly, internally, looking at how to streamline this. Particularly in the light of Health Accord NL's comments around access. We look forward to being able to bring something forward in due course.

Speaker, Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Speaker, last week the minister responded to questions about access to abortion. The Athena centre is based in St. John's and only travels once a month to Corner Brook and Central Newfoundland, with no services available for Labrador.

I ask the minister: Would this government put more funding into the Athena centre to add Labrador to their monthly travel services?

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Access to abortion services has certainly been a topical conversation in the media this weekend. It has been highlighted that if you live more than 150 kilometres from the United States border, access is a challenge across Canada. We have recognized this; we have changed the way that the Athena centre is funded to take them away from an unpredictable and fee-for-service base but they are now receiving steady and stable funding.

For the benefit of the House, you do not need a referral to access Athena's services. This can be done over the phone or virtually. They are the experts. They have been our resources, and they will continue to serve the people of Labrador as well as Newfoundland.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Still a lack of access, Speaker.

The executive director of Planned Parenthood has said that they've heard from patients in rural areas who are unaware that the abortion pill is available.

I ask the minister: Will the government put all information about accessing abortions on their website where more people can access it?

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you, Speaker.

Yes, I think that was dealt with in another commentary by the director of the Athena centre. Certainly, from our point of view, if this is a matter of awareness, delighted to see what tools are available that we've currently not used.

Again, for the benefit of the House and any of our viewers at home, you do not need a referral. You simply need to pick up the telephone and call the number. They provide a wraparound service with counselling, procedures where appropriate and support afterwards.

It is an excellent service, one I commend Ms. Ryan's dedicated decades of service to this province. Certainly happy to look at communications.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees

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

S. GAMBIN-WALSH: Speaker, pursuant to the motion of referral of April 7, 2022, and in accordance with Standing Order 72, the Social Services Committee met on five occasions: April 8, 12, 13, to May 2 and 6, 2022.

The Social Services Committee have considered the matters to them referred and, pursuant to Standing Order 75(2), have directed me to report that they have passed without amendment the Estimates of the Department of Justice and

Public Safety; the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs; the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development; the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation; the Department of Health and Community Services; and the Department of Education, and recommend that the report be concurred in.

Speaker, I'd also like to say of the 6½ years that I have been engaged in Estimates, either chairing or as a Member; this was the most respectful time that we have had Estimates. I want to thank all my colleagues for that.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Further presenting reports by standing and select committees?

The hon. the Member for Burin - Grand Bank.

P. PIKE: Speaker, pursuant to the motion of referral of April 7, 2022, and in accordance with Standing Order 72, the Government Services Committee met on three occasions: April 11, May 5 and 6, 2022.

The Government Services Committee have considered the matters to them referred, and pursuant to Standing Order 75(2), have directed me to report they have passed without amendment the Estimates of Consolidated Funds Services; the Department of Finance; the Public Service Commission; the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure; the Public Procurement Agency; and the Department of Digital Government and Service NL, and recommend that the report be concurred in.

SPEAKER: Further presenting reports by standing and select committee?

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

Pursuant to the motion of referral of April 7, 2022, and in accordance with Standing Order 72, the Resource Committee met on five occasions: April 7, April 12, May 3, May 5 and May 9, 2022.

The Resource Committee have considered the matters to them referred, and pursuant to Standing Order 75(2), have directed me to report that they have passed without amendment the Estimates of the Department of Industry, Energy and Technology; the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation; the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture; the Department of Environment and Climate Change; and the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills, and recommend that the report be concurred in.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Are there any further presenting reports by standing and select committees?

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

I am pleased to present this addendum to the first report of the Standing Orders Committee in the 50th General Assembly. I thank the Members of the Committee for their diligence and hard work, and I recommend this addendum to the House of Assembly.

SPEAKER: Any further?

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

S. COADY: Speaker, I give notice that I will move that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider a resolution respecting the imposition of taxes on carbon, Bill 60.

SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move the following motion: That this House concur in the report of the Standing Orders Committee tabled on May 9, 2022.

SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Speaker.

I give notice that I will on tomorrow move the following motion: That notwithstanding Standing Order 63, that this House shall not proceed with Private Members' Day on Wednesday, May 11, 2022, but shall instead meet at 2 p.m. on that day for Routine Proceedings and to conduct Government Business, and if not adjourned earlier, the Speaker shall adjourn the House at midnight.

SPEAKER: Further notices of motions?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Speaker.

I give notice that on tomorrow I will move in accordance with Standing Order 11(1) that this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 12, 2022.

SPEAKER: Further notices of motions?

Answers to Question for which Notice has been Given.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you, Speaker.

In reference to a question that was asked earlier about wait times for personal care home placements, I'm pleased to inform the House that since Eastern Health staffed up to deal with the backlog, there are now only 29 individuals awaiting placement at Eastern Health.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Any further answers to questions for which notice has been given?

Petitions.

Petitions

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Speaker.

Crown Lands' enforcement of the provisions of the *Lands Act* abolishing squatter's rights against the Crown has created undue hardship for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who honestly and in good faith have occupied and developed their lands.

Historical title in Newfoundland trace back centuries and people have developed their land for generations based on informal title. There is significant disconnect between the Crown Lands' position on private land claims and the reality in communities throughout the province.

The District of Bonavista is one of the oldest settled areas of the province and its residents find themselves unable to sell or mortgage or develop their lands because they cannot get clear title.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to make a legislative amendment to allow for a mechanism to resolve existing private land claims on Crown land and revisit the 1976 legislation to abolish squatter's rights against the Crown.

The district I serve, Speaker, Bonavista was settled in the 1500s. We had prohibition against lands, ended sometime in the early 1800s by then the British – us being a British colony. The House of Assembly didn't begin until 1832. We've had land going back before the House of Assembly was established in Bonavista.

If you look at the Land Use Atlas now and you google, and you look at all of Bonavista, much of Trinity, a significant part of CBS and Torbay, but focusing on the District of Bonavista, they're all in blue. Because those are being quieted.

They don't own the land according to the Crown Lands.

What is the problem that we have? We have people now through generations who are looking at moving the property, or getting clear title, and the only obstacle for doing so is Crown Lands.

What's it doing to the residents of Newfoundland and those in Bonavista, Trinity and Port Rexton? It's costing them thousands of dollars in court costs to have a lawyer, and that's only those who can afford to do so.

It was a suggestion in the previous government back in 2015 that they would change and allow for squatter's rights for any 20-year period, not just 1956 to 1976, but any 20-year period. We are out now, can't find anybody back or very difficult to find somebody of sound mind that can verify land position back in the early '50s, therefore it's practically impossible to settle land on the system we have.

I look forward to speaking more about it when time permits.

Thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

I, again, present this petition from Labrador West for seniors on seniors' housing. The petition is to increase it in support of seniors. The reasons for the petition:

The need for senior accessible housing and home care services in Labrador West is steadily increasing. Lifelong residents of the region are facing the possibility of needing to leave their homes in order to afford to live or receive adequate care. Additional housing options, including assisted-living facilities, like those found throughout the rest of the province for seniors, have become a requirement for Labrador West. That requirement is currently not being met.

WHEREAS the seniors of our province are entitled to peace and comfort in the homes

which they have spent a lifetime contributing to its prosperity and growth.

WHEREAS the means for the increasing number of senior residents in Labrador West to age happily in place are currently not available in the region.

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to allow seniors in Labrador West to age in place by providing affordable housing options for seniors and assisted living care facilities for those requiring that care.

Once again, I bring this petition because, once again, the seniors of Labrador West continue to ask me to bring this petition, as they feel like they are not getting the same adequate access to care as other regions of the province. It's a growing community, but, at the same time, seniors are continuing to choose to stay in the region. Many of these seniors, this is where they're from. Many of them came there as small children with their parents and some of them were even born there.

So we're seeing a rise in seniors living there and we'll probably continue to see a rise in seniors there as our population in Labrador West continues to actually grow and change. With the current housing crisis in Labrador West, where you can't even find anywhere to rent right now, is also applying pressure on seniors, too, as they don't have any options to downsize. Many of them are widows living in big four-bedroom houses that they can't sell because they have nowhere else to move into something more appropriate. So this also creates challenges for seniors on a fixed income.

We're seeing a changing dynamic in the region and we really need to take a look and address this going forward because seniors just want to live in peace and dignity and be able to enjoy their life instead of having their needs not met.

You know, these big multi-story houses is very hard on seniors, many of them with mobility issues. I know one who actually chooses to live in their living room because they just find it too hard to go upstairs sometimes.

So it's getting a little out of hand here. We really need to see something addressed. Part of the thing is, you know, home care – we don't have any access to adequate home care in our region so that puts a lot of pressure on the system. But, also, we don't have a personal care home like every other district in this province actually has. So this is getting to be something that really needs to be looked into immediately.

Thank you.

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

The Local Service District of West Bay and the town of Lourdes have an agreement in place for the extension of water services to West Bay. The water service does meet the provincial standard and the communities agree in principle on extending the water supply into West Bay pending funding.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to secure funding through the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure to ensure safe drinking water for the residents of West Bay.

Speaker, one of the fundamental principles of the Health Accord has to do with the social determinants of health. One of those social determinants of health is access to clean drinking water. Right now, the people that live in the community of West Bay do not have access to clean drinking water.

Their challenges with small drilled wells that they have in their community, the water tends to run out in the summertime. They are constantly forced to carry water in buckets or to go get it from another source, while at the same time there is a water system that was built in the town of Lourdes that was built as a regional water system. It has the capacity and the ability to service the entire community of West Bay.

So we urge the government, again, to consider the funding application for the community of Lourdes and West Bay to help them start the development of what will be a continuation of a

regional water system that already exists and extend it into the community of West Bay.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Thank you, Speaker.

The entrance to Sandy Point on the Trans-Canada Highway travelling east is a dangerous intersection with many safety concerns.

Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to increase signage and construct a left-hand turning lane on the Trans-Canada Highway.

Speaker, this is still an ongoing issue in the district. I have had meetings with two ministers. I have had discussion now with the third. He was going to look at the area. I know the minister is familiar with this area.

The area to Sandy Point is back towards the Bay d'Espoir Highway but they use the intersection further up, eastward towards Jumpers Brook, turning left on that lane, which there is no left turning lane and everyone uses that. You have about 200 people out in that area, so as they turn left, you have heavy trucks, you have fast traffic sometimes barrelling down on them and they're concerned that somebody is going to get seriously injured or even worse.

The residents of Sandy Point would like to have the signage changed from back where it was by the Bay d'Espoir intersection up towards the Jumpers Brook area so there is lots of signage and even a left turning lane if we could.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador who urge our leaders to ensure that the residents of Northern Labrador community of Postville have access to adequate health care.

The community of Postville, Labrador, has only one Labrador-Grenfell Health nursing position in the community of Postville at the single community-nursing clinic. This means that there is only one clinic nurse physically present in the community. This nurse does not have access to RCMP support services during a medical emergency because the community does not have RCMP stationed in their community.

The community of Postville is isolated with no road access to the outside world. The only means of year-round transportation is by aircraft. Often, inclement weather prevents air services, including medevac, which is medical evacuation service, from getting to Postville. Also, if the loan nurse becomes ill or inclement weather prevents nursing relief from reaching the community of Postville, they will be without a nurse.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure that the community of Postville has adequate nurse care in the form of two clinic nurses stationed in the community.

Now, it is National Nursing Week, Speaker, we talk about the quality of health care but also the quality of the life for the nurses is equally as important. A lot of times there are call-outs after hours in the community of Postville. There is only one nurse physically in the community. A lot of times nurses have to be thinking if they're the one single nurse stationed in Postville, what are they facing?

Luckily, Postville is a very law-abiding community, which is probably why the province gets away with actually having no RCMP officer present in the community. There are no professional services available to that nurse in the form of having an RCMP officer there. Emergencies are emergencies, right – no professional supports. What about a mental health crisis? What about a huge accident where there are multiple casualties?

The point I would also like to make about the one single nurse and the lack of resources and supports for that one single nurse is, really, we're impacted by transportation. If we were connected by road access, the RCMP and the

nurses in adjacent communities could actually support that single nurse. But we're not tied in by road access and we're actually hindered by inclement weather, bad weather, no transportation access. So it's really important for us.

The point I'm trying to make is that with this community of Postville, we are really isolated. So we need to actually have two nurses in our community of Postville and we also need to have regular RCMP presence. If the province is actually going to treat Northern Labrador, especially the community of Postville –

SPEAKER: The Member's time has expired.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Orders of the Day, Mr. Speaker.

Orders of the Day

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 6.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that under Standing Order 11(1) this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. today, Monday, May 9, 2022.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Act, 2015, Bill 59, and that said bill be now read a first time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Government House Leader have leave to introduce Bill 59 and that the said bill now be read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Act, 2015," carried. (Bill 59)

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, An Act To Amend The Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Act, 2015. (Bill 59)

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

S. CROCKER: Tomorrow.

SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 59 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call Motion 1.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Always an honour to stand in this House. The Minister of Tourism alluded earlier that he felt that, with questions, sometimes we're picking on tourism. Well, I'll say between our tourism, our oil and gas, our fishery and all of the other industries we have in this province, this party is 100 per cent behind him. Because we ask questions doesn't mean we don't support him. It just means sometimes questions have to be asked and sometimes the timing of funding is suspect.

We're living in a really troublesome time right now in this province, and it's really imperative that we all open our eyes and see what's going on. To say that the cost of living has affected everyone would be an understatement. Unfortunately, it strikes hardest the people who can least protect themselves. If your income doesn't increase, or your taxes don't decrease with the cost of living, the effects are swift and ruthless.

So I'd say imagine that you're on a fixed income or you're on government supports. Imagine being a single mom or a single dad. Imagine being sick or having a sick child or family member – and I'll do even better, now imagine that you live in Newfoundland, where we have the highest rate of everything. Highest rate of cancer, diabetes, obesity, seniors, poverty, mental health issues and unemployment.

As I said a few weeks ago, it's quite simple. As the cost of living is going up, our chances of living are going down. And it's a really sad state when you think about that. You know, when we sit in this House and we debate the budget, it's not about debating the tools that government has; it's about debating the choices that they've made. Everybody knows the fiscal situation of this province, and we know that it's not great. But that doesn't mean we can't make different choices.

Here's the reality. Today in the House of Assembly, there was a simple question asked about how much money the province collects in fuel tax. It wasn't about provincial tax; it was

about how much the province collects. The number is somewhere around 42 cents. We have the ability to defer some of that. Now it's a start. The Premier said this is all caused by global issues.

Well, we have very important issues that are happening right here in this province that we can help change. The global issues will always be out there; the cost of oil is affected by the dollar, it's affected by geopolitical issues with war and other things, the Middle East. We all understand that. Anything from shale gas in the States to fracking to supply and demand, global issues are always going to be a part of what we do and see here.

