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Speaker: Honourable Ross Wiseman, MHA

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

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

MR. KENNEDY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I withdraw the comment that was complained of yesterday.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Before we start today, I want to acknowledge a special guest we have in our gallery this afternoon. Today I want to welcome Mr. Gerald Healey. Mr. Healey was acknowledged as the outstanding Deputy Governor for District 7 Atlantic Canada and was awarded the Kin District 7 Atlantic Canada Award for Outstanding Zone Leadership.

He is accompanied today by his wife Sylvia; his children Geraldine, Rodney, Trevor, Glenn; together with his grandchildren Brandon and Grace; as well as members of the Kin Club of Paradise including their President, Jim Lewis.

Welcome to our gallery, and congratulations.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today we have members' statements from the Member for the District of Lake Melville; the Member for the District of Lewisporte; the Member for the District of Humber Valley; the Member for the District of St. Barbe; the Member for the District of Conception Bay East – Bell Island; and the Member for the District of Terra Nova.

The hon. the Member for the District of Lake Melville.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to recognize the Northern Huskies AAA Midget hockey team, who made Labrador hockey history this past February by being the first team to win the provincial AAA tournament, winning the right to represent the Province at this year's Atlantics.

During the provincial championships, they went undefeated beating strong teams from Tri-Pen in St. John's to a decisive win in the championship.

The team travelled in March to Atlantics and fought hard throughout the tournament. Facing stiff competition, the tournament was decided by the last game of the round robin. The Huskies lost to PEI, the eventual tournament winners, by just one goal, relegating them to a bronze medal game which they won in overtime.

I would like to specifically recognize Andrew Jackman, the second leading scorer during the provincial tournament; Brad Robinson, who was third in scoring at the Atlantic championships; as well as Jeremy Billard and Nathan Kennedy, recognized during the tournament as players of the game during the Atlantic Championships, who were all great representatives of Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House to join me in recognizing the Northern Huskies, our Province's AAA midget representatives.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Lewisporte.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. VERGE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to recognize the 617 Dambusters Air Cadet Biathlon team of the Lewisporte area who represented their region in a national competition during the first week of March. The biathlon is a sport that combines the rigors of cross-country skiing with the ability to shoot at targets placed throughout the course.

The road to the nationals began with a zone competition in November where the team finished second but were given the wild card position to the provincials. In late January, the team went to Corner Brook for the provincial competition and qualified for the nationals that were held in Quebec.

The team is coached by Captain Ambrose Patterson, who has given his time and expertise to biathlons since 1997. Members of the team include Warrant Officer 2, Natasha Baker from Little Burnt Bay, who has competed at the national level for three years; Flight Corporal Jennifer Wells of Lewisporte, who made her second trip to the nationals; and also first-year cadet Chelsey Pelley of Lewisporte, who made her first appearance at this level.

Honourable members, please join with me in congratulating Captain Patterson, Natasha, Jennifer, and Chelsey on a job well done.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for District of Humber Valley.

MR. BALL: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate Deer Lake Dolphins Swim Team member Ryan George, who has recently been named to the swimming team that will be representing our Province at the 2013 Canada Summer Games that will be held in Sherbrooke, Quebec this summer.

Ryan, who is the son of Derek and Crystal George, is a very dedicated and a motivated swimmer who has impressed many with his skill set and speed. Ryan has put a tremendous amount of training and preparing into these games. He is one of only two swimmers from the Western Region of our Province to earn a spot on the twenty-four member swim team that is competing in the 2013 games.

Mr. Speaker, representing our Province at the Canada Summer Games is an opportunity of a

lifetime for all young athletes. This will create memories that will last forever.

I ask all members of this House to join me in extending congratulations and good luck to Ryan George and all the Summer Games team as they compete in Sherbrooke this August.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for the District of St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to recognize the tremendous effort of the War Memorial Committee and to congratulate their success in seeing the Regional War Memorial completed in the St. Barbe district. Sixty names are inscribed on the monument.

Regrettably, we can expect to be plagued by war into the future. Fortunately, we can expect other gallant men and women to serve in order that we may live freely and in peace. Their names will also be added to this War Memorial.

Some four years ago, a committee with members Adrian Payne, Scott Hutchings as co-chairs, Harold Payne, Glenda Bavis, Nora Shears, and Daphne O'Leary decided they wanted to erect a Regional War Memorial to commemorate the brave people in the region from Sally's Cove to Daniel's Harbour who served in the First and Second World Wars, as well as future veterans.

They have been continually fundraising, and fundraising is ongoing for landscaping and maintenance of the site. Their efforts plus government support has resulted in this War Memorial that serves as a lasting reminder of the sacrifices of our veterans, and the men and women who continue to serve our country.

I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating the War Memorial Committee.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand in this House to acknowledge an award winning organization in my district. I refer to the Kin Club of Paradise. This club was established in 2009 through an amalgamation of the existing Kinsmen and Kinetite members in Paradise.

Through the dedicated commitment of its members, the club has donated tens of thousands of dollars to support such groups and programs as Heart & Stroke Foundation, multiple sclerosis, cystic fibrosis, numerous scholarships and charities, while sponsoring the Viking 905 Cadet Corp.

All members take a leadership role with the organization, however, I want to recognize one member who has been acknowledged for his outstanding contribution to this organization and is designated as a lifetime member. Mr. Gerry Healey himself has been a member of the Kinsmen organization for the past thirty-seven years and has served in many positions.

This past year Gerry was acknowledged as the outstanding Deputy Governor for District 7, Atlantic Canada, and he was award the Kin District 7 Atlantic Canada Award for Outstanding Zone Leadership. Mr. Healey and all members of the Kin Club of Paradise are to be commended for their commitment to improving the resident's lives.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S. COLLINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to recognize the efforts of a school from my district. Smallwood Academy in Gambo recently held their first ever Cancer Awareness Fair in Education, or CAFE, which took place on April 12.

Each grade level from K-12 participated by performing educational pieces as well as preparing projects that were displayed around the gymnasium. This event was superbly organized, having participation from health professionals, school district, community leaders, and I was happy to speak on behalf of government – in particular the Minister of Education. While there were a number of speakers, undoubtedly the most powerful words spoken were from three cancer survivors. Their message to students was simple, Mr. Speaker. Cancer can be beaten, and it is through such educational activities that we become more aware and more mindful of ways to live healthy and decrease the chance of ever getting cancer.

I would like to recognize the entire staff and student body of Smallwood Academy for organizing and hosting such a wonderful event, but in particular I would like to single out Ms Jo-Ann Broders who championed this from the very beginning and quarterbacked its success.

I ask all hon. members to join me in commending their hard work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Ministerial Statements.

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'BRIEN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in this hon. House to highlight key investments in Budget 2013 to support the people and communities of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Budget 2013 demonstrates the continued commitment of the provincial government to assist towns and communities as they grow and thrive. We have listened to the needs of large and small municipalities around the Province, and we have met with Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador to determine the best path forward for communities in this Province.

Mr. Speaker, through Budget 2013 we have made a commitment to begin discussions with Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador on a review of the provincial-municipal fiscal framework to ensure that it is sustainable and fair for all municipalities in the Province. These discussions will begin this month.

In addition, we will maintain Municipal Operating Grants (MOGs) at existing funding levels for communities under 11,000 residents for 2013 and we have budgeted \$22 million to fund a new MOG formula in 2014, which is a 38 per cent increase to smaller municipalities. It will also see that most municipalities will see an increase in their funding, and none will see a decrease.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of the importance placed on infrastructure funding for our large municipalities, this Budget includes \$25 million to create a new capital works program for the seven municipalities in the Province with populations greater than 11,000. These communities are St. John's, Conception Bay South, Mount Pearl, Paradise, Corner Brook, Gander, and Grand Falls-Windsor.

On top of these new programs, we will also continue funding for the second year of a \$130 million capital works program. This investment provides funding for important infrastructure projects right across the Province, especially in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, the provincial government is answering the call of towns and communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. We have spoken with mayors from municipalities across the Province and they have responded positively to the initiatives in Budget 2013. We are now

delivering a full suite of programs which will meet and exceed these needs, and will allow us to sit down for a meaningful and complete review of the provincial-municipal fiscal framework.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for the advance copy. I can see that the government is in a bit of a bind trying to find some good news out of the Budget because this is the fifth time this minister announced the same press release – the fifth time.

Mr. Speaker, out of this press release, I will tell you what has not changed. There was a commitment started in 2008 for the fiscal arrangements so we are supposed to jump with joy because now they are going to commit to starting negotiations that they committed back in 2008. We are also supposed to be happy because there are 160 municipalities without proper drinking water and have boil orders. This is the kind of stuff we have to work on and say there might be good news.

If the good news is about the \$25 million to the seven municipalities, why are they all banding together to find some way to fight it? What happens when this \$25 million is gone? The City of Corner Brook will be out \$650,000 from here to eternity, but they are supposed to be happy because they may get a few dollars this year. Ten years down the road, they are going to be out millions and millions.

Mr. Speaker, if you are going to make an announcement and try to make it good, have something concrete, something that you know is going to be done –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. JOYCE: – and not something that was committed in 2008 that you are doing now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I counted four releases on the same thing. It is almost up there with the same announcements that we see on the CBS Bypass, the numbers are that much.

I would like to thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. I would like to say while they are giving in one hand, Mr. Speaker, they are also taking from the other in various other departments.

One need only look at the Newfoundland Liquor Corporation that is projected to make another \$15 million in the next year. What did they do? They took away grants from cities like Corner Brook and from the City of St. John's. The City of St. John's lost in this Budget. Not only did they gain with the minister's program here, but my city lost \$100,000 in extra funding. That carries on with the same policy of this government –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MURPHY: – not paying taxes on municipal infrastructure on government buildings that are contained within the city.

I will leave it at that, Mr. Speaker, but it is certainly something for this government to think about. They should pay their taxes.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House to acknowledge April 28, this Sunday, as Canada's National Day of Mourning. This solemn occasion commemorates workers who have been killed, injured or who have suffered illness due to workplace-related hazards and incidents.

Mr. Speaker, all across Canada, families, friends and co-workers of those seriously affected or lost in a work-related incident will be coming together in support of those still with us, and to remember those who sadly are not.

In 2012, six workers lost their lives in our Province in workplace incidents, and twenty succumbed to occupational disease. Although any workplace death or injury is too many, we are seeing encouraging improvements.

Just last week, the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission reported the number of workplace injuries resulting in lost-time compensation claims has declined to the lowest level ever recorded in our Province. Additionally, the total number of lost-time workplace injuries in 2012 was 3,742, the lowest number reported in fifty years.

Mr. Speaker, we also recognize the impact occupational disease has on the lives of workers. An example of this is the completion of the registry of information about former employees and contractual workers of the Baie Verte asbestos mine. This registry, the first of its kind in Canada, will be a valuable tool to assist in the adjudication of asbestos-related claims arising from the Baie Verte mines.

The Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission works closely with the Occupational Health and Safety Branch of Service NL to enhance safety in all types of workplaces throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Last year, 1,081 potential workplace injuries and deaths were prevented through

Occupational Health and Safety enforcement intervention. Furthermore, over 15,300 unsafe work practices were rectified and corrected. By working together, employees, employers, and government can build an even stronger safety culture that will reduce workplace injuries and deaths.

Mr. Speaker, I will be participating in a wreath-laying ceremony this Sunday to remember those who have been killed while working. On the National Day of Mourning, our thoughts will be with those who have been affected by workplace injury and death. This day is an important reminder for all of us to be ever vigilant so we can all go home safe at the end of the work day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed important that we take the time to commemorate workers who have been killed, injured or suffered illness due to their work. Any injury, as the minister said, at a workplace is too many, and we must continue to make our workplaces safe.

Mr. Speaker, while I am encouraged to hear from the minister that lost-time compensation claims in our Province are at their lowest level, 2012 saw an increase in lost-time incident rates for agriculture and fish harvesting.

We should be seeing decreasing in lost-time injuries in all of our industries, so I call on the minister not to be complacent because of the overall numbers from 2012 and to continue his department's important work to make all our workplaces safe.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, will be present at the ceremony on Sunday representing the Official Opposition and the Liberal Party. On the National Day of Mourning, I encourage all

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to mark the occasion and keep their thoughts with those who have been affected by workplace injury and death.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. First of all, of course, I would like to pass on my condolences to the families of the six workers who died on the job this year and the twenty who were lost due to occupational diseases.

I am glad to see that our numbers are improving, but we have a lot more to do to work towards our safety work culture. It is not enough to speak about the issue; I do urge government to deal with the issues in a more timely fashion. For example, we waited two years on the announcement on the dust study for miners in Labrador West. We finally have it, and I am glad of that. Hopefully, we may see lives saved because of it.

The registry for the Baie Verte miners was also too long in coming, and we are still waiting for an offshore safety board that Commissioner Robert Wells recommended in the Offshore Helicopter Safety Inquiry.

We cannot sit on our laurels. While we will all be at the memorial on Sunday, Mr. Speaker, that is not enough. We require more action.

Thank you so much.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This government recently introduced a needs-based formula for education that would ensure quality education for all students, no matter where the student lived or how many students attended the school. This government has now flip-flopped and removed 40 per cent of that funding to these students.

I ask the Premier: Why are you deliberately denying students access to quality programs and education?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to read a little response from May 6, 1999 from the Minister of Education for the Liberal Party.

“For anyone to suggest, with that kind of a decline in student enrolment, and that kind of reduction in the number of schools, that we should not look at a reduction in the number of teachers, is being totally unrealistic and irresponsible.”

Mr. Speaker, in 2008 we introduced a needs-based teacher allocation. Because of that needs-based allocation, we presently have 265 more teachers in the system than would have been prior to that. Mr. Speaker, our investment in education is strong, continues to be strong, and we will see it into the future.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It will be interesting to hear the minister if he went back and just dug into the archives of his own government’s press releases in 2008 about this very program. Why didn’t he mention the 160 teachers who are coming out as a result of Budget 2013?

Mr. Speaker, the minister has said publicly that he is hoping to have all the board transition completed by the end of August. The key word here is hope. There is no certainty there. The transition is going to be a difficult process and will take time to complete.

I ask the Premier: Why are you willing to put the quality of education for our children at risk when you cannot ensure that this will be done by September?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, we have decided to invest where it is most important, that being in students and teachers.

Mr. Speaker, the member got up yesterday and made a comment about some of the regional boards in Burin and other places around the Province, the satellite offices that are not going to be in service. Mr. Speaker, that is totally not true. What we are doing is where the boards have identified vacant spaces; we are going to put the staff in those vacant spaces. Are they suggesting that we have vacant spaces and we continue to pour out rent? Mr. Speaker, that is not what we are about.

In the restructuring of these boards, it is the financial side of it that is being collapsed. Mr. Speaker, that strong regional presence will still be there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, the minister just needs to go around and do the inventory on empty offices because of Budget 2013. There are lots of them, so he need not worry about paying rent in offices.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard from boards and trustees from all over this Province that this has been an ill thought-out plan. The boards have spoken out publicly. Trustees have resigned, with the latest one as early as today. The President of the Teachers' Association has even written the Premier, pleading that these cuts would be reversed.

I ask the Premier: Is this enough? Is this a compelling argument for you to review those cuts, just like you did in Justice?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have to say one thing. Yesterday one of the members over there referred to the volunteer trustees who have come forward as hacks – referred to them as hacks. This is Volunteer Week. These are trustees who serve on a board for the best interests of students in this Province.

Mr. Speaker, we are looking at combining the corporate side. Where is our investment and our support? With teachers and students.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Maybe the minister will speak to those 160 teachers who are coming out of the system and then let them decide if you are minding what is happening in the education system.

Mr. Speaker, in the Estimates for Transportation and Works the minister confirmed the elimination of one complete water bomber crew: a pilot, a co-pilot, and a mechanic. This comes at a time when the possibility of fires is much greater because of rising temperatures and drier weather.

I ask the Premier: What areas of our Province do you see downgraded with the reduction in water bomber service?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to say that this government has invested heavily in firefighting services. In recent years, we have invested \$120 million to purchase four new state-of-the-art water bombers for this Province; CL-415 is state of the art and the best available (inaudible) –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DAVIS: The older water bombers that we have, CL-215s, are forty years old. They are aging. They work on an older type of fuel called avgas. We will have one of those posted in Gander this year and one of them in Wabush. In Wabush, we actually have to send the fuel in to supply for that aircraft because it is becoming more difficult as time goes on to find locations where avgas is available. We are also rightsizing our crews to go along with that, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: There we go, rightsizing again, Mr. Speaker. The minister did not answer which areas of the Province would see a downgrade in service.

Mr. Speaker, the forest is one of our greatest natural resources and it can be one of our greatest enemies, as we all know. We learned this last year with the evacuation of communities because of fires.

I ask the Premier: Why are you putting the lives of people at risk by downgrading firefighting

services? Is people's safety a compelling enough argument?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this year we will have our water bombers, our new CL-415s located. We will have one located in St. John's, we will have one located in Gander, we will have one located in Deer Lake, and we will have one located in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. We will have a CL-215, which we have two older CL-215s. One of those will be in Wabush, and the spare backup CL-215 will be located in Gander. The same as we had last year, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, today the Innu of Sheshatshiu have shut down and boarded up the CYFS office in their community. This comes after allegations of child removal by CYFS staff.

I ask the minister: Can you confirm what is actually happening today in Sheshatshiu?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services is concerned and has a mandate. It is the priority of the department to ensure the safety of children in Newfoundland and Labrador. When children are in need of protective intervention services, the social workers of CYFS work with the family.

Mr. Speaker, in working with the family, sometimes there are situations where children

have to be removed from the family home. It always remains the priority of the department to continue to work with the family to try to reintegrate the child back into the family.

Mr. Speaker, there are occasions, unfortunately, when children are unable to be returned to their home. It is certainly the priority of this department to work with families and to protect the children.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, these are very serious allegations by the Innu who have been seeking help for a long time. As of now, CYFS staff is out of their offices in Sheshatshiu with nowhere to perform their duties.

