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HANSARD

*Speaker: Honourable Tom Osborne, MHA*

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**MR. SPEAKER (Osborne):** Order, please!

Admit strangers.

To the public gallery today we are pleased to welcome Rick Stanley of Ocean Quest Adventure Tours; also in the Speaker's gallery today a former Member of the House of Assembly, Percy Barrett, and his grandson Adrian Skinner.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** We're also very pleased today to welcome to the Speaker's gallery Nevaeh Denine, CEO of Nevaeh's Lemonade Stand, and some of her team, Nevaeh's Angel Foundation: her mother Holly Denine; grandfather John Denine; Barb Evans; Stephanie O'Brien; Tania Evans; and Avah Curl.

For all of you, you know who Nevaeh is, I'm sure. This six-year-old has been battling cancer with amazing courage and strength. She's also been an inspiration to all of us. Having the strength to deal with her own battle, she decided to give back and after seeing the Janeway Telethon, she wanted the biggest lemonade stand ever.

She started in July of 2014. Her next lemonade stand is July 24 of this year. Last year, amazingly Nevaeh raised \$40,000 –

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** While Nevaeh is battling cancer herself, she's raising a tremendous amount of money for other children with cancer. She is a hero!

I'd like to welcome Nevaeh and her mother to the front of the mace, as well as the Premier and the MHA for the District of Ferryland. All Members of the House of Assembly have graciously signed a flag and we're going to present this to Nevaeh today.

(Presenting of flag.)

(Applause.)

**MR. SPEAKER:** I'd like to thank all Members for allowing us to do that today; I think it was very important.

Thank you.

### Statements by Members

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today we have Member's statements for the Member for the District of St. John's Centre; Baie Verte – Green Bay; Fogo Island – Cape Freels; Conception Bay East – Bell Island; Placentia West – Bellevue; and Virginia Waters – Pleasantville.

I recognize the Member for the District of St. John's Centre.

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what a pleasure to congratulate Holy Cross Junior High Crusaders boys and girls basketball teams who both won silver medals in recent tournaments.

The Crusaders are coached by amazing volunteers Robyn Evans and Mark Delaney. Robyn has been coaching the teams for six years and runs them on an inclusivity framework. Absolutely everyone is valuable and gets to play!

Holy Cross won a recent ArtsSmarts grant to study The Fairy Faith Oral Traditions with songwriter Ray Lake. They studied traditional stories of fairies in Newfoundland and Labrador, retold those stories in song and recorded a CD. It was just fabulous work.

Two incredible teachers, Lisa Saunders and Raymond Abbott, have been chosen for the NLTA's Change Lives Campaign. Their work with students has been life changing for sure. The testimonies from former students are absolutely breathtaking.

This year, the majority of Fry Family Scholarships went to alumni of Holy Cross. This year alone, they won a total of \$107,000 in scholarships. From 2006 to 2014, over 41 students from Holy Cross have been recipients of a Fry Family Scholarship.

Holy Cross Junior High is truly a community school nourishing and supporting its students. Bravo to Principal Linda Hart and her fantastic team!

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Baie Verte – Green Bay.

**MR. WARR:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would ask all Members of this hon. House to join me in congratulating the Springdale HATS-Haiti team as they conclude another year of fundraising and plan their annual visit to Haiti this May.

HATS, or Hands Across The Sea, was founded and is operated by Karen Huxter of Springdale. She has dedicated the past 20 years to her mission. Currently, her orphanage provides 18 Haitian children an abundance of love, compassion and caring, along with the other essentials of a healthy life.

On her compound, you will also find the Karen Huxter School and 400 proud Haitian children who have been given the opportunity to learn. Although the school currently offers grade one to 11, in September 2016, students will also attend grade 12.

HATS-Haiti is possible because of volunteers and generous donations. Over the past three years, the Springdale group of seven have raised nearly \$60,000. Volunteer groups such as theirs can be found across our great province. They demonstrate characteristics such as generosity, selflessness and social responsibility. Please join me as we thank them for their important work and wish them a safe journey in May.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Fogo Island – Cape Freels.

**MR. BRAGG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to stand in this hon. House today and recognize the efforts of the volunteer fire departments in Centerville-Wareham-Trinity, New-Wes-Valley, Lumsden and Greenspond.

In October of 2015, the Town of New-Wes-Valley volunteer fire department received two calls within minutes of each other. The first call was for a commercial building in their town, the second in a cabin area closer to Greenspond.

The fire chief called the Greenspond volunteer fire department for assistance. After extinguishing the cabin fire, we proceeded to the commercial fire. Upon arrival we joined the New-Wes-Valley, Lumsden and CWT fire departments. Over 40 firefighters were on the scene. Everyone knew we were dealing with a fatality.

Those first responders will be forever impacted by what they experienced that day. There was a somber mood around the scene. No one who responded to the emergency calls had anticipated a victim. These volunteers in small towns are rarely trained for such an event. Nevertheless, they handled the situation with grace and courage.

I would ask all Members in this hon. House to join me in showing our appreciation by thanking these men and women for their faithful community service.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand today to acknowledge entrepreneur Rick Stanley of Ocean Quest Adventures. This past month Mr. Stanley developed, financed and participated in a significant future economic business in my district, this being the Mine Quest adventure diving expedition.

Rick and 12 of the world's elite divers have embarked on an expedition to document and map the sprawling tunnels that make up the Bell

Island mines. The mine shafts run kilometres beneath the ocean floor, and are a treasure trove of historical gems which reflect the mining industry of the era. The objective of the expedition is to build a road map so that inexperienced divers can be taken down into the mines without risk.

The teams plan to open the mines up to the diving public has earned them the coveted title of Expedition of the Year from the Royal Canadian Geographic Society.

In addition to their award, a further acknowledgement of the significance of this expedition is evident in that a film crew from the Discovery Channel is documenting the group's expedition for a two-part series.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating and wishing every success to Ocean Quest and Mr. Rick Stanley.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Placentia West – Bellevue.

**MR. BROWNE:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to commend Olympian Kaetlyn Osmond, of Marystown, on her courage and strength in the face of adversity and overcoming it.

After two consecutive gold medals at the Canadian Figure Skating Championships in 2013 and 2014, Kaetlyn made all of Newfoundland and Labrador proud by winning a silver medal at the 2014 Olympics in Sochi.

Just months after returning from Russia, Kaetlyn was sidelined by an injury when she fell during a practice session, breaking her right fibula in two places, which required two surgeries to repair.

An injury of this magnitude could have been a career ender, but Kaetlyn unflinchingly embarked upon the road to recovery. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report to the House today that she has been back on the ice and back in her element.

We saw evidence of this in January of this year, when Kaetlyn returned to the Canadian National Championships. Just some 16 months after her major injury, she earned a bronze medal, finishing just 0.12 shy of second place.

I ask all Members of this hon. House to join with me in congratulating this world-class athlete, our hometown hero, Kaetlyn Osmond, on her remarkable journey of strength and best wishes on what is still yet to come.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters – Pleasantville.

**MR. B. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to pay tribute to one of Newfoundland and Labrador's greatest legal minds. Earlier this month, Jim Thistle passed away after a short battle with ALS. He leaves behind a truly distinguished legacy of public service and a record of achievements in the legal world that continues to benefit Newfoundland and Labrador today.

In 1985, Jim played a leading role with the Atlantic Accord, a moment in our history that paved the way for the development of the offshore oil and gas industry in Newfoundland and Labrador. Thanks to Jim's role in this agreement, our province has been transformed into a global player in the oil and gas sector. Jim later went on to serve his province as the Deputy Minister of Justice and the Deputy Attorney General.

During his legal career, he worked extensively in energy and natural resources, environmental and Aboriginal law and he served his profession as a mentor to dozens of lawyers over the years. Jim was a deeply committed volunteer and community leader who was well loved by his family and friends.

I ask all Members of this hon. House to join me in celebrating the life and legacy of one of Newfoundland and Labrador's most distinguished citizens.

Thank you.

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

**The Commemoration of the First World War  
and the Battle of Beaumont-Hamel**

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today for Honour 100 I recognize the Member for the District of Burgeo – La Poile.

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

I will now read into the record the following 40 names of those who lost their lives in the First World War in the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, the Royal Newfoundland Naval Reserve, the Newfoundland Mercantile Marine, or the Newfoundland Forestry Corps. This will be followed by a moment of silence.

Lest we forget: Alexander Chalk, John Fielding Chaplin, Albert Chatman, Isaac J. Chaulk, Ronald Chaulk, Charles Chaytor, Reginald Cheater, William C. Christian, Leo Joseph Christopher, Charles Chuck, George Chuck, Lawrence Edward Clare, William Clark, Dorman Clarke, George Max Clarke, George R. Clarke, George S. Clarke, James Clarke, John Clarke, Josiah Clarke, Solomon Clarke, Thomas Clarke, Walter J. Clarke, Bernard Cleary, Charles Allen Cleary, John Cleary, Patrick Michael Cleary, Cecil Bayly Clift, Albert Cluett, Henry Cluett, Vincent Cluett, John Coady, Timothy Francis Coady, William Coady, George Coates, Harold Coates, Harold Gordon Coish, Leo Coish, William Clyde Coish and Ronald Colbert.

(Moment of Silence.)

**MR. SPEAKER:** Please be seated.

Statements by Ministers.

**Statements by Ministers**

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, it was an honour to participate this morning in a ceremony to recognize the 40th anniversary of the first sitting of the Court of Appeal as the appellate

division of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Prior to 1976, both trial and appeal superior court functions were discharged by a single unit court – the Supreme Court of Newfoundland. Each individual judge sat as a trial judge and in the case of appeal, that judge's decision would be heard by the other sitting judges.

Mr. Speaker, the Court of Appeal is a vital component of the justice system in Newfoundland and Labrador as the court of last resort for more than 95 per cent of all appeals initiated in the province. Over the past 40 years, there have been many significant decisions that have directly impacted the administration of justice for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Today we also recognized the contributions of one of the first justices to sit on the Court of Appeal, Chief Justice James R. Gushue, who was just 43 years old when he was appointed in 1976 – a remarkable achievement for such a young man. He was known as a polite and courteous writer of good, solid judgements.

Chief Justice Gushue led a commission that examined the circumstances related to a 1976 fire at a personal care home in the Goulds that claimed 21 lives and which resulted in many health and safety improvements that are still in place today.

He passed away last October and is dearly missed by his family, friends and colleagues in the legal community.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I ask my fellow MHAs to join me in congratulating the Court of Appeal of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador on its 40th anniversary.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We, as well, join with the hon. Member in recognizing this anniversary, and I thank the hon. Member for a copy of his statement today.

One of the hallmarks of a democratic society is a fair and progressive judicial system and today marking the 40th anniversary of the first sitting of the Court of Appeal, we recognize the immense vital role it plays in the Newfoundland and Labrador justice system.

Mr. Speaker, all governments have a major responsibility to ensure that each and every person has a right to fair and just legal proceedings and the appellate division adds an additional level of oversight to legal rulings right here in our home province.

I would also like to briefly recognize all of the men and women who work in our court systems throughout Newfoundland and Labrador and commend them as well for the support they provide to courts and the work they do for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What an honour to stand in this House to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Court of Appeal of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador and to recognize the work of Chief Justice Gushue.

What an honour to thank Chief Justice Derek Green, the current judiciary and their teams for their dedication to the court and to the administration of justice on behalf of our people. Chief Justice Green has done wonderful work educating the general public about the need to modernize our justice system and the important issues of access to justice for all people.

To all, Mr. Speaker, I thank them for their passion and their compassion.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

**MR. HAGGIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to recognize March as Colon Cancer Awareness Month.

Colon cancer is one of the commonest types of cancer in both men and women in Newfoundland and Labrador. It often develops with few – if any – warning signs. Early recognition for the prevention and treatment of this cancer often means a greater chance of successful recovery.

Regardless of whether you have a history of colorectal cancer in your family, talk to your health care professional to learn more about your personal risk. Your family doctor, nurse practitioner or other health professional can help you identify preventive options to reduce your risk of colorectal cancer.

Mr. Speaker, together with the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development we're developing a health promotion and healthy living strategy. We can all make personal lifestyle choices to reduce our risk of developing cancer. This includes eating a well-balanced diet, regular exercise, refraining from smoking and limiting alcohol consumption.

I encourage all residents during Colon Cancer Awareness Month to speak to their primary health care providers to learn more about this type of cancer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement today. Also, we would like to join the

government in recognizing March as Colon Cancer Awareness Month.