But the reality is we have to start focusing more on our provincial issues. And a great example, as the Health Minister said today when asked a question about MTAP, he said: Our MTAP program is equal or better than almost everywhere in the country. And you know what? Perhaps it is. But here's what he didn't say: Our ability to transport people and our transportation infrastructure is worse than everybody in the country.

So they're not comparable. You cannot compare those two things and expect to give the people who need the answers the answers that they require. You can't expect a patient to fly from Labrador to St. John's and have an appointment cancelled. No more can you understand getting sick in Corner Brook, Gander, Grand Falls, Clarenville, St. John's costs the same as it does getting sick in Bonavista, Burin, Goose Bay – entirely different world.

Those are the things that we don't do as government. We don't look at the – to quote the Premier and his key phrase – holistic. Well, perhaps he should start looking at the province in a holistic way, because the reality of this province, and the reality of the world we live in, is that all things are not equal.

Today, big announcement on busing in Metro – great announcement, much needed. There's no question, but it forgets about rural Newfoundland. And guess what? When the minister sits and talks about tourism or the minister sits and talks about fisheries, rural Newfoundland, 100 per cent, they generate lots

of revenue. Labrador West, Tacora, IOC, lots of revenue. Goose Bay, lots of revenue. Baie Verte Peninsula, two new mines, lots of revenue. Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans, lots of revenue.

There are lots of things to be excited about, but what we need to understand is we can quell our excitement to look after what's happening today. What's happening today is people are hungry, people are afraid and people are choosing between heat – actually, they're choosing between heat and food, and it's really a shocking thing.

The Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture said today that he was unaware – unaware – of questions that were asked by my colleague from Exploits. I can tell you what, on May 4 he got a letter; the same letter that we got that outlined everything in those questions. Him and the Premier got the letter, and he sat here today and said he had no idea what we were talking about. That letter went to him and the Premier. They both had it, but they don't know anything about it. So either they're not listening or they're not reading their emails. There's something going on, because we got it and they got it. But they say it doesn't exist. There is the problem.

We've got lots of opportunities in this House to make the right choices for people. One of those choices is as simple as deferring the sugar tax this coming fall. Doesn't seem like a lot, but it's a lot to very low-income people I can guarantee you that.

Another way we can do it is to reintroduce the home heating rebate. Government says it's still there. Well, maybe perhaps a portion of it still is, but it doesn't go far enough. People need more – people need more. A line of questioning in this House today that talked about landlords evicting people so they can raise the cost of rent to include what is happening with their heating costs is very real. I've heard it in my district, as have many other people on this side of the House, and I'm certain that they've heard it on that side of the House too. But guess what? Once again, they're not listening. What a shock.

At the end of the day, it's all about choices. Now, we can go back in time and we can quote Muskrat Falls, and we can quote all of the

things, but when this government came in in 2015 and introduced 300 new fees or taxes, they knew the economic state we were in. They knew it in '15. They made all kinds of promises, and here we are still in an economic state that predated COVID, that they knew was there because of Muskrat Falls and nothing has changed. As a matter of fact, I'll even go as far as to say from '15 to 2019 we were bullish on *Advance 2030* and now that's gone out the window. We have one project, which I'm very happy to see, Bay du Nord. It's wonderful but I suspect that this government has traded off the rest of them, which is sad. It could be our future.

The former minister, the current Minister of Finance, touted the 600 Hebrons, Hibernias and oil finds that she was going to progress and bring to light. None of them happened and here we are in a mess. We're in a mess make no mistake about it. So when we talk about our sectors and we talk about our potential, you talk about our mining industry, it's spectacular what is happening in the mining industry. I applaud the minister for what is happening in the mining industry. It's exciting. It's a glimpse of what could happen tomorrow, but we have to get electricity for that first. We have to get electricity, because these mines are not going to operate on windmills or solar power. They need electricity and it has got to come from somewhere. That means these guys have to bring Muskrat Falls over the line, something that they haven't been able to do in seven years. So here we are.

Mr. Speaker, when I talk to seniors – and I raised the question last week but I will say it again: between our seniors and our truck drivers, professional people who need medicals, even our pilots, they can't get a family doctor. So imagine being a senior who needs to have a medical on an annual basis or a professional long-haul driver or a pilot or a ship's captain or any of these positions that require annual medicals and not being able to get it done. Actually, on the edge of losing your job or losing your ability to drive and your freedom because you cannot access health care to get a medical. That is where we have come. That is the reality of where we are today. That's not a one off-call, that's a call that people get on a daily basis and it is a shocking state.

Then we get call 811 or call – it just doesn't happen. People aren't getting in. These collaborative clinics, people are being turned away. I raised concerns last week about a gentleman from Charlottetown. It's pretty funny, I raised it here in the House of Assembly and the next morning he got a phone call and he could get in to the new collaborative clinic that is going to open up in Clarendville. So he said that is amazing. Can you tell me when it is going to open? No idea. Couldn't even project it. They couldn't ballpark it, but you can get in when it does open.

How is that a solution? How is that going to fix the problems that we have in our health care system? I can tell you it's not. We are hearing from doctors that are concerned. We are hearing from the NLMA. We are hearing from the Nurses' Union. We are hearing from all of these people.

The Minister of Transportation stood up here in the House last week and he talked about fear mongering. I'm not fear mongering; I'm simply stating the facts. I can tell you right now, when I've got a senior or a mom or a dad with a sick child, or when I've got a Member in my own caucus or someone in this House who can't access the health care they need because they're ill, that's not fear mongering, that's stating the facts. The fact is it's unacceptable and there's no solution. There is no solution. The reality of that fact is that this minister has had seven years to address it.

Now, if he never stood in this House and said that he knew the issue seven years ago, I may give him a pass, but if he didn't know them six years ago, that's unacceptable. If he didn't know them five years ago, now we're really going down the wrong path, aren't we? I don't need to carry on with four, three, two or one, because this situation has been in place for a long time. He could have changed it. He could have fixed it. He could have done something. When the Premier came on board he knew the solution by his own admission. He ran almost solely based on our health care system and the state we're in. And instead of fixing the problem, he reappointed the same minister into the same position. Here we are two years later in a bigger mess. It's gotten worse.

I'm not going to say that COVID hasn't had something to do with that because we're not silly in this House, we know COVID has played a role. But the problems existed pre-COVID, much the same as our financial issues. In March of 2020 when the previous premier wrote the letter to the prime minister and said that we have these existing problems and we're on the brink of bankruptcy – Snowmageddon did not cause that, COVID did not cause that. It was all pre-

Now, let me put something else into perspective. That was one year away from this government's promise of balanced books. They promised to have the books balanced by 2021. In 2020 they wrote a letter to the prime minister of this country – I guess if the federal Liberals are their cousins we'll call Mr. Trudeau their uncle. They wrote a letter to their uncle and said we're on the verge of bankruptcy 12 months prior to their promise of having the books balanced. What does that tell you? It tells you we're nowhere close. Now the promise is '25-'26. Guess what? Pretty skeptical, I have no faith in that. Not one little bit.

The people in this province right now are struggling with absolutely everything – everything. Now we talk about our ability to supply food, we talk about our ability to employ people, we talk about our robust fishery and mining industry and tourism and it's all good. It's all key to how we move things forward there's no question. When we stand here and we question things like the investment in NASCAR, it's not because we don't believe in tourism or NASCAR. I believe that will be an economic driver, no different than in my region; I have White Hills. I know what \$100,000 means. It probably means a \$500,000 return.

We're not stunned to any of that, but it's about timing. It's about the timing of the Premier going to Ireland. It's about the timing of the Premier going to Ottawa. It's about the timing of the Premier putting an office in Grand Falls-Windsor. When people are starving, when people can't afford to put fuel in their vehicles and drive to a doctor's appointment, we're spending money that we don't have to spend. And the reality of it is that boils down to choices.

So it's not about questioning government and their budget, it's about questioning some of the choices that they didn't make in this budget. The reality of it is this budget doesn't go far enough to help the people that need help the most. It does not go close to far enough. People are not buying electric cars; people are not switching their homes. One hundred and forty people, I believe, applied to switch their homes from oil to electric. Guess what? Not going to cut it.

Then you take into consideration that if they switch from oil to electric and they decide to put a heat pump in, they've got to have a secondary source of heat. I know one Member in our caucus quoted this morning, the Member for Stephenville – he had a constituent get a quote. Oddly enough, I had a constituent bring a quote to me and both within \$2000 of each other. So between \$18,000 and \$20,000 to do the conversion. Government's offering \$5,000, when people can't afford to put beans on the table. So they're going to come up with another \$15,000, when they can't afford to buy a can of beans.

I got people calling me who said: Mr. Parrott, we used to bring grocery bags to the food bank, full. Now, we're going there with empty grocery bags, hoping to bring them home full. Imagine, we have food banks reaching out that are out of food, that don't have the supplies to help people. Now, that's not fear mongering. That's stating the facts. Don't take my word, call any food bank in Newfoundland and they'll tell you the same thing. They're hurting. Every one of them.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

L. PARROTT: Yeah and the people that are going there, like I said, are the people that used to supply the food banks. It's a scary fact of life and the reality of it is that every single person now – and you want to talk about what we can do as a province? Well, the first thing is we got to get our supply chain figured out 100 per cent. Because our supply chain – we take our goods, our produce and ship it across the island twice. We're paying double for no good reason. The reality of it is we're not looking at the logistics of getting things here, and there are options, there's no question.

You talk to any trucking company in Newfoundland and Labrador and ask them one question: Would they rather have their trucks full of freight land in Argentinia or Port aux Basques? I can guarantee you almost all of them, I would say overwhelmingly, would say Argentinia because they don't want to drive 800 kilometres across the Island.

Mr. Speaker, before I came in here today I got an email from a gentleman who just moved back from Alberta – moved to Random Island, 6,467 kilometres; him, his wife and his children drove with a big trailer in tow right across the country. When he got to Random Island he said he was shocked. He drove across the entire province and he said by far the very worst stretch of road that he hit was from the causeway on Random Island to where he was staying at his parent's house.

But that is not his story; his story gets a little different. He came here with hope and promise of moving back to a province the he loved, the same reason I came back here and the same reason that most of us live here, because we love this province. Newfoundland and Labrador is endearing to every single person in this House, I have no question. But the reality of it is, is that it makes some of us mad sometimes. It kicks some of us sometimes, but that doesn't stop our love for it.

So he came back and he tried to get a doctor. He tried to get a doctor from Gander to St. John's and everywhere in between and he can't get a doctor. He needs a doctor, his family needs a doctor; we won't get into that, but they need a doctor.

This is a gentleman who was just about to build a \$500,000 home on Random Island. He was going to build a \$500,000 home on Random Island, just moved back from Alberta with his wife and children. She is from Alberta, for the record, and now he is talking about going back to Alberta. He had one sentence which rang clear with me and it says it all. He said: Me, invest in Newfoundland; when Newfoundland invests in my family, I'll come back. Until that time, you won't see me.

Now that makes a lot of sense to me. When you have people trying to come here, much the same

as our Ukrainian friends that I welcomed today, anyone who wants to move to Newfoundland, they come here and they don't know what they got or what they have in front of them. We all need health care on some level, every one of us.

When they move back here and they can't get the care, not only that they deserve but, in a lot of cases, that they need. Why would they stay when they can go to other provinces, live the same life, have a cost of living that is much lower, have access to health care – not better, we're got a fine group of doctors and nurses in this province, I guarantee you. We've got some of the best health care professionals in the world; there's no question about it.

But ask them if they are overworked, the answer will be yes. Ask them if they are overburdened, the answer will be yes. Ask them if they're stressed, the answer will be yes. Every one of them. Every single one of them is at a point where they are ready to break, yet we don't make the right choices.

Now the Health Accord, I have no question that the Health Accord is going to help this province, but it's a 10-year plan. We need a plan for today and we don't have it. The saddest part about the plan that we need for today is the Minister of Health had seven years to come up with and fix it – seven years. If any other person for any other company or job did the same, they would not be in the position I can guarantee you. I can guarantee you they would not be there. It makes absolutely no sense.

So here we are seven years later, in the midst of a crisis, that was going on pre-COVID and here we are. Same spot, spinning our wheels, hoping that it's going to fix itself.

Listen, if you want any faith whatsoever that the government is going to listen to the Health Accord, listen to one of the first sentences in the Health Accord when they say: the social determinants of health weigh 60 per cent on health outcomes. Then think of this budget and what it has done for low-income people and the cost of living in this province. The biggest portion of the Health Accord is being ignored all ready, think about that. That speaks volumes. So what hope does that leave for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians? Very little.

I urge the Premier, with all of my heart, when he's looking at a holistic approach, understand that St. John's isn't rural Newfoundland, that the Avalon isn't rural Newfoundland, and there are two different levels of care.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to stand and have a few words in the main motion. But before I do, Mr. Speaker, and I know there's a bit of controversy lately about me, about some things going on. I understand that, because I stand on principle; always have, always will.

But I just have to read something into the record, Mr. Speaker, because I think *The Joyce Report* of October 18 is where a lot of this started about me trying – trying, which never happened, no foundation to it – to encourage somebody – I ask the Minister of Energy to listen to this because it would be very important to him – trying to expose someone or put someone in a position. I just have to read something that someone sent me from Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. I'll read it, Mr. Speaker, because it develops the budget, about hiring and all that.

Here it comes from a staff member: Because of the importance of filling the position – this was a senior position, a manager in Western Newfoundland for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing in Service NL – with the best candidate available, we're conducting the competition for the Western regional director within the two-tier interview process for both internal and external applicants. The first two rounds of interviews involved the panel meeting the applicants over a period of time, over an hour or so to try to get the sense of who they are and assess their communication and interpersonal skills to determine how they might fit as the leader of the Western regional hospital.

The second round of interviews would dig more into the applicant's training experience, competency related to the actual work. The first round of interviews, which included six interviews via video conference and two in-

persons, were conducted July 18-20, resulted in three of the external applicants, including a screening out – they blanked that out. The remaining five applicants will be moved on to the second round of interviews with two internal.

So this was a management position in Corner Brook, Mr. Speaker. And here is it, buddy's name, I won't say his name, but it's here on the record that they sent me: As minister, I am not satisfied with the process. Have you personally reviewed the résumés of the final candidates? Can you forward the advertisement for the position to me? As we discussed, I want the final interview process to be completed by two individuals external to Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and our executive HR personnel. We need to discuss this.

This is very important, Mr. Speaker, because November I almost got crucified in this House. This is very important for a false statement. Also, the top three candidates and reasoning for ranking are to come to you, as the CEO, and myself for the final decision. Thank you, Sherry Gambin-Walsh.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the Member –

E. JOYCE: Oh, I'm sorry, because I'm just reading what's here. Sorry about that, okay, sorry about that – the minister.

So here we are, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to put it in the House so everybody would just know what was put in the report that I apparently did, which wasn't even up at the time, which information showed it wasn't even up. But here's the minister of the Crown, the same one saying you should never get involved with the process, here she is demanding that the names come to her for the final decision. That was the minister at the time –

SPEAKER: Order, please!