I ask the minister: What is your department prepared to do to deal with this very serious situation and these very serious allegations out of Sheshatshiu and Natuashish?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell the hon. member that the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services are more than willing to work with the Innu communities. We want to ensure the safety of the children in all the communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, and we have absolutely no problem working with the Innu communities. As a matter of fact, last week or the week before, a member of the executive visited the leadership in Natuashish to talk to the leadership. We had our zone manager in the area. We also have social workers on the ground.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to do what we need to do to ensure the safety of the children,

and we will do it in complete co-operation with the leadership of the Innu communities.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, in 2004 this government paid \$3.5 million for a groundfish quota, which they then assigned to Icewater in Arnold's Cove. We learned in December that 2 million pounds of that yellowtail is not being caught.

I ask the minister: How long are you going to let our yellowtail sit in the water when processors and harvesters would like to have a chance to catch it?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is, I believe, a pilot project that is going underway, because some folks are saying that they can harvest and make profit off this. Mr. Speaker, we are entering into a process whereby that is going to be allowed as a pilot fishery to see if indeed it can be successful.

Mr. Speaker, again, this is another example of government working with industry for the betterment of the harvesters in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, in Estimates this morning we learned that government just made a \$2 million equity investment. They bought shares in financially strapped Icewater so that they could fix up a used fishing vessel.

Mr. Speaker: Would it not make more sense if this government properly invested in the fishery

into the fisheries loans board so all these transactions could be open and fair to all harvesters?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Innovation, Business and Rural Development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we need to make no apology for investing in rural Newfoundland and Labrador in traditional industry.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HUTCHINGS: When you hear it from the other side, we are not investing in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. What we have here is a company that purchased a vessel about a year and a half ago. Due to the original cost, it escalated because of 'Canadianization' on that vessel. We recognize the importance of the industry. They came to us for assistance. We have no intention – we were not interested in shutting it down, like the hon. member, I guess, is suggesting, not at all.

This company was going through a difficult time. We went through the normal process of evaluation, business analysis, looked at it and certainly it was a sound investment, we believe, in the industry, in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. We will not back away from that, not like the hon. member. We believe in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. Where we can invest, we will invest, and we make no apologies for that, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, the Faculty of the College of the North Atlantic have made a compelling argument for keeping the college's ABE program. The minister states the reason for cutting the program is the cost of delivery and the low graduation rate.

I ask the minister: Why do you think the cost is higher and graduation rate lower at the college's ABE program?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have received a copy of the letter from the Faculty of CNA and their most compelling statement in the letter is their last: With a looming skilled worker shortage and the need for an educated workforce at an all-time high, it is vital that your government make investment in our public college system a priority.

Mr. Speaker, we have done that since we received the White Paper on Education. We are going to continue to do that, Mr. Speaker, and we are going to answer the letter and the points in the letter put to us by the Faculty of CNA.

Mr. Speaker, we are not going to pay more for less. Our motto is to pay less for more for a better result. Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue to do that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, one of the things referenced in the letter is government's sound bytes in justifying this, and certainly we just heard more of them.

Speaking of the White Paper, income support clients must go through ABE at the college. This government's White Paper on Education cited income support clients as having fewer education credentials to begin with and overall a weaker skill set on a number of dimensions.

I ask the Premier: Don't you think the increased barriers faced by income support clients are a

considerable factor in the increased cost and lower graduation rate?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when we came to government in 2003, I was honoured to receive an appointment to the lead business department of government, Minister of Innovation, now Innovation, Business and Rural Development.

I was also appointed, as my participation in that department, to the Poverty Reduction Strategy, Mr. Speaker, and because I had experience in community, had come from that background, had experience as a social worker, as did many of my colleagues, and brought varied experiences from a number of my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, we were able to recognize what the challenges were before people who were trying to reattach to the workforce, and we dealt with it not only in the White Paper but in the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

MR. A. PARSONS: I guess the Premier, Mr. Speaker, is referencing the Poverty Reduction program that was recently gutted and had the director position not filled and competitions not filled.

The John Noseworthy report states contradicting numbers on ABE seats at the College. In a couple of instances, he states that the department receives 1,250 seats for \$6 million and that 349 of those must be used by Income Support clients. Elsewhere he states that the department receives 600 seats and that all 600 must be filled by Income Support clients.

So I ask the minister: Can you clarify how many seats have the department reserved for ABE and

how many are reserved for Income Support clients?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, I would like to first comment on the hon. member's statements regarding the Poverty Reduction Strategy. This Province, this government, has invested approximately \$150 million annually into the Poverty Reduction Strategy. The hon. member makes it sound as if a director position is the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Mr. Speaker, the Poverty Reduction Strategy is programs and services that are offered across various departments of government that help people who are most vulnerable or who are in need of services. That has been a commitment of this government. We wanted a ten-year period to transform the Province from the Province with the highest rate of poverty to the lowest rate of poverty. Mr. Speaker, the people who receive the services under the Poverty Reduction Strategy understand what we are trying to accomplish.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

MR. A. PARSONS: Now that the minister has answered my statement, I will ask my question again: Can you clarify how many seats the department reserved for ABE and how many are reserved for Income Support clients?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, what I would like to clarify is that as we transform the way that we deliver ABE in Newfoundland and Labrador, we also the program being inclusive. So we do not have to segregate people in this Province and say because you receive Income Support you have to go to this classroom. If you are more independent and able to fall under other government programs, you go to this classroom.

Mr. Speaker, as we move forward, we want to ensure that ABE is available to students who need it. It will be unnecessary to segregate people because they receive Income Support.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, the John Noseworthy report points out there is a financial incentive for public and private colleges to maximize the duration of ABE training. An argument could be made that an incentive exists to push people through the system, as the minister has emphasized the importance of the delivery being cheap and quick.

I ask the minister: What happens to a society's education system when cheap and quick is the priority?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, the ABE program as it is delivered today and will be delivered in the future is a prescribed curriculum. The curriculum has been developed. The students will be tested on the curriculum. The student-to-teacher ratio has been established and the qualifications of the teacher or the instructor have also been determined, Mr. Speaker.

The same program delivered by qualified people in a class ratio that has already been established will be delivered into the future, Mr. Speaker. Students who finish the ABE program will

receive their diplomas and will be able to move on based on the curriculum, not on the individual colleges.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Third Party.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

This year's Budget will raise another \$8 million from the tobacco tax. At the same time, the government has ignored the call from key health-related organizations to make smoking cessation medicines and nicotine replacement therapies available, something which is done in every other province except one.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: Why she will not invest in smoking cessation programs to help people quit smoking?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENNEDY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

One of the issues that we had to look at in this year's Budget was whether or not we would raise personal income taxes. I went through last week the difficulty with that in terms of the number of people who pay the taxes in this Province. We also then, Mr. Speaker, looked at whether or not we would raise the HST. Having decided that consumption tax would affect everyone, we decided not to go there.

The tax on cigarettes, what we did is we brought it up to a level that is consistent with what is taking place in the rest of the country, Mr. Speaker. There is nothing unusual about it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Third Party.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

No, there is nothing unusual about raising the tobacco tax, and that is not my point. What is unusual is that this government is not doing what other provinces are doing, and is using some of that tax to put in place the cessation therapies and medicines. This government has been asked by the Newfoundland and Labrador Lung Association to take \$500,000 of the new \$8 million and invest it in the smoking cessation products.

Now I ask the minister to be clear: Why won't the minister consider doing this option which has been asked for and which other provinces are doing?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENNEDY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

One of the areas that we have invested most heavily in as a government is the health care system. In the year 2000, Mr. Speaker, there was a \$1.2 billion investment in health care. Today, we invest \$2.9 billion or, Mr. Speaker, 142 per cent increase over that period of time; 38.7 per cent of our provincial Budget goes to health care at present.

To answer the question, quite simply, we had to choose between putting money into the cancer drugs – which we did, Mr. Speaker, and you will see there are new cancer therapies that have been provided for – or putting it into smoking cessation. We chose cancer drugs, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: I find that hilarious, Mr. Speaker, comparing the cost of cancer drugs with smoking, which is a cause of cancer.

I ask the Premier then: Has she asked her ministers to do an analysis of how much money would be saved in future health care by spending \$500,000 now to take care of getting rid of smoking?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KENNEDY: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that have to take place within our health care system and in society, in general, is the preventive aspect of health. We all have to be responsible, Mr. Speaker, for our own health.

The issue being forward by the member opposite could apply to any aspect of the health care system. What we have to do as a government is make choices. There are limited monies to go around. We have an aging population, Mr. Speaker, and the issues we face are the same as faced in the rest of this country.

Let me give you an example. In our Province, we have fifteen hospitals, twenty-two community health centres, 114 community clinics, and twenty long-term care facilities in a Province with 500,000 people. Hamilton, a city with the same population, has three hospitals.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Third Party.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We will never get through to them on the importance of preventative health measures.

Mr. Speaker, action speaks louder than words and show priorities. In the 2013 Estimates, government slashed the Mother Baby Nutrition Supplement by \$100,000, a full quarter of last year's allotment. This same Budget saw

government giving \$170,000 to Vale, the richest nickel mining company in the world, for two hydrometric stations for the Voisey's Bay Project.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: How can she defend giving grants to the rich multi-national mining companies ahead of nutrition of infants in this Province?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, I would like to clarify that there has been no reduction in the amount of funds received by mothers in the Mother Baby Nutrition Supplement. Any reductions in the Budget to that program would be related to the number of people who draw down on that program. Based on the needs, the number of people who draw down on it continue to have access of that program. If the numbers decrease, the Budget decreases because of that, not because the benefits to the parents or to the mothers have been reduced.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I hope if the numbers go up this year over and above what they are estimating that the money will be there to take care of the infants in this Province.

Mr. Speaker, last week when the Premier responded to my questions about why she is pitting the vulnerable against the ill, she made no reference to the point of my question.

I ask the Premier: If she is concerned about the high cost of cancer drugs, why did she lay off four Wellness Division consultants in the

Department of Health. Government seems to be cutting off its nose to spite its face.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KENNEDY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What took place in the Health department, Mr. Speaker, was a rigorous analysis of the delivery of services. I can assure you that no one worked harder during this Budget process than the Minister of Health and Community Services and her officials. They looked at how the department was structured. They reorganized the department and found efficiencies and effectiveness within the department.

For the member opposite to criticize the fact that we are putting money into cancer drugs, Mr. Speaker, is quite frankly, shameful.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier said she avidly works against violence against women and children, yet she shut down the Family Violence Intervention Court without warning, leaving women victims vulnerable and panicked about what to do next. The Family Violence Intervention Court is one of the most effective programs that keep women and children victims of domestic violence safe. It is supported by judges, prosecutors, defence attorneys, social workers, Child Youth, and Family Services victims and offenders. Mr. Speaker, what can be a more compelling argument than the safety and lives of women and children.

I ask the Premier: Will she reinstate the Family Violence Intervention Court?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind everybody that it is important to understand the dynamics of violence in this Province and around the world. There has been, for me personally, a devastating ignorance of the impacts of violence and what violence looks like in the work of this government and the work of this House of Assembly during the last number of weeks.

Mr. Speaker, my record and the record of this government speaks for itself. Anti-violence has been something –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: - that I personally have been engaged in, Mr. Speaker, all of my adult life, and I can point to shelters, I can point to programs, I can point to funding of transition houses. I can point to gender and diversity agreements, Mr. Speaker, because at the heart of violence is a lack of access to economic ways of supporting yourself and your family, Mr. Speaker. We are proud of the work that we have done as a government with regard to this issue.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, family violence experts have pointed to the Family Violence Intervention Court as best practices and ours has been shut down unceremoniously. Our correctional facilities are full, often overcrowded. Incarceration is very expensive. Avoidable incarceration is a waste of taxpayers' money.

Mr. Speaker, now that the minister has abruptly cancelled the Electronic Monitoring Program with no fallback plan, what are the minister's

plans to house additional inmates who may have otherwise gotten conditional sentences?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes the vulnerability of victims of violence. It is a terrible reality in this Province when more women, for example, are murdered or killed than soldiers in a war zone. We have worked diligently to make people aware, and I am afraid we have significant work yet to do, Mr. Speaker, in our anti-violence initiatives. Not only in terms of the committee's work that we support, what we do for families, what we do for employment, and what we do in our anti-poverty campaign. Mr. Speaker, the work goes on and on. Our record is second to none.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for St. John's North.

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, a number of Adult Basic Education instructors at the College of the North Atlantic have been told by supervisors that they are better off not speaking out about the privatization of ABE.

Can the minister tell us if this is based on a directive from her office? If not, why are we hearing from people across the Province who are afraid to speak out about your Budget cuts?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, it is not a directive from my office.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for St. John's North.

MR. KIRBY: ABE instructors are asking if government's program completion figures show that many ABE students at the College of the North Atlantic transfer their credits back to high school in order to receive a high school diploma instead of an ABE diploma from CNA.

Will the minister finally clear the air and release the full details of the ABE enrolment and graduation analysis that was carried out to justify government's decision to privatize the program?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, as I have said, the ABE program will continue to be offered in Newfoundland and Labrador in September. It will just be offered in venues other than the College of the North Atlantic. It may be offered by private institutions or by community groups, Mr. Speaker.

What I can say is today, based on the enrolment figures in the ABE program in this Province, we have approximately 2,000 students enrolled in ABE. Sixty per cent today have chosen not to attend the College of the North Atlantic. Forty per cent, approximately 800 or maybe lower, are students at the College of the North Atlantic.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The member has time for a very quick question without preamble.

MR. KIRBY: Is the Premier unaware that students are forced to borrow thousands of dollars more to attend private training institutions instead of attending College of the North Atlantic? Is she aware of that?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, for a quick response.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, students who fall under the mandate of Advanced Education and Skills, whether they are under Income Support or the LMDA programming, receive funding to attend ABE. Mr. Speaker, we feel that as we move forward there are cost-saving measures we can incorporate into this department, yet be able to offer that program to the people of the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

I have a petition to the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS home care allows the elderly and people with disabilities to remain within the comfort and security of their own homes, home care also allows people to be discharged from hospital earlier; and

WHEREAS many families find it very difficult to recruit and retain home care workers for their loved ones; and

WHEREAS the PC Blue Book 2011 as well as the 2012 Speech from the Throne committed that government would develop a new model of home care and give people the option of receiving that care from family members; and

WHEREAS government has given no time commitment for when government plans to implement paying family caregivers;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to implement a new home care model to cover family caregivers in the 2012-2013 Budget.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This is a topic that has obviously been very hot prior to the 2011 election. It was something that was announced in the PC Blue Book and a lot of people really enjoyed seeing that because they thought this issue, which is obviously important, was going to be dealt with. It was next brought up in the 2012 Budget and we heard about it again, but still no framework. Now, we did ask questions on it last year and we got two answers. One was very soon, and one was very, very soon.

The issue came up again this year in an otherwise pretty terrible Budget. We had the announcement of a pilot program, \$6.1 million for this year, and \$8.2 million for next year for family care givers. Again, people got excited. It was good news. It was something that we would applaud, but we have not been able to get any details on this so far.

I have asked numerous questions, both here in the House and I have asked it in Estimates, but we are not getting anywhere. I tend to believe there is actually no plan in place. I do not know, Mr. Speaker, why you would promise something if you actually have no concept as to how you are going to fulfill that promise.

I hope I am wrong, because for the many people out there who are going to avail of this, they want to see it. In fact, I had calls from a government member's constituency today, people who are very interested. They want to talk to me. They are very scared, actually. They said: Please keep asking about this. We need this. We need to rely on this. That is why I am here putting this petition in again today.

So I hope that the minister's answer – which I am not sure, I think it was soon now. We will see it at some point, hopefully in this calendar year. We are going to keep asking about it and this is just another one of the petitions that we will enter on that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. KIRBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS students of the Adult Basic Education program at College of the North Atlantic do not wish to attend private educational facilities; and

WHEREAS the College of the North Atlantic has the most accredited Adult Basic Education program in Newfoundland and Labrador; and

WHEREAS students are concerned as to the availability of private institutions and whether or not they can accommodate additional students;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to reverse the damaging decision to students and reinstate the Adult Basic Education programming at the College of the North Atlantic.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it may be the third time that I have presented this petition. The last time I stood up there were over 1,500 petitioners on the list of petitions. This one has over 300 people from Marystown, Garnish, here in St. John's - a number from St. John's - from St. Anthony, River of Ponds, a good number from the Northern Peninsula, CBS and Mount Pearl. There are I believe a little over 300 on this one.

I spoke to a gentleman yesterday in Labrador; he has collected about 300 petitions in a number of communities in Labrador. I do understand now there is another petition that is circulating asking government to release their calculations on the enrolment, graduation, and funding of Adult Basic Education.

As I have said before here in the House, and has been said by the other Opposition party here, government's argument to shut down this program at College of the North Atlantic and to privatize it has been unclear, inconsistent, and sometimes incoherent. The government has suggested that the cost of Adult Basic Education at the College of the North Atlantic is too expensive compared to private training institutions.

The Premier said at one point that the program costs more than \$7,000 at the College of the North Atlantic. We got a different message from the minister at one point. Then if you look in the John Noseworthy Business Transformation Report, the suggestion is that there are 1,250 seats that were funded by \$6 million. You do the math in that. It is less than \$5,000.

We do not know which of the numbers is correct. There are also some questions around the student success and graduation data, mixing of ABE, Level I, II, and III. It is not the same thing. That is sort of the same as treating Level I, II, and III of senior high schools as if they were the same.

There are a lot of outstanding questions. The best way to have some openness and transparency here is for the minister, for the government, to release these calculations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: To the hon. House of Assembly for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents humbly sheweth.

WHEREAS home care allows the elderly and people with disabilities to remain within the comfort and security of their own homes. Home care also allows people to be discharged from hospital earlier; and

WHEREAS many families find it very difficult to recruit and retain home care workers for their loved ones; and

WHEREAS the PC Blue Book 2011, as well as the 2012 Speech from the Throne, committed that government would develop a new model of home care and give people the option of receiving that care from family members; and

WHEREAS government has given no time commitment for when government plans to implement paying family caregivers;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to implement a new home care model to cover family caregivers.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people from River of Ponds, Hawke's Bay, Bellburns. There are a few dozen of these on these two

sheets. The concern that people have – this is something which actually costs government nothing. The people who we are speaking of are people who are already approved for home care.