As the minister indicated, colon cancer is one of the leading types of cancer in our province today for both males and females. Like many other cancers and conditions, early detection is key. Mr. Speaker, that's why our government expanded the province's Colon Cancer Screening Program making it accessible to residents throughout all regions of our province.

It was a goal to have this type of screening performed province wide and I'm happy that is now the case. The screening program assures that residents who are at average risk of colorectal cancer can be screened for early detection and diagnosis of colon cancer. We know that about 90 per cent of colon cancers that are detected early can be prevented and treated very successfully.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**MR. P. DAVIS:** We acknowledge the work as well of those working in health care throughout Newfoundland and Labrador and protecting the best interests of the people of the province.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

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

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. I certainly recommend that everyone learn about the risks of colon cancer and the benefits of early detection.

I want to add one important measure is the free Fecal Immunochemical Test, better known as the FIT. It is easier to say. It's an advanced test you can order from your health authority. It comes in the mail with all the necessary equipment and instructions.

I urge people to check with their physicians about their eligibility to use the FIT. It's a simple, free test that could save people's lives.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further statements by ministers?

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

**MR. KIRBY:** Mr. Speaker, the Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living, a non-profit organization that works with and on behalf of persons with intellectual disabilities and their families, have opened nominations for their annual Inclusive Education Award.

I was pleased to meet with this group in February when we proclaimed Inclusive Education Month. Each year the Inclusive Education Award is presented to a school for outstanding efforts to develop and design classrooms, programs and activities so that all students can participate in all aspects of school life.

Mr. Speaker, students have a right to attend school with their peers while receiving appropriate and quality programming in safe, caring and inclusive environments. Inclusive schools embrace the diversity of our communities and employ collaborative approaches to teaching and learning.

I encourage each of our schools to acknowledge and celebrate inclusive environments by applying for this Inclusive Education Award. The deadline for submissions is March 25. Information about the award and the new guidelines are available online on the Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living website.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to fostering safe, caring and inclusive environments enabling all students to reach their full potential.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. We, too, on this side of the House want to recognize the valuable work of the Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living and particularly what they do in our community.

It is important that we note that this is the 60th anniversary of the association. That is a milestone but it is also a testament to the great work that has been done by their paid staff, but particularly the hundreds of volunteers who give freely of their time every day to ensure that persons with intellectual disabilities and their families are provided services.

This award is a great opportunity to recognize the school that goes out of their way to promote inclusive education and encourage students to be engaged and the school community itself to be supportive.

Mr. Speaker, we, too, want to encourage all of our Members here in the House of Assembly to reach out to your schools, encourage them to make an application to acknowledge the schools that go out of their way to include persons with intellectual disabilities.

We want to acknowledge the fact that the deadline is March 25. And we, too, want to encourage everybody to reach out and thank the association for the great work they've done.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, please!

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement, and congratulations to the Association for Community Living for establishing this award. It's such an excellent way to make students aware of inclusion and to

come up with their own solutions to make their classrooms and schools more inclusive.

However, I would like to see the minister acknowledge that many schools do not have the number of teachers and teaching assistants they need to create a truly inclusive environment.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has indicated that one of the areas in which government has achieved savings since taking office is travel.

I ask the minister: Can she table the details on savings in travel between December and March 2016?

Thank you.

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

**MS. C. BENNETT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Over the last several days, the Member opposite is continuing to ask questions, which I have answered. I'm not sure why he is unable to hear the answer, but I'll try it again.

The full details of every single savings across every single line are presented to this House and to the people of the province through the Estimates process, and then further through Public Accounts. I look forward to providing that information in the House for the people of the province and for the Members opposite when those deadlines and dates around budget and Estimates are planned.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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



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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, the hon. Member offered to provide the exact details here in the House of Assembly, and I would also reference this is part of budget 2015-16 and she had indicated the savings had already taken place and provided a number. So we were looking for those details.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister, a reduction of MHAs introduced by our administration, reducing the House from 48 Members to 40, would impact the number of political staff and result in savings to government.

So I ask the minister: Can the minister outline the exact savings due to reduction in MHAs, and are they also included in the savings the minister is referring to?

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

**MS. C. BENNETT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The specific details around every single line item and every single savings related to individual line items through departments, through the agencies, boards and commissions through their annual reports – all of that information is tabled in the House of Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly all the details the Member opposite is looking for will be available for him to review at the same time it's going to be available for review for the people of the province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We keep asking the questions because we haven't been able to get the answers.

Mr. Speaker, in the Liberal red book it stated a new Liberal government would implement a provincial autism strategy.

I ask the minister: When can we expect to see such a strategy, and who will be responsible for the development of that strategy?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As Members here will probably be aware, the Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador produced a very comprehensive review yesterday with a fairly lengthy executive summary. Myself and my officials are working our way through that document.

We would hope to use that to inform discussions around a strategy for autism. We wish to engage with stakeholders, in terms of developmental paediatricians, in terms of providers of autism support in education and, in due course, we will develop a strategy and bring that back to the House.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We're all very much aware of the many challenges faced by those with ASD, as well as their caregivers and families. One of those challenges commonly identified by the autism community is the archaic threshold of IQ 70 when determining eligibility for service.

We recognize the need to address this shortcoming and, as such, I committed while I was premier to the elimination of IQ 70 standard. Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased the Liberal Party followed our lead and also announced the same in the red book just days before the election.

I ask the Premier: Are you still committed to eliminating the IQ 70 as promised, and when can we expect some movement on that?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Member opposite, I thank him for the question, because as he knows, during many of the forums we took part in in the election last fall, there were a number of questions around autism.

As the minister just spoke about, the release of a strategy yesterday by the Autism Society, the autism association made many recommendations and one of those recommendations of course was to do away with or the removal of the IQ 70. This is something we are still committed to as we are looking forward to working with the autism association on many ways to improve the lives of people and families that have to deal with ASD.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think the Premier is saying they remain committed to it, and I'm glad to hear that.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberals also promised to expand the ABA program – Applied Behavioural Analysis, commonly known as ABA. Currently, the cut-off stands at grade three. While this may be an appropriate threshold for many, especially those who are enrolled in ABA programs at an early age, however, for those who are diagnosed later, the grade three cut-off does not suffice.

I ask the Premier: Are you still committed to expanding the ABA program as well past its current scope? When can we expect some movement and more details on that?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm a little surprised to hear that the former premier would be standing in this House asking us questions when this could have been done when they had a number of years to do exactly

that and refused to do it. As a matter of fact, refused to even, in many cases, entertain a discussion which was meaningful in any way with those impacted by this.

We understand the impact this is having, and this is something that will be part of the overall strategy. We would like to be able to make those changes but this and many other changes will be part of the overall discussion that we look forward to having. We realize the importance and how significant this is, especially within our education system, within our health system and how it impacts families. So this is something we look forward to having a broader discussion and we look forward to hopefully being able to implement these changes.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Ferryland.

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Budget 2015 produced a five-year financial plan. The three bond-rating agencies liked that long-term plan and rated our province's outlook as stable. A lack of a plan by this government resulted in Newfoundland's outlook being downgraded to negative.

I ask the Minister of Finance: Has she met with the bond-rating agencies to address this issue? What is the current status of the provincial bond-rating status?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, the gall of the Member opposite to say that they actually put in a plan last year and they stand by their plan. Last year, there were borrowings of almost \$5 billion, which they did no borrowing strategy on and virtually zero success in getting access to any long-term borrowing.

Well, I am proud to stand in this House today and speak to you about the minister who sits in this very chair and the success and the work that she's been able to do for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** She's been able to put in place some long-term borrowing initiatives already, in spite of the failed plan that you guys announced last year in April.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Ferryland.

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I remind the Premier that it was him who was out in the public just a short while ago saying we couldn't get any long-term borrowing (inaudible) the previous administration. He had to retract what he had said because the previous administration did have long-term borrowing.

Mr. Speaker, could the Premier clarify who indeed was turned down, the province was turned down, by what institutions for long-term borrowing? Why did he have to retract his statement that the province in the past year had not received long-term borrowing?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Member opposite knows this was essentially a reopener that was done last summer – nothing new at all. It was a reopener of a loan that was already put in place.

The downgrading that took place this year – that you've seen recently in the credit-rating agencies – was as a result of the plan that you guys announced last year, one that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador took a good look at.

Right now, what they are looking for is some security, some sustainability for our province. I'm proud to say that our minister is putting a great plan in place. This government will do just that to make sure that we can secure the future of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Ferryland.

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I ask the Premier, he indicated publicly that the prior administration was unable to secure long-term borrowing. He later retracted that statement. I'd ask him to clarify that.

As well, he indicated there were lending institutions that would not lend long-term borrowing to the province. I ask him to name those institutions, if he could.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, why would I get up in this House of Assembly today and let the people of this province know and explain to people who would not listen to your plan?

We've been able to, as a result of the efforts of the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, secure \$1.4 billion in long-term financing. So you might ask: Why is that important?

Well, when you're in a situation where downgrading is – based on the plan the previous administration put in place becomes at risk, it's important that you put security, that you put certainty in place so you do not have to worry. You take all those risks, all those variables out of play. That is what the minister and her team has been able to do, unlike the previous administration.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Ferryland.

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, again, I remind the Premier it was our plan that the bond-rating agency stabilized our bond rating last fall.

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

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Last November they looked at it and they secured that bond rating. It

was later on that it was changed, I remind the Premier.

The Dominion Bond Rating agency stated on January 21 that “Without a material improvement in the fiscal and debt outlook supported by a credible multi-year fiscal plan, a one-notch downgrade is likely.” Moody’s said on January 25 they will consider revising their outlook back to stable if the government implements a comprehensive fiscal plan. Standard & Poor’s: If they develop a credible plan.

I ask the Premier: When will your government have a credible, multi-year fiscal plan ready to prevent further downgrades of our credit rating?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I noticed the Member just said our credit rating. Well, it was your credit rating that they actually downgraded.

What I would say, Mr. Speaker, is last year during budget 2015-2016 the previous administration, which the Member was a part of and which the premier was a part of, said this: We will need to be borrowing over the next five or six years. They had said that.

What they didn’t do – now if you know that you have to borrow, why would you not put in place an investors relationship strategy? Why wouldn’t you do that? The previous administration knew they had to borrow, refused to do it, put the future of Newfoundland and Labrador at risk.

It is their plan of the borrowing that led to the \$15.4 billion over the next five years. That is the reason why our minister is putting in place an investment strategy, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Ferryland.

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Mr. Speaker, I remind the Premier it’s their lack of plan that the bond-

rating agencies have reacted so negatively, I’ll say to him.

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

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** The lack of a plan, that’s where the bond-rating agency is. Lack of vision, lack of direction, no fiscal policy; Mr. Speaker, it’s terrible.

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

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Mr. Speaker, *The Telegram* reported on February 24 that the Premier admitted the lack of a plan hurt us and said the reaction will be more positive for credit agencies if we have a plan we can show them.

What plan has the Premier provided to financial lenders and institutions to help secure financing and instill confidence in the fiscal plan of our province? If so, will he share that plan?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** That plan will be called budget 2016-2017, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for the District of Ferryland.

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Short answers, but we have lots of questions. No worry there, Mr. Speaker.

A 15-month consultation tour that the Liberals are undertaking is virtually identical to that which was taken by the New Brunswick Liberal government. One year later, the New Brunswick government has made massive cuts to programs, services and jobs.

I ask the Minister of Finance: Should the people of our province be prepared for similar cuts to programs, services and jobs by your government?

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

**MS. C. BENNETT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can assure the people of the province that they will have a budget as part of '16-'17 fiscal that will include multi-year targets, actions in the short, medium and long term, which we will be discussing as part of our budget '16. We'll look forward to continuing the dialogue that many people across this province so desperately have wanted for a decade and were unable to participate in.

We'll continue to have that dialogue and put a credible plan in place to make sure that the people of the province are supported, understand and get what they want when it comes to budget 2016.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Conception Bay South.

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

**MR. PETTEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, during the fall election campaign, as part of their campaign platform, the Liberals assessed the value of government assets and claimed they could generate \$50 million each year from the sale of those assets.

I ask the Minister of Transportation and Works which assets have you placed on the market were sold since taking office. How much has your administration raised, to date, through those assets?

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

**MS. C. BENNETT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The work that's being undertaken around getting a deep understanding of the assets that the current government has at its disposal is ongoing. Part of our process in building budget 2016 and our ongoing fiscal plans will include a commitment to do exactly what we said in our platform.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Conception Bay South.