This issue has all been dealt with in the House of Assembly and ruled on.

E. JOYCE: I'm just reading about hiring, how we should hire people.

SPEAKER: That has nothing to do with the budget. We're in the budget debate right now, so ask the Member to be relevant.

E. JOYCE: Oh, that's right; you were parliamentary assistant to her, that's right. Were you parliamentary assistant? That's right.

SPEAKER: Are you questioning the Chair?

E. JOYCE: No, I'm just asking if you knew about it.

SPEAKER: The decision has been made.

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

E. JOYCE: I'm going to get on with other things now, Mr. Speaker, and talk about some of the stuff that's happening in this House, especially around the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

One of the things that's been brought up on many occasions is health care, and we're talking about nurses. I just want to tell you a little story.

We just had a recruiting class, about 100 nurses in the province. There were people looking for full-time work. They contacted me because they were wondering, so I wrote Eastern Health.

Eastern Health got back and said, yes, we'll get someone to contact them. Do you know what this person was told? We don't need your services at this time. That person, plus two others who just right now graduated, went and moved to the hospital in Nova Scotia. They found out last Monday or Tuesday or Wednesday that they weren't going to be hired full-time, they put an application into the hospital in Halifax and they just got hired. Three of them moved yesterday and started work today.

AN HON. MEMBER: Nurses.

E. JOYCE: Three nurses just graduated. So when you hear of questions about, well, we've got a lot of vacancies here, that's one example that I just dealt with myself last week, trying to get nurses just graduated hired here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to read a part of an email that I got from a constituent. I'm going to read a part of this email and it's touching. It's touching because what do you say to these people? Hopefully I can find it now in a second. What do you say to these people? I want to read it and put it on the record, because I stood in this House and talked about nurse practitioners. I just want to read what email these two seniors sent me:

Hi Eddie, don't like bothering you but I'm so upset. Blank and I are without a family doctor. Both our wonderful doctors retired in November. I will soon need my prescriptions renewed; I called 811 and a nurse was very nice but told me she could not help me with the information I wanted. She said if I called 811 a nurse practitioner could refill my prescriptions.

I always get blood work done before my doctor will review my meds. She wanted to keep check on my kidney functions. Anyway, she told me that they can't order blood work and I should go to a nurse practitioner clinic. That would be great but why a senior on OAS has to pay for medical care if they can't find a doctor? Isn't MCP supposed to be for everyone? I heard the Minister of Health and Community Services on the radio show talking about the collaborative care clinics and how could you register me online to get a clinic. Good for St. John's. According to a nurse I was talking to, there's no collaborative care in Corner Brook. If you get a chance to speak to someone in the Department of Health, would you please try to get some answers for me? Sorry, Eddie, for being long-winded but I am so upset about this.

So here are two senior citizens on the West Coast have to pay to go see a nurse practitioner and the minister says that he's in negotiations with the Nurses' Union. Two seniors now, frightened they might not get their meds and frightened that they might just renew it without the blood work – without doing the test. I asked the minister that on several occasions over negotiating with the Nurses' Union. He won't meet with the Nurse Practitioner Association, but here they are two seniors on the West Coast. That's just two, there are many more. There are many more here in this province, especially in Western Newfoundland, that can use these

services, but have to pay a fee to go see a nurse practitioner. Can you believe that?

Here you are trying to ask the minister – here's a way to help out on it and, Mr. Speaker, they just won't budge. Everything is fine in health care. They have the plan. Everything is just fine. Relax. Tell that to the thousands of people in Western Newfoundland who don't have a doctor. Go out and tell them. Go tell these two seniors. I ask the minister to call; I'll give you their numbers. I know them personally. Call these two seniors and tell them everything is fine. How can we not?

I heard the Premier on many occasions: We have to think outside of the box. We have to think what worked before and didn't work. Wouldn't putting nurse practitioners and be able to invoice MCP – wouldn't that be a great idea? Wouldn't that be a great idea so that we can expand these types of services for the people who don't have doctors?

I know two people who have two years left, I think, before their residency; I think it is two, maybe a year and a half. One is going to be a psychiatrist and another one is going to be ear, throat and nose. They're engaged. They, in six years, have yet to be contacted for recruitment in Newfoundland and Labrador. They actually called one health authority and they said we'll get back to you. Never got back to them. Two, 26, 27 years old. Those are the kinds of things that frustrate people because they know these people on the West Coast. Here are two young professionals want to come back to Newfoundland and Labrador, want to work in the Western region, yet they haven't been contacted. It is shameful.

So if the Minister of Health is listening attentively, there are ways that we can help out a lot of seniors. Here are two, an example. I have a long list, Mr. Speaker, of people who are looking for doctors, who can't get doctors. So what do you do? You explain to me what to do, because I'm out of answers bringing up to this government about options; options that can help people, options that people are willing to help.

When I spoke last week about the nurse practitioners, they had over 4,000 visits then. Four thousand people in Western Newfoundland

who had to pay a fee to see those people to get a prescription done, or to go and get some blood work, or may have needed a medical certificate for their driver's licence. Four thousand that they had to pay. We have an easy solution here. We have a very, very easy solution here, Mr. Speaker, yet we can't get the government to move on it one bit.

I have to speak on the cataract surgery in Western Newfoundland again. I have to speak on that, Mr. Speaker. When you talk about the cataract surgery in Western Newfoundland and I heard – the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands is here also. As he was saying, there's a lady here who's a caregiver for her husband. Needs her eyesight, a caregiver –

P. LANE: He got cancer.

E. JOYCE: He got cancer and now she has to pay over \$6,000.

P. LANE: Thirty-two hundred dollars per eye.

E. JOYCE: Thirty-two hundred dollars per eye because the quota is up. There's something wrong. That's here also. There is something fundamentally wrong. There's space there. There's capacity there. Everything is fine to do it, but it's just the will.

I know in Western Newfoundland, I know the minister wrote me there about two weeks ago, three weeks ago about the information about how much it costs to pay for the supplies, and then pay for it when it's done at a private clinic. The private clinic itself comes up, I think it's \$960, \$945, something like that – I don't have it in front of me.

The minister and the cost at a provincial authority, Western Health, say for example, or the Sir Thomas Roddick Hospital in Stephenville, it's over \$1,200. The minister writes me, puts in a letter, no, no, no, the facts that we have it's only \$500-and-something. The part that the minister is not bringing up, that's one eye, but most people get two eyes done. When you add two of them together, it is the cost for the surgeries at the regional authorities.

It just amazes me why this government – I don't know if it is personalities or what. That is

something the minister has to decide himself or the Premier, because the Premier is well aware of it. I just don't know, Mr. Speaker, if it is just personalities. For the minister to say that it is only \$500-and-something to get it done, it is not; it is usually two eyes. That is what the Grant Thornton report came back and said, both eyes, over \$1,200. It is cheaper when you do it at the Apex building; it is \$900-and-something, 23 per cent cheaper – 23 per cent cheaper to do it.

The capacity is there; they can do it. But because of a quota and because we won't even allow them to do it there – it is not going to cost any extra money because if you found some surgical time at the Western Memorial Regional Hospital, you could go get it done. There is no problem to get it done at the Western Memorial Regional Hospital if there was surgical time. They can't do it as efficient, Mr. Speaker, because the time is just not there with the backlog of surgeries and other things. If you could and you give them five days a week for the next two or three months, you could end up having them done, but there is no surgical time, as I said..

So if they allow them to do it at Apex building, they want to do it in the nighttime and weekends, within three to four months, there would be no backlog and it doesn't cost the province any money. It doesn't cost the province any additional money; it will save funds.

So why that is not done when the Premier of this province stands up here and says, okay, we're going to look outside the box. What a way to look outside the box. Say to the three specialists at the Apex building, okay, what we're going to do now is we're going to allow you to go ahead and get the surgeries done. Charge a cheaper price than it would be at the Western Memorial Regional Hospital. Charge the MCP the same amount as you would if you did it at the hospital and there wouldn't be people waiting another year and 14, 16, 18 months to get their eyes done. I'm not sure how long this person –

P. LANE: A year and a half.

E. JOYCE: This person if they went through the system – that the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands was talking about – has to wait a

year and a half. Just think about that. Here is a person –

P. LANE: Who is going to look after her husband then in the meantime if she can't see?

E. JOYCE: Who is going to look after her husband in the meantime if she can't see? Then, all of a sudden, you have to get home care in, you have to get people in to take care of them, you have to make sure that the medication, you have to get the blood work done – she can't drive; she can't do any of that anymore. So here it is, capacity to get it done, funds to get it done, but because we have a quota system in this province for cataract surgery, you can't get it done.

In Western Newfoundland, it is the same thing. There is capacity there, there's ability to get it done there, yet for some reason this government refuses to do it. Absolutely refuses to do it.

So I would urge the government, once again, put a bit of water in the wine if you have a personality conflict. Think about what we're been elected for. We've been elected to serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. If we're elected to serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, we should do it to the best of our ability. And if we can do services for 800 seniors on the West Coast for cataract surgery, which is going to be cheaper, more efficient, and they could have their eyesight back in three to four months, instead of 14 to 18 months, shouldn't we do it? It's a win-win situation, Mr. Speaker, and I refuse to give up on the issue because it's so important to the seniors.

And I hear it and I see them. I actually know the people. Not all of them, of course. You can go right from Baie Verte right down the Northern Peninsula they come to Corner Brook, right in the Corner Brook District, Bay of Islands District and Stephenville area. I know the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port is getting calls out there and he's nodding his head saying he does get calls about the cataract surgeries.

So why can't we as a government say okay, b'ys, here's the way we want to alleviate the suffering of 800 seniors and we just won't do it. God knows how long negotiations are going to take to get nurse practitioners on the MCP. So

the seniors and these two seniors that I just spoke about, keep paying your money, but if you're lucky enough to have a doctor, you don't pay a cent. You go ahead. You want to talk about a two-tier health care system, there it is right there. You want to talk about that we need a health care system right across the board, there it is. If anybody in this House wants to talk about a two-tier health care system, look at the seniors who have to pay a nurse practitioner and the ones who have a doctor who don't. That's the issue, Mr. Speaker.

If you want to look at cataract surgeries – and the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands was this morning when he was talking about it. So it's just not Corner Brook, Western Newfoundland, it's also in the St. John's, Mount Pearl area.

So there are ways to do this. There are easy ways for us to do this, but we just need the will. We need to say, okay, we have a problem. It's all right, Mr. Speaker, to say we have a problem. That's all right. Many times ourselves we could say, okay, yeah, we have a problem; what can we do to fix it? There are easy fixes for both of it – easy fixes. Just that we've got to get the will to do it. As long as we stand in this House and keep debating, no, we can't do it or, no, we shouldn't have to do it, there are people in this province suffering.

There are people in this province right now, seniors, who got to pay for medical care when they shouldn't have to pay. There are people in this province who can't get their medication filled because they can't even read it, and they can't drive to get to it. We could get this fixed easy.

I see my time is up, Mr. Speaker, and I'll have lots of opportunity during debate.

Thank you.

SPEAKER (Trimper): Thank you.

Any further speakers to the main budget motion?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, to adjourn debate on Motion 1.

SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that we adjourn debate on Motion 1.

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 Government House Leader.

S. CROCKER: Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Concurrence Motion, report from the Resource Committee.

SPEAKER: The motion is that the report of the Resource Committee be concurred in.

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

I rise on Concurrence for this. I want to thank the Resource Committee. During Estimates, I know we had a lot of great Members and we also had some Members substitute in, so I want to thank the Committee but also Members that actually participated as well, who substituted in, and also all the people that came in from all the different departments and stuff to provide Estimates.

It's really much appreciated to do that. It does take some time; it is a long process, but they all took the time to come here and answer our questions. So it was very much appreciated from everyone. I do want to thank all of them and thank my colleagues.

Also there is a lot of staff from different caucus offices that participated too, that sat with us through it. We did meet five times and it was great insight into all the different parts of the different Committees and that. You learn a lot, you find out a lot and it is a big learning exercise. So I do want to thank them all for that.

Inside of that, though, not as the Vice-Chair of the Committee, but me as Jordan the Member for Labrador West, I do want to say there is some interesting stuff in there and there's some stuff that you learn along the way and it brings a bit of how these departments work and how these different things actually operate, and it's quite fascinating sometimes. You don't get to see the whole big picture every single day. Sometimes an assistant deputy minister or director or something there sheds a little bit of light on some stuff. It was good, especially with the Resource Committee, to see different industries and stuff that operate throughout the province.

Sometimes you don't realize that there is certain operations out there chugging along that you don't know about, little small industries that operate in the background. We get an opportunity to learn about different things like that, that you just never thought that was here.

I know especially with the Resource Committee, too, we talked about agriculture and stuff like that. It's just fascinating. I grew up in a community that never had – other than your community garden or anything like that, you don't realize there is a large agricultural industry in this province. It's fascinating to see that we have that ability, but also that there are proposals for potato farming in Labrador West, all done out there. It's just interesting. There are different abilities to expand and grow that industry. I just never thought of the potential for commercial-scale potato farming in Labrador West. It is interesting to see these are different things that are coming along and moving along.

I do want to mention – we talk about the home industry, the industry that built and continues to provide for the region in Labrador West – iron mining and the magnitude on which scale that is done. We are looking at now just continuing to grow, and grow on both sides in Labrador West. Just across the border they're also expanding their operations so more and more and more iron is coming out of the ground. The job aspect of it is they just can't get enough workers. It's just not for the mine industry but mine services and community services. The magnitude that it is right now is absolutely fascinating.

It was interesting to see an advertising campaign for one of the mines. The ad was: Join us for the next 150 years. Just to show that's the outlook, their current outlook is 150 years. So can you imagine a mine advertising itself saying: We're good for 150 years. That just shows how much of the resource is in the ground in Labrador West that they're advertising: join us for 150 years.

I have to say tonnage wise this is the largest industry in the province right now, just the weight of it. But it operates the last railroad in this province. In this province, some job postings are for conductors and enginemen. This is a very thriving industry in our province, in mining, and now you're starting to see it trickle out through different parts of the province. To talk about that in Estimates was great, because we're looking at a big future with lots of opportunity and stuff like that.

I know the commodity markets can be like a dog's stomach, up and down, but the consistency is still there. Even during the last downturn in the iron market, it went down and it got scary for a little while. But, at the end of the day, we were still persistent. We still got through it. People still had jobs and people still continue to mine iron, and now we're on the other side of it. As we've seen in the last three years a consistent price in the \$100-something a ton which is the golden area for the ability, not just to mine and make it work but also to see reinvestment back into the industry.

It was important that we see that, but we also see the opportunities for gold and other deemed critical minerals now, so, hopefully, we'll see a lot more investment into the region. We should be pursuing is like a dog with a bone, pursuing the industry, because we're just seeing between Vale and Tesla to sell nickel into the battery-making markets.