There is an example of a man in my district in Hawke's Bay. He is in his mid-thirties, blind, hypertensive, and needs constant home care. He is approved for fifty-six hours a week, eight hours a day. In his case, his mother is a qualified home care provider; she is in her early sixties. If she provides the home care to him, he loses two days. He loses sixteen hours. If his mother, who is a qualified home care provider, cares for him, she gets paid for forty hours and someone has to give him free home care for the next sixteen hours. If his mother would go and work for the next-door neighbour, then two strangers could come and provide care for him for fifty-six hours per week. It is completely inequitable.

In another situation, Mr. Speaker, there is an elderly lady in the Town of Port Saunders and her family members are very concerned. This lady suffers from dementia. She does not take well to strangers in her home. Giving home care to people who are suffering dementia is very trying for the home care workers; consequently, there is a certain amount of turnover.

From time to time when she gets a new home care provider, that person is a stranger to her. She absolutely panics; she is in terror because there is a stranger in her home. On the other hand, if government would go along with what it said it would do at no additional cost, a niece of hers, who is well known to her and who is a qualified home care provider, could provide this very care for this lady. She would not be traumatized every time there is turnover for her home care provider.

Mr. Speaker, this is not something that costs government extra. It is the same cost. It was promised. It is now in the Budget, but there is still no action. All these people ask for is action.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for St. John's East.

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS the process of slickwater hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, injects hazardous chemicals into rock formations to extract oil, and is polluting groundwater and air across North America; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has commissioned an assessment of the potential environmental impacts of shale oil and gas extraction in Canada, including fracking; and

WHEREAS Quebec, Nova Scotia, and a number of US states have halted fracking and others are introducing regulations specific to fracking; and

WHEREAS it is incumbent upon the provincial government to ensure that our natural environment is protected from harmful industrial processes;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to impose a moratorium on slickwater fracking until it develops comprehensive regulations and ensures that each proposed project undergoes a conclusive environmental assessment to determine whether it is safe for the environment, the integrity of water supplies, and human health.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have risen in the House on any number of times on this petition. There is probably about another 300 names on this petition from places such as Fox Island River, Stephenville, Port au Port; there are some here from St. John's, Kippens, Campbells Creek,

Boswarlos, and various communities all around the areas of interest that the oil companies have in exploring shale oil and gas from this particular region.

We know the risks of slickwater fracking. We know that it is a dangerous process. We know that Quebec on January 5, 2011 halted fracking to the point where they had thirty-one wells that were previously drilled and inspection showed there were nineteen of these wells that were leeching natural gas and polluting the environment.

There was a reason why Quebec stopped it. There is a reason why we have to have vested interest in our own people's drinking water supplies. There are various reasons we should have various interests in protecting our environment and protecting the plants, for example, that are over there native to the Port au Port Peninsula that are on the endangered list.

We know there are risks to industrial development as much as there are possible benefits to it, but we have to be responsible for it. We have to be careful in developing new regulations, I say to the Natural Resources Minister. He has a vested interest in helping to develop this resource but we cannot be careless and reckless about it.

We have Gros Morne National Park. We have the Western area of the Province that brings in approximately \$200 million of tourism dollars in the run of a year out of a billion dollar industry in this Province. We have good reason to protect our natural heritage here.

Three hundred more people are speaking to this issue, Mr. Speaker, amongst all of the others that I have ever presented. These people want to be heard.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A petition to the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS students of the Adult Basic Education program at the College of the North Atlantic do not wish to attend privatized educational facilities; and

WHEREAS College of the North Atlantic has been the most accredited ABE program in Newfoundland and Labrador; and

WHEREAS students are concerned as to the availability of private institutions and whether or not they can accommodate additional students;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to reverse this damaging decision to the students and reinstate the Adult Basic Education program at the College of the North Atlantic.

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, we have had petitions coming from all over this Province, from one end to the other. I have had most of mine come from Labrador. I have had petitions with 300 names on it from the community of Nain.

The petition that I submit today, Mr. Speaker, comes from the community of Sheshatshiu. Also, I understand there are petitions coming from North West River, Hopedale, and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. These students live in rural areas. These students all realize the important role the College of the North Atlantic plays in Adult Basic Education, Mr. Speaker, and they are concerned about losing that second change. That second change is so important in many areas around this Province, in fact, Mr. Speaker, in all areas.

We have students in the hundreds who have been accepted for Adult Basic Education programs at the College of the North Atlantic,

Mr. Speaker, but they cannot get sponsorship funding now because of the decision by this government. The decisions are impacting Adult Basic Education delivery through infrastructure. Nobody knows what privatization will bring.

Mr. Speaker, I know the Nunatsiavut Government has funded 60 per cent of the programs for its beneficiaries. The College of the North Atlantic funds the other 40 per cent. Where is this other 40 per cent going to come from? Who is going to cover the cost?

Mr. Speaker, I will have more petitions to come but I thank you for giving me the opportunity.

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

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS as a result of a recommendation in the Green report about wrongdoing in the House of Assembly, there is now legislation that protects anyone who speaks up with evidence of financial abuse or other impropriety in the legislative branch; and

WHEREAS it is unfair for one group of civil servants to be protected by whistle-blower legislation when another group is not; and

WHEREAS Justice Green stated that the financial wrongdoing in the House of Assembly might have been discovered sooner if whistle-blower legislation had been in place; and

WHEREAS the Cameron Inquiry into ER-PR testing found that problems with tests could have come to light sooner, therefore lessening the impacts on patients, if whistle-blower legislation had been in place; and

WHEREAS the Task Force on Adverse Events recommended an amendment to the Regional

Health Authorities Act to provide legal protection for employees reporting occurrences or adverse events; and

WHEREAS whistle-blower protection legislation is in place elsewhere in Canada and the provincial government promised similar legislation in the 2007 election but has not kept that promise.

We, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge government to enact whistle-blower legislation to protect public sector employees in provincial departments and agencies, including public corporations, regional health authorities and school boards.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, once again the people of the Province are clearly saying that this is what they want. There is no justification for not going this route. We have it across the country. The previous Minister of Justice said well, you know, it is a very complicated issue, it is a very tedious issue and we are watching other jurisdictions.

I have faith, as do the rest of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, that our officials in our Justice department are well-educated. Well experienced officials in our Justice department can make this work. They can wade through the complexities. They can wade through what is tedious and they can come up with whistle-blower protection that is in the best interest of the people of the Province.

When we look over the last few years, the problems that we have had in our House of Assembly with spending scandals, when we look at the Cameron Inquiry with the ER-PR situation where some people may have died early because of that, that in fact, we, above anybody else, our Province above any other province, should know the importance of whistle-blower protection and legislation. It can be done. It will not cost us anything. What it will do, it will make a safer public service and safer services for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS with declining enrolment, distance education by Internet is now an accepted way to deliver educational services to students living in small communities; and

WHEREAS students have little to no say in where they or their families reside; and

WHEREAS many families do not have the ability to relocate so that their children can access educational opportunities in larger centres; and

WHEREAS many small businesses rely on the Internet to conduct business; and

WHEREAS high-speed Internet permits a business to be more competitive than slower dial-up service; and

WHEREAS no high-speed Internet service exists in the community of Bird Cove; and

WHEREAS there are no plans to offer high-speed Internet to residents of this community;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the government of Newfoundland and Labrador to partner with the private sector and offer high-speed Internet service to this community.

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is a small incorporated community that is paying its way. It is a community that suffered a significant population loss with the downturn of the fishery. It is in

recovery, it is coming back. They have done a lot of very good work over the last several years since the downturn.

One of the attractions there is the site for whales. They have a whalebone exhibition that tourists find quite attractive and interesting. They also have other diggings of the Maritime Archaic Natives. So this is an area that could really benefit from high-speed Internet. There are a few small tourist operators there, and they could be much bigger.

Mr. Speaker, it is an area that when high-speed came to the region this community got bypassed. That is not to say the service has not gone further north. In fact, it did go further north and overstepped them. A relatively small investment on the part of government, partnering with the private sector, would see that these people were brought into the contemporary twenty-first century with respect to high-speed Internet.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS students of the Adult Basic Education program at the College of the North Atlantic do not wish to attend privatized educational facilities; and

WHEREAS College of the North Atlantic has the most accredited Adult Basic Education program in Newfoundland and Labrador; and

WHEREAS students are concerned as to the availability of private institutions and whether or not they can accommodate additional students;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to reverse this damaging decision to the students and reinstate the Adult Basic Education programming at the College of the North Atlantic.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition I believe has been presented – this is the third time by members today in this House. This petition is signed by my constituents from St. Anthony, from Goose Cove, from Green Island Brook, from St. Anthony Bight, from Great Breat, from Raleigh, from Cook's Harbour, from St. Lunaire-Griquet, from Englee, from Main Brook. It is very far-reaching across my district on the Great Northern Peninsula.

One thing to acknowledge is that there are a number of people who go to the College of the North Atlantic to maybe attend and take ABE for just a small number of courses. They do pay a lower tuition rate when they do this themselves. There are a number of people who are not being funded, whether it be Income Support or the LMDA.

Where there is no other private institution on the Great Northern Peninsula, it certainly has impacts. There may be the option of a community program, but it is not providing a similar atmosphere for someone who requires maybe one or two courses to complete and then would be transitioning in to the college system to advance their own education.

On behalf of my petitioners I bring this forward. I acknowledge that I think this is a mistake in terms of cutting the funding to ABE from the College of the North Atlantic, and urge the government and other members of this House to recognize this as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

[Technical difficulties]

Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER (Verge): The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This time I call from the Order Paper, Motion 1, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, the Budget Speech.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Before I begin, I, too, would like to recognize volunteers this week throughout the Province and the hours and hours of work that they put in, Mr. Speaker, to support other services in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to talk about the volunteers in the community of Hopedale who work tirelessly to set up a program – part of a national program – called Shave for the Brave. In a small town of about 500 people, the volunteers put together a program which resulted in over \$7,000 being raised. That is no small feat in a small community. Mr. Speaker, hats off to people like this and volunteers throughout our Province for the hours that they put in to the betterment of our lives and our communities.

Mr. Speaker, this is my first address to the sub-amendment and it is certainly an honour to rise and speak to Budget 2013 or I should say lack of Budget. There are so many areas that you could zero in on in this Budget, but I think one of the ones that are most important right now – and I will have other opportunities to address other areas – is the issue that I just presented a petition on, and that is the issue of Adult Basic Education.

Mr. Speaker, this second chance, as I have come to call it, is very important to the people of this Province for the simple fact that sometimes you do not always get a chance to complete high school as a young person for various reasons, and this program that is offered through the College of the North Atlantic gives many, many, many people that second chance.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to go through a little bit of chronology in respect to how this government led up to the Budget and what the impacts are. When the House opened in March – and I can reference Hansard – many ministers across the floor, Mr. Speaker, stood up and talked about the shortage of skilled workers in our Province, the shrinking population in our Province, and this was prior to Budget 2013.

Mr. Speaker, these government members have said this repeatedly that there will be shortage or there is a shortage of skilled workers. This is on the heels of major, major development in all corners of our Province from Vale Inco in the North to Bull Arm in the South and everywhere in between.

Mr. Speaker, the demand there is for skilled workers in our Province. As megaprojects come forward or any projects come forward, the demand for skilled workers comes with it. Certainly at the protest site in Muskrat Falls last week, there was a lot of mention about people wanting employment and people coming in to take jobs away. This is the mentality that I see with this government, Mr. Speaker, and all of this before Budget 2013.

The other thing that happened before Budget 2013, Mr. Speaker, was the removal of the employment assistance offices around the Province. They removed the employment assistance offices. This is before Budget 2013. This group of people are skilled and highly trained, Mr. Speaker, and their job is to help people find jobs. That is their job. These positions were cut before Budget 2013.

Then, Mr. Speaker, we come into Budget 2013. The numbers are debatable. It depends on what side of the floor you approach, Mr. Speaker, but

after laying off the offices of the Employment Assistance Services they lay off 1,600 workers. That confuses me.

Mr. Speaker, we go on then and after the jobs were cut, they made cuts to the ABE program for people to get educated to get into jobs. Mr. Speaker, this confused me even further. First you cut the employment assistance offices, then you lay off people, then you cut the training programs. What was this government thinking?

What this did was create a Province-wide fear brought on by their own doing, Mr. Speaker. Certainly people in this Province have a right to be afraid. We have people who are afraid still of losing their jobs. We certainly have people who are afraid to come forward about losing their jobs.

Mr. Speaker, this whole unfolding of events has led to many, many, many petitions that have come forward in this House on different aspects of the Budget, but I would like to focus on the cuts to Adult Basic Education. When I spoke in the petition – I will reiterate some of the comments that I made then because I do have a little bit more time. Petitions have come from all over the Province on the cuts to Adult Basic Education as it is delivered by the College of the North Atlantic, including districts that representatives on the government side are a part of.

I have heard the minister stand up and say the programs will be better and that they will not be affected. Somehow the people are missing this because the petitions I have received have come from Lake Melville and three communities: Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Sheshatshiu, and North West River. I get petitions from Nain, from Hopedale, and from Rigolet. These learning centres in rural communities are worked through the College of the North Atlantic.

Mr. Speaker, as part of the funding arrangements, the Nunatsiavut Government has an agreement with the College of the North Atlantic where they fund 60 per cent of the seats that are sponsored by the Nunatsiavut

Department of Education, through that department. The college funds 40 per cent. It was a win-win situation. The college did not have to pay the extra cost and certainly with contributions from the Inuit in Labrador, seats were filled and seats were funded.

Now, Mr. Speaker, all of a sudden you have, I do not know how many students who are accepted to adult education programs through the College of the North Atlantic, but they cannot get sponsorship because of the situation that has occurred with changes proposed to the ABE program. There are reasons obviously why the government has made these cuts. I do not happen to agree with them and cannot agree with them, but there have been many, many success stories that have come out of Adult Basic Education programs.

Mr. Speaker, throughout this Province, as people get up into high school, through different reasons are forced to drop out or decide to drop out. The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is they do not complete high school, and we can write it off as serious situations or people being young and not understanding their full potential and the need for education in our Province. What Adult Basic Education offered was that second chance that they talked about.

Mr. Speaker, there have been stories of single mothers with families who were forced to drop out of school who took advantage of the Adult Basic Education program. Took their families and completed that program and went on into the trades. Mr. Speaker, some of them went on into university programs and graduated with degrees because they had that second chance.

Once you get in the rural areas and you talk about privatization, are private companies going to look at the numbers? Are they going to look at infrastructure? Are they going to look at cost of delivery? That will increase, because everyone else likes to jack up the price when they move north.

Mr. Speaker, these are the issues that affect the students and these are the issues that I have been hearing about. I am certain that members across

the way have been hearing about them. I know from the Third Party, they have been hearing about them. I think we have all been hearing about them. Mr. Speaker, they would not be coming forward if they did not have that concern.

I am not standing up here, Mr. Speaker, and giving you these reasons because I am trying to grab them out of thin air. These are the concerns that are coming from the people in our Province. They are coming from the students in our Province. They are coming from students who have completed the program. They are coming from students who want to get into the program. They are coming from families of students. They are coming from Adult Basic Education instructors, from teachers who have worked with students who have not finished high school. They are calling on behalf of students who they would like to see get back in and get that second chance.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the number of students who access this program through the College of the North Atlantic, it makes you wonder why this government would want to talk about the shortage of skilled workers in our Province and then take away the chance for people to get skilled in the workplace. I do not get it, Mr. Speaker, I do not get it.

Mr. Speaker, these concerns are also coming from Aboriginal groups. The petition I presented earlier came from the Innu community of Sheshatshiu. These people are trying to better themselves. They are trying hard, Mr. Speaker, but they do see a lot of frustration. I have students in the community of North West River, just across the bridge, walking distance, Mr. Speaker, who are concerned about having that second chance.

In terms of the new programs and delivery, Mr. Speaker, we are not seeing anything. All we are hearing is assurances that the program will be better and students will not be affected. The concern I bring forward, as I said earlier, and I will say it again, Mr. Speaker, is that their concern is about privatization, not moving into areas because it would not be cost-effective for

them. We have heard in Question Period and statements around this House that privatization is often more expensive.

Mr. Speaker, I am certainly one of the advocates who are saying leave the program with the College of the North Atlantic. I spoke about this yesterday. Programs in the College of the North Atlantic itself are being cut.

I talked about the automotive program, where there were sixteen students enrolled, Mr. Speaker, and automotive companies have called the College of the North Atlantic on an annual basis. They have put scholarships into the program. The answer I received from the minister is that if a program is not effective and it does not look like it is going to produce jobs, it is dropped.

These sixteen students are now put on a waiting list to move to another campus – and I am going to assume it is on the Island portion of the Province – to take this course that they want to take. How do you uproot a family that has a facility right in their community and move to a different town and be put on a waiting list? There is no confirmation that these students will be accepted into a program at another campus. If they are on a waiting list, Mr. Speaker, then the demand for students to enrol in this program is obviously there. It has not gone away.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if you add up the number of people in this Province, and you compare it to the number of vehicles operating in this Province, you will quickly find that there is a demand for automotive personnel, or automotive engineers or mechanics, or whatever you might want to call them.

When you are looking at industry, Mr. Speaker, the demand for automotive technicians in industry is overwhelming. I can share with you, and I am sure the Member for Lake Melville and the Member for Labrador West can share with you the number of vehicles that are traveling around in Goose Bay employed at Muskrat Falls with the little red flags. It is certainly very, very evident in that community. Yes, there is a

demand for these kinds of programs, and the students are there to fill these courses.

Again, I keep going back to the government's statement that there is a need for a skilled workforce. They have said that. Mr. Speaker, they have removed that opportunity for people to get into the skilled workforce. I just do not get it.