**MR. PETTEN:** Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Transportation and Works if he'll make public the full list of assets the Liberal administration plans to sell and the amount of revenue expected to be generated through this sale.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I guess what I'm hearing from the Member opposite, he's looking for a fire sale, maybe. I'm not so sure what he is interested in.

What we will do before any asset would be sold, that is owned by the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, there will be full economic analysis that would be done on those assets, I say, Mr. Speaker. If they bring value and continue to have value to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador well, guess what? They will remain an asset of Newfoundland and Labrador; I can say that, Mr. Speaker.

Anything that has no value to the province, well, we will do what is right. We can use that money to provide valued services for the people of the province who are desperately looking for some good management and some good planning for the future of our province, I say, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. PETTEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's strange for the Premier to say that when every community I go to, every person I run into, are looking: What is government selling? What buildings are they selling? It is in your red book, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the government has not yet taken action on this plan.

I ask the minister: Our province is in dire need of revenue; why haven't you taken any action?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If the Member opposite is going to many communities in our province, I would ask him to let us know which communities, because when I'm travelling this province that is not what people are telling me. What they are saying is they are looking forward to this government and to this team that's over here putting in a plan that's sustainable, making sure that we make decisions that are evidence based, that the complete analysis is done on all the issues that we have facing our province. That is what this government is committed to doing and that is what we will do.

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

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

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Announced on April 29 last year, the Community Sustainability Partnership provided new and needed sources of funding for municipalities. Included were partial rebated HST; access to the provincial gas tax fund; a three year commitment to municipalities operating grants at a value of \$22 million; multi-year infrastructure commitments to address such needs as clean and safe drinking water. Municipalities right across the province applauded this plan and this announcement.

I ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs: Is he committed to maintaining this partnership?

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

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

I thank the Member for the question. It was a great program that was brought in. Actually, we all voted for it, and the Members who are opposite. We voted for it. We agreed with it. We think it's a great plan to sustain Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, like we said, everything will be reviewed in the budget. Anything we do will be in consultation with Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador. I commit that anything that's done on this side, Mr. Speaker, will be done in the best interest, unlike the

former minister who wouldn't sign \$34.9 million to help out rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, municipalities right across the province are concerned about the economic turmoil we have and they're worried about the download of services to communities through actions taken by our government, which provided funding from 90-10, 80-20 and 70-30 respective on the size of communities.

I ask the minister: Are you committed to this type of funding?

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Again, I thank the Member for the question. Then again, I have to look at the commitment when there was so much work that could have been done in rural Newfoundland and Labrador with this \$34.9 million.

Mr. Speaker, I hear the Member talking about all the concerns. I've met with MNL. None of those concerns were raised to me. I don't know who the Member is talking to because, Mr. Speaker, we will have meetings next week hopefully with MNL to discuss some of the GRIs we're doing as a government.

I can tell you one thing, Mr. Speaker, one thing we will do that the opposite government never did: anything that will be done in this province will be done in partnership. One thing we won't do, Mr. Speaker, is send letters out to all the municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador asking them to apply for capital works knowing full well there's not one cent in the budget to use for rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the minister, I speak to my municipal leaders all the time in my district.

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

**MR. K. PARSONS:** That's part of my job. I work closely with municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador, especially in my own area. So I have a dialogue with them all the time, I remind him.

Mr. Speaker, as part of the municipal fiscal framework, government struck a committee that would look at regional government structure. It intended for the committee to report back in April.

I ask the minister: What's the progress of this committee?

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

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

I forgot to add one thing we're doing with Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador – it was a commitment that was in the red book. Every year we would have a Premier's forum with the Premier sitting down face to face with our leaders of rural Newfoundland and Labrador to hear their concerns. We won't be passing on things, Mr. Speaker, through a letter. The Premier will sit down and face them face to face.

Now, on regional governance, Mr. Speaker, there is a plan in place to start that. There are consultations already in place. We feel strong, as the other government did also, that it's great for Newfoundland and Labrador. We will follow through on that, but whatever we do will be in consultation with Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador, who's in agreement with this, and we look forward to the outcomes.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we were very pleased to see the continuation of our administration's Downpayment Assistance Program for next year. According to the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation's website, applications for 2016-17 will be available beginning on April 1.

I ask the minister: How much money has been allocated to this program for the upcoming year?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services.

**MS. GAMBIN-WALSH:** I thank the Member for her question, and I would just like to let her know the program has been fully used for the past fiscal year.

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

**MS. GAMBIN-WALSH:** What we are doing, in actual fact, is we have a wait-list of individuals who have applied for this program. So rather than putting it out again, we are going to allow those individuals access to the program first and then announce it again.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister again: Can you tell us how much money you intend to allocate to this program for the upcoming year?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services.

**MS. GAMBIN-WALSH:** The amount that we will allocate will be in the provincial budget.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** Mr. Speaker, we know from speaking to those in the real estate industry, as well as many first-time homebuyers who availed

of our innovative program, that it was very well received and considered an overwhelming success. I contacted the minister earlier this spring and I appreciate the information supplied to me by her in early February. I now kindly ask her to update the program.

Can you tell us, in terms of the funds for this year, have they all been allocated? Will you be continuing an equal amount of funds, at the very least for the upcoming year?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services.

**MS. GAMBIN-WALSH:** I would like to let the Member know that 122 households availed of the program, and we are evaluating the program.

As I said previously, the individuals who have previously applied will receive assistance from the program first. Based on our provincial budget, we will determine the amount on a go-forward basis.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Ferryland.

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Can the Premier give an update on the proposed Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement? We understand it's moving forward with final translation being performed. We are able to negotiate almost immediate access to the seafood into the European Union once the deal is signed, which would be tremendous for the fish processing sector of Newfoundland and Labrador.

So I'm wondering if he could give us an update on where it is and when it could be possibly signed.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As with any agreement we have with the federal government right now, it's important that we make sure we continue to dialogue, continue negotiation and a communication. We've got

communication and dialogue and negotiations happening on many fronts with the federal government, I will say, Mr. Speaker.

When the time is right, if we are able to close any agreement or any deal with our federal colleagues, what we will do is we will make that public at the time. It would be premature to make any announcement on anything that may happen until it's final. Unlike the previous administration, who took the liberty to go down without the federal government being part of it; therefore, had the signing authority.

When we finalize an agreement on anything related to the federal government and Newfoundland and Labrador, the details will all be publicly known, I would say. Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Ferryland.

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, recently the minister of trade for Newfoundland and Labrador indicated in the media that he's negotiating the fisheries fund. This, however, was negotiated as part of the overall full agreement with provincial support for the agreement with the federal government.

I ask the Premier: Is he renegotiating the previous agreed support by this province? Is the Premier or the minister suggesting they were offside with Newfoundland and Labrador's trade team, as the lead negotiator and staff been readily available, both domestically and nationally, over the past number of months and year to definitively state there was a fisheries fund agreed to as part of the overall agreement with the Government of Canada?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If you listen to the question from the Member opposite, there's a reference about renegotiating an agreement. I can say, Mr. Speaker, there is no agreement to renegotiate. They never were able to finalize an agreement with their federal colleagues.



As I said, there are a number of agreements, discussions and negotiations that are occurring on many fronts with our federal colleagues. It would be very premature of anyone on this side of the House right now. We are committed to making sure that all those trade agreements are effective for people in Newfoundland and Labrador. That is our focus.

When the agreements are ready to be finalized, it is then we'll make the information publicly known. It will be then that our federal colleagues will be present at the table for the finalization.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

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

Yesterday the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills said his department is in the process of doing a full review of the Adult Basic Education program. The contract with the private colleges ends in two weeks' time.

I ask the minister: What's going to happen with the ABE program and the students after March 31?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Making sure that there's no gap in educational services is paramount. We do not want to have learners not being able to attend classes as they normally would.

Yes, the contract does end on March 31. What I'm preparing now is a process to be able to extend the contract until the 1st of September, which is the normal beginning of the academic year, the normal school year, the normal planning year.

In the process, we then also have time to be able to develop a better plan to go forward, one that's based on the needs of the program, its overall sustainability and making sure we have best

benefits that result from it. It will be a much, much, much better plan than what was put in place before.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for the District of St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

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

A November 2015 departmental information note implies the new private contracts, whether they're the ones that get extended or new ones in September, will continue, but efficiencies must be integrated into the new contracts.

I ask the minister: How can he stay with an all-private ABE system given how badly it has worked? Will he now consider restoring ABE to the College of the North Atlantic?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, I don't think there's any contradiction in what I said. What we'll do is we'll put forward a plan. We'll be able to develop best practices to make sure learners and the service providers in educational institutes have an opportunity to participate in the plan as it goes forward.

What I am saying is that the College of the North Atlantic will indeed have an opportunity to be able to provide input to potentially participate as well. What we won't do is block the College of the North Atlantic from being able to potentially participate in the future like the previous administration did.

Our key here, Mr. Speaker, is to make sure that the priority is on learning opportunities and the learners in communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador have an opportunity to receive the best possible education that can be provided in an affordable, sustainable way.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Waterford Hospital ABE was a successful, specialized, comprehensive partnership program with health and education. It was designed to meet the very challenging needs of people with mental illness. It too was privatized, it's services ripped out.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: How are students now doing in this program that those crucial support services are no longer there? How many students are there? What are the dropout rates and graduation rates now for this program?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** In the calculation of the overall program, one of the things we have to be very clear about is that some students enter the program for just the purpose of taking one course or another. Not all students will enter the program for a full three-year block. Some will enter the program for taking one course for a high school upgrade; some may want to get into a professional program.

In terms of the attrition rates, and this is one of the issues that has been raised in terms of the original assessment is that the numbers don't necessarily reflect a full and complete picture. That's why, Mr. Speaker, an analysis is required. The previous administration, when they made this decision, in my opinion, did not do so with very solid evidence and facts before them and that's why I think mistakes were made.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre, for one final question.

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, the students at this ABE program are very vulnerable.

I ask the minister: Who is monitoring the program now? What is the oversight? Who knows what's really going on at the Waterford ABE?

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

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, the entire program has to be reviewed from the point of view of what's in the best interest of learners. We have a particular group of learners who have special and separate needs. That's one of the things – what I want to do is make sure that all the evidence is brought forward, all the data is brought forward – and if hon. Members opposite can provide me with better input, I would be more than happy to receive that information because that's what makes for better decision making. It wasn't necessarily what was available in the past.

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

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

Presenting Report by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

### **Tabling of Documents**

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, section 28 of the *Provincial Court Act* requires that the Lieutenant Governor in Council appoint a tribunal every four years to review and report on the salaries and benefits of provincial court judges, and present its recommendations and reasons to the Minister of Justice and Public Safety. The act which had initially required the report to be filed by 30th of September 2014 had earlier been amended to require that the report be filed by 31st of December 2015.

A tribunal consisting of Brad Wicks, Q.C., David Eaton, Q.C. and John Whelan were appointed in December 2014 to make recommendations for a four-year period from April 1, 2013, to March 31, 2017. Hearings were conducted by the Wicks tribunal during the 25th to the 27th of May 2015. The tribunals report was presented to me on December 21, 2015. The

tribunals report made recommendations on salary, pension, interest, sick leave, judicial indemnity, bereavement leave, cost and per diem judges.

Section 28.2(2) of the act requires that the report must be tabled in the House of Assembly within 15 days of the start of this session of the House of Assembly. The act also directs that within 30 days after the report is tabled a resolution must be submitted to the House of Assembly to confirm, vary or reject the tribunal's recommendations.

I hereby table this report for the House of Assembly.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Notices of Motion.

#### Notices of Motion

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

**MS. C. BENNETT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I give notice that I will move that the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider a resolution relating to the raising of loans by the province, Bill 9, An Act To Amend The Loan Act, 2015.

Mr. Speaker, I also give notice that I will move that the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider a resolution relating to the raising of loans by the province, Bill 10, Loan Act, 2016.

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

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

I give notice under Standing Order 11 that I shall move that the House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, March 21, 2016.

Further, I give notice under Standing Order 11 that I shall move that the House not adjourn at 10 p.m. on Monday, March 21, 2016.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has Been Given.

Petitions.

#### Petitions

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

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

**MR. K. PARSONS:** 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 federal government cannot justify discriminating against Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in determining the dates of the recreational ground fishery;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to be vocal in calling on the Government of Canada to extend the recreational ground fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador to promote fairness, safety and tourism.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to get up every day that I can because this is so important to so many different people in our province. I talked to Members over on the other side and everywhere you go – people at work even here at the House of Assembly that enjoy getting out for the recreational fishery. We all believe that it's our God-given right to be able to go on the water and catch a fish. We do realize that the moratorium came in and there was a time that we had to stop fishing. It seems like when you talk to most people – even the fishermen when you talk to them, they feel that the ground fishery is coming back. This is a part of who we are as people.