People are watching us, people are seeing us; people are seeing that the opportunities are there for that industry. I'm looking forward to seeing what other opportunities we can pursue in that market, but also to take stock of what we have and what we're currently producing.

Then we go to gold, it's interesting when you think of the gold industry and the mining. It's

not always about jewelry and coins and everything like that, gold has a massive market, but it's in the electronics industry. Every little microchip, every single thing that we have now at our disposal between our phones and even the key fob to start your car, everything like that, there is a little bit of gold in every microchip that's out there now. The gold industry is not just for shiny new coins or shiny new anything, it actually has a very valid part in the electronics world.

We, as a society, as a whole, if we continue to work down the path of technology and things, gold will continue to be a massive key part in that world. We have some of the largest gold deposits in Eastern Canada. It's good that we see that investment and stuff has paid off after many years of exploration and the geoscience and everything like that, because a mine doesn't start after the prospector stakes their claim. It's a 10-year process just to get to the point where a lot of junior miners are today.

It is a long process and when you actually finally get that final mine licence, it is a big deal for these mining companies and stuff, especially the junior miners, the small ones that are trying to compete on global scale, it's great when they get to the point where they can actually put shovels in the ground and start hiring for mining and stuff.

It's a labour-intensive industry so it does hire a lot of people, and not just the actual mining part of it. Mine services is a massive industry and all the other wraparound supports that does come with mining. It is good to see that there.

We talk about resources and the different resources of this province, but you also have to look at the biggest resource of all is people. People in this province investing back into the people of this province is key, because, as you can see now, where I come from in Labrador West, we're trying to find people to work and everything like that. So investment back into people, into training, education, but even just to make their lives a little bit easier, especially in northern and rural communities. The investment back into people will always pay back twofold.

It's important that we take the opportunities when we do look at resources to look at the

opportunities, but look at the people who are going to work in the resource industries, look at how people are going to contribute to the resource industries. Because, at the end of the day, these people are what actually operates the equipment and processes the fish and all the other things. At the end of the day, it's people. That is when we reinvest back into it.

Then, also, the business owners and people who have a dream. Invest back into them and you always get twofold back. That's the thing that you have to look at is when we're doing these projects and stuff like that, make sure that there is investments back into the people, but also the communities that will host this industry. Because sometimes what we've seen is, like during a boom or a rapid expansion of an industry, sometimes the communities have a hard time dealing with it from a resource point of view, but also from a point of view of how you create, how you service and how you manage.

We always found that in our area the biggest thing always, as it is right now, is where are we going to put people to live. All these new people moving into the area, how much is this going to haul onto services and how much is it going to affect – I know my colleague from Lake Melville, I know when they did Muskrat Falls they had a lot of issues with road conditions and the amount of traffic on roads and stuff like that, because they had so much of a massive influx into the region that it did actually start to have an impact on the roads and services and stuff like that.

So it doesn't matter if it's mining, if it's hydro development or anything, the investment has to go back into the communities that are going to host these people. We're going to work in these industries as well. Even sometimes when you invest into a region, it actually helps spur industry and spur resources and spur this kind of development into there. So there's also the other side of the coin per se, that sometimes a little bit of investment into a community could also increase the value of what comes out in resources.

So it is a bigger picture; it is a lot of things going on and a lot of moving parts. But, at the end of the day, you have to find that sweet spot where

investment is going to return in value. That's what I think about, too: Where are we going to put these resources; how will we manage these resources; and how does it all work at the end of the day?

It is an interesting area when it comes to the province and when it comes to Estimates and the budget. There is some value in there and there's a lot of value in hearing from all the people in Estimates on these different departments and things like that. But also, we stop to think about: how do we maximize investment, but all at the same time as how do we maximize the human resources so that we know that we have Newfoundlanders and Labradorians working, trained and ready for this.

Because there is some stuff here that we, as a province, have the ability to become the corner of the market, especially with the new technology that's developing, but also the change in how economies work, and the movement away with the carbon reduction and things like that. We have the ability right now to actually be the leader in that. Not every region is blessed as we are to have all the different types of resources we have. We are very lucky to be geographically where we're to, and we can't squander that. We actually have to find a way that we can manage it in a way that will maximize benefit for us but also get out ahead in the market and show the rest of the world that we have this.

So one great start was obviously the deal with Vale and Tesla, but we have the largest iron deposit in North America. We also have some of the largest gold deposits in Eastern Canada. There are all kinds of other stuff that's still yet to be found. So maybe it's a good investment now to have a look at the mining industry and see how we can maximize – how do we get it to market? And that always is a challenge for us; we are far away from markets, but at the same time we do have the ability to get it to market.

If we can find a way to maximize selling our brands abroad, I think that's the best thing that we can do right now. And that's not just for mining, you know, that's just personal experiences of an industry that I worked in, but the fishery, agriculture, forestry, it all applies in the same way too as that. And the thing with

forestry, fishery and agriculture, they're renewable resources. As long as we maintain it and protect it, it's something that is forever and a day. So how can we maximize those industries; how do we maximize people training in those industries?

And I know the minister spoke before. The revitalization of our agricultural industry is very important, but at the same time we have to make sure we have people trained and interested but also, again, human resources. We have to make sure that we have enough people to continue to work in these industries, make sure that they are prepared, but also that they want to work in these industries. We have to make it something that people want to say when they're in high school: oh, I want to be a farmer. That's great, and that's something we should be encouraging and finding ways to continue to encourage. Because farming and agriculture is a renewable industry that as long as you protect it, it's there forever. So this is something that we also need to take into consideration.

Management of fisheries and things like that, too – it is a great industry. It's renewable and if managed correctly and properly, it will be there forever. But, at the same time, we have to sell our brand, make sure that we have something that the world wants. I know it takes a lot of marketing magic sometimes, but we have to do it. We have to find a way to get our product to market and do it that way. But also, the human resources again, people trained who want to work in this industry and say, hey, I want to work in the fishery, and nurture those people. Because once they're gone, it's hard really hard to replace them.

With that, Speaker, I take my seat.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Speaker.

It's a pleasure to discuss the Estimates within Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture. I'm probably going to start with Crown lands, and then I'll move towards the fishery in my address.

I'm going to have a confession first because, in my petition that I stated today, I noticed the hon. Member across from me in Education wondered about and was questioning the colour of what I had stated on the map, but it must have been the political map I was looking at. The Crown lands map has the quieting areas that show no ownership as green on the map.

I presented on behalf of the residents of Bonavista, Speaker, a petition today looking at Crown lands, and it consumed some time within the Estimates that we looked at it. My hon. colleague from Exploits will surely raise Crown lands as well, but I want to discuss about the injustice of which the *Crown Lands Act* is bestowing upon the residents in the District of Bonavista. I will cite some examples, without citing names, as examples that have occurred in my tenure as MHA within the district and the astronomical cost of which was associated. Some followed through, paying large sums of money; others, not.

I stated in the petition that Bonavista was one of the earliest settlements. If you drove to Cape Bonavista, you'll see the gentleman that is alleged to have landed in Newfoundland and Labrador and I think that was part of the colonization then that the Europeans came over to fish and a lot of them resided in Bonavista; that was in the 1500s.

I stated in the House of Assembly that this Chamber – or the House of Assembly didn't begin until 1832. But thousands of people had already owned land by that time. Squatter's rights were what we always operated under. If you can have an affidavit to show that you had continuous ownership and usage of that property, then that is what was needed. I think the correct term in the legal sense was open, notorious, exclusive and continuous possession. Those were the principles of which the law firms would go by when you're looking at settling land.

Very few in Bonavista did a full accounting of the land that was occupied. Governments have not done a full accounting of the lands that existed in Bonavista and other historical districts for hundreds and hundreds of years. So as I stated earlier in the petition, if you look at the land use map in the District of Bonavista and the

Crown lands, you'll find all of Bonavista is listed in green. And all green because they are all quieting; there is no clear title to land in Bonavista.

So what happens when somebody seeks to have clear title to the land that their families have been on for hundreds and hundreds of years? It will cost them thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars in court fees to have it settled, if indeed they could get it settled.

I'm going to give you some examples in a short time. What is a solution? In 1976, in this Chamber – were we in the House of Assembly in '76? It may have been the previous House of Assembly.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

C. PARDY: Oh, upstairs. Anyway, not in this Chamber but within the House of Assembly –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

C. PARDY: The Minister of Education remembers that time. It was the government at the time, Minister Rousseau, who brought it forward. Everyone was in agreement within the House of what the expectation of the Crown lands were at that time. I want to read you a couple of excerpts from *Hansard*, which talked about the good faith in which this legislation and the amendment in 1976 occurred.

The Liberal leader at the time in 1976 stated the following in *Hansard*: “But it would not be our intention, for example, if a man was continuously, whatever you call that term, Mr. Speaker, in open, notorious, exclusive possession of Crown lands for a reasonable period. I do not think that that would apply. Something would be worked out.”

The Minister, Rousseau at the time, stated: “The most important principle of this bill is that nobody is trying to do anybody out of their land.” I repeat: “... nobody is trying to do anybody out of their land.”

“What we are saying is, look if you have had squatter's rights for twenty years why do it for another forty years – because it was 60 years. So if you've got it for 20, why do it for another 40;

20 was now the benchmark. That was the genesis of which changing in 1976. Instead of 60, we're going to 20 to help out those people in Bonavista, of which now are spending thousands before the courts. “Let us clear it up so we know that that land belongs to John Jones or John Q. Citizen.”

So the intent back at that time was to change it to 20 years, whereas it was 60. What happened after 1976 was that through the judicial process they said that you must prove between 20 years, but not rotating – 20 years between 1956 and 1976.

So if you think today in 2022 John Doe in Bonavista is going to look at settling their land, they're going to have to get affidavits from somebody who could vouch for that land back in the early '50s or the mid-50s. And I would say every year that passes it becomes more problematic to get somebody to vouch for somebody's land.

So while I sit here today as the MHA for the District of Bonavista, like other historical areas, nobody – a very slim minority – got clear title to the land in the Town of Bonavista. The same could be said for Port Rexton and Trinity. If you don't go through the courts or you don't have any transaction on that land, you will get by. Even the ones that had the Registry of Deeds and had everything registered through legal recourse, they can't sell their property; it's tied up in the courts. If they are successful, it costs them a whole lot of money through legal fees.

So what is the solution? The solution is back to 1976 with what they intended. Pick any 20 years. It doesn't have to be '56 to '76, select any 20-year period. If you can certainly claim then that you had open, notorious and exclusive possession, that land is yours. Then, move on with the others that don't lay claim to it.

Let me share with you a couple of examples of land active in the courts and from the District of Bonavista. This lady, a resident of Bonavista, applied for a quieting of title certificate for land on a lane in the middle of Bonavista, but we know that it is all green. She hasn't got clear title to that land but she was going for quieting of titles.

Her mother had been paying property tax on the land for over 20 years, but in the Crown's eyes that did not matter because that would not show ownership that she had it. The Town of Bonavista, of course, issued a billing certificate for the property in 2005. The title search on the property indicates that the land was likely contained within a certain family claim back to the area when deeds were registered in the 1920s. Adjacent land had been successfully quieted in the early '70s. Crown Lands objected to the entirety of the claim.

My constituent, the lady, withdrew the quieting in 2021, having been unable to resolve matters with the Crown. No other objections were received, Crown only. Nobody – the neighbours in the neighbourhood, only the Crown. Her legal fees? Thousands of dollars.

Let me share with you. Come up the peninsula and we're in Bloomfield. We have a couple in Bloomfield who bought land in 1973. Remember, the *Lands Act* was changed in '76, but they bought it in '73. They built a house on it. A deed for the transaction was prepared and rightfully registered at the Registry of Deeds in 1975. This family then bought adjacent land next door to their house in 1977, which was registered in the same year. Paid legal fees to have it registered.

Both the 1975 and 1977 deeds had recitals of history and of the land, and affidavits of long possession of the land from which they bought it. They occupied the property for 50 years, until health issues dictated that he had to move closer to St. John's. Then came the problem of trying to sell the land. He had a buyer, the lawyers for the buyer questioned the title of the land, which is common practice to make sure it's clear title, and Crown Lands objected to the majority of the claim.

What they returned with was so much of the property – the only thing was that the property line ran right through this couple's house. So two-thirds of the house was on property that the Crown decided to have no objection with. One-third was on that the Crown objected to them having that land in the first place. So what happened? Ultimately, Crown Lands created a line to give him his full house, at a cost, but he did not release the land that they bought in 1977,

the acre that was by the side of them that they had paid for. They wouldn't release control over that.

I was the one that advocated on their behalf as far as this settlement, but when I called the couple back, they were quite upset with me. I was respectful of that because, really, what they were upset with was Crown Lands and government. I was tied with it because I was trying to broker on their behalf.

So, anyway, they got their house, they sold their house; the land next door they didn't get. Their legal fees, are you ready? Close to \$40,000. So I would say to you, the *Lands Act* we've got here is not serving those people who are moving land in rural Newfoundland, and certainly not in the District of Bonavista. I would say it's too long, far too long.

I want to give you one more, quick example, because this is one now of which this couple called me. Let me read this one and it's the last one, I promise. A couple in Trinity Bay North, in Catalina, they built a house on the land in 1983, the land that was owned and registered by her father. Her father had bought it from a family in 1981. A proper deed was prepared and registered at the Registry of Deeds in 1986. Again, as I stated, accompanied by affidavits of possession by seniors who could vouch for it at that time.

They have been living in the home for 40 years. The lady now has cancer. She is requesting to move, to sell the house and, like the family in Bloomfield, they have a purchaser. But guess what?

T. WAKEHAM: Crown Lands.

C. PARDY: My hon. colleague next door from Stephenville - Port au Port says Crown lands, and he's 100 per cent correct.

So they went to the court – and this has just gone now recently in 2021 – the purchaser, which is right, the purchaser raised a title issue regarding that father's estate and the matter put forward on a quieting. Crown Lands objected to the entirety of the land claim. No other objections from the community were received and the matter is still ongoing in the court.

The only thing I would say to you, I have five others but I don't need to go through them because they're the same as what we've had.

What was proposed by the outgoing minister in 2015 was the fact that we should have squatter's rights that have a 20-year period, but that 20-year period could be a floating period. So if you have open, notorious and exclusive possession in that 20-year period, then that should suffice for the courts and for Crown. But whereas currently it's not.

Municipalities in the District of Bonavista, one in particular in the middle, often tell me they used to be able to have delinquent landowners within their municipality, land tied up without paying taxes, they would go through the courts and they would repossess the land. Only thing is different now for this town council in the District of Bonavista is that when they went through the quieting of that property, guess who had an objection to that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Crown Lands.