Mr. Speaker, I only have a short time left, I had planned to go on to some other issues. I think I will just run the clock out on this. In North West River there are eighteen students who want to get into Adult Basic Education programs. A small community, small numbers, but why deny them the opportunity?

Mr. Speaker, the numbers are not in yet from Happy Valley-Goose Bay, but the College of the North Atlantic at Happy Valley-Goose Bay accepts students from the North Coast who are unable to access the learning centres. They get students from Labrador West. They get students from Central Labrador and they get students from Southern Labrador. If you look at industry in Labrador from Lab West, to Central, to Northern, these students want to access those jobs and I for one think they have a right to. They have a right to access those jobs.

Why should we have to import workers into job sites when we have workers there who want to go to work? They want to go to school to get educated to go to work, Mr. Speaker. Why take that chance away from them? They lived there; they know the jobs are there. It pisses them off when they see outside workers coming in and taking those jobs. It certainly pisses them off when the government removes that opportunity for them to be able to access an education to get to those jobs.

The government is well aware of this. Muskrat Falls has been highly debated both in this House, on the road and at the site, Mr. Speaker, and the movement from people in Labrador is that they want the jobs. I think the government is obligated to give them that opportunity. If you are not a student graduate out of high school, I

think this government should give them that second chance.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I recognize the Member for Bonavista North.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, like all who stand in this House, it really is a privilege to have the opportunity to speak to and for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: We realize here today we are talking about Budget 2013, and in particular today we are talking about the sub-amendment after a non-confidence motion, of all things, to this Budget, from the Opposition.

What we are hearing from the other side is all that they do not want to vote for; it is all that they want to deny the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Some of the decisions that we have had to make around this Budget, Mr. Speaker, have been exceptionally difficult decisions to make. We make them because we are concerned about this Province; we are concerned about our children and our grandchildren. We are concerned about providing for them a sustainable future; a future in Newfoundland and Labrador, not a future outside of Newfoundland and Labrador. Therefore, many of these decisions that we are making are difficult, but they are always based on principle. The principle has to do with ensuring that future.

Principle; we use that word, but we do not use it lightly. Principle versus popularity; popularity is concerned with gaining favour from the electorate, trying to do what gets votes, flip-flop as the trend indicates. No strong conviction to

ideals, short-term planning, short-sightedness. It sounds complicated, but it sounds a lot like what we hear from across the floor, Mr. Speaker.

Principles, Mr. Speaker; principle leads by a standard. There are touchstones for success. It does not directly relate to voter satisfaction. It stays the course because it has its eye on a goal. It is a lifestyle. You do not jump when there is a hiccup. There is no panic. A strong economy, pride in your heritage, and your eye on a goal. You stay the course.

Mr. Speaker, our Minister of Health spoke a few days ago. She made reference to what she had seen our Premier and our leader saying and doing when discussing this around the Cabinet table. It came up time and time again the question: What are we doing for our children? What are we doing for our grandchildren? In other words, can this be sustained indefinitely? When we talk about our children, we are looking to the future.

Mr. Speaker, those are the principles we adhere to in this Budget. Lots of times it is really easy to be popular. We had a choice in this Budget. We recognized on one side of it there is a very, very difficult, problematic deficit. We had a choice to ignore that or take it on head-on and do something with that so our young people can have this future that they want in this Province. There are reasons we made choices that we made.

If we ignore all of that, if we ignore all of these principles and what we are doing, we would spend, and spend, and spend, Mr. Speaker. We would have nothing left for the future. Again, it starts to sound familiar.

As I have been discussing this Budget with my constituents, they have been asking questions. Some of them might sound like easy questions or simple questions, but sometimes it is simple questions and simple answers in which we get the true picture of how we would feel. In my remaining comments, and it is impossible to touch on everything, I am going to try to give you some of these questions and some of these answers as they have been posed by some of my

friends in my conversations in Bonavista North. I agree that all of us come from different districts; all of us come from different backgrounds. We will each have a unique perspective on this.

The first question: Why do we have a deficit? The simple answer would be your spending is up and your revenue is down, but it is more than that, Mr. Speaker. In our oil-based revenue, our economy based on oil, just look at the last couple of years. In 2011 we harvested or we recovered 95 million barrels of oil. In 2012, because of reasons that everybody is familiar with, we only recovered 70 million barrels. This is 27 per cent less, one-quarter less in the number of barrels of oil we have recovered. The price was lower on these than in previous years, one reason why our revenue is down.

Equalization, Mr. Speaker; in 2004, 22 per cent of our Province's revenues were in equalization payments. In 2008, that ended. Last year, what did we receive? Zero. In just a few short years equalization payments are gone. Lower production does not mean we are going to get equalization back just because we had a rough year.

The Accord, Mr. Speaker; the Accord payments ended in 2011. That year we received our last payment, \$536 million. In 2012, Mr. Speaker, what did we receive? Zero; zilch. Take away \$500 million from your revenue. Tough choices to try to replace it, and we do not have that money to spend.

Wages to our public service, Mr. Speaker; the public service has increased in size over the last few years, as well as the generous wage increase that was offered in the last package to our employees. Wage costs have increased by about 29 per cent over the last seven years – 29 per cent.

The cost to the Budget annually, you have heard it, about \$500 million annually. Can we squash that? There are collective agreements to meet. We cannot just say: Oh, that \$500 million, we are not going to spend that. We have to spend that. If we had the \$500 million I just mentioned

on the Accord payment, balanced. We have to find this, Mr. Speaker. We have to find the answer for this.

The idea of the have Province, Mr. Speaker, in 2003-2004 our total revenue was handy about \$4 billion, \$3.9 billion. Of that, 36 per cent came from the federal government. I mentioned equalization payments. I mentioned other programs from the federal government.

In 2013, Mr. Speaker, just nine years later, revenue has climbed to \$7 billion. An 80 per cent increase in nine short years. It has gone from just under \$4 billion to \$7 billion, zero equalization in the last year. At this time, only 10 per cent is coming in agreements, payments, and supplements from the federal government. Our revenues have almost doubled but they are coming from our own sources.

After nearly a decade of surplus, Mr. Speaker, we are going to face these two or three years of deficits. In 2013, even with this deficit, what do we see? No borrowing. We do not have to borrow this year. We have made fiscal adjustments and done some sustainability planning.

Like a good sailor, my grandfather was a good sailor, he always read the weather. He did not always take advice from everyone else. He accepted the dangers of the storm. He adjusted his course, sought shelter when necessary, but generally he weathered the storm, and there is better sailing ahead for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians financially, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: Some of my constituents looked at the Budget. They criticized us and said you have no plan. They looked at me and said: What is your plan? What is this plan?

The projected deficit for 2013 is \$563 million, down from the \$1.6 billion as projected. It is down because of a huge piece of work the Department of Finance and Cabinet, and our civil service did for us in the last few months.

This Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has enjoyed and sustained economic growth for the last nine years. When you go through nine years of prosperity, it sort of spoils you. Who does it spoil? It spoiled the electorate because they have gotten use to good budgets. It spoils the public servants. It spoils the politicians.

The fundamental driver of our economy is expected to continue. It is not over. It is not done with, and we have to adjust our expectations for the period of this deficit. This government, we have managed responsibly with a balance of debt reduction and investment. All have been duly recognized by the bond and credit rating agencies recently and the banking gurus.

Our minister has indicated the Triple A rating continues. Through this and through the planning that we have done, we are the envy of the rest of the country. Our goal is to return to the surplus, back in the black in three years. Eliminate the deficit budgets in three years, surplus by 2015.

Even during the deficits, we are going to maintain strong fiscal positions. Our economy is going to continue to flourish while we are being frugal. How do we plan through these deficits, and how do we come out of them? Well, we have to seriously take a look at – you look in the Budget and you look in the other documents that we have been reviewing. We are going to attack the Budget.

Health care review is going to be important. Post-secondary review is going to be very important to this. Equity investments are going to come through for us in some cases. We are going to prioritize our spending. We are going to continue with our competitive taxation regime, and we are doing much consultation recently with our municipalities.

We have shown through these principles, through good times and rough times, inside and out, touchstones for future sustainability. What is the question that I was asked? Do we have a plan? I say yes, Mr. Speaker, a resounding yes. There is a plan to bring us through this.

When I visit someone else, Mr. Speaker, I get a question: What about seniors? What about health care and families? Budget 2013 includes \$2.9 billion –

AN HON. MEMBER: How much?

MR. CROSS: It is \$2.9 billion directed towards health care, families, and community services. It still remains the largest portion of the Budget, more per capita than any other jurisdiction in our country. Health and community services, target investment, increase of services, new health care treatments, greater long-term care, and community support for seniors and families.

Let's touch on a few that will have a direct impact. A paid family caregiver, it has been attacked. There have been questions about this in the last few days. There has been a value attached to this, Mr. Speaker, \$6 million this year, annualizing next year to \$8 million-plus. The Opposition says there is no plan to this, but we have no one to copy. We are creating this new and comprehensive family caregiver plan that will be the envy of the rest of the country.

I know of brothers and sisters, sons and daughters who have removed themselves from the workforce in my district to take care of their loved ones. This is not going to be as soon as they decide that, oh, I am going to take care of my family now, and I am going to get paid for it. It is not a Klondike.

Although the final model is not yet ready, when it is prepared and when it is rolled out, it will be comprehensive and it will be basic. Family members are going to need to qualify to receive care. Decisions are going to be made by professionals. I am confident of what is to come, and I am proud that it is going to happen this year.

Another thing here is enhanced care in personal care homes, Mr. Speaker. I have known of couples in my district who in the latter years of their life have been separated because one needs a different classification of care than another. This may allow them to stay together for a longer period of time. This may allow them to

stay with dignity in their own community of residence for a longer period of time.

The introduction of respite care in personal care homes would also allow for the same thing. This would allow for short-term relief for families who are in a crisis that need some help. It is stressful, sometimes, giving the unconditional care for family members and loved ones. Also for seniors in this Budget, Mr. Speaker, is a \$3 million investment which allows for the continued reduction of the 35 per cent on fees, motor vehicle registration, licences, hunting licences, et cetera.

There is \$8.4 million for Harbour Grace and \$4 million for Grand Falls-Windsor for addiction centres for adults and youth, respectively. There is millions, and millions, and millions for construction and planning of health care and long-term care facilities.

AN HON. MEMBER: Millions.

MR. CROSS: Millions, hundreds of millions.

This government's investment into health continues to be a very high priority.

Let us talk about infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, in this really, really difficult Budget year. You would think there is no spending on anything. Not true, Mr. Speaker. This year's investment of almost \$800 million-plus into infrastructure –

AN HON. MEMBER: How much?

MR. CROSS: Nine tenths of a billion dollars. Ferry terminals, roads and bridges, water and sewer projects, hospitals, long-term care facilities, aquaculture wharves, tourist investments, schools, and training facilities – this stimulates the economy. Not only that these facilities are going to be built, but jobs in construction, safer bridges, improved roads, and better health care facilities.

I apologize to all of my friends who do not like to hear of investment of capital funds, but indulge me just to listen to a few short notes I have jotted from many sources. I remind you on

the other side this is going to be a sampling, but it could be hard on your ears. I am sure I might resume this list a little later another time speaking.

Again, this may be hard to endure over there, nine tenths of a billion dollars: \$59 million for provincial roads, some of which is being expended in Bonavista North; \$43 million to complete the last full season of paving on the Trans-Labrador Highway Phase I, with widening and other improvements and other phases to follow; \$26 million to support several TCH projects, some near the entrance to Bonavista North; \$20 million for the Placentia Lift Bridge; and \$12 million for the Sir Robert Bond Bridge.

Are your ears sore yet? There is more. Health care facilities: \$226 million for health care infrastructure; \$165 million for continuing construction; and \$20 million for repairs and renovation. In Education: \$100 million for new and ongoing infrastructure, including \$77 million for major capital improvements; and \$25 million for planning new schools in Gander, Paradise, Portugal Cove – St. Philip's, Coley's Point, and others. I am getting out of breath, Mr. Speaker.

Municipal and Provincial Affairs: \$130 million for the second year of capital works programs to support water and waste treatment; and \$25 million in capital works for towns over 11,000. Are your ears full yet? Yes, there is more, but I have to move on. When I come and stand again, I will come back.

Mr. Speaker, this deficit time is not unique to Newfoundland and Labrador. Some of our strongest and wealthiest provincial sisters and brothers are experiencing a similar impact. I say, in the last twenty seconds, how I will respond to this. I am saying no to the sub-amendment and no to the non-confidence motion. We have the principles to move on. We have the right plan. We have and can maintain a vibrant economy. We have great potential. We have the right attitude. We have the right leadership.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. CROSS: We have the right confidence. We are a have Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I recognize the Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We may be a have Province, but there are certainly a lot of people who do not feel they are a have person. I listened intently to the Member for Bonavista North talk about there is no one to copy for a proposal of this family caregiver program. I really hope that no other province is copying this poorly named Budget that we have here and a really mismanaged Budget on behalf of this government.

I really find it appalling that the Member for Bonavista North would blame the prosperity, and deflect and say that these problems spoil the electorate, it spoils the public servants, and it spoils the politicians. Mr. Speaker, this is clearly a blatant attempt of admitting all of the mismanagement on behalf of this government after ten years in power.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MITCHELMORE: I find that really insulting, Mr. Speaker, as to what was said there. If we look at anybody who has mismanaged the books here and spent like drunken sailors, it is the government across the way.

Let's just look at the financial statements right here of where we go, because the former Finance Minister always talked about net debt and how well we were doing. Well, let's see where the Estimates are this year for net debt. The net debt the end of the year, do you know what it is this year? It is projected at being at \$9.5 billion. That is an increase of \$936 million,

nearly \$1 billion. That is a lot of money. Do you know what it was this past year? It increased \$757 million. That is an excessive amount. That is three-quarters of a billion dollars increasing the net debt. That is not the only thing that increases because net debt is a funny number that you can put around.

Let's just look at the direct debt. Direct debt this proposed year is going to go from \$10.8 billion to \$11.5 billion. That is directly in the financial statements. We cannot hide from the numbers. The Public Accounts clearly state exactly where we are and where we are going. Do you know where we are going per capita? Right now, it is forecast that this year every man, woman and child is going to owe \$18,867. Do you know where we were a few years ago? We were down quite a bit. That is quite significant, looking at that.

Budget 2013 is titled A Sound Plan, A Secure Future. It is nothing but. It is completely mistitled. To put a 10-Year Sustainability Plan forward, it is just incredible that this government would base its sustainability plan on the volatility, once again, of oil and non-renewable resources because that is what the bulk of it is in their plan, it absolutely is.

The Member for Bonavista North talked about all the volatility. He talked about there is no Atlantic Accord money this year. We do not have any money there, but the Finance Minister and the government knew that there was not going to be any money years ago. They knew this and they did not plan for it.

These are the types of things we need to look at. If you know that something is happening, you plan for it. You do not just wait for things to happen and say: Now we have to have a crisis budget where we lay off lots of workers. We have all of these job cuts. We have program cuts, department cuts. Everywhere around there is a significant loss, yet the debt is still going up. We are sending ourselves into a real financial mess if we do not do something to turn things around.

I hope the former Finance Minister will stand on his feet and explain why we are in such a poor fiscal mess right now, and saying there is an 80 per cent increase in revenue. If we have an 80 per cent increase in revenue we should not have these types of deficits coming forward if the revenue has been going up; yet, the expenditures has been going up even more. We are not matching that.

The talk that we are not borrowing money this year, Mr. Speaker, we may not be borrowing money but something has happened because let's look at the debt servicing ratio. We will look at how much more. Do you know –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The member opposite will have his opportunity to speak because he certainly has some explaining to do.

A \$40 million increase in debt servicing this year. We are not borrowing more money but we are certainly spending a lot more when it comes to servicing the debt. What has happened there? Forty million dollars can certainly pay for a lot. It could have kept the Adult Dental Program as it was. It certainly could have dealt with the RED Boards and other entities. It probably could have kept ABE at the College of the North Atlantic. There are certainly things that could have been better planned.

The Budget here has been absolutely devastating for the economy. It is doing everything to destabilize the economy actually and send shockwaves into it. To see the immense growth that has happened, it is not the government that has created all of these immense opportunities. The private sector has done so much itself to create the economy there that is going. We are seeing that happen in tremendous capital investments when it comes to things like that.

Let's look at something that the government is responsible for. It is looking at our exports. Looking at dealing with things as to how we can really – where that is headed. It is declining.

One of the things that is going on right now, and I want to look at the economy with all these layoffs, if we look at Stats Canada, where we were. For every job vacancy in the Province in the last report, there were sixteen people unemployed. Sixteen people who were looking for work for every job vacancy, yet now there are at least 1,200, if not close to 2,000 people or more without work right now.

Government touts that we have the second-highest average weekly wage at \$929. Look at this, that is \$48,000 annually they are saying is the average people earn. We know there are so many people who are working at minimum wage jobs, on very low income. If we look at where this money is coming from, it is coming primarily from the commuter economy. If something should happen so that the people in Alberta are not filing their taxes here and coming back and forth, we are in a boatload of trouble right there.

With the way this Budget has cut rural areas, has cut youth retention, we are going to be sending more and more people away. So we are going to be collecting less provincial tax dollars in income taxes from these people. It is going to have a trickle-down effect on the programs and services that we can offer the people of the Province, and that is something that is not really looked at.

You can say and tout how things are right now with looking at \$929, but the reality is that most people in this Province do not earn \$929. It is skewed by heavy oil money and the commuter economy that is happening. Should that change, all of us are in for a very, very hard wakeup call when it comes to looking at: Where do we go from here?

What we have seen in this Budget, we have seen up to 700 per cent fee increases for forestry and fishery licences, hikes to ferry rates, job losses, and cuts to tourism marketing, employment

services, health care and education. How can the Member for Bonavista North get up on his feet and say this is good, things in the Budget are good?

MR. MURPHY: He is from rural Newfoundland.

MR. MITCHELMORE: He is from rural Newfoundland and Labrador, and I am sure his constituents would be appalled to hear what he had just said.