Safety is a very, very important time. When you look at there's three weeks in the summertime and a week in September – I've been involved in

the food fishery since it started and, to tell you the truth, I'd say last year I didn't get out at all in September; the year before I think I got out once, and the year before that once.

Mr. Speaker, September is a hard time on the water for fisher people. We're putting people's safety in front of everything else. I think it's important that we make sure the federal government realizes how important this is to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It's very, very important. Not only is it important – it's important that people do not risk their lives to catch a few codfish. It's important that we don't put people in jeopardy.

I spoke to a gentleman yesterday. He told me that September is the time of year he likes to get his bit of fish to keep for the winter because it's the best time to do it. We're putting people on the water when it's not safe. It's not fair to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to be doing that.

Also, another big part of this is our tourism industry. Tourism is a very important part of rural Newfoundland and a part of Newfoundland in general. Mr. Speaker, I tell you, when somebody that's not used to going out and catching a codfish gets the opportunity to go out and catch one, it's an experience that they hold for the rest of their lives. This can be sold as a huge tourism attraction for the whole province. If you talk to all the tourists in boats and everybody that's around, it's a real good idea to be able to promote that they can go out and have their people on the tour boats be able to catch a fish.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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 the English School Board trustees propose to close down Holy Cross Junior High school and send students to a distant school; and

WHEREAS the board has arbitrarily and without consultation reduced the Holy Cross Junior High school's catchment area and students will have to be bused to a far more distant school; and

WHEREAS Holy Cross Junior High is an important neighbourhood school with programs, community partnerships and extracurricular activities designed to meet the particular needs of the inner-city students who attend it; and

WHEREAS the English School Board trustees are an appointed body and no longer accountable to the people who elected them;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to ensure that Holy Cross Junior High school remains open and to immediately arrange for a democratically elected English School Board.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, I have stood in the House again and again and again asking the Minister of Education if he would halt the process of reviewing the possibility of the closure of this school with an appointed board of trustees.

Today he said that students have a right to attend school with their peers while receiving appropriate and quality programming in safe, caring and inclusive environments. And inclusive schools embrace the diversity of our communities and employ collaborative approaches to teaching and learning.

Mr. Speaker, Holy Cross Junior High school has about 108 students right now. I was there the other day and there was an enrolment of another student; 38 per cent of the children attending Holy Cross Junior High have exceptionalities – 38 per cent.

A lot of these kids come from a community that is a centre-city community with very significant

socioeconomic challenges. This school is crucial – absolutely crucial – to the well-being and education of these children. We're not just talking about moving a bunch of kids to another building and amalgamating them. This school has developed over the years partnerships with the Froude Avenue Community Centre who provides tutoring, partnerships with Buckmasters Circle Community Centre who provides tutoring.

These kids can all walk to school. If their school is closed, many of the children who can see the school from their kitchen windows are going to be bused. What does that mean to them? That means that they will not be able to attend after-school activities.

A lot of these kids, as I mentioned today, are on the basketball teams. These basketball teams are inclusive; everybody has a right to play. These children will not be able to play basketball at Brother Rice because the pool is so big. Also, they have no way of getting home after school; their parents don't have cars. Their parents can't chauffeur them back and forth to school. Moving these children would be a disservice to them.

I look forward to talking about this again, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

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

**MR. PETTEN:** 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 remediation of the *Manolis L* site is an urgent federal responsibility;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to bring pressure to bear on the federal government to remediate the *Manolis L* site.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, this is not a new issue; it's been off the waters of Change Islands and Notre Dame Bay for quite some time. It's been an issue that the hon. Minister for BTCRD has brought to the floor on many occasions for action. Our former government also lobbied to have this site remediated.

Prime Minister Trudeau has promised to remove the oil from the vessel; he promised this during the campaign stop in the province. The people via petition are now calling for action on this and they want the potential environmental disaster prevented. Is this another promise that people are waiting on? We need action.

Thank you very much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further petitions?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Orders of the Day, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Orders of the Day.

#### Orders of the Day

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009, Bill 7, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded by the hon. Government House Leader that Bill 7 be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 7 and that the bill now be read a first time?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Service NL to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009," carried. (Bill 7)

**CLERK (Barnes):** A bill, An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009. (Bill 7)

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time? Now? Tomorrow?

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 7 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Conservation, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Change Of Name Act, 2009, Bill 8, and I further move the said bill be now read the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Government House Leader have leave to introduce Bill 8, and that the said bill be now read the first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 8, and the bill be now read a first time?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Service NL to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Change Of Name Act, 2009," carried. (Bill 8)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Change Of Name Act, 2009. (Bill 8)

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

When shall the bill be read a second time?

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 8 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, resolution and Bill 2 regarding Interim Supply.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that we now call Interim Supply and that I do now leave the Chair.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

### Committee of the Whole

**CHAIR (Dempster):** Order, please!

We are now considering the related resolution and Bill 2, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2017 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** Thank you so much, Madam Chair.

It is a pleasure for me to rise to my feet here again today and speak to the debate on Interim

Supply. When I got up the other day I spoke briefly about my district, so today I think I'll talk a little bit more about my district and, once again, thank the many people who entrusted me to come back to the House and represent them here for the next four years.

In particular this time, in addition to my constituents as a whole, I'd like to thank in particular my volunteers, without whom, of course – I certainly appreciate every hour of the day and night they've given me, not just during the election, but throughout the entire duration I've been in politics. So a special hats off to you.

I'd like to say, as an Irish Newfoundlander, happy St. Patrick's Day to everyone across the province today, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. PERRY:** Today actually is my father's birthday. Had my father still been living, he would be 96 years old today. He was 50 when I came along, so I'm really a good Irish Catholic. Come from good stock, actually, from up the Southern Shore.

So I hope everyone does enjoy St. Patrick's Day and everyone pays attention and are sure not to drink and drive tonight. Anyone who is going out to enjoy the festivities, make sure you have some rides arranged coming home and I hope you manage to get a great scoff and a scuff tonight.

Madam Chair, Interim Supply debate is a very important one, of course, because it allows the government to access funds for the first three months of this fiscal year, coming April, May and June, while the actual budget for 2016-2017 is being debated here in the House. During that time, of course, people need to get paid, programs still need to continue and investments still need to be made in industry. So it's very important it passes expeditiously, and I certainly will have no problem supporting this bill when we get to the vote.

In terms of some of the investments, Madam Chair, that governments make – and I'd like to talk a little bit about the industrial ones and about my District of Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune, which has benefited greatly from

innovation in the aquaculture sector. As a young person, when I graduated from high school there were no options at the time. It was go to the mainland. I bucked that trend, myself and many friends of mine, because at the time aquaculture was just beginning, and fortunately for all of us we were able to stay living at home.

I'm very pleased that a large number of my close friends, we'd get up in the morning – we had a routine when I went to school. We all lived on the same street. My friend would come to my house, two of us would go to the next house, then three of us would go to the fourth house and a fifth friend would meet us there. Every day we walked to school together. Of the five of us, four of us are still living home in Bay d'Espoir. To be able to say that for a girl of my generation, I'm quite proud and quite happy of how my region has managed to sustain itself, Madam Chair.

We look forward to continued growth in aquaculture in my district and across the province. I believe it certainly is a crucial part of the fishery of the future and one that deserves our support. It's important, of course, Madam Chair, to all of us that it is developed in a sustainable manner. I do believe it is an industry that will provide rural employment for generations and generations and generations to come. I look forward to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture coming to visit us in the very near future to see first-hand just what an impact it has made on the well-being of our people.

Madam Chair, I'm going to talk a little bit as well today about the importance – I mentioned just a little while ago how important it is that Interim Supply be passed expeditiously. I'd like to say before I sit down – we don't have much time here today – it's equally important that budget 2016-2017 be passed expeditiously. I have to say, as a resident, I'm very concerned that we may find ourselves waiting until May before the provincial budget comes down because –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** What about last year?

**MS. PERRY:** It was April. It was late last year as well. The difference between last year and this year is people are sitting on pins and needles. They don't know if they have a job

post-budget. They're not spending money. That is declining the amount of disposable income that we're seeing in our retail sector and in our restaurants.

I do look forward to you bringing in the budget. I do implore that you do whatever you can to bring it in as quickly as possible so that the bond-rating agencies can take a look and make a decision about the future, so that people can make a decision about whether or not they're going to buy that new car. It's absolutely crucial.

The mental anguish, Madam Chair, you can feel it walking around Confederation Building. This is my ninth year here in the House of Assembly and in Confederation Building. I have never felt the tension that I'm feeling walking through the halls here today. I find it very disturbing. My heart goes out to them very much.

All of us as politicians, we know what it's like, especially those of us who come to this as a profession as opposed to a second career. If you don't get re-elected, you don't have a job. So you can really relate to the pain these people are feeling. I think it's cruel to drag that out into May. I think the federal budget comes down on March 22 and I'd like to see ours come within a few days of it.

Madam Chair, I would even like to see us keep the House open right through Easter, not take an Easter break. This is too important to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We should sit here. That budget should come down during Easter and people should be able to move on with their lives.

I will take my place now, Madam Chair, and remind you of the promise you made to the people. You told them you had a plan. We want to see that plan. You told them they'd like the plan, and I really hope they like the plan. I really hope Wall Street likes the plan, because it's important to each and every one of us who lives here.

Please, Mr. Chair – Madam Chair, my apologies. It's taking some getting used to but we are absolutely delighted, Madam Chair, to have you in the chair. I will get the hang of Madam Chair. It sounds really great.

Please, I ask the government, work quickly to bring the budget down. Do everything you can to bring the budget down as quickly as possible so people can get on with their futures, determine whether or not they can stay living in Newfoundland and Labrador or if they have to go somewhere else to look for a job.

It's a crucial time in our history and we look forward to the plan that you're going to bring down and we truly do hope it's something we will all like.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

**MR. TRIMPER:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. TRIMPER:** At least these guys have a chance to see that I do speak.

I haven't had a question yet, but it's great to rise and speak on this bill.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible).

**MR. TRIMPER:** I bet you are; I can't wait. I shouldn't be inviting that.

What I thought I would talk about today is what we're all here about, which is we are a reflection of our experience. I've had some interesting experience in my career and I sometimes wonder how I find myself in this chair, but anyway, I'm enjoying the adventure and I'm very glad to be here.

First of all, before I go into talking about finances and so on I just want to thank all of the supporters I had in Lake Melville; actually, throughout Labrador and throughout the province. It was like some others of my colleagues, it was a long run. After winning the candidacy for myself back in 2014, I left my job and started focusing on this. So it's good to finally be here speaking about this.



What I thought I'd talk about in terms of Interim Supply is – since we're talking about money, I thought I would talk about financial structures. In particular, I have three terms I'm going to speak about. One is chaos, next is change and, finally, stability.

What I thought I'd give you as an example of chaos is the 14 years that I spent in what was formerly the Soviet Union and Russia. If you want to see chaos around financial structures and systems gone wrong, you only have to look and live what went on in that country.

I started working there in 1990. At the time, the whole region had enjoyed some 70-plus years of communism, where every day for all of those 70 years you knew exactly what you were going to spend on a loaf of bread, you knew exactly how much money you were going to make. Salaries were allocated a square foot for an apartment and so on. Everything was extremely regimented. It was totally insular to what was going on in the rest of the world, such that when perestroika and glasnost occurred and Mr. Gorbachev came along, it came with a huge upheaval.

I feel very lucky to have lived through that time. As I said, I started there in 1990 at the height of perestroika. Just by way of example, I found that we would go over there and as we converted money – and I remember one time going in with \$200 Canadian, and as I cashed this into rubles I was handed stacks of money. Because as the government opened itself up under the utter chaos they had been dealing with over the last seven decades, it just wasn't prepared. So the denominations on the bill couldn't even keep up with the hyperinflation that was happening.

While I don't anticipate this kind of fallout from what we just dealt with in the last 10, 13 years, I do anticipate that there will be some restructuring; but back to the Soviet Union and Russia. Two hundred dollars would give us two stacks of rubles that we literally had to carry in a bag. The Russians called it cabbage. So all of us Canadians all of a sudden felt very wealthy.