C. PARDY: Crown Lands. My colleagues are with me here.

The only thing being is that the municipality, they're locked up now and they haven't had a transaction within that municipality for some time. So the only thing I would say is we need to revisit the legislation on Crown lands. I would say the land that is in green, which I early thought it was in blue in Bonavista, all that land that is now in green, we ought to determine who has got the ownership in that land, have a mission to make sure that those people in historical districts got title to the land and start off new with our squatter's rights and reactivating the squatter's rights for a 20-year period.

I went a little longer on that than what I had intended. I have a tendency to get carried away. I knew that early in life but I am battling it and trying to – I want to stick with the fishery and within that area.

I had asked two questions in the Estimates, whether the Department of Finance had issued any targets for this fiscal for attrition – any attrition targets, but in the last two Estimates I

was told that there was no attritions targets for this. I would assume that why there are no attrition targets is because we have a full-time job trying to get some vacancies filled, which we have in government. If that is the reason, then I can probably relate to that.

Another thing I raised in Estimates was the fact that the Premier's Greene report stated, "the governance structure of the fisheries is not working in this province." I think fishers, processors and residents would say it isn't. We ought to have an action plan within our government and within our House of Assembly, which I think we would all be in concurrence with, that we do need a better governance model. It doesn't mean we're going in with money that we've got to contribute, but we need to be part of a decision-making model of which decisions are made that impact Newfoundlanders and Labradorians without it coming to us as a surprise. It doesn't mean that we've got to contribute money to be part of that decision-making.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the granted time.

SPEAKER: I thank the Member for Bonavista.

Just for the information of the House, whoever catches my eye, they will go next. And it's lovely to see a lineup.

The hon. the Minister of Fishery, Forestry and Agriculture.

D. BRAGG: Thank you very much, Speaker.

It's always a great opportunity to talk about what was the number one problem in the province, Crown lands. As the Member just explained to everyone, we have a 68-day turnaround on a normal routine application, but you have some very complex applications when it becomes Crown lands. What appears on the surface to be so easy and so simple gets so complicated so fast.

One of the main things – and Greenspond was settled before Bonavista, just for the record, let *Hansard* show. We came in 200 years after John Cabot in 1697, when we settled in there and so there are similar situations. But what we would have had is large blocks of land that would have

been owned by one person, maybe, in this case, a triple-times great-grandfather. That land got subdivided so many different ways with a handshake, a wink, a nod, someone died, someone else moved in, so squatter's rights was the only option to figure out some of these blocks of lands. And let's be fair, squatter's right is as close to amnesty as you could ever ask for.

It's saying 20 years previous to January 1, 1977, if you were living there, we're going to consider you to be the owner. So that's not much different than amnesty. And the Member opposite said: Why not have a revolving 20 years? So then I was thinking if someone sat now – 20 years goes like the blink of an eye. So are you saying now that people should illegally occupy Crown lands because in 20 years' time they'll own it? I don't think that's where we need to be. So a rolling 20 years for Crown lands is not where we need to be.

Right now, there is an option; you apply for a section 36, but that gets complicated because Great-Aunt Sophie's great-great-grandchild once removed times twice lives away in Alberta finds out that you're going for this block of land, registers a complaint: Well, that was our family land. And it becomes very convoluted and sometimes, as the Member said, thousands of dollars to figure it out. Because, by that time, someone has built a house that is probably worth \$400,000 on that piece of property that he just can't move it.

Crown lands become so complicated, so many times. That is in our incorporated areas. Now, if you go out to unincorporated areas where there are no records, it gets more complicated. Remote Islands more complicated again. I know up in Bonavista Bay they must have resettled 40 small villages off these islands and people have gone back and said: That is my family land. But family reaches out so far that someone else comes back and said: Yeah, well, it was my family too and you have no right to be there.

So although someone occupied – and you'll see the chimney in a lot of these places because it was a concrete block for the chimney that was still there. So Crown lands is far, far from being easy to figure out in places like Bonavista and my hometown of Greenspond because there is history there.

If you go into the Town of Gander, that's only been there for the last 60 years, it is pretty easy to figure out landownership, for the most part. Anywhere where towns are relatively new. But in the old sections of this – Fogo Island comes to mind, almost any of the small, rural communities. I was up on the Northern Peninsula and we (inaudible) down from Great Harbour Deep and there were a couple of places between where houses had just fallen down. If ever there were some reason for someone to go back there, I am sure any paperwork on that is long gone, long destroyed.

What would appear to be once the right land becomes the wrong land. I had two brothers one time, when I worked with the town, and they both stood up and said: Yes, this is our land right here. One fellow said: The step was here. The other brother said: Go on, for God's sake, that rock over there is where we used to be. So it is memories sometimes change.

I agree with the Member, sometimes it is difficult. But you need somebody that is 75 or 80 to sign an affidavit, two or three if you can get them. As difficult as it sounds, it is still possible to get older people to sign these affidavits. There are ways to do it. We help out where we can, but we just can't let people squat somewhere, build a house and 20 years' time think they own it. It is our resource, it is the Crown lands of this province and we need the people to ante up for it. It isn't fair for me to go to Crown Lands and pay \$7,000 or \$8,000 for a block of land and someone else go somewhere else and just build on it and, in 20 years' time say, well, it's mine now.

We cannot have that process. We just can't throw out the squatter's rights from years ago. Can it be modified? Maybe, but we need to find a way and most incorporated towns would have records that date back a long time.

The other thing is paying taxes. Because you pay taxes on it, that's a municipal thing. The municipality would impose the tax, not the province. So it's a municipal property tax people would pay because the house was built there, and it sometimes becomes an issue. Because what happens, people have actually sold land they don't own. That was father's land, that was

grandfather's land, or grandmother's land and they just sell it. But there's no real ownership.

But because it was sold for little amount of money and there was no mortgages involved, so many pieces of land changed hands so many times in this province, in the rural part of this province – and I would think in the older parts of St. John's, we probably would find the same thing, that actual documented ownership of a piece of land is going to be difficult if it's sold for lower quantities of money.

I've had where banks have sold land, probably being repossessed, and then it was found out the house was never built on the land of the person who thought they owned the land. Because the survey should have been over there on the other side of the road. So there are lots of complicated aspects about Crown land.

The Member for Exploits, last year, most of his questions would have been around Crown lands, because some of them went on for years. People are not in the courts and using lawyers for it, because it just comes down, as I said before, lots of times, between neighbours disputing boundary lines is almost always the case. They said the best neighbour you can have is the one where there's a fence between you. The fence defines who owns what. But a lot of fences were torn down and burned so many years ago that everybody distorted where the landownership is.

I appreciate the issue in Bonavista. It's not only Bonavista; it's anywhere in this province that has a house that's 100 years old, or the house was torn down and people moved away. So Crown lands is something we like to work with people with, but there are some very, very, very complicated files.

I was hoping to take some notes on the fishery, but I think the Member ran out of time before he really got into his speaking notes. I just want like everyone to know I guess in this province, so frustrating as it is, you just can't go in and occupy a piece of land. We have it now where people say, well, it's only \$1,000 fine if I go there. That's the wrong attitude – that is the wrong attitude to go and build and then you get \$1,000 fine. So like I said, with Crown lands, it's not just cut and paste and it's not that simple. I wish it was, but actually it's not.

So any time the Member opposite would like to sit down and talk about Crown lands, I've made this offer before, or any other Member in this House, I invite them to come to our office and I'll get the Crown Lands manager for their region and we'll talk about their problem files.

Thank you very much, Speaker.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Thank you, Speaker.

It's good this evening to be able to stand up here and represent the District of Exploits again. During Concurrence of course we did talk about agriculture, forestry, wildlife and Crown lands. So seeing my colleague from Bonavista only spent a couple of minutes on Crown lands, I think I'll take a bit of time and talk about Crown lands.

AN HON. MEMBER: And seals.

P. FORSEY: Later.

Anyway, I respect the minister for his comments on Crown lands, I really do. The searches of the land do go back a long ways. But then again, as the Member for Bonavista said, those standards, back in '76, they do sort of need to be brought up to the current year of 2022. We need to certainly look at the *Crown Lands Act*.

In regard to Crown lands itself, I know that in Estimates of course we were told that there was a 60-day standard, which is fine, but we're still getting calls to my office, especially, and I'm getting them all across the province, actually, of Crown land applications that are still not being approved. Certainly not in the 60-day standard. Sixty-day standard is mostly to say that your application is on file and waiting approvals of one department or another. So the 60-day standard probably does work that way if there's nothing wrong with it.

But I'm still hearing of two years to three, probably some even longer, of the application not being approved. I know there's a backlog in Crown Lands; there are probably a couple of thousand applications right now that's still in

Crown Lands that are not being approved. So that happens through the multiple departments that Crown Lands have to go through. It's not only Crown Lands, it's Service NL, it's Municipalities, it's Transportation, Forestry – I think there are eight of them altogether that Crown Lands has to channel through.

So by the time it goes through every department and everyone does their own work on it, gets it back to Crown Lands again, yeah, it does take more than 68 days for that to happen. Whereas probably if Crown Lands spoke to the rest of the departments, gave them an option, probably, of 30-day standards for everybody to get back, maybe those applications would be sped up to a convenient amount of time. Probably after a year or so, year and a half, maybe we would get some approvals. That's on the new Crown land applications, that's not the ones dating back to '76 and beyond on squatter's rights. That's just on the new applications.

Certainly, if we get those applications approved in a fashionable standard, that helps out the economy. People are eager, especially in the spring of the year, summertime. That's when people want to do their building construction with regard to getting lumber bought; getting different supplies that can be used to help out the economy, put people back to work. Crown lands application approvals are a very important detail with regard to the economy itself, because anything is always built from the ground up, and without ground you cannot start.

Applications need to be streamlined a little bit more through Crown Lands so that we can get departments back to work. Like I say, hopefully one of those days probably the minister or the department would take a look at the Crown *Lands Act* and bring it up to standard-day needs.

Having said that, during Estimates, of course, forestry – another big part of my district. All these areas are pertaining to my district: forestry, farming, wildlife and Crown lands. Every one of those I hear and it's big in my district. Forestry is a big one. I know that it's been through tough times. It's been through decreases in business and that sort of stuff in the forestry in Central Newfoundland, especially since Abitibi went down. We need to find an industry in Central

Newfoundland, especially in Districts 10, 11, 12 for the forest industry.

Permits, of course, are always an issue in our district. Even the local domestic cutters, local sawmill operators and commercial ones; they can't get any extra permits. They tried to get some extra permits to do some extra work, try to survive a little bit more, but they just can't get those permits. The problem with those permits is that in 2017 the government did unlock 280,000 cubic metres of fibre from the old Abitibi permits, which was well needed, should have been done as soon as Abitibi went, I suppose. But that was well needed and it was something that that fibre could have been used to build an industry – another industry – in Central Newfoundland. I know there's mining and that sort of stuff in there, it's on the way, but we've suffered in the forest industry long enough in Central Newfoundland.

I know that the minister has stated on different news channels, that sort of stuff, that there are 1,500 jobs tied to forestry in Newfoundland and Labrador. There probably is, not doubting it for one minute. But those jobs are not directly in Central Newfoundland where the main resource is.

D. BRAGG: Nineteen hundred and twenty.

P. FORSEY: Nineteen hundred and twenty jobs, thank you, Minister. But those are not directly in Central Newfoundland where the forest industry is. No doubt there are some harvesters up there cutting, there are some trucks, that kind of stuff, being used to transport those timbers and that forestry back and forth across the province, east to west and everything being shipped out of Central Newfoundland. When Abitibi closed its doors, those permits were left there for Central Newfoundland, for another industry to be found to go to Central Newfoundland to create that employment, give the economy back to the people in Central Newfoundland, which didn't happen. Unfortunately, that didn't happen.

What did happen, back in 2016-2017, the permits then – that 280,000 cubic metres was then allotted to the bigger players. That would go from east to west, whatnot; the bigger players are not in Central Newfoundland. All the

processing industry is not in Central Newfoundland, it's outside of Central Newfoundland where the bulk of the jobs are.

Not taking away from any jobs that are supposed to be outside, wherever the job can be created. Listen, we're all looking for that. We all want that. But as for Central Newfoundland, it's like a forest industry – that there was supposed to be in Central Newfoundland. That's where it's to. It's no good for Central Newfoundland to be looking for a fish plant. We don't have fish.

So our forestry, we need to build on an industry and a secondary industry in Central Newfoundland. The permits now were done probably February of this year – this is 2022 – with another five-year plan. So the five-year plan will take you up to probably 2026-2027. That's going to give nobody a chance to give a secondary industry with regard to forestry in Central Newfoundland. It's not allotted.

Anybody who wants extra permits just for their own sawmills and domestic cutting, they can get some. But the permit that they're going to get, you have to be a billy goat to go cut it, honestly. They will give you some extra permits to cross bogs, up on hills. Wherever terrain is rough, that's where they will give the other smaller contractors the permits to go cut this stuff.

Yet the prime cutting spruce, the prime cutting lumber, flatlands, easy access – who got it? The bigger players pushing out the smaller players for at least the next five years. What needs to be done there on the forestry part of it is that you have to find a more diversified plan that diversifies more business with regard to the forestry.

I know there are plans. The minister will come on and he'll say: I never seen no permits. I never saw anybody looking for any extra business. I haven't seen any business plans. We haven't seen anybody with permits. Yet they're all coming to my office with business plans. They are coming to my office with applications gone in for extra permits. All denied – they all keep getting denied.

Even though, yes, it's great and employment outside – it is creating employment in Newfoundland itself, but that forestry was left

there for the people of the Central region, to create some employment in that area to get the economy back boosting the way it was before. We've struggled on that so I think that's something we have to look at with regard to diversifying business in Central Newfoundland. We need to utilize our forestry in a lot of different ways.

Farmers and agriculture: again, that was another big topic. Actually, that's big in my area too. I know that the crops and that – this year it's up again. Farmers have, in the past few years, increased different crops, different supplies and they have been doing well, but this year, of course, there is a big, big problem. The cost of fuels, the cost of living has just gone through the roof. The cost of living has also hit the farmers and the cost of living is hitting our plates on our tables.

Our farmers are the ones that are producing that crop. Their high cost of operations right now, this does trickle down to our tables, but right now probably some of them are facing elimination and they might not even be in the game. They can't get any more with regard to food self-sufficiency, they can't clear any more land. They're not even looking at clearing land, which needs to be done in order to increase food self-sufficiency. If they're going to increase crop, you need land. You need to get it cleared.

They can't clear this land because of the cost of fuels and the cost of fertilizers; it's not even worthwhile to go at it, because they know they can't do any of it anyway. They're even questioning their own regular crops that they have this year. This is creating a big, big problem.

I know diesel fuel – I was talking to one farmer, he told me diesel fuel, 83 cent he paid last year. This year, he's paying \$2.03 a litre just for diesel fuel – just for fuel. So you can't clear land with the equipment that they have.