If anything, the Premier's Budget really promotes a further depopulation of our rural communities. I asked the Minister of Innovation, Business and Rural Development: Where is the advanced transportation strategy? Where is the plan? Yet, no, what has further been done is a cut to the Air Access Strategy, that program is gone. We need to really look at strategies in place to advance our economy, and that is not happening. What we are seeing is more people are leaving our small communities.

The Budget has put forward moving money, for people to move from rural regions. It is quite apparent that there is no plan to create rural sustainability. Just a few years ago this government touted a Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy, yet it cut initiatives in this plan. It gave people a lot of hope that there were going to be 70,000 jobs; yet, with all these cutbacks we know that 70,000 is not an accurate number when it comes to the openings in the next seven years left to this plan. We need to see some updates to this.

We need to have a look at, when we talk about volatility, when we talk about the oil and gas sector, the mining sector. They are going to be volatile. Where are we in our renewable resource sector when it comes to the fishery, when it comes to the forestry? What is government actually doing to help these sectors?

Fish landings last year were down 6.2 per cent. The landed value was down 6.3 per cent. Do you know what the value was? It was \$575 million, and this was a result of low crab prices. This year crab prices are even lower, at \$2 right

now. It is lower than what it was last year. They are hoping to make up this shortfall by other species.

Aquaculture production was up by 23 per cent, but the market value dropped by 6 per cent. We have a lot of investment put into the salmon sector, but the prices fell. We have seen a drop in aquaculture value as well. These are the types of things that are going to have an impact.

We have to look at things like certification of our fish species. We have to really develop an overall plan, because things are not just going to work themselves out and be on par. I invite the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune to get up and talk about this. There are things that could be talked about.

I want to talk about the increase to fish licensing and fish buyer licences. They have jumped quite significantly. This is really a misstep when you look at trying to help the small competitors, the independents to create that competition on the ground. It is going to be making a profit overall, the fish licences, in the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture. Yet, the overall budget was cut by 33 per cent. So it really shows the commitment to the fishery and aquaculture on behalf of this government. They increased the fees. They are going to make a whole lot more money there. It is going to have an impact because you are going to reduce competition.

When we look at the open market, what the price of crab was, the market value, and what the shrimp was, it levied last year about \$5 a pound. That has certainly not trickled down into our economy. We are seeing a lot less in terms of the value there. The small business fees, like I said, looking at where they went, they went up to a 100 per cent increase. The aquaculture site licences – I am sure the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune should be speaking out about this, increases from 150 per cent to 400 per cent.

Looking at the forest sector, commercial forestry permits went up 138 per cent. Commercial sawmill licence fees went up 700 per cent. That is quite significant when we have a sector in the

economy looking at where we are in terms of forestry. There has been a real concern looking at where we are in our paper shipments and where we were last year. The projected value of a ton of paper is going to be between \$20 and \$40 less this year.

So that means anybody who is shipping paper right now can anticipate that they are going to be earning \$5 million to \$10 million less. That is going to have a significant impact on the bottom line of any company that is shipping out paper product and involved in the industry. Yet you are taxing all the people from the bottom who are dealing in the forestry, from the person who is cutting at the sawmill and all the way up. It is all interconnected, so you are really forcing people and you are trying to push people out of the industry. It shows no interest and no hope for rural Newfoundland and Labrador based on the types of fees and increases that you are doing.

When we look at adding a fee of \$500 for putting up a business by the side of a highway, a provincial highway, that is a fee that did not exist before. It is the same thing if you wanted to build a house. Now you are immediately taxed \$100 to build a house. You are not going to see these types of fees in certain areas, but you are going to see them primarily in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. That is having an impact.

We wanted to see things like looking at the small business in Newfoundland and Labrador. They employ 40 per cent of the people and are significant contributors to the economy, yet there are seven other provinces than Newfoundland and Labrador that have a more progressive small business tax policy than what we do. If we looked at cutting our small business tax and being more competitive, we might be like a province in Nova Scotia that added 2,900 jobs last month. Instead, we saw a significant loss. We probably saw more than 2,900 jobs cut last month overall when we see the numbers that are going to be released. That has quite a significant impact.

If we look at some of the other missed steps in the Budget and looking at the cuts, looking at where it is in my own district – when we see that there is only one fish wildlife enforcement officer for the whole Northern Peninsula, it really opens up the gate there for poaching and what that means for protection of our environment and protected areas, and dealing with snowmobile and ATV regulations. I mean, this is something that needs to be looked at in terms what the trickled down and domino effect is going to have on the outfitting industry. That is a \$40 million industry. They were not consulted. When it comes to the tourism industry, when we talk about trying to promote and extend the seasons, when we talk about developing the trail systems and things like that, losing these positions have an impact.

We look at a lack of commitment and a lack of respect, really, for some of the areas when it comes to our forest sector completely. We are really turning our back on royalties and revenues from the forestry. If we look at where we are going to be in five years, government is moving forward on Muskrat Falls, so Muskrat Falls moving forward is going to be built in 2017. What is the plan after that? We do not see it addressed in the Sustainability Plan. Just looking at the jobs here in The Economy, the employment after construction in Newfoundland and Labrador: eighty direct full-time jobs. Employment after construction in Labrador, where the development is and where the investment is made and where the power is going to come from – do you know how many jobs are going to be created after it is developed? It says more than forty jobs. It does not really show a big commitment really overall.

When we look at 120 jobs as what is going to be created, we really need to look at having a sustainability plan for our forestry, for our fishery, for tourism, and for other sectors of the economy that create and have tens of thousands of jobs in them. We are spending billions and billions of dollars to develop Muskrat Falls. The long-term impact is going to be about 120 full-time, permanent jobs. That is something that needs to be looked at.

When we look at tourism one of the things that TIAC has said is that you have to have marketing; that is the number one thing. The number two thing is access. The number three thing is product development. The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation has cut the tourism budget basically by \$4 million. That means that there are going to be a lot less ads, a lot less shares that can be purchased in and make people aware of our unique product. If we look at what that means right now, because the Budget is basically destabilizing our economy with all the cuts and everything that is there, people are not going to be going out and buying houses, people are going to hold off buying their cars. There are a going to be a lot of things that are going to be impacted by this Budget.

We depend for 55 per cent of the revenue of that \$1 bill industry to come from interprovincial travel. There is going to be a lot less of that. If there is a lot less of that, in order to make that up and to help out the tourism industry and all the small businesses that are out there, there really needs to be an increase in marketing to the high yield, the international tourists, and bringing that in. We are not seeing that; we are certainly not.

Cutting things like the Air Access Strategy, when the plan says that it is going on until 2014, has an impact on our airports and how we promote different industries. We have unique potential here in Newfoundland and Labrador, but we are seeing a real misstep when it comes to how we really do business.

I had the opportunity to ask a lot of questions in Estimates with the Department of Innovation, Business and Rural Development. We are not done yet because we have a lot more questions to ask. We think that the role of that department has to really address a lot of key issues, to advance telecommunications and transportation.

This Budget, Mr. Speaker, completely fails Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. It does nothing to create a sound plan or provide a secure future. If anything, it sends more and more of our youth away. It does not do anything for long-term planning of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I am very proud to speak to the sub-amendment put forward. I will take my seat, because my time has expired.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, I do have some messages that I want to speak about with regard to the Budget and the Department of Advanced Education and Skills. I also need to address some of the comments that I have heard here and in particular from the Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

Mr. Speaker, one of the comments we just heard is that this government is and has been spending like drunken sailors. It seems to be a comment they like to make. I want to talk about some of the spending and some of the stuff that the NDP indicate is frivolous or unnecessary in this Province. That is how they characterize it.

Mr. Speaker, we have eliminated school fees for the parents of Newfoundland and Labrador when they have a child going to school. That is spending like drunken sailors, according to the NDP. We provide free textbooks to all students in Newfoundland and Labrador. Up until we brought in that, high school students had to pay for their textbooks. The NDP do not support free textbooks in Newfoundland and Labrador; they refer to that as spending like drunken sailors.

Mr. Speaker, we have infrastructure in this Province, including a new hospital being built in Corner Brook. The NDP do not support the hospital being built in Corner Brook. We also have a new campus of the College of the North Atlantic and a new hospital in Labrador West. The NDP feel that because we built those buildings in Labrador West that we have

squandered the money of this Province, and I completely disagree.

Mr. Speaker, we have child care subsidies in this Province to assist parents in low-income jobs to allow them to enter the workforce. The NDP do not support parents receiving child care subsidies. We have a Prescription Drug Program in this Province for low-income earners, so that if a person has a family member or they are not well themselves and require prescription medication that enables them to move into the workforce.

We have that program set up in this Province and the NDP feel that is a waste of money. They describe that as squandering and spending like drunken sailors, Mr. Speaker. I for one, along with my colleagues on this side of the House of Assembly, disagree completely with their stand on how money is being spent in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, we also hear that the NDP does not think we should use oil as a resource to plan our Budget, and to indicate how we are going to spend our money. They think it is too volatile. They do have a plan, they are very cute about their plan. They do not want to deal with the volatility of oil. What do they want to do? They want to tax the working person in this Province. Tax, tax, and tax, and increase the taxes. They see that as a way to create stability.

For all the working people in this Province, if you want a glimpse into how the NDP will stabilize the economy as they will say, balance the Budget, and be secure in their forecast of the Budget, they feel the answer is to increase taxes. I suggest to everybody right now to look at your pay cheque, look at what you are earning, look at your taxes, and be rest assured that the NDP plan is to take more and more money from your earnings.

It is all about taxes, Mr. Speaker, and that is what they are saying. They do not want to look at oil or resource development. In fact, they are

against resource development in Newfoundland and Labrador and one great example is Muskrat Falls.

Mr. Speaker, Muskrat Falls, which the NDP does not support, will provide jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador and unionized jobs for thousands of people. They do not agree with these jobs being in Newfoundland and Labrador. The development of Muskrat Falls will provide employment for the people of this Province and in particular people from Labrador, including our Aboriginal communities and people who live in Labrador. Mr. Speaker, that is important.

Also, Mr. Speaker, Muskrat Falls will give us the lowest-cost option to be able to secure the energy needs of this Province. On top of that, it is also an environmentally sound, green project for this Province. Things that you would expect the NDP – the federal NDP under their former national leader, Jack Layton, supported this project. Our provincial NDP does not support what he said and does not support Muskrat Falls. In particular, they do not support the prosperity that project will bring this Province, and that is important to note as well.

Mr. Speaker, I will also note from the chirping of the NDP there today, they do not like what they are hearing, because they know that they have to listen to the gibberish that they preach here day in and day out. It is my honour to stand up and give it back to them here today.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to talk about the Budget. I will have a couple of more times to get up and challenge the stuff that they are saying, how it does not make sense for the Province and how their policies are to tax, tax, tax.

Mr. Speaker, in fairness when we looked at this Budget this year and had to make the plans for the Province to provide sound fiscal management and be able to plan for the out years, we had a very difficult job. It is a difficult job, but one that we have faced before. The challenges that we face in this year's Budget are very similar to what happened when we had to do our first Budget approximately ten years ago when we first took government. At that time,

we had to look at a situation where the spending was probably outpacing the money that was coming in.

You cannot live like that. You cannot live in your household like it. You cannot spend, you cannot live on a credit card, nor can the government expect taxpayers to do the same. Taxpayers as they pay their taxes, only so much will be able to be used to pay down the debt. Beyond that, services are needed in Newfoundland and Labrador.

When we went after this Budget, Mr. Speaker, and we had to make decisions, we were challenged the whole way by the Premier of this Province to go into our departments, to be able to look at the services that the people of this Province require, and to be able to deliver them in the most effective and efficient way possible. I would expect no other direction from this Premier than what we got.

This Premier is somebody who is very principled, who is very strong in her values and who does not stray from her values. Mr. Speaker, she will not govern this Province by popularity, by saying let's do this because it is popular. She will do what is in the best interests of Newfoundland and Labrador so that the future generations are not left with debt that is totally unsustainable.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, we have an economy in this Province today that is very promising for the young people. We need to make sure, as a government, that we are mindful as well of our spending, so that we do not burden the young people of this Province, the people who are in the K-12 system, preschoolers, or our young people in our post-secondary institutions, that they will come out and have to take on the debt, because as a government we were not prepared to make the decisions that were necessary in order to support them.

Mr. Speaker, in saying that as well, I also look at the determination of the Premier. Before I move on with the Budget messages I think it is

important also to speak to this. We have never witnessed before as much intimidation and harassment going on, and in particular directed at the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador. I want to remind the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that our Premier is a woman who worked in her community, worked for a community, has worked with vulnerable populations, has done stellar work in the women's community, is certainly an advocate to help reduce and eliminate violence in particular against women. She is a person who has stepped into public life through politics, through being an MHA, a minister and now the Premier.

It is almost as if because a person goes into elected office and reaches those heights that intimidation and harassment are to be expected. Mr. Speaker, through our Violence Prevention Initiative, we always indicate that the roots of violence, standing by and watching it, supporting it, and monitoring it is just as bad as being involved in it. We encourage people in our public awareness campaigns just don't stand there, take action against violence.

Mr. Speaker, we seem to have come to an era. Because of social media and the way we throw things out there that you would not say face-to-face, you would not say in a meeting, you would not even say if you were being interviewed, but because you can hide behind a Twitter site, or a made up name, you can throw things out that you would not say. It has gone beyond; even last week there were comments that were thrown out that people had to immediately take down because they were so vulgar and inappropriate that they had to come down. They were only done because people think it is appropriate to personally attack somebody because they hold public office in this Province, and that is completely inappropriate, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have had some comments about the Budget. From the Department of Advanced Education and Skills, one of the most important initiatives that we have and that we have maintained since we came to government is our support for the students in Newfoundland and Labrador. We support our post-secondary students like no other province in this country.

We have maintained a tuition freeze in our public institutions since we took office in October 2003; there has been absolutely no increase in the tuition that our students pay.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, we are the lowest cost tuition in Canada. We are able to have our students go to Memorial University for just over \$2,500 a year, who are in full-time attendance, and approximately \$1,200 if they attend the College of the North Atlantic. Mr. Speaker, that is over all programs that are offered at the University. If you compare us to other universities in Canada you will see that, depending on the program, the tuition may change, but we have it straight for all our undergraduate students in this Province, Mr. Speaker.

Not only have we maintained a tuition freeze, we have also eliminated the interest on student loans, and the first Province to do so, Mr. Speaker. In addition to that, we also brought back the up-front, needs-based grants which are targeted towards the students who need the most financial assistance. In doing that, Mr. Speaker, when I say we brought it back, we brought it back because it was eliminated in the 1990s. This government did not eliminate the up-front, needs-based grants, but we brought them back.

Mr. Speaker, not only have we looked at the tuition and the cost of education, we have also provided other supports that enable students to attend post-secondary education. If anybody is here in St. John's and you are going to say oh, well, this is infrastructure that goes into St. John's, it is actually for the people who are not from St. John's. You will see two brand new residences build on the campus of Memorial University. That represents 500 new beds for rural students from Newfoundland and Labrador to be able to attend university in St. John's.

Mr. Speaker, we often hear there is a housing crisis, people have nowhere to live, and what is government doing about it. Well, what government has done in this case is we have provided 500 spaces for students in this Province, and that is a significant impact for student housing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: I will take it a step further. It is not just localized to our campus here in St. John's. At our Grenfell Campus of Memorial University in Corner Brook, Mr. Speaker, we have also provided 200 new beds. So when you look at it, Mr. Speaker, 700 new spaces for students have been created by this government and that is a significant investment. To St. John's alone, it is over \$70 million.

Mr. Speaker, we are also committed, as we look at the university and post-secondary, that we will build a new science building for Memorial University. If anybody is familiar with the science building – most people who have gone through Memorial University at one point or another have done courses in the science building understand the importance of replacing that building for our students and the future students of Memorial University.

Mr. Speaker, it is a extremely important that we continue to support our young people because this Province understands the importance of enticing our young people to stay here following their graduation. We are going to have approximately 70,000 job openings across all sectors in this Province, Mr. Speaker, and that means there are opportunities for our young people. Actually, Mr. Speaker, there are opportunities that our young people have today and will have over the next ten years that many generations of people from this Province have never experienced and could not imagine that they would have available to them.

Mr. Speaker, that is certainly from the ability of this government to be strategic, to look at resource development, to look at Hebron, to look at the expansion of Voisey's Bay, the development of Muskrat Falls, and it goes on and on. That will stimulate our economy and provide opportunity for our young people.

In addition, there will be retirements from an aging population. So we will need people across sectors, all types of jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador, who will be able to fill the positions, and who will be able to contribute to this

Province, Mr. Speaker. We certainly have opportunity.

The government recognized and this Premier recognized the opportunities that were in this Province, and realized that maybe status quo was not the way to go and that we needed to develop the new Department of Education and Skills. With an economic focus, our mandate is to try to help people attach to the labour force, Mr. Speaker.

One thing I find astounding when I listen to the Opposition Parties in their questions and in their debate in the House of Assembly, they pose questions and they talk in a very critical manner, which is probably their role, but they will say everything that is going wrong, why we cannot keep young people, why people will not take jobs, why people are not prepared for jobs.

Then, Mr. Speaker, when we institute changes and when we say we looked at things, we examined the department, we examined the way we do things and we think we can do things more effectively, we can be more efficient and we can meet the needs of the people, we are criticized then for change. We are criticized for status quo; we are criticized for change, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, that is when they lose their credibility. Either you like the way things are and you want no changes whatsoever because you can stand up and tell us day after day how perfect everything is in this Province, and if you do not think things are great and you keep criticizing and saying that everything we are doing is wrong, then we bring in changes and you say, no, you cannot change, you cannot change the way you do things because everything is perfect.

Mr. Speaker, when you have Opposition like that, as government, you keep your head down, you do your job, you do your Budget, you examine the programs within your department, and you move on. You expect nothing to be sound, critical analysis coming from the other side because they criticize change and they criticize status quo. That is how they operate.