With it came, of course, a whole bunch of different systems and structures around values in society. Doctors, teachers and so on were suddenly making less than waiters and

chauffeurs. If you didn't have access to foreign currency you were now second-class, if not third-class, citizens. It was an amazing upheaval. It was a great experience. I stopped working there in 2004 when Mr. Putin came along.

In terms of change, and now bringing it back home a little bit, I want to talk a little bit about Labrador and its history, how it went from a barter economy, which was essentially fur, sealing, fish, maybe berries – although I doubt if that was traded for goods. Money and currency was almost unheard of, especially in Labrador, and that's not until approximately the early 1940s with the development of the air base at Goose Bay. With that, and overnight seemingly, people gave up that traditional lifestyle of working around a barter system and suddenly were able to enjoy a salary in order to enjoy some independence and were able to enjoy a lot of the stability the rest of the country had been experiencing for probably a century or more. It came as a huge shock to Labrador; they've adjusted and gone forward.

What I wanted to roll that into, of course, was then stability. Further, on 5 Wing Goose Bay and the importance of that base, it's been a big part of my life. Since 2003, we started what was called the Goose Bay Citizens' Coalition, which was trying to point out to federal and provincial governments at the time – and I'm going to throw a kudo across the floor to the former premier, Danny Williams, who worked with myself and others as we went to Ottawa – that was a kudo – and worked with Ottawa to actually find a way forward for 5 Wing Goose Bay. At the time, foreign allies were spending tens of millions of dollars, and for every dollar Canada was spending, allies were spending another two or three. From a business perspective, it made all the sense in the world. However, we could never convince National Defence of this.

It's business cases in situations like that that have frustrated me in the past. Frankly, at the end of the day, if you can justify what you're doing, how you're spending your money, you should be able to go forward.

What I wanted to say is 5 Wing continues to be an important part of our economy. It's probably generating some \$70 million in direct investing

from Ottawa. With the spinoffs, I would say it would probably be in the vicinity of doubling, tripling that. That goes for the same of a lot of our economies. If I looked over to my colleague for Labrador West, certainly the mining industry also does this. It generates a tremendous number of dollars with spinoffs we enjoy here in our revenue and our coffers.

Recognizing the importance of those industries is an extremely important role for government, as well as anyone else – citizenry and so on. So as you're going forward of any kind of decision we need to make sure the economy can continue to function, that government doesn't get in the way of it, that it actually encourages it, supports it. It doesn't need to necessarily direct it.

So those are some thoughts on Interim Supply. I see I have three minutes left, so I guess I'm supposed to stand and keep talking. Perhaps I'll just say thank you to everybody else. That was my maiden stand up, so thank you.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

**MR. PETTEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

As it was the hon. minister's first time to his feet, this is my first time speaking in debate.

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

**MR. PETTEN:** It's a pleasure to speak on Interim Supply, thank you.

He mentioned cabbage. The last time I bought a head of cabbage it was \$6, so I'm not sure what cabbage he's referring to. It's not the same stuff I'm familiar with.

I first want to congratulate all the Members on their election to the House, and especially new Members like myself. It is a pleasure to be here. I look forward to much debate in the coming years. Hopefully, we can all make a difference.

We are speaking on Interim Supply – money. During the election I used to go to door after door and people would ask the question: What did your government – what happened to all the

money? It was \$20 billion or \$25 billion? That number always floats. I struggled with it at first because I knew there were good investments made, but you almost had to get your script prepared type thing because you knew you would be asked the question. It came over and over again. I never did feel there were any real bad investments, but it was a good question.

So as I continued on during the election, I kept thinking, I need to get more prepared for the question because it did come up, like I said, day after day. I know from my own district when I look around and I go up to the new arena, we have a new town hall and we have a new fire hall and Manuels River Hibernia Interpretation Centre, a beautiful state-of-the-art facility. If you go outside my district – I go to every district throughout the province and there's always a new road. There's a new building. There are recreation facilities. I look around and I think these are sound investments.

I gestured yesterday to the Minister of Fisheries about his amalgamated District of Carbonear – Trinity – Bay de Verde, and you don't have to drive through Carbonear very far to find that there are massive investments in that district. So I guess it's fine to say: Where did you spend the money? But my question – and it has always been one of them ones, and I've said it to many people opposite: Are they not sound investments? What's so bad about those investments?

It's fine to say sometimes that you would spend it elsewhere. That's fair enough. That's why the government here now will make those decisions and we'll critique it for days on end. There was a lot of money spent and a lot of people have opinions on where we could have done better. That's fair play.

Another thing I noticed – I had the privilege in my previous life of serving under a couple of ministers. I got a bit of a crash course on expectations. Oil was at \$140 a barrel, I believe, when I first came to work with my former MHA. It was unbelievable when you look at \$140 a barrel, we were running \$2 billion surpluses, and at the same time there were people lined up at the doors of Finance, basically, with demands.

I sat in the boardroom with ministers and I heard the requests that came in. It was hard to say no to any of those requests. When you're left with this massive surplus, how can you say no to this community group or this organization or or this municipality that are looking for that new arena? It is fine to say it now because we're supposedly broke or we are broke, for now, because of the price of oil plummeting. But then again when the good times were here, it's hard to say no to those groups that come in looking for money.

I equate it sometimes – I use analogies a lot, but I equate it sometimes when you look at the person who won a lotto. They may be down on their luck and they are struggling. They are struggling to find a place to live and they hit the jackpot. The general public will sit back and say, oh yeah, they're done for life. But when they buy that new home, they buy the new vehicle, they get a trip and clothes to wear, so they are going to buy some, all of a sudden that is not really much money any more, then they're struggling to try to stretch that out to get into the next step in life.

I'm 49; I've lived in Newfoundland for years and years where we struggled to survive financially. I know what it was like budget after budget. My own family were affected by layoffs back in the '90s. Every second year you were bumping, but we all got that and we all understood we were in a fiscal struggle. We never had the benefit of oil in the '90s, but we finally found our way and the revenues did start flowing and we did have money. But in saying you have money, you still have a pent-up demand.

After all these years of being suppressed – because it's no good of anyone coming over to you guys now looking for money because we hear every day we're \$2 billion deficit, fair enough. If you carry that for five years and all of a sudden you had a big surplus, rest assured they'll be lined up at the door. That's the fact of the matter.

Sometimes you hear the negativity and, again, like I said, I've heard it loud and clear. Do you know what? There's not been a government elected to this House of Assembly that's not wasting money. So I wish you well in your pursuit to not do that – and I really sincerely

mean that, but I know that at the end of the day there will be lots of fingers pointing that way, too.

As long as the decisions are made, when you come up with your budget, as long as you make sound, financial decisions that are not going to shock the economy, shock people, I guess it's something that we'll have to wait and see. I mean, you're the government in power so you can do that.

I want to finish off – that's my rant on finances. I have lots of other issues I will go into other times, but that was something that I said to my colleague there for Cape St. Francis; I heard it at the doors over and over again. It's an opportunity to stand up here and just kind of get it off your chest. I know it's a play on words and it's popular to say it when you're on that side, but, I don't know, there are a lot of great investments made to the province. A lot of your Members now are the beneficiaries. Your districts, the people of your districts are the beneficiaries to those investments. I'm sure they all appreciate the investments that were made. I don't think they would consider it to be a bad investment.

Madam Chair, my District of CBS has benefitted from a lot of those investments. It's a beautiful district. It's still probably 70 per cent rural, but it's become more – I guess being 20 minutes outside the city, you kind of get that transient population.

I see every day the community is changing. I guess it's changing for the better, but we have a lot of – people don't want to lose the rural aspect of it. They've come to CBS because it's only 20 minutes away, yet they can go home in the evening and sit out, go on their quad and not have to worry about being downtown and getting in trouble for driving down Water Street on your quad. That's never that popular apparently.

**MR. KENT:** And you can get an ice cream at Bergs.

**MR. PETTEN:** And you can get an ice cream at Bergs. Yes, that's right. Where I live I can actually get on my quad and go from my house. I really appreciate that.

Like I said, CBS is a unique district in the sense that it's so close to the city, yet it's so rural. It's a place that I've lived all my life and I'm proud to call home.

I'm also very pleased the people in CBS gave me the opportunity to represent them. It wasn't easy. I had to go two swipes at it. The first time I saw the finish line but I tripped on the way. I'd like to say, the second time I pulled out all the stops. I went for broke on my second bid and that almost cost me my life, too.

In saying that, it's a pleasure to get up here and speak. My time is running low. I could go into lots of other topics which I'll do another day, but one final point I'll make in closing.

Conception Bay South has a large seniors population, as a lot of districts do. I know we have a lot of seniors in CBS. One of my platforms in the election was an advocate for seniors.

You're not going to solve their problems. I've had the pleasure so far in the short time I've been elected, actually, to personally deal with a lot of seniors. It's something that I've really enjoyed. It's great helping seniors because you're not really helping – these are programs that are in place. They just don't know where to find these programs.

You walk a senior in through the front door of this building, it's like you're after putting them into a maze. I get that. My own mother, you wouldn't get her out to this building for that.

It is a real treat to help seniors. I really enjoy it and it's something I look forward to doing during my term. I have other things that I will be paying a lot more attention to, especially my district. On that note, I'll finish up for now.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Stephenville – Port au Port.

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

**MR. FINN:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

It's a pleasure to get up and speak for the first time, other than a Member's statement just last week, and speak to the importance of the Interim Supply bill.

Madam Chair, first of all I'd just like to acknowledge a great gratitude and thanks to the people of Stephenville – Port au Port who supported me in becoming the newest Member for the district.

Just 70 years ago, actually, my grandfather sat in the national convention, the very first representative of the Port au Port District, which is now known as Stephenville – Port au Port. So 70 years ago my grandfather had this role and I'm proud to now take it on myself.

In speaking to the Interim Supply bill, it's very necessary of course. We have to administer funds for the ongoing efforts of government with respect to supplying programs and services.

I find it quite interesting, just Tuesday when we were debating this bill a couple of Members opposite, there was some acknowledgement of working together. I believe the Member for Mount Pearl – Southlands acknowledged the Member for Mount Pearl North, and there was recognition of working together. Of course, we're all in this together and we're all very much well aware of that. You can see the love right now between the two Members. There you go.

I'm quite happy to be here and to work together with all of my colleagues. I must say, representing the West Coast and the West Coast area, we have a great team of individuals: the Member for Bay of Islands; St. George's – Humber, my colleague, Mr. Reid; we have the Member for Burgeo – La Poile; St. Barbe – L'Anse aux Meadows; and as well the hon. Premier, all representing the West Coast. I'm very proud to be a part of that team and very proud to work with these individuals.

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

**MR. FINN:** Not only have they given me much advice and wisdom in the months leading up to the election and so on, and continuing to do so,

but it's great to work alongside with them in representing the great West Coast.

When we talk about the Interim Supply bill, we're talking about keeping the funds going. One of the things I find quite troubling is the references from the Members opposite about the Government Renewal Initiative. They're constantly referring to this fact that there's this 15-month road tour, and this 15-month plan and so on and so forth. Well, I just find it really troubling that they keep touting that as a reason that we're not doing something. Well, we're actually doing everything we can. We're reaching out to all the people of the province for their input right now.

The Minister of Finance referenced just yesterday, we've had up to 1,800 unique ideas alone on our Dialogue App. I think the Government Renewal Initiative is very important. It's very interesting, Members opposite – suddenly the electorate has put them opposite and now they have all the answers. They suddenly have all the answers and they're not quite sure why we're doing this Government Renewal Initiative. Well, if they didn't leave us with such a deficit we probably wouldn't have to go to a Government Renewal Initiative to seek input.

The Member yesterday for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi, spoke about the fact we're all elected and we're all elected to show leadership and that's why the public takes care of our paycheques. We're all elected to show leadership. What leadership can we show? She went further to reference the fact that health care is important and education is important. No one's going to argue that health care and education are important services. I don't think we'd get any argument from anyone of the 40 Members in this room today that those two services are important.

When you refer to the fact that we're now looking at sweeping cuts of 30 per cent across the board, well, the reality is we're not looking at sweeping cuts of 30 per cent across the board. I don't know how long they can continue to reference that. In fact, the idea was put forth from the Minister of Finance specifically suggesting that departments get creative in looking, if they had to cut 30 per cent. There

was no specific reference to cutting 30 per cent across the board. This was merely an exercise in looking at ways in which we can save money. In doing so, we're asking all departments to be creative in looking at that. There was no suggestion of sweeping cuts of 30 per cent across the board.