One type of fertilizer that he's using, \$754 a ton he was paying last year. This year, he's going to be paying \$1,354 a ton. Double on fertilizer, and that's the fertilizer that goes on our regular crops, on cabbages, carrots, potatoes, that's our regular fertilizer. They just can't sustain it, no.

Hydraulics that goes in those units, that's big, too. They're all hydraulic units. They used to pay \$74 for a five-gallon drum last year. This year, \$115 just for hydraulics to put in those units.

Not only that, parts themselves – now that's just the liquids, but the parts themselves are up, a 40 per cent increase on parts and equipment. Actually, that's just on parts. The new equipment itself, if they wanted to go buy a new tractor, well that's up 40 per cent as well. How can you buy a new piece of equipment to help out with farming? What do you do? Do you buy a new piece of equipment that you might not be able to use, or do you try to keep up the old one that you have there, putting good money after bad?

So that's some of the problems that the farmers are hitting this year.

Insurances is another one. Their insurances are up 46 per cent this year. Some of them are paying over \$8,000 per month. That's just for insurances.

So agriculture will be a difficulty in the future. I mean to say, we're going to have to be looking at the food self-sufficiency, which we'd like to have here in our province. I mean to say, we need it for our tables. We need farmers to be growing. We need new farmers to be coming in.

I know there are initiatives for new farmers. The minister mentioned the potato farm there a little while ago; I think it was on the West Coast. They put \$2.75 million into two potato farms, non-recoverable grants, that's what they gave them. That's what they gave them to get the potatoes in the ground, but we need to be talking to our existing farmers, our experienced farmers to help them out. Especially in this situation right now, they are in dire straits.

They are all across the province; I'm hearing from my area, I'm hearing from other areas as well. We need to help out those farmers now, or try to do something. We can do that in the form of probably looking at fuels, of course, taxes on fuels. I know the Member from Stephenville - Port au Port has pushed this quite often. And here it is right now, it's causing a – you take the

fuels that they use – actually, I said the fuels back there, 83 cents to \$2.03 a litre on diesel.

The taxes on that, the amount they burn in a piece of equipment. We have to look at the taxes on those fuels to help those farmers along. Even if we did that, it would certainly play a big part in helping those farmers with the taxes on those fuels. Maybe some extra relief in the forms of grants and interest-free loans. It's been done before. So maybe we can look at something like that.

Certainly we have to reach out to the federal government, I know the CAP programs and that are there, but we certainly got to reach out to the federal government demand more from the federal government.

During COVID they did give out a recovery benefit program. The recovery benefit was somewhere around a \$40,000 loan, if they paid back \$30,000, they kept the \$10,000. So something like that we can look at with our counterparts up in Ottawa, but we need our government to go to Ottawa, or contact Ottawa, and say we need this done in order to keep food on our tables here in this province.

Wildlife: Of course, wildlife is another big thing this year; we did get a lot of calls on the moose licence applications because they changed to more the online structure of moose licence applications. I don't think the government was prepared, they sent it out there but I don't think they were really prepared to have the moose licence gone to online applications. So we need to address all those issues, because moose licence is very important, especially with the cost of living right now in Central – not only Central Newfoundland, across the province. People getting a moose licence right now, it will be a great source of meat, no doubt, for next winter for their fridges and to help feed their families, because that's what we're looking at here. We're looking at feeding our families, feeding the people here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

With that, we need to speed up those processes with regard to the wildlife applications, get those out to people so that they can get ready for next year's hunt, without any aggravation and stipulation, because this is what this is causing,

it's just causing aggravation to the people. With the high cost of living and then add on something like that, it just causes frustration to the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, again, back to the forestry, I would like to see some adjustments done. I know this five-year plan is out, but I would like for the government probably to look at something else in the near future to come up with a better-diversified plan that fits everybody of the province. Not that I want to take it away from anybody else, or any area, but if you're going to be fair, you have to be fair.

There is lots of timber still in Labrador, of course. There is still lots of timber on the Northern Peninsula. I know the deal fell through with Timberlands where they were going to do the pellet plant. There is lots of timber up there; maybe that can be moved elsewhere so that timber can be looked after.

But, again, those people still want to congregate on Central Newfoundland because of the terrain. It's easier access. Up on the Northern Peninsula there are a lot more hills, rougher terrain to get that access to the prime spruce, the black spruce, the big spruce.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

P. FORSEY: The bigger goats.

But on the serious matter, it's something that has to be addressed. If we could get those two – we have mining going on in Central Newfoundland and it's going to be a big boost to us. We needed it and it's going to happen. Then if we could only get some sort of forest industry in there with the mining industry, I think we could build a good economic future for Central Newfoundland.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

The Member's time is over.

We are debating the Estimates of the Resource Sector Committee.

The next speaker is the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

P. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me say, it's an absolute pleasure as always to speak on the budget, and, of course, this is just another process that we go through as part of speaking to the budget. We've spoken to the main motion. There have been a couple of amendments which we've spoken to and now this is where we get to sort of debate the Estimates.

We go through a Committee process that allows direct questions to the minister and staff on the line-by-line items in each particular department. This is the opportunity basically where, once that information is gathered, then Members have an opportunity to have a more, I would say, fulsome debate with the information and the knowledge gained from the Estimates process in the various parts of the budget.

So, right now, we're speaking to the Resource Sector. That would include the Department of Environment and Climate Change; Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture; Immigration, Population Growth and Skills; Industry, Energy and Technology; Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation. I want to say that as we get into this portion of the debate, Mr. Speaker, it's been great to be part of this debate thus far, and certainly I want to thank all of my colleagues for the significant contribution that they've all made to the debate. Also, to the Members opposite for the tremendous contribution they've made to the debate thus far.

It's quite clear to me as I've been sitting here in this House of Assembly that they're very passionate about this budget and they've all spoke so eloquently to it. Obviously, they believe in this budget and everything that's in it, which we can tell and we glean from the fact that they've been such great supporters of it and have spoken so often to it.

But, Mr. Speaker, with that said, I want to concentrate on a couple of areas here. The first thing I just wanted to mention is –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

It's becoming difficult to hear the Member.

Thank you.

P. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

They're just agreeing with me that they are excited about the budget.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to touch on the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture for a moment. It's not something, I have to say, that I have a huge lot of dealings with in my particular district. Members have talked at great length about issues with Crown Lands. It's not something that I have a lot of dealings with, but I do have dealings from time to time with constituents as it relates to, perhaps, they're trying to acquire a property in rural Newfoundland. Maybe it's family land that they want to build a cabin or something like that, or a summer home in a property perhaps it was their parents' property, their parents' land and so on. I do know that they're quite frustrated on a regular basis when it comes to dealing with Crown Lands on these issues.

I can only imagine if you're representing an area, like the Member for Bonavista, where he has so many constituents that are on Crown land and dealing with Crown Lands, it must be a nightmare for him, because I do know that for the minor dealings I would have from time to time with constituents, they've been quite frustrated and, quite frankly, so have I with some of the red tape and hoops they've had to jump through.

So I do throw that in there just to sort of concur with some of my what my colleagues over here are saying, without the in-depth knowledge that they would have and the dealings they would have, that it would seem to me that are issues within Crown Lands, that government, someone really needs to do a review of how we are dealing with people with Crown Lands and try to find ways to reduce red tape and make it more user-friendly for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I would say that, Mr. Speaker.

Also just on the fisheries, which again is not something that I have a lot of dealing with. The

only wharf we have in Mount Pearl is at Power's Pond. So I would say that upfront. Although I do have some constituents that do work in the offshore fishery that live in my district. But the fishery impacts us all. I've said in this House of Assembly before that if you were to take a drive through Donovans Business Park, the Kenmount industrial park and so on, you will find that there is actually a lot business there that depends substantially on the fishery from a supply-and-servicing point of view.

So if anyone thinks for a second that the fishery does not have an impact on urban parts of the province, they're sadly mistaken; they actually do. A district like Mount Pearl - Southlands, Mount Pearl North, the St. John's districts, there are a number of businesses, service companies, supply companies and so on which do have direct ties and relations to our fishery. While it certainly is, as people have termed it, the life's blood of rural Newfoundland, the fishery I think is important to all of us. Not to mention the fact that if rural Newfoundland is doing well, we're doing well. If we're doing well, rural Newfoundland is doing well.

Any industry that we have in our province, if it's going well and people are employed, taxes are being paid and money is coming into government coffers, it's good for all of us. So I would say that. I just wanted to point that out as well. I know, again, the Member for Bonavista has been a great advocate for the fisheries. I've listened to him on a number of times raising that issue. In particular I want to sort of echo some of the comments; he's talked about seals. That is something that we really have to get a grip on. It comes up in the House of Assembly periodically, but there never seems to be any action on it, unfortunately.

We talk about the fishery and the fishery being sustainable for our province, I think it is important that we do all we can in trying to seek our new markets for those seal products and to lobby the federal government as well to take a more proactive stance than they have taken to date. That is something that we could all be working on both sides of the House of Assembly.

I'm sure the Member for Bonavista, who is the Fisheries critic, would have no problem

whatsoever in working with the Minister of Fisheries and the Fisheries critic with the NDP and so on or any independent Member on trying to sustain our fishery – which is a billion-dollar resource and could be much more. Certainly the impact, we know, that seals are having on the fishery definitely has to be addressed. I did want to throw that out there as well.

Mr. Speaker, another part of the Resource Sector and a department that is included in here that I want to speak to is the Department of Industry, Energy and Technology. I saw something in the media recently that the minister was excited, I think it said, about the opportunities for our nickel industry with Vale and so on. I certainly join with him that he has very exciting department because we know that we are rich in resources in this province, whether it be oil and gas or whether it be minerals; whether it be iron ore or whether it be nickel; whether it be rare earth minerals. We're seeing a lot happening in Central Newfoundland, which is so great to see.

I was actually at the Municipalities NL symposium over the weekend and talking to a councillor – actually, I think it was the mayor of a small town. I can't remember exactly the name of the town, off the top of my head, but it was in the Roddickton, Conche, that area. He was telling me that he believes there are a lot of opportunities for rare earth minerals up there in that area as well. He says that it is there and it is just a matter of getting it developed.

There is no doubt, I'm sure that he's accurate in saying that, but I think one of the key things is – and this has been said in this House numerous times, Mr. Speaker – that while we are rich in natural resources, one of the things that we have not necessarily been as great at as we could be, arguably – and I know it's debateable to some degree – is ensuring local benefits for our people. The question always comes: Are we getting enough for our resources?

It's very easy for us to stand up in this House of Assembly and say, you know, we should benefit more. I get that. It's quite one thing for me to stand up in this House of Assembly and say it, and quite another for the minister to have to sit down across a negotiation table with one of these companies and barter out a deal that's going to be acceptable to both sides.

So as much as we would like to have it all, it's not always that easy. And I appreciate that, but I guess my only commentary to the minister and to the government, which I am sure all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians would agree with, is let's make sure we get as much as is humanly possible and, in particular, let's ensure the employment. This comes down to a lot of what Trades NL have been talking about as an example about local benefits agreements.

I know it's not easy to simply impose that in negotiations. But that is what we have to be pushing for. We have to be pushing for the local jobs, and if we have them in agreement, if we can get these things in the form of an agreement, then it also has to be monitored and it has to be enforced.

In the past, for example, I have heard from people in our offshore who have told me situations where a company might set up an office, so to speak, maybe with nobody in it or one person in it, a small office in Newfoundland and Labrador and bid on some work in the offshore and they have a vessel, but guess what? Everyone on that vessel is from another country, but the office happened to be here in Newfoundland.

I'll tell you one even worse: A local company – I am not going to name people but I thought it was shameful – owned and operated by a Newfoundlander bidding on work in the offshore, getting the work and hiring people from other countries on the vessel instead of his own fellow Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, which I think is absolutely shameful, personally. I won't name him. I don't know how common that is, but that was a story I was told. I have heard that kind of thing a couple of times. It's not good enough.

It's in the agreement that they can't be at it, but it's like anything else, an agreement is just simply something written on paper. Unless there's somebody going to be monitoring what's going on and enforcing the letter of the law, when it comes to these local benefit agreements and so on, then it's not worth the paper it's written on.

I believe that would fall under the C-NLOPB, I think, who is supposed to be doing that kind of

thing. But are they being as effective as they should be? I don't know. Are they doing audits? Are they just taking their word for it and saying: Listen, you know you have to hire Newfoundlanders? Yeah, we know. Okay, good enough with us.

Is that that's happening? Is there actually somebody going in on a regular basis, no different than you do a safety audit, is there somebody with the C-NLOPB, as an example, auditing these worksites and so on, to make sure that if the agreement says you have to hire Newfoundlanders, that they're actually hiring Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and not simply bringing in people from outside?

Now, I understand that there may be, from time to time, certain expertise and so on that we may not have here. I doubt that there's a lot of it, because our people now – we've been in this industry now for a substantial period of time and I think we have the expertise here, locally, I really do. But there could be some speciality things where you may have to, from time to time, bring someone in from the outside. That should be the exception to the rule. I'm not sure that that's always the case.

So I would say to the minister, I, like you, am very excited about the opportunities that we have and I suspect that we will continue to have in this province in the mining sector, oil and gas and green energy, alternative energy, I am. I really am. But, Minister, let's make sure – and I know you will, he's nodding his head in agreement – that we maximize the benefits to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. That's what we have to do.

Now he's even applauding me.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. LANE: Thank you, Minister.

Now, with all that said, one of the things that I was a little disappointed in when it comes to this particular department, and in fairness to this minister, he wasn't the minister at the time, is first of all, I definitely agree with the fact that we no longer have NL Hydro and Nalcor. I think we reached a point where we didn't need the two of them and we've chosen to get rid of the

Nalcor. I think that was also necessary given the black cloud that was hanging over that company, in the minds of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Whether it be real, justified or not, people have their own opinions. But I think it was a good idea to just have NL Hydro.

But when that piece of legislation came into the House – actually it came up twice because it was OilCo, when they separated OilCo. One of the things that I had hoped was going to be done that didn't get done and is still not done, were changes to the *Energy Corporation Act* in terms of the protection that used to be Nalcor, now it's NL Hydro and OilCo, receive an exemption from the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. They don't have to be in compliance with ATIPPA; they don't have to.

And it's interesting because the former premier and a lot of the people over there were the same people with the former premier, and I'm sure everyone can remember when Nalcor was hiding all the consultants' costs and so on. It was a big deal in the media. Premier Ball, at the time, was in the media and he was saying he was getting to the bottom of it. He was going to Stan Marshall and he was getting that information released. Guess what? It never got released and we never did find out about the billions of dollars in taxpayers' money that got spent on consultants and how much some of these outrageous charges were that were going through. We never did get that information, even though Premier Ball said he was going to make it happen. He didn't do it.

And, of course, then this administration decided we're going to create OilCo and NL Hydro and so on, which I agree with, I don't have a problem with. But when they did that they never changed the legislation. So OilCo and NL Hydro can still, to this day, hide information from the public.