When we developed the new Department of Advanced Education and Skills, it was important that we just did not bring two departments together and say, okay, here it is and just continue on. We have done significant work, Mr. Speaker, in integrating the various parts of the Department of Education, the post-secondary division, the Apprenticeship Division, along with Human Resources, Labour and Employment, in particular the labour market programs, Career and Employment Youth Services, and the Income Support program, to make sure we look at how we serve the people of this Province and how people best prepare for the labour market. We need to make sure that all individuals in this Province, whether they have been working and now receiving EI, or whether they were on the Income Support program, that we work with them and they have opportunity to be able to work in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes things happen in this Province that make us realize we have to institute some changes because what we have is not working. I just want to give a quick example of last year, and I will have an opportunity to speak a couple of more times on the Budget, but last year we had the situation where we had twenty temporary foreign workers come into a fish plant to work. Employers use temporary foreign workers when they are unable to get people from Newfoundland and Labrador to fill those positions. There is a process they go through.

What was very disturbing was within a fifty-kilometre radius of that fish plant we had 171 people under the age of thirty with no health issues who were receiving Income Support. Mr. Speaker, the people of this Province need the opportunity to take these jobs. I am not advocating that they were all prepared for the labour market and there was some reason they were not there. What I am saying is that we have an obligation to work with those people to ensure they have access to whether it is the educational supports they need, the pre-employment programs they need, or the programs that support them to go to

employment, whether it is our Prescription Drug Program or our child care subsidies.

Mr. Speaker, it is all right to say the programs are there, and this department exists, but if we do not start integrating the services to ensure what we have available are meeting the needs of the people, it is being done piecemeal. That is what this new department is all about. I will speak about that more.

Mr. Speaker, we have employment programs, we have jobs available. We need to make sure that we match the people to the appropriate services they need, so that they are able to contribute to the economy and increase their own self-esteem as they are out there and being able to enter the workforce.

I do not think for a minute that people in this Province are satisfied with Income Support and that is a lifestyle they aspire to, Mr. Speaker. I do think most people, if they have access to a job, would like to go to work. It is incumbent on us to support the people to be able to do that.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the nice round of applause for standing up here and having a few words.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MURPHY: There you go.

Mr. Speaker, just to address a few things that the hon. Member for Port au Port just talked about, I want to –

AN HON. MEMBER: St. George's – Stephenville East.

MR. MURPHY: Sorry, St. George's – Stephenville East; my apologies.

I wanted to address a few things she said. First of all, she addressed Muskrat Falls and talked about the federal loan guarantee. Mr. Speaker, we are pleased the NDP supported the whole idea of a loan guarantee for this project –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MURPHY: – saving the people of Newfoundland and Labrador approximately \$1 billion. We freely admit that. Why? Because that was the federal NDP's responsibility and their job to press for issues concerning Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MURPHY: As far as I am concerned, Jack Harris and Ryan Cleary did their job and they did it well, I say to the hon. member.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MURPHY: What their responsibility was not, was the responsibility that the Newfoundland and Labrador NDP had to do, and that was to make sure that, number one, this project was going to be economically viable. Number two, that it was going to be environmentally sound, Mr. Speaker, and number three, to make sure that we were still going to be able to sustain the social programs of this Province.

Mr. Speaker, Muskrat Falls failed on all three counts and this Budget is evidence of the fact – evidence of the fact.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MURPHY: This Province is running a deficit right now because the Muskrat Falls Project has proceeded. This government had the blinkers on to show that they did not have the revenue to pay for it and possibly will not in the future, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Speaker is having trouble hearing the speaker.

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

MR. MURPHY: Let the next Progressive Conservative member of this government stand up in the House next time – and I challenge him now, stand up the next time and show us how you are going to sustain all these programs, the social programs in Newfoundland and Labrador, the programs that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are asking for because it has not been done. They have a right to all of this. They pay for it with their taxes.

How about seniors? How is this government getting ready for seniors, Mr. Speaker? I am going to start on that point right off the bat. How are they going to address the problems of seniors? The CLC are saying right now that we are going to have major problems when it comes to the growth in the numbers of seniors that we are seeing. Right now it is somewhere around 87,000, and I quoted it last year in the Budget Speech, at this date it is a year old.

In the year 2030, they are talking about the possibility of having an extra 100,000 more people. Where is their plan for the future when it comes to addressing the needs of seniors? We have not seen it yet. Some of us here sitting in the House now are probably going to end up being party to whatever plan is put in place in 2030.

I will talk about the cuts to EAS and ABE funding, particularly in the next couple of minutes, that the hon. Member for St. George's – Stephenville East is dealing with right now. If you want to hear about a good argument to bring back a review of some of these programs, this is it.

The hon. Member for St. George's – Stephenville East talked about the Poverty Reduction Strategy. She knows, and all the members on the government side know as well as on the Opposition side, that the gateway to getting out of poverty is through education. What are we doing? We are hauling out one of

the very tools underneath somebody's feet who could be in a remote area of the Province, who needs it the most when it comes to Adult Basic Education.

I am sure the Member for Mount Pearl South is going to go and he is going to recruit a small company that has profit in mind to go out in some other area of the Province and try to make a profit in a smaller community where there might be two or three people who could be needing that program. We have a social responsibility to make sure that that need is going to be there for the people when they need it most. With cuts to CNA and ABE programming, it is not going to be there, Mr. Speaker, it is not.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MURPHY: That is the reason why you will not see me support this Budget. It is not going to happen, Mr. Speaker.

EAS people who were working in my own district, I can count twenty-one people right off the bat. In places like the Brother TI Murphy Centre, the Association for New Canadians, the Northeast Avalon Y is another good one. All of these people were pretty much doing the work as well as what social workers would do, they were taking people in off the street. They were giving them a shot at life. They were giving them a shot at a decent education to be able to carry on. Where is that chance gone to now, Mr. Speaker? To a private corporation that maybe will be able to teach them in the classroom if they make it there.

The EAS workers were the people, they were the go-between. They would find the people out there on the street. They would find the people who needed the service and they would get them to where the service was. There is a gap that is missing here. Strike two on that.

Where is the Poverty Reduction Strategy? While government was probably making pretty good progress on the Poverty Reduction Strategy in the first place, now they pulled the rug out from their very own team. That, Mr.

Speaker, is a shame. I will leave it there for now but I just wanted to address those particular facts.

Now, let's talk about what is happening with the Budget itself. Let's talk about the Budget document. Let's go to page ix, and I will give the viewers and the listeners out there a chance to turn over to page ix if they want to scroll down on their computers. They will find a section there called, Where The Money Comes From. I am going to tell you where the focus has been on this government. It certainly has been on people in one particular way, because the people are getting nailed for this, it is not corporations. It is not corporations in what government is projecting to make over the next year and where the money is going to come from.

I went back to the 2011-2012 Budget just to get some sort of a balance, Mr. Speaker, on exactly the way the numbers have been going. It is a little bit disturbing when you go back to the Budget and see how fast these numbers have been turning around as regards to our government, as a percentage of revenue it is getting.

Where The Money Is Coming From; if you go to the personal percentage of revenue, the Income Tax, 2011-2012 it was 12.6 per cent or \$939 million. If you go to 2012-2013 it was 16 per cent, \$1.076 billion – up the number goes. People listen to this one. The estimated Personal Income Tax revenue for 2013-2014 is 17.4 per cent.

Two things; number one it might be a good thing when it comes to personal employment, but number two, the numbers have gone up. Is that because of better jobs? Possibly, I say to the Member for Mount Pearl South, that is possible, but listen to this one. As a focus of general revenue, maybe these numbers really stayed the same and maybe it is the corporate end of things that have changed a bit. Do you think? Maybe, just maybe.

Listen to this, Mr. Speaker, when you are talking about numbers changing. The corporate

percentage of revenue in 2011-2012 was only 6.5 per cent; \$484 million in corporate taxes collected. Then you go to corporate percentage of revenue for 2012-2013, it shoots up to 11.5 per cent, \$775 million. What happened in this Budget, in estimated corporate percentage of revenue, corporate taxes? Can anybody take a guess over there on the other side of the House? It is \$375 million, a drop of \$400 million – \$400 million less. Why? Corporate tax breaks, maybe? Maybe we will go ahead and collect a little bit more off the personal income tax end of things. I do not know, Mr. Speaker, but I pose the question: Is their focus on corporations or have they lost focus on people? I tend to look at this number and I would say the focus is turned over to corporations.

Personal income taxes have risen altogether. If it is jobs, we still do not know why that corporate number is falling and we really need an answer from the Finance Minister on that. Why is there a \$400 million difference here, when if we had that \$400 million maybe we only would have had about a \$160 million shortfall to deal with? It is a good question, and it is one I hope the Finance Minister will answer when his time comes to address this. Perhaps the next member from the government side will get up and explain the \$400 million shortfall.

Is it because of falling oil revenues? Well, Mr. Speaker, last year in the Budget when they came out with \$124 a barrel, this member here was standing up and saying you are crazy. You cannot do that. There was no justification for \$124 a barrel for oil, which brings me to the next topic when it comes to the predicting of oil prices.

For last year, they came out with \$124 a barrel. I looked at some of these surveys and everything that were out there as regards to where people were going with the price of oil. I read it all. They took it all on a business perspective, Mr. Speaker. Do you know what? I did not find a single one out there. I think that government might have forgotten that in their own budgeting projections last year and possibly again this year. They forgot the realities of what consumers can afford.

They forgot the consumer. They forgot, probably, things like estimated population growth and economic growth, certain factors like that, inventory levels, and maybe the impact of shale oil resources and how they would go and affect the price of oil. All of these are very good questions. Government really needs to sit back and do a proper assessment.

No doubt the people who are coming out with their oil numbers probably have done it on their own basis. This year they have come out with about \$105 or \$107 a barrel. Government is sitting back on \$105. I think, to tell you the truth, government really wanted to go down to \$100 a barrel. I think that is where they should have gone because of certain varying factors that are out there. Number one, consumers cannot afford high prices. They cannot. That is a simple, basic fact that is happening now worldwide when it comes to oil prices. We cannot afford high prices.

Look at your electricity bill. Every time Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro wants to put up rates because of higher oil prices what happens? We turn back the lights. We start to attack Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro or Newfoundland Power because of that. No doubt they have to try to recoup costs. Is it fair? Absolutely not, I do not think so; I think that is a reason when government should be stepping in to protect the consumer when it comes to volatility of oil prices. The same as what they should have done with this Budget.

They did not go with a number that might have kept them a little bit safe. If any place that you should have gone when it comes to picking out a number, when it comes to putting out the price of oil, the first place that you would have started is how much it would have cost to actually pump the oil out of the ground. Right now they are saying \$55 a barrel. What would government do with that? I do not know, it depends on what they are doing with it now. So far in this Budget they have not done it right.

We are \$560 million in the hole. We cannot count the number of barrels we had because about two months before that it was \$1.6 billion

in the hole. What happened? We do not have full control over our own finances. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador have lost a say in exactly where the money is going. That, Mr. Speaker, is that.

I think that we can do a lot better when it comes to predicting the price of oil. As I said, if you were going to start anywhere and then work your way up, if you had to work up to a higher level, start with what it cost to actually put a well in the ground. Some people are saying about \$55 a barrel, work up from there.

When the hon. Minister of Finance stood up and gave that wage increase as they were talking about earlier, the 4, 8, 4, and 4, on December 23, 2008, oil that month – when he stood up and did his press conference down there at the media centre – averaged \$42 a barrel for Brent. It is a fact. What I am saying is that is lots of room here for government to work with right now based on \$100 a barrel if they wanted to. Let's see where they go. I will leave it at that.

I wanted to get up and say a few more things. Obviously one of the departments that I wanted to come to again – talking about cuts, Mr. Speaker, which were wrong for government to do in this particular case, not only with EAS and ABE, and putting people out to work where it really matters, where it would have been a cornerstone for the economy carrying on with education. I am not going to touch on schools yet, I am pretty sure that my cohort from St. John's North will be tackling the school issue. I will touch on it again myself too later on when it comes to it.

No doubt I wanted to touch on environment and conservation, Mr. Speaker, cuts to wildlife and what it means for this Province. The implications of giving lower corporate income tax would probably see in return a boom in the industrialization of this Province. Now at this juncture of our provincial economic history and security of our environment, now they are cutting to environment?

When we need it most, Mr. Speaker, they are making all these cuts. They are talking about

the possibility of bringing in fracking for oil on the West Coast. We are talking about industrial development in Labrador, which may or may not be a good thing in some people's minds. No doubt the Treasury needs it but it is coming at a cost. Possibly at a cost to our natural heritage, because long after industry is gone we are probably going to have to be-

MS ROGERS: Stuck with the mess.

MR. MURPHY: Stuck with the mess, exactly.

We already have a long heritage of being stuck with the mess now, for example, Abitibi. For example, the holding pond that breached –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is still debt. These are environmental liabilities we are talking about. Somebody has to deal with the clean up of the mess.

In the case of Abitibi, it is somewhere around \$110 million. I think that is the number that is kicking around. We can go back to the Hope Brook Gold Mine, the year before last I think government had to put \$25 million into the clean up of various chemicals that were out there, speaking of fracking. We are talking about \$25 million in Hope Brook Gold Mine. No doubt the mine is working now at \$1,300 or \$1,400 an ounce for gold. If it shuts down again who is going to get to clean up the mess?

We had an environmental disaster, almost an emergency, happen, Mr. Speaker, out just north of the community of South Brook where a holding pond for a former mine breached. The water came down over the bank, got into the river and almost contaminated the water supply. We almost lost it. It is shameful that we could not keep up on inspections.

It is shameful that this government did not have a plan to have monies put aside by these major corporations so that we would have some form of redress in the end because we know that they are going to leave. You know they are going to leave us hanging. You know that somebody else is going to have to clean up the mess and you know that it is probably going to be in somebody's backyard. To this government, right now it is out of sight and out of mind.

MR. LANE: How do you know that? Do you know that? (Inaudible).

MR. MURPHY: Fracking is underground so it does not exist, I say to the Member for Mount Pearl South. It does not matter to him if it is happening out in Port au Port or in the confines of a national park on the Northern Peninsula or in Sally's Cove. It is not happening out in Mount Pearl, so it does not count. Little does he know that the revenues that would come from it would probably be going to Mount Pearl South, and rightly so if we do it right.

This government has not taken the time out yet to redevelop the regulations around fracking. Right now, Mr. Speaker, they have not come out with regulations on holding ponds, they have not come out with regulations on environmental cleanup, who is going to end up cleaning it up, what those chemicals are going to be, the protection of people's water supplies, and everything. We do not have it yet. We are a long way from it, but they are talking about doing it, pretty much yesterday rather than tomorrow when we have all the checks and balances put in place.

That is the only reason people are calling for a moratorium on it, but we cannot throw a few dollars aside that would be going into the Provincial Treasury and let it wait until we have a federal government report come out on it. No, Mr. Speaker, we need it now because we are in the hole. That will be two of them in the hole, the oil companies and the government. That is all we need is to jump in with them.

Mr. Speaker, back to Wildlife, eleven people employed – I think it was six and five when it

comes to full-time and vacant positions. They were working in Sustainable Development and Strategic Science, three in Biodiversity and Ecosystem Science, three who were working with pollution, one in pesticides whose job was repositioned, one in Waste Management, four in Water Resources, and one layoff who was doing water investigations.

Two were working with Endangered Species and Biodiversity. Mr. Speaker, do you know where some of those endangered species are? Right over where they are talking about smacking those drill bits into the earth. They cannot wait to get rid of the species there now that are endangered, right over on the Port au Port Peninsula anywhere around the Robinsons River and in areas that are close to Gros Morne Park. Once you lose it, it is gone and it is gone forever, the same as the oil that was sucked out of the ground – gone forever.

There were six people in Stewardship and Education, talk about learning. I would be remiss – two important positions, one lost in Witless Bay at the Ecological Reserve and one in St. Mary's that was lost as well. These people were educators. They were protecting our natural heritage. Government has cut too much from natural heritage. They have cut too much from Environment and Conservation.

They need to rethink the strategy. Why? There are a couple of good, compelling arguments here, Mr. Speaker. I challenge the next Tory government member to get up and find \$400 million in the books as we found it here now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Baie Verte – Springdale.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. POLLARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am so depressed, so disparaged, I do not know if I can speak now. The fumes coming from the gas tax man over there has

clouded the issue and contaminated the environment. Let's go and get our gas masks.

On a more serious note, Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege and an honour to speak in this hon. House to Budget 2013. I just want to thank the people of the District of Baie Verte – Springdale for placing their confidence in me. I am here today because of that. I am proud to wear the PC banner.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. POLLARD: I am also proud to serve under our Premier –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. POLLARD: – who has shown principled leadership, based decisions on a caring heart and sound policies, a genuine person, knowledgeable person, knows the issues of the day, knows rural Newfoundland, knows urban Newfoundland, and understands all the issues. Just like JFK said years ago: When the going gets tough, the tough get going. This Premier is resolute and sound in all that she does. I am proud to be part of this team.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. POLLARD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge not only the work of the Premier and the Cabinet, but the Finance Minister and his officials for the outstanding work that they have done on Budget 2013. Their tenacity, their hard work, is much appreciated; they spent a lot of sleepless nights trying to craft a Budget that would suit the economics of the time.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, Budget 2013 was a tough and arduous process. We do not take glory in job losses as the Premier said and some other members said the same thing. It is painful; it impacted all of us, our friends and families as well.

Mr. Speaker, having said that, government has to govern responsibly. Given the economic times that we have, we have to make smart, wise decisions; and yes, even tough decisions, not to

serve our egos, but to serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. This government, this Premier, looked at the big picture and made decisions in Budget 2013 to suit the economic times.

Mr. Speaker, before I go on any further though, this being National Volunteer Week, Let's Make Some Noise – that is the theme – why not give a good round of applause to all the volunteers right across Newfoundland and Labrador and in my own district as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. POLLARD: One hundred and ninety-seven thousand right across this great Province. What a heart they have, Mr. Speaker, unselfish, caring, does things for the intrinsic value, no reward whatsoever, just a handshake, just a thank you. We want to thank the volunteers for their time, talent, energy, effort, and unselfish heart to serve this great Province of ours.