It's quite funny when you talk about money, one thing that sticks out to me in my district in particular and for Members who would have been paying attention to the media, we had an oil leak in Port au Port Bay, a very, very sensitive issue. We had oil leaking from a cracked-off pipe that was in the ground for years and years and years and the government of the day couldn't really determine who had that oil lease and who had the ownership of that well.

At that time, I believe it was in June, the then minister of Environment wouldn't take the time to come to Port au Port to see it. Around the same time they happened to send the minister of Transportation and Works to Romania to christen a ferry. It's just troubling for me, as a Member for Stephenville – Port au Port with a very sensitive issue in my district with respect to environmental disaster, we couldn't send the minister of Environment over to look at some oil in Port au Port Bay, but we had no trouble spending \$10,000 to send someone to Romania to christen a ferry that didn't work anyway. Again, very troubling when you talk about waste of money.

The Member for Conception Bay South just acknowledged it's always good to see what some of the good work is in the district, and there's always a new road and this sort of thing. Well, there's always a new road, and there's always going to be a road that needs to have work done on that road. I'm very proud to sit here with my colleagues and our Minister of Transportation and Works to acknowledge we have a multi-year infrastructure plan in place. The plan is in place to take the politics out of pavement, and to take the politics out of asphalt.

Laying out a plan is what's important, and it's what's important to the people when you talk about being financially responsible and acknowledging that every district has work to be done and we need to do so on a priority basis.

The Member for CBS also just mentioned there has not been a government that has been elected that is not wasting money. For the last number of days we've heard in Question Period from Members opposite with respect to questioning the Minister of Finance over the savings of \$100 million. Again, it is troubling that it takes three days in a row to ask the same questions around \$100 million when we're over here tackling a \$2 billion deficit. I really find it hard to fathom how they can get up and ask these questions full well knowing they had every responsibility and every effort to ensure we weren't left in this position.

I just look at they're suggesting we're not showing leadership and we haven't done things to date. Well, since taking office on November 30 we've done numerous things to show leadership to the people of this province. Our Premier acknowledged in December and put out in the public eye the financial updates reflecting exactly where the circumstances were with the province after having sent letters to the former premier in September of the same year asking for a current fiscal update.

So here we are asking for information on where the province stands today, we're not getting any responses and then within three weeks of being elected we're laying it out there for everyone to see.

Secondly, what we've done as a government to show leadership, to save money, we've eliminated the funds for the parliamentary secretaries and parliamentary assistants. We've done that measure. We've also reduced and taken back some of their stances on taking the pensions and the overpayments back from our seniors. I mean, how terrible is it, you're over there talking about wasting money and then we're going to go turn around and get it on the backs of our seniors of our province. It's just unbelievable to think that was even a thought.

It is very easy to just look and say, you know what, some overpayments were made. How can you go to anyone who is a senior in this province, who's lived and worked their entire life and paid taxes, and now go back and say, well, you had an overpayment, we need to get a few dollars back from you? It's just unfathomable.

So, again, in acknowledging our seniors, we've made that effort. We've also reduced the funds from the parliamentary secretary positions as well. Of course, this has to be a long-term plan. The Minister of Finance has acknowledged that there are short-term efforts; there's medium term and there's long term as well. The very first effort is going to be when we present our budget 2016.

This is something that we were doing during our Government Renewal Initiative in consultation with all of the public of the province to receive their input. It's not simply just one of these Office of Public Engagement sessions that the Members opposite used to hold where you'd push a clicker, push a button and rank your ideas. There's no such thing as ranking your ideas here. We're opening to receiving all ideas as a part of being an open, transparent and accountable government.

In conclusion – and I know that time is getting short there – the Interim Supply bill is a very necessary initiative. We need to keep the programs and services going for the residents of the province. It's something that's very important. We all know that this is just a necessary means right now to improve the Interim Supply bill. Of course moving forward, our budget 2016 will outline a plan moving forward for the medium-, short- and long-term goals of this province.

I'd like to thank you, Madam Chair, for giving me the opportunity to speak today.

Thank you very much.

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

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

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Thank you very much.

I'd like to congratulate the Member that just got up before me. A great job on your first speech here in the House of Assembly. Good job.

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

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Also, I would like to congratulate my colleague for CBS here on the

side of me. I think he did a good job. People don't realize how difficult it is to get up sometimes and just speak in here. It's not as easy as people – you're sat in the House; you're doing nothing at all. It's a bit difficult sometimes. I congratulate you for getting up and doing your job today and being part of this debate.

It's so important that we do what we do here because it is a debate. I'll argue with some of the points that you just made and disagree with you, but do you know something? That's what this is all a part of and it's the reason we're here in the House of Assembly. We all have different opinions.

At the end of the day, it's one thing we all have to be – the main thing is the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I believe that's the reason why we're all here. I hope everybody is here for the same reasons. It's a good job today with the new people that came in.

It's all about doing our best. We're here to represent our districts. We do our best for our districts. We have people in our districts that need our help. That's the reason we should be here. I look forward to approaching any of the ministers or any of the people over on the other side and asking for that help. That's the reason why I'm here. I hope that you'll be receptive to whatever I ask for. Sometimes it's a simple little thing that we can do to help people, but it's a big thing for the person that we help.

Madam Chair, I have to say again, it's a great privilege just to get up here today to speak to my District of Cape St. Francis. There are opportunities during this session that we'll all get. When you're finalized you'll be after getting up about four or five times. You'll be after speaking on everything that we can speak on when it comes to budget and Interim Supply and everything else. So it's a good opportunity to get up and be able to express our opinion and people can see what we're all about.

I'm very proud of one thing that happened in the last election. We're doing a great commemoration here of 100 years of Beaumont-Hamel this year. We all have to look at the people who came before us and what they did so we could be here sat in the House of Assembly.

The right to vote is a very important part. I can remember my dad and mom – I can tell you right now we all voted because it was a right that they and their forefathers before them gave us, that right to be able to vote.

This past election – sometimes we all do our best to get the vote out and everything else, but I'm very proud of what happened in my district the last time: 71 per cent of the people got out in Cape St. Francis. I'd like to see it at 91 per cent. I'd like to see 100 per cent, but that was the highest in the province.

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

**MR. K. PARSONS:** I have to say, the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune was a close second.

It's important because when you look at districts in the province – I really believe, no matter what side of the House we're on, what side of the fence we're on, it's something that we really have to make sure we do because to exercise the right to vote is so important.

I found this time in my election, I saw more young people get out to vote, which is fantastic. Because the more that we can engage our youth to get out and vote, the more they'll get engaged in what we're doing. So it's very important that we really do that. It's nice to see that we do that and make sure that – I tell you how it works are your volunteers. They really are the people who get the people out to vote. As we all know, we wouldn't be able to do anything without the volunteers. They call people and do everything else.

I hope there's some way we can promote it a little bit more. I hope that people who watch us here in the House of Assembly want to be engaged and become part of the political system. The biggest way to become part of it is to get out and vote. Like I said, 71 per cent, I am very proud. I would like for it to be 91 or 100, but it's very, very good.

Madam Chair, I sat on that side of the House. I also sat on this side of the House when we had that many members that we had to sit on this side of the House. So I've been sitting on both sides of the House, beforehand. It's a new job

for us. We're getting used to it. We're here now, this is our second week. We're getting used to it. As a Member, I have some portfolios that I have to be the official spokesperson for as part of the Opposition Party. I'm very proud of what I have to do because I really look forward to doing it. It's important to me. I have Municipal Affairs, I have Fisheries – and I've had dialogues with both ministers so far – Service NL and workers' comp.

I just want to talk a little bit today about Municipal Affairs. It strikes home to me being the former Mayor of Flatrock, my dad being the first Mayor of Flatrock, I'm always proud to say that he was and I'm following in his footsteps. It's so important – municipalities over the years had to struggle.

I can remember when I was Mayor of Flatrock and we were looking for a fire truck. The split at that time was 50-50. The fire truck was \$240,000, so for a small town the size of Flatrock we had to come up with half the money. At that time it was a big decision. We debated at council whether we were going to do it or not. We ended up doing it. The minister at the time was my former good friend and former colleague – and I'm sure a lot of people in this House that knew him respected him. It was the late Jack Byrne. We ended up getting a new fire truck.

At that time, 50-50 was so huge. We had a budget of \$450,000 and all of a sudden one item on that budget, which was a fire truck – a safety issue, something that we needed, it was very, very important – was \$125,000 for the Town of Flatrock to be able to invest.

Municipalities across the province since – and, again, I heard my colleague for CBS talk about different things that happened in his district and where we're spending money. I believe the investments we've made in municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador is huge. Rural Newfoundland and Labrador needed a 90-10, they needed an 80-20 and communities needed 70-30 because they just couldn't afford it. We only have one taxpayer in this province. Three levels of government, but just one taxpayer. It's important we don't download our services to municipalities across the province because these are volunteers.

I always say when I'm finished this part of it I intend to go back and serve on council. I don't know if I'll be a mayor again, but I really enjoyed my stay with it because you're really at the ground level. You're really at the level where if people want to put a shed in their backyard or whatever it is, it's important to everybody. It's nice to be involved in your communities, especially in small communities right across the province, because there are only so few people that really want to step up and do it.

It's important that these volunteers that are in the small communities of rural Newfoundland have our support. So some of the questions I asked to the Minister of Municipal Affairs today – and he gave me answers. I don't think he's going to touch the ratios. I hope he's not.

Even the money last year that was allotted for Municipal Operating Grants, it's so important. We've been at this for a long, long while and it's unbelievable that in this day and age – I'm not blaming it on anybody – there's not safe and clean drinking water in our communities. It's very important these investments be made so that people do have safe, clean drinking water. It's almost like it's a right and everybody should have it. There are so many communities across the province that don't have it today. I hope we don't just cut it off and say, that's it, times are tough and we can't afford to do this and can't afford to do that. We have to look at the priorities in the communities.

I understand there's going to be some issues with communities that are looking for things that maybe are not top priority, like drinking water, that we have to have a look at. But there's a lot of things that our communities and municipalities right across the province of Newfoundland supply to our residents that are key and important to the residents in those communities.

We can't cut those services because that's the last stage. Once we download stuff to our municipalities we're going to be cutting. Like I said, there's only one taxpayer. If you look this year at the Municipal Assessment Agency – and I was pleased in the Throne Speech that they mentioned they are going to review it because it really does need to be reviewed. Look at St.



John's alone and the turmoil that it caused, even in communities like mine, because it's about four years and so much can change in those four years when they get the assessments done.

It's important that there's some kind of mechanism in place so it can be done quicker and it can be done fairer. Sometimes when we experience what we experienced over the last couple of years, where there's a downturn in the economy and stuff like that happens, it's important that people in municipalities don't get to feel the brunt of everything.

As we go forward, I'm hoping the Minister of Municipal Affairs will do the proper thing and make sure that municipalities right across the province are taken care of. As far as I'm concerned, it's the backbone of our whole economy. It's the backbone of who we are as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that we survive.

We can't expect taxpayers in rural Newfoundland who, mainly seniors – a lot of people are moving out of these communities – have to foot the bill for a lot of things that are in their communities. So it's important that we keep the 90-10, the 80-20 and the 70-30 ratios. It's also very important the \$22 million we promised last year – that they were so happy with and so pleased to get that \$22 million – that we ensure that is continued for municipalities.

I'm cutting down on my time now. As far as I'm concerned, Madam Chair, the municipal leaders in our province are the key to our –

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. K. PARSONS:** They're the key to our communities and it's important that we support them.

Thank you very much.

**CHAIR:** I remind the Member his time has expired.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

**MR. HOLLOWAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

There are a lot of (inaudible) today. First, I'm really proud to stand up and speak in favour of this bill.

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

**MR. HOLLOWAY:** As some of the Members opposite would quickly realize, not too long ago I was actually working in the public service. As I look across, two of the Members opposite were actually ministers for a department that I've worked for. It's an interesting place to be now, Madam Chair, to be on the government side and to talk about the need to support the things that are going on in this province.

We have some tremendous people that are working in the public service. I was very proud to be working there for more than 26 years helping communities, helping individuals, working with voluntary organizations to do some very great work that is being provided by the people of this province and the taxes that they pay.

I just wanted to talk a little bit today about some of the services that are provided beyond the public service, and talk about some of the agencies, the boards and the commissions. In particular, I want to talk about the family resource centres in the province and specifically the one in my region, in my District of Terra Nova, the Neighbourhood of Friends Family Resource Centre.