Now, one might say well, Paul, some of this information is commercially sensitive. Some of this is legal opinions and so on. I agree. Certain information does need to be shielded. But guess what? If this was done properly and someone was looking for information regarding what's going on in OilCo and what's going on at NL Hydro, they should be able to ask for the information. And if there's a legitimate reason because of, for example, commercially sensitive

information, it should be going to the Privacy Commissioner and let him decide what information can be released, and what information is legitimately commercially sensitive.

Because right now, NL Hydro and OilCo, all they got to say is commercial sensitivity. They don't have to give a reason – they don't have to give a reason, Mr. Speaker. If I ask for legitimate information, even if it's got nothing to do with commercial sensitivity, all they've got to do is say commercial sensitivity, period. No explanation, no opportunity for appeal, nothing. So they can hide everything under the veil of commercial sensitivity.

Similar, I might add, to how this government now is hiding everything under client-solicitor privilege. We've seen that in the media just recently. That's what's happening. The Privacy Commissioner has been quite clear that's what's happening. It was never done before, but now apparently we've found a loophole and now we're going to hide everything under that.

As somebody – and I've said this here before, and I don't mind saying it, I don't mind admitting a mistake. See, that's one thing about me, like me or lump me, I don't mind saying when I was wrong.

AN HON. MEMBER: It don't happen often.

P. LANE: The Member said it don't happen often; it's happened a few times. I supported Bill 29. I supported it. You don't need to heckle it, I'll say it. I supported it because I had to toe the party line; that was the bottom line. And I did so, no one forced me to do it, but I did.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hoodwinked.

P. LANE: No, I wasn't hoodwinked, knew what was going on, but anyway, I did it. Had to support it. But Members were over on this side showing me blacked-out pieces of paper and how terrible it was. To the credit of Paul Davis at the time, he brought in Clyde Wells, they developed new ATIPP legislation, told it was the best in the country and now this government wants to go back in time and starting hiding everything all over again (inaudible) –

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

The Member's time has expired.

P. LANE: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

C. TIBBS: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I really appreciate the time. Lots of passion in here today it seems to be, whether it be Question Period or our Concurrence. My personal portfolio of course –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

C. TIBBS: Definitely very robust here today, there's no doubt about it. Good to see.

Again, my portfolio is around Immigration, Population Growth and Skills, and it's very important, especially moving into the future, to have a sustainable, healthy population to move forward. Because if we do not have a healthy, sustainable population in the province, we will fail. There's no doubt about it. Our success has always been built upon the people here in the province, and it will continue to be contingent on the people that are here in the province.

That's why it's great to see, of course, the Ukrainian refugees coming in today; I'm excited for them to come in and dip those wings going into Torbay. Hopefully, it is daylight out and they can get a good look of where they are coming. It's a beautiful province.

Just yesterday, myself, I took an hour or so and hiked around Signal Hill there and I thought it was absolutely fantastic. Now if I had a suggestion for the Minister of Tourism – I know

he is listening intently, my suggestion for the minister would be to put a defibrillator in Cabot Tower because I nearly died when I got back.

So it definitely took its toll on me, but it would be great to have something up there. In all seriousness, though, it actually would be a great idea and I just thought about it. I made a joke, but you know what? I think it is a great idea to have something up there like that, if it is not there already.

AN HON. MEMBER: He's writing that down.

C. TIBBS: He has been writing on it; that's perfect.

We were happy to see the Ukrainian refugees come in, but how do we keep newcomers here? I think that's going to be the biggest issue right here. You know, it is great to get people to come in here, show them what we can offer but at the same time we need to keep our newcomers right here, as well as the people who have been here their whole lives. I think that if we can get a handle on that, it encompasses so much within the province. If we can make this province attractable enough to have people come here and stay here, well, by God, I bet you that 75 per cent of the battle is taken care of on its own right there.

But when people come in here, they are going to look at our health care. Health care has been a big issue. Health care has been a big issue because there are so many people that are suffering within our health care system. Again, we all recognize this did not happen overnight. We all recognize this was not on one person. I am not going to stand here and play politics and say that but, at the same time, something needs to be done.

When people are sat home with cancer or with something that they are diagnosed with and they have to sit there and wait for an appointment and wait and wait and wait and then have appointments cancelled. By God, you know, I am sure some of us here have gone through it, but it must be absolutely debilitating to them and their family. You think about it – I am very fortunate, knock on wood and for the rest of us, too, that I haven't had to deal with anything like that yet or anybody in my immediate family. But

to sit there and you can imagine how long those days are, the weeks are, waiting to get an appointment or to see an oncologist or a specialist. You know that Preston up in Ottawa had his surgery and he waited so long. He waited 28 days before he could get his surgery. Do you know what? That's not good enough. We need to do better and I know we can do better if we all work together and try to come up with a solution that works for Newfoundland and Labrador.

My colleague from Terra Nova said it many times. What works for Newfoundland and Labrador might not work for another Atlantic province, in the Maritimes or out West. We need to find something that is right here and we continue to compare our issues to other provinces across Canada, other countries around the world but when we come up with different solutions, like Alberta doing something with their gas tax, well, then we're not comparable anymore.

And that doesn't work; it can't be both ways. We need to ensure that we get a good handle on the cost of living for people. The economic drivers here in Newfoundland and Labrador are going to be something else that's going to keep people here. You know, I've been across the country, probably more than most. I've lived in many parts of the country; I've worked in many parts of the country. We see the mining sector; it's absolutely fantastic. But there has to be high-paying jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador, good-paying jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador.

At one time, minimum wage could let you sail on through, depending on your life circumstances, but not anymore. It's impossible. It's literally impossible. So you're waiting for the straw that broke the camel's back. Well, by God, that poor camel must be on his knees. Because we are absolutely at a breaking point here in Newfoundland and Labrador. And I don't know if gas is going up again this week – it's terrible news for the province; it's terrible news for those people that are working minimum-wage jobs or just above. These people have families. They have children and they've got to try to take care of them. Again, it's debilitating to the people that are trying to get

through it and there doesn't seem to be any end in sight.

It comes back to this budget once again; what does it do for the moms and dads that are out there trying their best, working 50-60 hours a week and still can't get ahead, for the most vulnerable, for our seniors? There's not a whole lot of change. I've seen the change now in two different budget the word "change" – nothing's changing. Nothing is fundamentally changing.

I'm not talking about small changes; it's great what we did with the motor vehicle registration, to cut that in half. It's good, but it's a minimal change. We need radical change here in order to make sure that Newfoundland and Labrador is going to be sustainable in the future.

Food sustainability: We just talked about farmers across the province. By God, we should be doing everything in our power to help contribute to any farmer in this province that is looking to take it on or continue their operation. They're going to be hurting bad. I've worked through Saskatchewan, Alberta, a lot of the guys I worked on the rig with were farmers in their off-time or whatever. Farmers have had it hard throughout Canada for quite some time, so it's not an easy thing to get into, but to think about what it's going to pay out in years to come, in generations to come – food sustainability.

I'm not sure how much food we produce here on the Island ourselves. It's like 8 per cent. It's a very small amount. But imagine if we could get down to 30 or 40 per cent of our own food, right here on the Island or in the Big Land, my God that would be absolutely amazing.

I know we can do it, but the supports must be there, and we need to listen to the farmers. I don't know if there are any farmers in here; there's probably not. I guarantee you there's probably not, but the farmers that are out there in the province, we need to listen to the experts. They are the experts. What they need is what they should be getting. All the supports should be there.

The infrastructure throughout the province – the long-term care centre Grand Falls-Windsor, we pray to God that's open in a couple of weeks. I truly do. I know the minister wants it open, too.

I'm sure he does. But I just had an 89-year-old man who was guaranteed one of the first spots in the home. He was told we're going to get you in the home as soon as it opens. He left for Harbour Breton last week from Grand Falls-Windsor, and he's been living in Grand Falls-Windsor his entire life. Now he's gone to Harbour Breton and that's where his family have to visit him.

That's shameful. That can't go on like that. It's very hard on him and it's very hard on his family, so we need to ensure that that gets straightened away and we get some people in this new home. We're all excited about it. Let's get them in there. But when it comes to transparency, if something comes up and it's going to be four weeks down the road, not a week, say, four weeks, let's deal with it. But that communication needs to be open.

Housing: There's a huge issue with housing here in the province, and I'm telling you first-hand, one of those issues is the landlord tenancies act. I'm sure that, throughout COVID, there's been some grey areas and stuff, but I have a person in Grand Falls-Windsor, a landlord, who hasn't been paid rent since October. He had to wait to get his hearing. Last month, he finally got his hearing and, through all the jigs and the reels, and the Sheriff's Office, that person is still in his home. That's eight months ago.

Now, when this person does finally get the tenant evicted, for not paying rent for eight months – I empathize with the tenants as well because it can't be easy on them. I'm sure there has to be some wiggle room in there, but eight months and beating up places and stuff like that – one of the reasons why we have a housing problem in this province is because nobody wants to rent out their places anymore. They don't want to do it. It's too much of a hassle.

So this man right here, he has two rentals. He's taking them back and he's selling them. There will be no more rentals. So when you have 100, 200 people throughout our district waiting for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, that's going to be an issue, because there's no other places to rent and, unfortunately, that's the way it is. So if we need to look at the legislation and do something there, that's something else that we should look at as well.

In order to grow our population, we must make this province, again, attractable for many people. As we set noble, important goals to increase our immigration, we will not achieve healthy population numbers if we don't convince Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who were born here as well, spent their whole lives here, to stay here. I think we're going to see more mass exodus in the future. I hope not.

I hope we give them something to stay home for, but the fact of the matter is there are shutdown jobs out West right now that they can't find people there. They can't shut down plants because they can't find enough people, and those jobs are starting at about \$300 a day. You know what? That's something that is very attractive out there. It is going to convince people to pick up, move away, and that's what we're trying to avoid. We want to ensure we keep those people right here.

We talk about rotational workers. I have stood here many, many times and everybody knows my background; I'm not going to go over it again. But the rotational workers are so vital to this province. I'm not sure what the number is; we've heard up to 18,000, 20,000 rotational workers. Can you imagine if all these people got wise and said I'm going to head on back up to Alberta because I don't need to pay for a plane ticket? I don't need to go back and forth; the health care system might be better. If that starts to happen and we see a trend, by God, not only can you say bye-bye to our sustainable population, but that is a huge influx of money right here. Those people are not making \$15 an hour; there is nobody going away for any less than \$80,000 or \$100,000 a year and just about every cent of that comes back to our Newfoundland and Labrador economy.

I want to ensure rotational workers that we are with you; we appreciate everything you do. We know it can be easier in certain ways but you love this province just as much as I do, just as much as all of us in this House and we thank you and we applaud you for staying right here in Newfoundland and Labrador because we need you and we need your families. So I'll say that about rotational workers.

We're the highest tax across the country. Again, when you look at Alberta's tax, I think it is at 7

per cent or something like that right now. When you go out and buy a vehicle or a house or anything else, that is a big difference. That is an absolute huge difference. If we can do something about the taxes on gasoline, absolutely it would be great to try to knock that down a little bit.

We touched on Crown land earlier. I will be talking to the minister about a few issues. I'm going to talk about it right now and, in fairness to the minister, I haven't spoken to him about it yet. Also, he has always responded and he has always gotten back to me every single time I've ever reached out to him, and I thank him for that.

Crown lands: I have a fellow in my district right now; he's had a cabin on a lakefront since 1981. Now they are asking him to move it; he's poisoned. He is absolutely poisoned. Why am I staying here are his exact words. So he just wants to sell it and move out of the province. He does. So we'll talk about that anyway.

The Crown lands, once again we've talked about it previously. I think that we need some more legislation. I think that we need to really sit down, look at the legislation and ask ourselves how do we help Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Because that's asked enough when it comes to these decisions.

Now, this House of Assembly is going to sit for probably next week and that might be it. Another record low number of days for us to sit. Hopefully we sit longer, but how there isn't more legislation not coming from across the way to help Newfoundlanders and Labradorians is beyond me.

We have lots of ideas over here. I would love to work with some of the departments and introduce some of the legislation that we see that could help Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. I'm sure you see it over there, too. But to have record low number of days – and that's what we're probably going to gear up for, not like it used to be 10 years ago. But we're going to have a record low number of days sitting here trying to help the people of the province. That's not good enough. It's not good enough at all.

Let's come up with some real hard-core legislation that can help the people. It might be something simple, but I'm just asking that you look through your departments, find out what can help the people of the province. Because never forget, we work for them, not the other way around.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. TIBBS: The worst part about all this, Speaker, is – I'm going to call it gaslighting – the ability or the energy put into certain people trying to normalize the way Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are struggling right now. And it's done through such an array of ways. It's that way throughout all the rest of Canada. It's that way throughout the world. And eventually it gets trickled out of the news and you don't even see it anymore. But it's not normal.

I'm here to tell the people of the province today the way you are suffering, the way we are living, the way we are just surviving, it is not normal. It is completely not normal. And this is not a full knock against government; it is not at all. I promise you it's not, because I know you all over there are working so hard and you're just as passionate as I am, you truly are. But at the end of the day, we have to stop normalizing this process.

To say our health care is not in crisis, it's wrong to say that, because it is in crisis. It may not be in crisis sat here today with lots of energy, feeling good, not having to worry about a doctor's appointment coming up, or an oncologist appointment, or a cardiologist appointment. But we have to stop normalizing this. It's not normal for the people that truly are suffering, that are trying to depend on our health care system that has failed them.

Now, that's not a knock on the people that work in our health care. We all have families, friends and neighbours throughout our districts, my God – and I know we say it over and over again, but it can't be said enough. The nurses, the doctors, the support staff who are putting in those extra hours, that are working overtime 16 hours a day – the sacrifice is huge. They're spending time away from their families. Throughout COVID they were always on the front lines. My God, you can imagine their frustration. They are

getting frustrated. They do not have the supports they need to continue.

You're seeing more and more nurses go back to casual because they just don't want the pressures of coming in and working the overtime that they must. Do you know what? The doctors that are here, same thing. We have a doctor in our district, Lynette Powell who has spoken out, and God bless her, she has taken up the advocacy for most doctors, and we thank her very much for her advocacy. We know it's an uphill battle for a lot of health care workers, but we are there to help and do whatever we can.

Bay du Nord: Do you know what? The mining is great here in the province, but I think about Bay du Nord and I don't know if the question has been asked yet, and I definitely don't think an answer has been given. What is the future of oil and gas in Newfoundland and Labrador? Are we going to go after projects in 2025, 2028, 2030? Are there going to be new projects?

Our LNG, the world seems to be moving towards the LNG projects and it's great. So that would be my question. I really want to know: Was there any horse-trading done with Bay du Nord? Are we giving up more than we're getting? These questions need to be asked and they need to be answered. I would like an answer within this year – immediately.