They contribute immensely to economic development and social development, Mr. Speaker. From my own experience, I spent seven years at the municipal level, four years as the Mayor of Springdale. Mr. Speaker, I must say that was a very enriching, a very rewarding experience. I hope that I did make some contribution to that town with my council.

Mr. Speaker, I did have the opportunity last Saturday night to attend the Baie Verte forty-seventh Firemen's Ball. It was very, very well-organized. I would like to congratulate the fire chief Darrell Barker for twenty years of service, and of course, Kyle Payne who was selected as the firefighter of the year. It is nicely fitting, Mr. Speaker, since it is Volunteer Week, to recognize that we can spend fifty-two weeks and it still would not be enough to recognize the immense contribution that volunteers make to the society of Newfoundland and Labrador in general.

As a government, we do recognize volunteers; we do appreciate them. That is the reason why our Premier launched the Office of Public Engagement, just to acknowledge the

tremendous work that our volunteers do. By the way, that department is doing a tremendous job as well.

Mr. Speaker, back to Budget 2013 – *Budget 2013: A Sound Plan, A Secure Future* gives legs to our vision. It tells us how to reach our goal in our vision. You might say the word vision that a lot of people talked about it and said what is a vision. There is a proverb which says without a vision, people perish. I would just like to add to that, go a little further, and say without a vision, towns perish. Without a vision, nations perish. Without a vision, schools perish. Without a vision, organizations perish. Yes, without a vision, even governments perish as well.

It is important to have a vision. Why? Because it keeps us moving forward. If we have a vision we will not become stagnant, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, just listen to this. This is an interesting definition. I would like to liken that vision to the banks of a river. You say, well, what is the purpose of the bank of a river? Well, the banks keep the river flowing in a certain direction, in a set direction. The river stays its course, keeps its course, no collateral damage whatsoever. It remains going in a certain direction and it reaches its goal, what it set out to do; but, Mr. Speaker, just imagine a river without banks. I guess a river without banks would be a stagnant pond, stagnation.

Picture a river meandering downstream. If the banks are gone or certain parts of the bank are gone there will be a lot of damage. The river will be making a lot of damage, taking whatever is there away, and any kind of debris. The river would have no focus, no set direction and most likely it will not reach its goal. It destroys everything in its path and never reaches its destination. I liken that to the parties on the opposite side, Mr. Speaker. They have no vision. Like the banks of the river, it is not there. Just like the opposite side, no vision.

Also, I have been sitting here two or three weeks now and I have heard a lot of rhetoric. The rhetoric flows from their mouth like lava. Just like lava flows or erupts from a bursting

volcano, cascading down the slippery slopes of a volcano, taking a lot of debris with it and destroying.

Budget 2013, A Sound Plan, A Secure Future.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of things in there that are positive. I would just like to dwell on a couple as a former mayor. I got a little biased there, Mr. Speaker, so you will have to forgive me.

When I read it, I was very, very pleased to see that Budget 2013 has MOG's intact. The present level still stays there, but beginning January 1, 2014 there is going to be a new formula. Most of the communities with less than 11,000 will receive even more under that new formula. That is fantastic news, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. POLLARD: I talked to the mayor – I think I contacted four or five mayors or all of them in fact. Just as an example of a few: Burlington, they will receive from \$27,000 up to \$40,000; King's Point, \$50,000 up to \$72,000; Middle Arm, \$37,000 up to \$57,000; Springdale, \$158,000 to \$204,000. These are some examples, Mr. Speaker, of the impact this new formula will have on communities in my district. The mayors and councils are very, very pleased to see it in this Budget. I am also very, very tickled pink as well, as the saying goes, Mr. Speaker, to hear that.

AN HON. MEMBER: He is still blue.

MR. POLLARD: Still blue though, of course, thank you.

With communities over 11,000, Mr. Speaker, there is \$25 million set aside for municipal capital works as well. By the way, for communities with less than 11,000 people, which is everyone in my district, close to thirty-eight, thirty-nine and forty, they are less than 11,000 people that have cost the government \$22 million. That is positive news, Mr. Speaker.

Another feature of Budget 2013 – I have you all in suspense – A Sound Plan, A Secure Future, is the provincial Roads Improvement Program is not touched. The funding still remains intact. In fact, if I remember correctly, it is \$59 million. I chatted with the Minister of Transportation and Works. He informed me that that funding is there. The Premier insisted that it would be there.

This is good news for a lot of communities right across Newfoundland and Labrador – \$59 million, I might add, Mr. Speaker. It could have been reduced. The Cabinet, Premier, and Finance Minister had that discretion but they saw fit to keep that in the Budget because it is so important. As a government, we are committed to enhanced roadwork. My district again, I will use that as an example, Mr. Speaker. A lot of times I get up and I do not mention enough about what is happening in my district, so I do not get the message out there like I should.

As an example, in the past ten years or more I would estimate at least \$20 million or over in Baie Verte – Springdale District on roadwork alone. Now, if you cannot brag about that, what are you going to brag about? The sky is not falling and the roof is not going to cave in. That is an outstanding investment.

We have paved Westport, Brent's Cove, Harbour Round, six kilometres of the Fleur de Lys road, Coachman's Cove, three kilometres to La Scie road, and \$1 million for the gravel road in Nippers Harbour. That is on the Baie Verte Peninsula alone, Mr. Speaker.

On the Green Bay side, for example, six kilometres to the Springdale road. Harry's Harbour road, about eight, nine or ten kilometres of gravel road, that is all paved now, Mr. Speaker. The Devils Drop in King's Point, we call that. Then we have six kilometres for Beachside, Little Bay, St. Patricks, and Coffee Cove road.

AN HON. MEMBER: You have them all.

MR. POLLARD: Some members are getting jealous now, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we have a lot more. I am hearing some people now.

I know the communities right now, if they hear me, I know what they are saying now. I can hear them in Seal Cove, La Scie, Nippers Harbour, Shoe Cove, Fleur de Lys saying there is more if we need more. Yes, I agree, but the Budget is limited. We are doing a great job. We cannot do it all at the one time. I wish we could. If this government had all the funds – if we had our money tree like the other side over there, we would click a button and we could have it all, but so much per year, Mr. Speaker, and hopefully we will get to the others later on.

Mr. Speaker, in the last few years we have invested over \$5 billion in infrastructure alone, the last five, six, seven years or so. Now, \$5 billion is a small amount. Mr. Speaker, \$5 billion in roads, bridges, ferries, ferry terminals, hospitals, roads, water bombers, you name it. We have changed the face of Newfoundland when it comes to public infrastructure, Mr. Speaker.

That infrastructure spending stimulated the economy. It created new job opportunities. It made our communities and towns and people a lot stronger. It made them more sustainable, made them more vibrant of the day. So, Mr. Speaker, the glass is half full on this side of the House, certainly not half empty. It is right full, Mr. Speaker. We have rebuilt this Province.

Mr. Speaker, in the last few years as well, as has been mentioned already, we have reduced debt by \$4 billion. Now, that is nothing to sneeze at. I will say it again, Mr. Speaker, just in case they never heard it. It is \$4 billion, 28 per cent in debt reduction.

In 2003-2004, if I can remember it correctly, twenty-three cents of every dollar went to servicing the interest on the debt. Today, ten point nine – almost eleven cents out of every dollar is servicing debt. It put everything into perspective; yet, the major, major progress, that is outstanding progress but we still have a lot of work to do. It is still costing to service the debt,

\$800 million a year; but, by reducing debt we have a lot more money now to put on roads and hospitals and schools, like the opposite side of the House over there demand all the time, Mr. Speaker.

We have more money. In fact, half a billion dollars a year we have saved in reducing debt, Mr. Speaker. That is something to brag about. We should be bragging about it, Mr. Speaker. We should put the positive message out there to override the negative all the time.

Mr. Speaker, yes, we have reduced taxes as well, to the tune of half a billion dollars. We have put half a billion dollars, since 2008, cumulatively, into the pockets of ordinary Newfoundlanders and Labradorians like myself. We can go out and spend money on a hockey stick, or ice cream, or take trips here and there, Mr. Speaker, all over the place. Money is in the pockets of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Half a billion dollars we have saved, and more disposable income, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have come such a long way. We are not going to throw in the towel and jeopardize all this work that has been done, and jeopardize our future. In fact, since 2003, as was mentioned earlier, investments in health have had a 142 per cent increase – a 142 per cent increase. That is a phenomenal increase, \$1.2 billion up now to \$2.9 billion. Education increased 70 per cent, if I can read it, from \$700 million today to \$1.2 billion or \$1.3 billion.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to apologize or be ashamed of these investments. That is outstanding. I am certainly proud to be part of a government and be part of a team that has made such progress in the last seven, eight, nine, or ten years or so. We have come too far.

Just listen to this, Mr. Speaker. This is an interesting tidbit, something for the tweeters over there: not borrowed since 2004 for operational purposes. Isn't that awesome? Let us examine the concept of a have Province because I have heard people say, well, a have Province, there is nothing to have about this. It is a terrible ad on television. It creates a dark

cloud over the entire Province. I am a have person. We are a have Province. We are a have people.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. POLLARD: What does it mean to be a have Province? Let us park here for one moment, what does it mean? It does not mean we are rich. We are just paying our own way. We are standing on our own two feet. We are masters of our own destiny, Mr. Speaker, and we are masters of our own household. That is something. You cannot put a number on pride.

Do you know what? Because of this, we can make independent choices now, Mr. Speaker. We have independent choices and we make our own decisions, which will impact our own destiny. We are not dependent on anybody else right now for our own destiny. We have our own destiny in our own hands. We shape and carve our own destiny right now. We have that capacity.

A few years back, we never had that capacity, Mr. Speaker. You would get some people complaining, well, we are a have-not Province, my goodness sakes. Anyway, I am getting riled up.

Ever since 1957 we have been on equalization payments. We never cut the umbilical cord. Mr. Speaker, 1957, since its implementation, we were receiving equalization payments. We could not stand on our own two feet. We would be going around with our chins low carving or furrowing in the sand, that deep, because we were so despondent and despaired. We could not even look up.

Now we have pride, Mr. Speaker. We no longer receive transfer payments. We pay our own way, just like Alberta, just like BC, just like Saskatchewan, and we are a Province as well. Only four jurisdictions and we are one of them. I am proud to say that. I am proud to say that 80 per cent of our revenues are generated by ourselves now. What a difference.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. POLLARD: Just in a measly ten years, that is how much work we have done, Mr. Speaker. That is amazing and we have to keep that message out there. We are going to keep investing in families, keep investing in education, and keep investing in health care. We are going to keep investing in infrastructure, towns, communities, for a sound, solid, secure future.

Budget 2013 is about responsible government. It is about responsible management. It is about fiscal management. It is about responsible decisions. It is about responsible stewardship, Mr. Speaker. Good stewardship and a secure future, which outlines a long-term Sustainability Plan based on what? Three pillars: a more efficient government, a more effective government that will invest in diversified growth, innovation and a vibrant economy. We will also protect vital programs and services that are important to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Keep our heads high. We are proud people; we are Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, Mr. Speaker. Have a good weekend everybody.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe in criticizing just for the sake of criticizing. I also believe in giving credit where credit is due. In my comments today, I am going to outline some of the things that I think government are doing right and some that they are not doing right. People can say with every government that some governments make mistakes, and perhaps every government does.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the Poverty Reduction Strategy just to start. There are many good aspects to the Poverty Reduction Strategy. In many regards, government is to be commended for some of the work that they have done with the Poverty Reduction Strategy. I

know that other provinces across Canada have recognized this Province to be a leader with that strategy, and have modelled their strategies after our Poverty Reduction Strategy.

I will recognize that government has done good work in that regard. Have they solved all of the problems? Absolutely not, there is more work to be done there. Since the Poverty Reduction Strategy was implemented, Mr. Speaker, and it has been implemented for several years, we have seen an increase in the number of people going to food banks in this Province. Those people are falling between the cracks. Why? We will get into that in a little bit, why I believe that is happening.

We see an increase in the number of people going to soup kitchens. I know, Mr. Speaker, because I volunteer from time to time at one of the soup kitchens in my district. I have seen an increase year over year of the number of people who visit that soup kitchen. Four or five years ago there were about sixty people who used to show up Fridays to take advantage of the offerings of the soup kitchen. Today, there is close to 200 people show up every Friday. There is an increase in the number of people using soup kitchens.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen an issue with homelessness and with couch surfing, particularly I would say in the St. John's area. We have seen an increase in the number of people couch surfing and issues with homelessness. There are people falling between the cracks, even though there is the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

How do we solve that? Well, I cannot say that I have all of the answers, but I can say that with an improved economy in the St. John's area, an increased demand on rental properties, and rental rates going up in the St. John's area – for example, I know in my district rental rates have increased – it puts the disadvantaged at a greater disadvantage, Mr. Speaker.

People who are finding it difficult to pay their rent, keep the lights on, and keep food in the fridge, are now finding themselves couch surfing

because they could not afford to pay the rent. That is a problem. We as legislators have a responsibility to try and address that problem. Government, through the Poverty Reduction Strategy, has an obligation to try and find out why that is.

I know there has been talk of rental control. I know that in other provinces when you look at rental control, there are problems with that. There are some benefits, but there are some problems, so that may or may not be the answer. I know with Income Support, Income Support rates have not increased to the same level as rental rates have increased in the metro area. That is part of the problem.

While government has increased minimum wage – and we have seen an increase in the minimum wage over the past number of years and many people applaud that – it still does not cover the fact that rental rates for a one-bedroom apartment six or eight years ago was \$500, maybe \$600 a month at the most, and now you are looking at \$700 or \$800 a month. The increase in the minimum wage does not offset the increase in the rental rate. Blue collars workers, the working poor and people hovering just above the poverty line, who are renting, find it difficult to rent.

While I commend government on the Poverty Reduction Strategy, and I will say that there are many, many good aspects to that strategy, there are people who are falling between the cracks and we need to find a way of fixing that.

Mr. Speaker, I will talk about Newfoundland and Labrador Housing in my district because my district is one of the districts in the Province with the highest number of housing units. I know I do not have the highest in my district. I think St. John's North has the highest number of housing units in their district; St. John's Centre and St. John's South are probably very close for second and third highest number of housing units in their district. I also have a number of St. John's housing units in my district, which I do not believe St. John's North does and St. John's Centre may have some but to a much lesser degree. Overall, the number of housing units in

my district is probably closer to that of St. John's North.

Mr. Speaker, I will commend government again, and criticize them, with some aspects to housing. Since that government has come to power they have decreased the rental rates from 30 per cent of household income to 25 per cent, which was part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy and that was a good policy.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to repairs to the housing units, I know in my district over the past year or so there has been funding provided for the replacement of windows, for some roofs, and for outside repairs to units. While I have looked to Newfoundland and Labrador Housing for some of those repairs – we have had some repairs in the Shea Heights area, in the Livingstone Street area, Brazil Street area, just to name a few, and those were needed repairs, much needed repairs. I thank government for addressing those issues, but there still are a very large number of housing units in my district that are in disrepair.

I do not expect government to go out tomorrow and repair every one of those because I know that money is not in the Budget, and I understand that. I do say that if the City of St. John's were to look at Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, some of those units compared to some of the private units, they would find that some of the units are certainly not at an acceptable standard – when you have windows that are literally ready to fall out in some units, roofs that are leaking and have been leaking for several months or in excess of a year, mould issues in some of the units.

I will say that some of the units, not only in my district, throughout the Province certainly need additional repairs. I will continue to push Housing for the repairs to those units and bring to their attention some of the issues that I find as we get inquiries and as I see housing units that are in disrepair.

I will commend government – I know that the T.I. Murphy Centre has received funding from government and that people within the T.I.

Murphy Centre received valuable educational training. There are programs for the health life plan which include healthy eating, physical activity, and so on. They are to be commended for the funding that has been put that way.

At the same time, you look at the T.I. Murphy Centre, you look at the John Howard Society and every other AES facility in the Province who have had positions cut and are not able to provide that educational training that they did at one point. Government will say well, they can do it in-house just as good or better; but I will say, for example, the T.I. Murphy Centre has developed an expertise, if you would, in what they are doing. I will say that the John Howard Society, Mr. Speaker, deals with a clientele that probably would not feel as comfortable going into a government office as they would into the John Howard Society, who have a great deal of experience, proven experience, in dealing with their clientele. Government, in that regard, I have to say I am not pleased and I am not happy with the decisions that they have made.

Choices for Youth in my district have received funding. I think that again in this year's Budget, Choices for Youth had received funding. I commend government for that because the clientele at Choices For Youth and the people they serve, Mr. Speaker, are amongst the disadvantaged, troubled youth, not only in my district. While Choices for Youth are located within my district, they serve people from in and around the St. John's area, and not only St. John's, but within the metro area, I would say.

Stella Burry, who operates throughout the city, not only in my district but in other districts as well, has received funding. That is a fantastic organization and they provide safe and stable housing for individuals who find it difficult to find that housing. I will say when individuals face barriers in trying to obtain safe and stable housing other aspects of their lives are challenges as well. So I will commend government on the funding they have provided to Stella Burry, and I will say that Stella Burry provide a great service to the people of the Province and the people of the St. John's area.

Mr. Speaker, I know I have about eight minutes left to speak.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. OSBORNE: There is another issue I would wish to speak on as well. I want to talk about some of the planning that government has done. We will talk about last year's Budget because each and every person in this House who would be honest with themselves and honest with the general public would say that when government projected \$124 a barrel of oil and based their Budget projections on that last year, that most people in the Province who pay attention to the Budget and who understand the revenue derived by this Province from a barrel of oil would understand that planning, Mr. Speaker, and that foresight not only was way off base, but was totally, totally unrealistic. To expect that a barrel of oil would be on average for every day of the last fiscal year at \$124 a barrel was absolutely ridiculous.