The Neighbourhood of Friends Family Resource Centre actually started out as a literacy centre. In 1998, we had the Strategic Social Plan for this province. The intent of the Strategic Social Plan was really to break down the silos in government. It's interesting to see that over the last 10 years, all those silos have come up and departments have started to work in isolation. We know that today as a government we have to break down some of those silos again.

During the Strategic Social Plan days, volunteers, government departments and regions would come together and talk about some of the core issues that were impacting sustainability of our rural regions. I was thinking as the Member opposite was talking about rural Newfoundland and rural sustainability – because it's keenly important to someone like me and one of the

reasons that I chose to run for office and to be elected as an MHA for Terra Nova. Rural sustainability is actually sustainability of this province.

So the role of the regional steering committees after 1998 was to really come together and government departments to come together, and to talk about what are those core social and economic issues. Madam Chair, you can't grow the economy of this province without thinking about the impacts on the social side of our communities and our regions. They go hand in hand. These regional steering committees would come together on a regular basis and they would develop a regional work plan.

One of the things that we quickly realized – I'm thinking back now, this is 2001. As we go into 2003, we quickly realized that there was a need to support families with children in this province. There were family resource centres that were being created in other districts, other regions of the province. What I was finding in my district was that there was a gap. So we were working with some of our partners in education and in health care in terms of identifying some dollars that could provide those necessary programs and services to those families and those children.

I'm grateful to say that we were able to partner with the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation. They were able to provide a housing unit in Clarenville. So we were able to start to provide some necessary services to underprivileged families who were struggling, children in particular who were having some difficulties after school and certainly during school so that we could enhance the kind of services and supports and relationships that were going on in those family environments. I'm very proud to say that we did some really great work.

Yesterday, in the lobby of the West Block we had the Food Security Network. We also had the Kids Eat Smart. It reminded me of the days when I was involved with the Family Resource Centre where we partnered with Kids Eat Smart. We were able to leverage some dollars from various government departments and we were able to work with Kids Eat Smart. We were able to offer Homework Haven, but provide nutritious food to some of the kids who were

able to come and participate. We were able to partner with the colleges, in particular the College of the North Atlantic, so that they could come and offer tutoring services to those children.

Now, over time, Madam Chair, what we found was that our success and the success of the families caused our numbers to grow. So we were forced, if you will, to move to another part of the community. Now, that's a very good thing when you're helping people achieve positive results.

We think about the sustainability of this province. One of the foundations and one of the things I spent a lot of time at in my early days as a public servant was I was helping kids and families nurture their skills and abilities so that they could become active and proactive members in our community. So it was a good investment of the dollars that we had and the dollars that we're talking about here today in terms of the investment into communities, investment into families and investment into children of the future.

We moved to another part of the community. We decided to do some outreach. Our outreach decided to go beyond Clarenville. We went to Random Island. We went to South West Arm. We went to Swift Current. We went to Arnold's Cove and Come By Chance because there was a great need that was happening.

We partnered with the school board. We didn't want to – and one of the things that we will do as a government is we're not going to waste money. We're going to spend money wisely. One of the things we did at that time, Madam Chair, was we actually partnered with the schools so that we didn't have to pay rent. That could reduce some of the cost to the Neighbourhood of Friends Family Resource Centre.

We could put those necessary dollars right into the programs and the services that were needed for those children and those families. We decided to hire some early childhood educators, because we wanted to enhance the programs that we were going to offer, and we wanted to enhance the services we were providing to those families.

One of the things that came to our attention at the time was we were initially in a low-income neighbourhood and there was a dilapidated playground in the area. So we had some of the families in the area saying it would be great if we could work with Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, work with our community partners and if we could actually do something about that playground. I can say, Madam Chair, I'm very proud of the role the community played.

I'm sure Members opposite and my colleagues on this side of the House would recall or know about Let Them Be Kids. They're a fantastic organization; they've helped build many playgrounds across this province. Well, the very first playground they built in this province was actually in Clarendville. It was a playground build and revitalization project I was very proud to be a part of.

We brought together the community, we partnered with the Department of Municipal Affairs and with Recreation, and we brought in youth who were part of the project, and at the end of a weekend we built a brand-new playground for that neighbourhood. It was a really good investment of some limited dollars, but some great dollars.

It's a playground that continues to survive today. It's about seven years since we did that. The community itself, one of the things it did, it created pride. We also at the time realized the neighbourhood and the people in the neighbourhood didn't have a lot of pride for where they were living. Doing investments, making those right kind of investments in those sorts of neighbourhoods really helps build pride because it shows government, it shows the community, is keenly interested in everybody in this province. I certainly was very much proud to be a part of that.

The Family Resource Centre – and I know I'm down to my last minute. The Family Resource Centre itself has been a tremendous success. They help over 900 kids and families in various locations, as I mentioned earlier, which is tremendous. It's a great investment of the dollars we have.

It's important we speak in favour of this bill; we continue to support the wonderful services and programs that are needed in this province, and certainly those that are being provided for kids and for families.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Doesn't that have a great ring to it? I'm very happy to stand and speak to Address in Reply again.

I would like to take this opportunity to talk about the issue of the appointed school board trustees. School board trustees are very, very important in our whole democratic process, particularly how we deliver education to our children. School board trustees are elected by the community; they are members of the community. When the community elects them, the community is saying to the board we entrust to you the concerns and the educational needs of our children; we entrust to you to make good decisions on our behalf.

I'd like to thank those who are currently on the school board – the trustees that are on the school board. They were elected in 2009 and their term was for four years. There hasn't been an election since. So they've been on the board for seven years, an unusually long period of time.

When government amalgamated all the school boards, what they did is they just appointed these trustees. There hasn't been an election. The Minister of Education promises there will be an election; however, in the interim some very, very, very important decisions are going to be made. These decisions affect communities; they affect the lives of children. These decisions are being made by trustees who have been appointed, trustees who no longer come from a democratic process of being elected by their communities to best represent the needs of their children.

I do trust that these trustees probably have the best interests of children at heart and our educational system, but this is a violation of our democratic process. Again, I thank them for their time, for their expertise and for their willingness to step up.

I'd like to talk a little bit about what's happening with the potential closure of Holy Cross Junior High which is in my district. Holy Cross Junior High is a small school. Right now there are 108 students. They are grade seven, eight and nine. The majority of children come from the inner city. They all come from city centre. There are a lot of children that come from families that face really challenging socio-economic challenges – really challenging ones. This school is so dedicated to providing the best resources possible to these children.

Mr. Chair – it's now, Mr. Chair. I have a stack of letters that parents and guardians – because there are a number of children at the school who may not be living with their parents. They may be living in foster care or they may be living with their grandparents who are their guardians now or with other family members who are so determined –

**CHAIR (Lane):** Order, please!

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

They are so determined to make sure that Holy Cross doesn't close. Why is that important? It's important because many of these children need the extra supports.

Mr. Chair, 38 per cent of the children at Holy Cross Junior High have exceptionalities. I know that there are many retired teachers and educators here in this House now. They know what that means to have 38 per cent of your school population with exceptionalities.

I would like to read for you from a letter, if I'm permitted, from a parent of two children who are in grade seven. Their parent wrote a letter about why they feel Holy Cross is so important, and why it's so important to keep it open. They said that Holy Cross Junior High was within walking distance of almost all its students. The students

aren't bused and there are several after-school activities that are provided.

This is about keeping some of these kids off the streets. They have a student leadership group. They have an Allied Youth group. They have cheerleading. They have recycling. They have a drama group. They have a school yearbook committee. They have hockey, basketball, volleyball and baseball. They have a robotics group. They do trips to the museum.

Last night, Mr. Chair, there was a rally. It was attended by all of the basketball teams from Holy Cross Junior High. Many of these children – the basketball team has a regulation of inclusivity. Everybody who wants to play basketball gets to play – everyone. This is about giving kids who do not have access to a lot of money and other resources a chance to play, giving them a chance to learn and making sure they have what they need in order to learn and be successful within the educational environment.

There's a breakfast program. I attend a number of the breakfasts. A lot of these kids come to school hungry. This school has won all kinds of awards for the inclusivity and programs that they have. As well, every child wins an award. They don't necessarily have to be the best; they simply have to try.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

The Chair is having difficulty hearing the hon. Member. I would ask all Members to take their conversations outside.

Thank you.

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

One of the important aspects as well for Holy Cross Junior High is that they have developed a number of community partnerships. Among the community partnerships they have developed is a tutoring program with the Froude Avenue Community Centre. The kids can walk there at lunchtime, they can walk there after school and they get free tutoring.

Mr. Chair, I'm having a hard time hearing myself. Perhaps the Member for Mount Pearl North might be able to give me a little space here to speak.

Thank you very much.

They have a tutoring program as well with the Buckmasters Circle Community Centre and with the Boys and Girls Club. Again, 38 per cent of the children in this school have exceptionalities. They're kids who need this extra support.

When they go to Brother Rice – if their school is closed, they will be bused to Brother Rice. All of them will be bused. Even though where they live right now, from their kitchen windows they can see their school, they will be bused to Brother Rice. They won't be able to attend after-school activities at Brother Rice, nor will Froude Avenue be able to provide tutoring there. We don't know what kinds of services are going to be provided. We do know, though, that the services that are so integral to –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MS. ROGERS:** – Holy Cross Junior High will not be available to them at Brother Rice. We cannot ignore the situation that 38 per cent of these children have exceptionalities.

The school team, the teachers, the principal, all of the staff at the school are incredibly dedicated. They have dances and events for the kids. All of these after-school activities are done voluntarily by the teachers.

A number of the children have a hard time getting to school on time; however, if they're a little bit late, they can still get themselves to school. By being bused to Brother Rice, they will have to get to school earlier. If they miss the bus they have no way to get to school. A lot of their parents do not have cars. A lot of their parents cannot chauffeur them to school. This is also an issue of being able to get kids to the school, make sure they're fed and make sure they have the services that they are providing.

This present government has said that everything is on the table. There are some

things, Mr. Chair, that shouldn't be on the table: the education of some of the most vulnerable. The children that attend Holy Cross Junior High are among some of the most vulnerable children in our province.

These children have won the majority of the Fry Family Foundation Scholarships, so something is working in this school. That's the issue. It's not that it's just about moving somebody from one building to another; this school is successful. It works for the children who attend it.

We have to make sure, Mr. Chair, that the Liberals are not making children pay for the mistakes of the Tories. That's what's happening.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MS. ROGERS:** The Liberals will make these children pay for the mistakes of the Tories. So if the community school is closed down because of financial situations, these children are being punished. Their families are being punished –

**CHAIR:** The hon. Member's time has expired.

**MS. ROGERS:** – because of the sins of the Tories.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's certainly my pleasure to stand in the House today and speak on behalf of this bill. I'm going to try to take my 10 minutes sort of off the cuff and talk about a few things that are important to me.

I would like to acknowledge my hon. Members across the floor, and particularly the former minister of Transportation and Works. When I

became the Minister of Transportation and Works, he's probably one of the first people that I was in contact with. I thought it was pretty good because this can be a working relationship.

It was sort of baptism by fire because one of the first challenges I had was one of my new ferries that came in, which was the *Veteran*. Obviously, we know where the ferry came from. I was so pleased that the minister was able to work with me on that. We're working through that challenge.

When the Premier called me and offered the Minister of Transportation and Works, I was certainly honoured to be able to accept that. I knew it was going to be a big challenge. We are facing a tremendous number of challenges as we move forward as a government.

I'm so pleased to be a part of this team. We have a strong team. We have a fantastic Premier. We have a great, fantastic Minister of Finance. How can I forget my Minister of Municipal Affairs? He is one of those guys that will stick you when you least expect it and he will also compliment you when you're doing something good. I would like to acknowledge my great friend, the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Chair, we are faced with many challenges and one of the challenges that I'm faced with is having to deal with a lot of the work that was not completed by the former government. One of the challenges that I have, Mr. Chair, is the fact that I have 1,500 requests for road repairs.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** How much?

**MR. HAWKINS:** One thousand five hundred.

Mr. Chair, do you realize that that 1,500 equates to about \$1 billion? Yesterday, my good colleague and friend stood and talked about a legacy fund. Guess what would have happened? Twenty-five billion dollars in the last 10 years in royalties and assets – \$25 billion – if, for example, the former government had a vision, even a small vision, imagine if just 4 per cent of that amount had been put aside, just 4 per cent –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Only four.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Only 4 per cent, I would have had \$1 billion. I would have been able to complete every single request for roads this year in a billion dollars. I'm telling you that really puts it in perspective when we want to look at where we are financially, where we are as a province to realize that we are over \$2 billion in debt.