If this is the death of oil and gas, than say it so we can pivot and move on from there. But it shouldn't be, because Newfoundland and Labrador oil and gas, some of the best oil and gas and oil and gas workers on this planet and we're going to need it for quite some time. I'm not ready to give up on it. Ottawa is not going to dictate whether we give up on oil and gas or not. We're going to take our future in our own hands and we'll decide when we give up on oil and gas, not anybody else, and that's exactly the attitude, I believe, we should have.

I'll touch on mental health for one moment. I try to talk about it every time I'm up here. Mental health throughout the province, of course, we see it. It's in a spiral like you wouldn't believe, but there are all kinds of little things. When you're in a province that is – like I say the cost of living is gone up. The people's pay hasn't gone anywhere, but the cost of living has

definitely gone up, that creates problems in the household with your husband, with your wife, with the kids. Now you're fighting and arguing more.

Addictions: I would like to see numbers on addictions; gambling addictions, marijuana addictions, alcohol addictions. Were have they gone in the past two years? Where are they going now? These are some of the fundamental questions that need to be asked so we can get a handle on them, because that's not going to help our mental health at all either.

Speaker, I'm going to take the last moment and talk about the Premier's office in Grand Falls-Windsor, which we all agree over on this side we don't want it; we don't need it. It's a waste of taxpayers' money at this time. But I want to make one thing very clear before I sit down. The person who they have hired on who we've referred to in the past, it is not his fault. It truly isn't. This is the Premier spending taxpayers' dollars for an office that is not warranted.

I know the person, we all know the person who has been hired on to do this. Right now, he is a public citizen. His wife, her name is Jennifer. She is a public citizen. She is a doctor in Grand Falls-Windsor who has given years of her life to the service of Grand Falls-Windsor as an OB/GYN. We are very lucky to have her. I've seen some things on social media calling out the family. I'm asking my constituents to stop that, please. This is a private family, they deserve better than that.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans for that, families shouldn't be brought into it. I agree and I support the Member on that call for all people to keep the families out of this political realm. That's a great gesture to do because families, they didn't get elected, it was us people here in the House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to speak on what they call the Resource Committee and I'm going to go through each department.

The first department here is Environment and Climate Change. That is for everybody in the province. This is a big issue now, climate change, for all of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. We see erosions on a lot of land. We see a lot of heavier tides and other things. There are a lot of issues in the District of Corner Brook and Humber - Bay of Islands that we deal with the Department of Environment and Climate Change on. I have to say the working relationship is good.

When you bring an issue to the minister, to the department, the working relationship is good. They do look into it, they do try to do what they can and help mitigate, if there's any problem there. I just want to recognize that to the minister and to the staff, sometimes you may not get the answer you want, but at least you can address the reason why things can't be done.

Environment and Climate Change is a big issue. We're all well aware of it all across Canada, all across the world. If we can do our own little bit here in Newfoundland and Labrador – and we see climate change, the effect it has on municipalities, on our roads. We see how climate change is affecting things. We see a lot of times when it happens in a town and we have to go to the department to look for guidance and the department is there to help. I know many times that I asked the minister to look into a few things and he did. And then he's concerned and going back and giving the answer. Sometimes we may disagree on the answer and he'll explain why, but the department is very open to helping when there are issues and I just want to recognize that to the department.

The next one, Mr. Speaker, in part of the Resource Committee – there's five departments under it – is Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture. I'm going to talk about the District of Humber - Bay of Islands in this speech, Mr. Speaker. You look at the Fisheries Department. Right now, there are three fish plants in Humber - Bay of Islands: Curling, Benoit's Cove and Cox's Cove. It's a huge employer. The harvesters and then the fish plant workers. I would say close to 800 to 1,000 people in the Humber - Bay of Islands

are in the fishery. This is where we need the support of the government.

We look at Corner Brook, which Curling is a part of Corner Brook, and we say well, that's not big in the fishery, but it is. It is.

I know Bill Barry and the Barry Group sometimes over the years, you have your discussions and you have your differences of opinion, but they create a lot of employment in Humber - Bay of Islands. There would be a lot of people moving away if the fisheries wasn't so prominent in Humber - Bay of Islands.

I know that the Barry Group itself does have a good relationship with the government, which is great, and I know Bill has a relationship with the minister and others, which is good.

When you drive by – just last Saturday I went down to a senior's dinner down in Lark Harbour and on the way down you pass the fish plant. It was on a Saturday, you pass the fish plant in Benoit's Cove and the parking lot is blocked with workers. They actually had to make more parking space for the workers, for the fisheries in Humber - Bay of Islands.

I've got to recognize the workers in Humber - Bay of Islands who work in the fisheries. The Barry Group owns three of the plants; they're creating a lot of employment. They're expanding, they're hoping for the redfish; hoping they're going to get a quota off the redfish when it's put out through the Qalipu. The Qalipu supports the fisheries in Humber - Bay of Islands because a lot of Qalipu members work at the plants, their members in Humber - Bay of Islands and their spouses.

So the fishery is very big in Humber - Bay of Islands and I encourage the minister, which he has, to help promote any way possible for the redfish for the Humber - Bay of Islands because it would be a big employer.

The biomass is getting larger; the fish is getting larger so the next year and a half or two years there's going to be a big supply of redfish. I know they're out looking for markets as we speak, looking for markets for the redfish all across the world. So I ask the minister to keep that with you so that you can keep an eye open if

you're speaking to your federal counterpart about the redfish quota for the Humber - Bay of Islands because it's fairly big.

The second part of that department is Forestry. Once again, forestry is big in the Humber - Bay of Islands. Kruger, very big, very big and it has been for a number of years going back in the early '20s, '30s. It's been very big. My father worked there, my family worked there; I worked there. There is not as much employment now through technology and other things, but it's a big industry. Not only for the Corner Brook area, but for a lot of people who are wood suppliers out in Central, that way, the Baie Verte area, the Central way. They bring a lot of wood to Corner Brook Pulp and Paper and there are a lot of spinoff jobs through the sawmill industry, because of Corner Brook Pulp and Paper.

Again, that's the minister's department and I'm sure that will be front and centre for him because Kruger is a big employer, not just in Corner Brook but through Central Newfoundland also.

Down on the Northern Peninsula, is there some way that we could find some way to use the resources on the Northern Peninsula? It's a lot of resources; I don't have the answers. I know there were a few pellet plants going to look at being set up. They weren't set up, but I was looking if there is any way for the Northern Peninsula – because they're great people. The industries are scarce down there. The fishery is big, but if there is any way for the forestry, not just for Corner Brook. I look at the Northern Peninsula as a great area that you can create a lot of employment.

There are a lot of other smaller forest industries in Humber - Bay of Islands, in around the area. It's a big industry. It's a big industry for the Humber - Bay of Islands, the forestry part. I know the minister is over there taking notes of this. I ask the minister that keep that in mind also, because it's very important for the whole Corner Brook and the Humber - Bay of Islands.

The third part that is part of the minister's part is agriculture. I know that they're trying to get some sustainability of food over the years. I know there was 127 acres of land put out for Crown land for the agriculture industry to try to promote agriculture the last number of years.

There were so many acres, 127 acres, I'm not sure of the exact amount, but it was a huge amount of land put out for agriculture and sustainability.

The people in the agriculture industry work hard. They work hard day and night. That's all they do. I know the minister is working with the association to try to help promote and have food security in the area.

So agriculture is big. Just that department alone affects the Humber - Bay of Islands so much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, with the Fishery, Forestry and Agriculture, it is a big employer. Those three combined is a big employer for the Corner Brook, Humber region and in the Bay of Islands itself.

I know, myself, just as a hobby with my wife, we do a small bit of farming. I see the hard work that goes into it. God bless the commercial people because they have to spend day and night and they have to depend so much on the weather. We should do whatever we can to support them. I know there's money there for equipment and machinery.

The other thing under this department is - I heard a Member speak about it earlier today - Crown lands. It is a tough file. It is easy for me to stand here and criticize and talk about what could be done or should be done. I had the opportunity; I was there. We were moving forward, some things changed and some things never. But I can tell you, it's a tangly file.

Crown Lands is a tangly file. There are some that can be resolved. I'll just give you one easy example where you need people to step in and say, yeah, we can get this. I'll just give an example.

There was a person who was applying to buy the piece of land that they were on. They went and got the quote; an appraiser came in and gave them the quote. So when the appraiser came in and gave them the quote, the quote was double the land next. So I went up and I said: Okay, we got to have a meeting on this. We had a meeting and they said: Okay, yeah, you're right. We made a mistake on that. Now appeal it. I said: Guys, you made the mistake, why don't you just

fix it? Oh no. This person had to go ahead and appeal it.

So when the person appealed it, they got the letter back, there was a \$1,000 fine next to it. I said: What's the fine for? They said: Well, he built a little shed next door to put his lawn mower in in the winter and his snow blower in the summertime. I said: Didn't you check out the land? They said: Yeah, he's on Crown land. I said: Let's look at this. His son owned the land next to him, so immediately saying that you are on Crown land, not checking it out to see if someone owned the land. It was his son's land but because a picture showed a shed next to a piece of Crown land, he got a \$1,000 fine.

They removed the fine, but this is the smaller things that I say to the minister that we discussed that sometimes people have to take their time and give people the benefit of the doubt.

I heard the minister earlier, and I heard the Member from Bonavista, talk about some issues about land that is caught up in the families. That is so true. That is so true; there is a history of that all over the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. There is a history of when you put the application in and then some distant family member says, no, that's my land. What does the department do? I was in that position.

There are things that can be done with Crown lands. I know the minister is working on it and we had discussions on it. They did have some issues and a lot of the smaller issues that we have on Crown lands can be resolved. Some of the more tangly issues when it comes to family, it takes a lot of time and energy, if it can be done. I can assure you of that. I encourage the minister to move forward on some of that and some of the initiatives that you're doing.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, before I go, there are some issues that I brought to the minister's attention, I may not have gotten the answer I wanted but they were looked at and I got to recognize that. You may not get the answers, some you do, some you don't because you may come back with information that you didn't know, but at least I got answers. Once you get answers, you can explain to people, that's what people are asking for. I just want to recognize that to the minister also.

The next one in the Resource Committee is the Immigration, Population Growth and Skills. That is a very important department in the government. If you look back, I remember Don Mills came in years back and they gave the government a little overview. The growth of the economy in PEI was higher than anybody. The population growth was higher than anybody. He equates it to – and he did – if the population growth increases, your economy will increase.

That's why that department is so important; it's an important department. If we can get people to move to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, find some way to keep them in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador; the evaluation that was done over the years is that once your population increases, your economy will increase also.

That is very important to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is a very important department, it is. It takes time to make a plan. You can't expect everybody to come in – but once they come here, we need to find some way to keep people in Newfoundland and Labrador. We need the employment. We need the skills. We need the training. This is where this department is hand in glove for people coming in.

I also want to recognize the people who are coming in from Ukraine tonight. I have to recognize that because that is a tough environment to be in. I just think about us here. I always put the example to try to make it – here we are having an argument sometimes, we get mad at each other. Just imagine, we're in this Assembly here today and we don't know if there is going to be a guided missile come through. Just think about how they live. Just think about if we all lived in the basement here wondering if there is a guided missile coming through.

I have to applaud everybody who's involved with helping these people to come over, to give them some sense of normality; let them see the spirit of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I want to also recognize, I say to the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port, there's a group out in Stephenville who took it upon – the Stephenville - Port au Port area and the Bay St. George area – themselves to start raising some

funds just in case that people that come to Stephenville – the largest Ukrainian population is in Stephenville, that area. They had connections. They have people who can speak the Ukrainian language, and they raised over – and they're still going – \$32,000 to help any extra when people come from Ukraine.

The Member for Stephenville- Port au Port and the Member for St. George's - Humber, he was talking to the people also. This is non-political. This is a bunch got together, because some of the people that employed one of the ladies who was from Ukraine. They said: What can we do? They started out, the Town of Stephenville, Tom Rose and the councillors, congratulations, the first fundraiser that they had, they matched it, the Town of Stephenville.

It's a whole community, the whole region out in Stephenville, Bay St. George area, Port au Port area all came together and it's \$32,000 and rising.

Mr. Speaker, here's the good news, there's a guy driving out today or tomorrow, he's taking a mother and two kids to Stephenville. The person that started this, they started it for this person, her mother got out of Ukraine and is going to Stephenville to live with her daughter; living with her daughter in Stephenville.

One of the other people from Stephenville whose mother was trying to get out, got shot at. They had a motorcade, they got shot at and they had to turn around. Couldn't get her out.

To the committee in Stephenville that raised that money, let me tell you, great job. Great job taking it upon yourself.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

E. JOYCE: Roland and the crew, a bunch of ragtags – Roland called them a bunch of ragtags – got together and raised a few dollars, the next thing you know it exploded and everybody jumped on board. The Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology, I hate to say it, I hate to point you out, but he gave a donation also to help out the people in Ukraine. He jumped out.

Now, I tell you, the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port was heavily involved with it also.

So everybody that reached out on this project, helped out. There are people going to Stephenville. Thanks everybody, Roland and the committee, you did a great job.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to speak about Industry, Energy and Technology next. We all know about the bigger projects that are happening in the province in the oil and gas industry. But I have to reach out to the minister.

There's Copper Mine Brook, they're doing some exploration down in Copper Mine Brook and there was a bit of an issue with the permits. I went to the minister and I said, look, they're bringing in \$8 million or \$10 million for the next six or seven months to continue on. The minister got involved with it and so did the minister responsible for Crown Lands got involved to help out and the project is going to continue. They have one find, I think, and they're waiting, they're still doing it.

So they're going to be spending \$6 million to \$10 million looking for minerals in Copper Mine Brook, creating local jobs, staying right in the Lark Harbour area; local people, great for the economy, great for employment. If they happen to make another find or if they already have one large enough, they'll create a commercial operation.

So I have to recognize the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology and the minister responsible for Crown Lands who jumped in to ensure that this is moving ahead for Humber - Bay of Islands.

Mr. Speaker, the last one I'm going to speak about in this Resource Committee is Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation. Tourism is a big sector for all of us and we see Come Home Year. I hope it's going to be a success in the Come Home Year. A lot of people are celebrating. I don't know how many people are going to be coming home, but we have to recognize that also, the tourism industry in Newfoundland and Labrador.

There is one thing I would say to the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation is that we hear so much here, and we hear from the report from Dr. Parfrey and Sister Elizabeth Davis, that we have to start changing people's actions. So I

say to the Minister of Recreation if there's some way to start putting money into recreation where we can get more people more active. It's tough to do, because we have to change the lifestyle, have to change your mindset, we have to ensure kids can get to events and things. Summertime is pretty good. Wintertime is when there's a problem for that. So recreation in this department is very important to change.

Tourism, I hope we have a great year. I know a lot of tourism operators out on the West Coast; they're looking for a great year. We need a great year.

I see my time is up, Mr. Speaker. I thank you for your attention.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that this House do now recess until 6 p.m.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

This House do stand adjourned until 6 p.m.