That only compounded the problems that government faced in this year's Budget, Mr. Speaker, because it created a deficit that most people looking at the Budget and understanding, knowing that oil would not reach and maintain a level of \$124 a barrel on average for every day of the year, it was going to create a deficit issue. I know when I was on that side of the House government took a focus of underestimating a barrel of oil because it was safer to underestimate. If oil did not reach its projected value, then at least you did not have a deficit. If it met its projected value or above you had a surplus. It is much better to have a surplus than a deficit. Having a deficit on last year's Budget created problems on this year's Budget. We have seen people laid off, people packing their boxes and going home, in part, because of poor planning and poor projections.

Mr. Speaker, just a few short months ago we saw government project that there was going to be a \$1.6 billion deficit within this Budget year. Less than two months later, they shaved \$1

billion off that. It is only going to be between \$500 million and \$600 million deficit this year.

What numbers are we to believe? What numbers are the people of the Province to believe, that a couple of months ago the deficit was going to be \$1.6 billion, and a couple of months later it is only going to be \$600 million? I hope it is only \$600 million. If a projection of \$1.6 billion was made just a couple of short months ago and now it is between \$500 million and \$600 million, how are we to believe which of those numbers is accurate?

You look at the credit rating of AAA on Muskrat Falls. I will commend government again on receiving the loan guarantee from the federal government. That loan guarantee will save this Province a great deal of money. It has helped to achieve that AAA credit rating on Muskrat Falls; there is absolutely no doubt about that.

I will say that government is to be commended for receiving the loan guarantee. Mr. Speaker, I will also say that if I set up a business in which my clientele were absolutely guaranteed – and I knew that I had a total monopoly on the service that I provided. I had, as part of that monopoly, a guaranteed return from every one of those customers. Not only did I have a guaranteed return, Mr. Speaker, but the product that I was selling, the product that I manufactured, I could charge my clientele for every item that I manufactured, even though I was going to sell them part of it and I was going to sell some of it to somebody else, that my clientele were going to pay for all of that product – that is essentially what Muskrat Falls does.

Of course we have an AAA rating. You go to the bond rating agencies, you get an AAA rating, because every kilowatt of electricity coming from Muskrat Falls will be paid for by the people of this Province – every kilowatt will be paid for by the people of this Province; yet the surplus power that is going to be sent to the mainland and sold to the mainland is paid for by the people of this Province and we are going to sell it and get additional revenue there. We are going to get additional revenue.

So, I see a problem with that, Mr. Speaker. I see a problem with saying that the people of this Province have to pay for all of the electricity, even though they are not going to get all of the electricity, they are going to pay for all of the electricity, then we are going to take some of it and sell it again and get a double income on part of that electricity.

Well, of course, Mr. Speaker, absolutely of course they got an AAA rating. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the people of the Province are paying for all of that and should not be. Yet, when we had the debate in this House, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I asked for was to ensure that the surplus energy that was sold to the mainland, the revenue that came from that, that we guaranteed that the rate calculator that Nalcor used and told the people this is going to be the rate you are going to pay – and people said well, this is a good project. If that is what we are going to pay and it is going to be guaranteed, yes, I can see that this is a good project.

Well, if we were going to tell people that those were the rates on the rate calculator, government should guarantee it. Government should guarantee that that is what the rates are going to be. Even if they use some of the surplus energy that they are going to sell and receive a second income on to ensure that the rates that we showed on the rate calculator were guaranteed.

Mr. Speaker, I will just shift direction a little bit again on what I am going to speak about, because I have got a little more than a minute now to make some additional remarks. We look at what happened on Tessier Place in my district just recently. While I am not saying that what happened there is the fault of government – I am not saying that at all. What happened there was very unfortunate. It was unfortunate for the individual there who had lost his life and it is unfortunate for the area residents that law enforcement officials had known for close to two years what was happening there, but just could not gather sufficient evidence to lay charges that they knew would stick in court.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods legislation that was brought in here in 2007. That legislation had gone through a great deal of feedback. There were individuals and groups across the Province who we received feedback from on that legislation. That legislation was brought to Cabinet committees and passed, it was brought to Cabinet and approved by Cabinet, and then it was brought to this Legislature and debated by both sides of the House. It was passed by both sides of this House, yet it was never proclaimed into law. If we had proclaimed that legislation into law, Mr. Speaker, that could have saved a life.

MR. SPEAKER: I remind the hon. member that his time has expired.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the time to speak.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I see by the clock on the wall that it is late in the afternoon; it is Thursday and it is the last day of the sitting of the House – it is a great privilege and I appreciate and thank you for recognizing me this afternoon so I can have a chance to end this week of debate.

I want to continue on where the hon. member opposite was going because he was talking about the safety of communities. When you talk about the safety of communities, you are talking about the people of the Province and securing the safety of the Province.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, quite clearly, through my lifetime and as everybody here in the House is aware and most people in the Province are aware, I spent a full career of policing in Newfoundland and Labrador; I spent a career in policing in many different ways. I spent time as a patrol officer, responding to calls

and twenty-four hour service. I was an investigator in the Criminal Investigation Division. I served on the West Coast for a number of years, over in Corner Brook.

I can tell you that when you talk about safety, you talk about violence and you talk about crime, I have seen my share of crime in this Province. I have seen my share of the results of crime and violence in this Province. I have seen far too much of it. I would not know where to begin if I had to start trying to reiterate stories or events and experiences that I have had.

I will tell you – I back up a little bit before that. In policing, when I decided back when I was a young man that I wanted to pursue a career in policing, and I decided I would, I was preparing to go away for training. I went to Prince Edward Island for training. I know some of my friends then were saying, oh, you are going to be a cop, Davis. You get a bit of a jeering and that kind of thing. You grow a little bit of a skin. You start to grow a little bit of a hide because people are starting to push you a little bit.

Then when you get in the police academy, I can tell you before long, I was not off the bus, Mr. Speaker, from the airport to the police academy when they started in on us. They started in pushing us. They started in testing us. You have to learn to be able to control how you respond to it. There is a good reason why you do it. At the police academy, you grow a skin and you grow another skin. You grow a hide and you learn that what people say to you and what people try to make you do, you have to try to be in control of what you do.

When I came back and I started policing in St. John's, I spent a lot of time policing in downtown St. John's early in my career. You learn very quickly then you better very quickly grow another hide because then you are in the real world and you really start to learn how nasty and how difficult people can be. It took me a little while to figure out that whether you show up to a call, or you show up to a disturbance, or you show up to a place, people would start in on you. They would attack you personally. They

would throw insults at you. They sometimes would physically attack you.

You become a victim of assault and verbal attacks. Really nasty and personal things would be said at you. You start to realize, they do not even know me. They do not know anything about me, yet they continue to attack me because you represent something. You have to learn to deal with that. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, I know police officers who went into policing and could not deal with that and ended their careers early, or decided this is not for me. I respect that, because it is not cut out for everybody.

As I went along in policing through the years, I matured and I started to learn more. I learned a rule from a man from the District of Carbonear, actually, from a police officer from Harbour Grace, a man from the Carbonear district. A police officer I met in Corner Brook. When I met him, he said to me: Corner Brook is a small place. My wife was working there and she was working in a private business. He said: Really quickly, people are going to form an opinion of you. He said: What I recommend to you is that you treat everybody with respect, no matter what they have done because they have not done it to you, and focus on your job. Your job is to resolve that circumstance.

If a crime has been committed, your job is to look after the person who has been victimized as a crime and to collect evidence. Your job is to protect people, to protect property, and to prevent crime. He said, don't forget that. If you treat everybody with respect, he said you will get it back over and over and over. It is a good rule. It is the golden rule, and we all know that. It is very much the golden rule, but it also works in policing. It also works in politics, and it also works in life when you treat people properly.

When I was an investigator, Mr. Speaker, in the CID back in the 1990s, I was working in the break and entry unit. I was assigned to a particular area, and I will not mention it. We had a real run on a problem in residential break and entries for a little while in a particular neighbourhood.

I learned from my partner, who was working with me at the time. We started to round up the people who were responsible. We laid a lot of charges in a short period of time and apprehended a lot of people who were responsible. He used to say to them, especially young people, he used to use this term. This is what he used to say to them: If you lie down with dogs you are going to get fleas. That is what he used to tell them. He used to tell kids all the time: If you lie down with dogs you are going to get fleas. What that really means –

MR. BENNETT: (Inaudible).

MR. DAVIS: I hear the insults coming from the Member for St. Barbe. You can insult me personally all you want, I say to the Member from St. Barbe, because you cannot say anything to me that has never been said to me in my lifetime, I can tell you that. You can throw at me whatever you want to over there, I say to the Member from St. Barbe, and you are not going to stop me from saying what I have to say this afternoon. You can continue with your insults, you go right ahead. I am going to get on with what I want to say. That is what I am going to do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DAVIS: I am not going to be bullied by you. I will not be bullied by you, I say to the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the hon. minister to direct his comments to the Chair.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is a good example of trying to control yourself, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes you get a little bit upset here in the House.

Getting back to what my partner was saying, he said if you lay down with dogs you are going to get fleas and it was a good piece of advice. It was a good piece of information. It applies to so much, because what it means is you will become

your environment. What you choose as your environment is what you become. You become your environment.

If you choose friends and people who like sports, and that is the friends you like to gel with and spend your time with is with sports, you will participate in sports and you will watch sports. That is what you will spend your time at because that is what your environment is about. If you like people who like to study and learn and read, I say to the member opposite, then you become that. If you want to go to the library and read and become an academic, if you want to do those types of things, go right ahead, because you become your environment.

What is really interesting, Mr. Speaker, is how social media now has affected all of this. Social media has now affected where our environments are, because one time your environment was where you went. If you go to a coffee shop, who do you sit with? You go to places that you like to relax in, you go to a restaurant, you go to a bar, or you go to a friend's house. You choose the friends you go to. Now you can do that so quickly through social media and through the Internet, but we choose where we go. Before there was social media we chose what Web sites we went on. We chose what Web sites we wanted to visit and look at.

If you wanted to sign up as a membership somewhere, if you liked recipes and you want to go on a Web site that has recipes, because that is what you liked, that was the environment you chose to enter on to. When you go to social media and when you go into Facebook, you can pick your environment as well. You can decide where you want to go and where you want to visit; but, unfortunately, there is also bullying and threats and intimidation and those types of things that occur in social media.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I tell you, someone might go into my Facebook and start attaching me to something else or they can make comments to me, and as I have told you, I have grown a few hides over the years. I have done that and I have accepted that.

I also know, Mr. Speaker, that when I put up my hand because I wanted to become a politician, some people will say to me: Well, Davis that is what you signed up for. Yeah, you are right. If you want to criticize my policies, if you want to criticize my decisions, if you want to criticize how I vote in the House of Assembly, you go ahead and criticize me, because that is what I put my hand up for.

Recently, when we went through the Budget process, which I am going to tell you was a tough process. One day I was having a chat with the Premier, and she said to me what has been said to her before. She shared it with me. She said: Paul, this is not what you signed up for is it? This is a tough process. This is not what you put your hand up for is it? I said: No, Premier, I am going to tell you it is not. It is really not Premier.

When I decided to be a politician, when I decided to put my hand up and run for office, did I want to make those hard decisions that we have had to go through with the Budget process? Because we could have easily ran up the debt. We could have easily done that. We could have easily spent more money like the NDP wants us to do spend, spend, spend. We could have put up taxes and charged more taxes to people. We could have done all those easy things to do, but I am going to tell you, it takes a principled person and a principled government to make those hard and difficult decisions. We have done that. If you want to criticize me for that, you criticize me for that. I will tell you what does not rest with me. What does not rest with me is when we cross that line.

As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, through my lifetime I have seen more than enough violence, threats and intimidation. I have seen too many lives destroyed, I have seen too many families destroyed, and I have seen too many people destroyed by the way they were treated with other people.

When you cross the line, Mr. Speaker, and you utter threats and death threats. You wish death upon somebody because they come here on principle, they come here and they chose to

govern. They represent their people and they do the best they can because that is what we put up our hand for. Because they threaten their lives, they threaten to blow up someone's house. Where have we gone?

I did not sign up for that. I told the Premier no, that is not what I put my hand up for. I am willing to stay here and make those tough decisions I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, because we have a Province to run. We have a Province to run with a bright future. You can intimidate me all you want. The members opposite can say what they like about me, but I am going to tell you I will continue to make my best efforts to be a member of this government and to do the best job that I can. That is what we all put our hand up for, I say to all members on both sides of the House.

When you wanted to run for politics I say to the Member for The Straits – White Bay North, you wanted to make an impact in your own community. You wanted to make a difference in your own community. He is shaking his head no, but I do not think he means that. You wanted to make a difference in your own community. We all wanted to do that. We all wanted to have a positive influence in our communities. We did that. That is what we put our hand up for. When we sit over here, I am going to tell you it is a tough job to do. It is a tough job. It has an effect on us, and it has an effect on our families.

I know people whose lives and jobs have been interrupted and interfered because they have lost their work as a public servant. I know lots of people like that, and I have talked to many of them. It is not like I have been sitting in some kind of bubble somewhere and I do not care because I do not know these people and it does not affect me. It does affect me and it affects every member of our government. It affects every member of our Cabinet, and it affects everyone here in the House of Assembly. For someone to think otherwise has completely lost the point. It is not easy work. If anyone thinks it is, they are sadly mistaken.

We make a lot of sacrifices as individuals to come in here, the members of the House of Assembly, to be representative of our districts and to be ministers in our government. We make a lot of sacrifices; we make a lot of personal sacrifices. We travel, we spend hours on end – how many days this week have I been here by 7:00 o'clock and I am here until 10:00 o'clock at night. That is not unusual. Not only me, and not only members of our Cabinet and the other ministers here, but also we have senior civil servants who spend hours and hours and hours. For someone to refer to them – I think the term over here was used the other day – fat cats or some other term. Was that what I heard? Was it?

AN HON. MEMBER: Fat cats.

MR. DAVIS: Fat cats. What a disgrace for a Member of the House of Assembly to refer to civil servants in our government who work for the Province. No, they should not, it is not called for. He is making jokes about it over there now, Mr. Speaker, and it is shameful, because that is not fair. If you want to criticize me, you criticize me, but I can tell you, people come here and they want to do things, and they make their best efforts at it.

If you lay down with dogs you are going to get fleas, and if you want to be like that, that is what is going to happen. If I want to go on a Facebook site where someone is advocating violence or death – I hope someone burns in their bed, I am going to blow up their house, or burn her house, or JFK her. If you want to be a part of that, you lay down with dogs; you are going to get fleas.

I am not going to lay down with dogs. If someone wants to pull a hank on my Facebook, or make up false Twitter accounts with my name and so on, beat yourselves out. I can tell you, I can stand here and say I do not want to be part of that. I do not want to be part of that, and I will not accept to be part of that. I have seen too much of it in my life. I have seen too many families destroyed, I am not going to be part of it.

Not only does it take a toll on us, it takes a toll on our families. All of us here have families, every one of us have families.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. DAVIS: Every one of us, I include you too, I say to the hon. member opposite. I am including you too, all of us; we all have families. When it affects our families, too, that can be tough. When you say you put your hand up, because that is what you want to do – Is that what we put our hand up for? I do not think so. That is not what was on my mind when I put my hand up, that my job or my role as an elected MHA, or now as a minister, would have a negative effect or a difficult effect on our families. My son graduated today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DAVIS: He graduated from the College of the North Atlantic in Stephenville while I am here doing my job. Not a proud dad today, I can tell you that. He got a good education; he is going to have a good future. He graduated from an arts program, it is ground-breaking. It is electronic, it is the future. We have to adapt our programs and our education system to meet the needs of our students and our youth to prepare them for the future. We have to do the best we can.

Are we perfect? Boy, we are far from perfect, every one of us. We all make our mistakes. We all say things we wish we had not said. We all do things we wish we had not done. We are all human and we make those errors; but when we make them, we respect them, we recognize that, and we all try not to do that again. We try to learn from them. We still do the best we can for the future of the Province.

The future of the Province is bright. The future of the Province for future generations is the best it has ever been. It is the best it has ever been. While the spin, the innuendo, and the exaggerations – I talked today about the water bombers. We are dealing with water bombers. We talked about them here in the House of Assembly today. We have a pilot position, a co-

pilot position, and a mechanic position that is affected by the work that we have done as a Cabinet. We are reducing a pilot's position, a co-pilot's position and a mechanic. That is three positions.

Here is a release from a Gander group, the Chamber of Commerce, that indicates we are reducing our water bomber crews by seven people. Now I have been dealing with that since then because it is not the truth. It is not accurate. It is spin, is what it was; it was spin. I wonder why members opposite come up with numbers that are so inflated about how many public servants are out of work. It is not hard to tell because here is a press release from a respected organization who issued a release based on information that they believed to be correct.

Now, they never contacted us. I contacted them, I can tell you, but they never contacted us to check the information. I know the member, the MHA for the area, the Minister of Municipal Affairs has also been in touch with them because we do not need all of that negative, inaccurate information out there, and there is lots and lots of it out there.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to clue up now because I see the clock is running down. I just want to say to you that in the spirit of all of this, and I am including all members again, it is a tough job we do. I can tell you that the Province is in good shape. We have made really difficult, tough decisions. If you want to criticize our decisions, do that. Do not wish harm to anybody and do not be part of wishing harm to anybody because I do not wish harm to anybody here. We should not and the people of the Province should not.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are a fine lot. We are a fine group of people. We have a fine history, we are good people, and we should not do that. We should not lower ourselves to do that. We should not let that happen. None of us should allow that to happen. We should not.

You can attack our policies and you can attack our decisions, but do not get personal and do not attack the person. Do not utter threats. Do not

wish them dead, and do not participate or be part of anyone who does. Do not do that.

Our Premier has a tough job to do and she has done a fantastic job in this Budget, I can tell you now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DAVIS: When I said to her, no, Premier this is not what I signed up for, she said, it is not. It is tough business and that is what we are here to do. We have to make those tough, hard decisions.

She is prepared to do it and I am prepared to support her every day.

MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman): Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KING: Given the hour of the day, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the House do now adjourn.

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

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Motion carried.

This House now stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Monday, at 1:30 p.m.