Mr. Chair, I can assure the Member opposite that I'm looking forward to getting up continually in this House to talk about the approach that we're going to take. We are going to take an approach that's evidence-based. We are going to do our research, and we are going to make sure that the services that we provide to the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador will be the best services possible under the circumstances and under the resources that we have.

I can tell you that as we continue to govern over the next four years, these will become evident as we put in place measures whereby we can service the people of this great province.

One of the other areas that I'm concerned about is New Building Canada Fund. I know that my colleague, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, had made reference to it on two occasions where we've had \$34.9 million that was in the Small Communities Fund that was never accessed. As a matter of fact, it was never applied for. So we are now in the process of putting together and we're going through our infrastructure so that we can maximize the amount of funding that's available under the New Building Canada Fund. I'm looking forward to building that infrastructure and getting that in place.

Mr. Chair, as we move forward as well, we are not going to take a partisan approach to road repairs. One of the things we're going to do differently as a government is we are going to base our decisions on evidence. We've already had our regional directors that have come into our office, and we are now looking at and asking our regional directors to go through an exercise whereby we have criteria in place that we are going to make our decisions on what roads are to be done and when they're going to be done.

Mr. Chair, that will be quite different than what we've been used to. We don't intend to spend money from this province and what we have, in doing one kilometre in this district, another kilometre in another district and another kilometre in another district, like it's been done in the past for partisan reasons. We are going to take all of the evidence that we have, we're going to look at it and we're going to make our decision. We can probably make better sense, better use of our money and better use of our finances by actually doing three kilometres in one district and maybe nothing in the other.

That's the approach we're taking, Mr. Chair. An approach we consider to be sustainable, an approach that makes sense, an approach that tells us we want to do it right. I pledge to my hon. Members across, and also to my colleagues, that I want to work in partnership. I want to look at ways in which we can work together. Because they're on the opposite side does not mean they will not be a part of the financing we have and the projects we have.

That's something that, I think, will be significantly different as we move forward and as we govern. I think we're governing as being open and transparent. We're governing to serve and provide the services that best suit the people of this province. I want to make that commitment.

Mr. Chair, I'm honoured to be in this House. It's something I've had a dream for many, many years, to be a part of that. I never, ever had the opportunity. I just want to thank the good people of Grand Falls-Windsor – Buchans – the great people of Grand Falls-Windsor – Buchans – who put their faith in me for the next four years. I can assure you that while we have our challenges going forward, I've always said whenever you have a challenge and when challenges come, there's opportunity.

I believe in spite of the fact that it may appear – and I know some of the criticism we've gotten on the other side – that it's all doom and gloom, well, Mr. Chair, we have to give the right picture. We have to tell the people exactly the situation we're in.

The situation we're in, Mr. Chair, is not a good situation. However, having said that, as I said

before, where there are challenges, there are opportunities. If there's any team that's going to find those opportunities, it's the team we have here on this side of the House.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** As we work together on looking at opportunities and as we face our challenges, I believe it will be in the best interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I always liked the word best practices. I believe that when we look at best practices we can find a lot of synergies in a lot of what we're doing. That's an idea we need to really build on because I think it's important for us.

No matter what side we're on, we owe it to the people that put us here. I think that's a very important part. Members opposite, you will find when you do say something and you do put something forward that I agree with, I will applaud you for that because I believe we're in this together. I think it's important that we work together as a team.

Mr. Chair, it's my pleasure to stand in this House today and talk about this particular bill because I think it's important for us. We have to get about doing the business. I think it's important for us as we look at the next couple of months in preparation for the budget. It's been a new experience for me. Being on the Treasury Board, that's a new experience in itself. I know we've put a lot of long hours into getting to where we are now.

Under the direction of our Finance Minister – I admire the energy and the skill set that she has. I believe for the first time in a long time that, from her business perspective and being an entrepreneur in this province, she is bringing a different perspective for us to have a direction and a course going forward. I know over the next four years, under the direction of our Finance Minister, we will put in place the best possible plan that we can do under the circumstances we have.

Mr. Chair, I want to thank you for the opportunity. I certainly look forward to the

continuing work with this side of the government.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for the District of Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The great District of Conception Bay East – Bell Island, Mr. Chair.

I do want to acknowledge the opening of this session, the opportunity to speak to Interim Supply and the importance it plays in maintaining and furthering programs and services, particularly supporting the valiant civil servants we have here to continue the great work that's being done on behalf of the people of this province.

I do want to thank my colleague, the Minister of Transportation and Works, for reaching out to me at the beginning of his tenure to pick my brain on a couple of issues there. I do look forward to working with him over the next number of years, particularly around some of the issues in my own district. Again, I'm open. Any tidbit of information or knowledge I may have that may be able to help you, I'm more than willing to share that with you. I open that olive branch there for that discussion.

I know we're going to have some very interesting discussions over the next number of years around our infrastructure needs, particularly around ferry services, which is very near and dear to my district as part of that process. One of the challenges you jumped right into was one of our new ferries. An unforeseen circumstance, but, again, a major investment by this administration to ensure the communities that are serviced by ferries have the proper assets that they need to, not only sustain their growth, but find a way to improve it, to make it grow. They can ensure that people are drawn to that and businesses are drawn to it.

We have all the luxuries of knowing the two vessels that are in place now, the *Veteran* that's here and the *Legionnaire* that will be here in the next month or so, will be great assets. I would hope this administration will continue what we started in the ferry replacement strategy in ensuring that the South Coast is taken care of and that Labrador is taken care of, Mr. Chair.

Very valuable parts of this province need their infrastructures improved, Mr. Chair, and we started that process. I look forward to meeting with the minister and giving my two cents worth, and hoping and knowing – he's a man of honour – that he'll start the process of trying to improve the other services that are out there.

Mr. Chair, he talks about needing a billion dollars to improve our infrastructure. I can't disagree; I was there. I looked at the books. I looked at our needs, I looked at the requests we had and, no doubt, another billion dollars would have put a major dent into the needs that people have in this province around roads, where you have to put a grader out every second or third week just to make sure they're passable.

There are potholes out there that people lose tires in. Part of it is around our environment. Part of it is around that it was neglected for such a long time. That's not blame to any administration; it's a reality of our financial ability to be able to do it. A big part of it is our geography. We're so spread out. We almost have equal roads as Ontario with 25 times the population and 20 times the financial ability to pay for their infrastructure, but we've done a great job. We've done a great job in improving it, in bringing it to a level and in identifying. The minister has an easier job now, in my opinion, because it's been identified. We went out to people. We talked to our municipalities. We talked to our leaders out there. We talked to our staff.

TW has, by far, the best, most diligent, most competent, most committed group of individuals. Look at what they do in the run of a day in the middle of winter, in 100 kilometre winds in a snow storm; what they do on our ferries when you have a nor'easter and they still want to run to provide services; what they do in the other services they provide, from our air ambulance services to our water bombers, all the



things that are essential to protecting people and providing services. It is a great group of employees, as we do in every part of the civil service that serves the people of this province.

Mr. Chair, I want to note, too, while we talk about how another billion dollars would have been great to have, let's talk about the billion that we did spend in our infrastructure, particularly around Transportation and Works, around our road improvements. Let's take my colleagues there from Labrador, the great work that was done on the Trans-Labrador Highway and the work that still continues. The contracts that I put in place and my predecessor put in place to continue to work on the South Coast part of the Trans-Labrador Highway. It's a great asset.

Outside of the issues around people wanting it to be completed, I've got hundreds of emails from people saying it's a beautiful highway, thank you very much. Now, do we want it to be continued? Do we want to get it done as quickly as possible? Fair enough and rightfully so, because when you travel on it – for those who haven't travelled on the old highway before it was paved and know the challenges, at times you couldn't travel on it. It was impossible.

I know my colleagues from Labrador – and I had the privilege of working in Labrador and travelling on the road back in the '70s, the '80s and the '90s knowing the challenges we had. Now you leave Wabush to go to Goose Bay, it's a beautiful highway. It's as good as anything we have. It's a beautiful highway, unbelievable. Not only is the scenery beautiful, but the highway itself is well done, well maintained.

As we move to the South Coast, ways of improving that so we have a link. So everybody in this province, the people on the Island are connected to the people in Labrador, and we have another transportation link that improves our ability to get our assets here and opens up the door for extra business. That's part of the billion dollars. People question the \$25 billion in oil revenue that supposedly we had. Well, there's a billion I can account for right away and there are billions of other ones.

When you talk about taking the politics out of pavement, I like the minister's concept about

that because I know we did it in a lot of programs and services. We definitely took it out of education. Only last year I sat in the House here and outlined to this House the monies that we spent in education, particularly around improving the infrastructure: new schools, repairs to existing schools, improving our busing systems, all the things that we announced, all the new school systems.

The Minister of Health will never hear issues around mould in schools as it was all during the '70s, '80s and '90s, even the early 2000s. We eliminated a lot of that because we built infrastructure. It didn't make any difference what district or what partisan or the party colour was, we built it because it was necessary. You look at the list. There are people who know, who were here last year when I went through that list. We know where the biggest investments were. A lot of them, if not most, were in districts of not the governing party. That's the fair way to do it, it's the right way to do it and it's the way the people expect it to be done. We were glad to be able to do that.

Are there going to be some times when there is going to be debate – there's only X number of dollars and there's two districts that need it and somebody's going to come in and give a better argument or a more valiant argument as to why they should have it, and some people will say it is all about partisan? That's all in the interpretation.

At the end of day, the monies that were spent were spent in the best interest of the people who needed it. I was proud to be able to say I sat in Cabinet. I was chair of the infrastructure committee being in Treasury Board. Understanding you only have X number of dollars, how do you make it benefit the people as much as possible?

There's a balancing act, and we'll talk about that. I've heard it from the other side, we've mentioned it since we started, and I know the Third Party will mention it. It's a balancing act, and we're going to be able to move that towards that. We're going to ensure we look at where we've been, where we are and where we need to go.

I also want to note, particularly, I think the first week or so should be the friendly week. We'll all get to know each other. There are 20 or 21 new Members here, welcome. You're going to enjoy this. There's going to be days you're going to shake your head and say, what am I doing here?

No doubt, you were elected by representatives in your districts because people felt you would be their best representative. That you would come in here, not only fight for what's needed in your own district and individual needs of those individuals, but you would represent the province as a whole. That sometimes you'd have to step back from your own district to do what was better for everybody else in the province. I applaud you for that. There are going to be times when it's going to be hard to do that, but it's part of the process. You'll find what your priorities are and what your principles stand for.

One good thing I found about this in the last nearly six years in the House of Assembly is you'll find out what you stand for and what your principles really mean. Sometimes you'll pull back on things you thought were important and go in another direction. Sometimes you need to be cognizant of the fact of keeping open minded, that there's always another argument, there's always another stream, there's always another approach to certain things. Maybe, more importantly, there's always a bigger priority.

I do encourage the new Members here. You've got some good, experienced people on both sides of the House. Use them, pick their brains, challenge them. That's fair for all of us. That's the best way you'll learn in politics. It's the best way you'll take your few hits and still be able to get up and say what I'm doing is the right thing. It's sometimes when you'll be able to challenge other people. It's times when you have to go back in your own district and defend what you've done, even if it's not popular.

Governance is not about popularity. It's about doing what you think is the right thing to do, and at the end of the day being able to look back and say, that benefited more people than it hurt. That's what our governance is all about. It's about good democracy, and we have that in this province. We had it when we reduced it to 40 seats. Bigger representation by Members having

to deal with in their own districts, but it's the right fiscal way to do it. There's no doubt, nobody's been hurt by that.

We've got very competent people on both sides of this House who'll service their districts very honourably. We look forward to the debate. I'm looking forward to it. It's a great relax being on the Opposition because we can question what's going on, but we also have a history. We know it won't be always doom and gloom and it won't be always on like that.

It'll be about if you're doing a good job, we'll give you a nod. If it's not what we think is in the best interest of the people of this province we'll make you aware of it. We'll make the media aware of it. We'll make our own constituents aware of it and we'll make your constituents aware of it. If we're all looking at what we think is in the best interest of everybody, there'll be more good days than bad days.

Again, I encourage all the new Members here, enjoy this. This is a part of history. You'll make some friendships here. You'll learn some good things. Your legacy down the road will be that you were part and parcel of a program, a service, an entity, part of our infrastructure that benefit the people of this province.

Welcome again. I look forward to the next four years in the House of Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Service NL.

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Thank you.

I just want to spend a few minutes to speak on Interim Supply, Mr. Chair. There was something I said that I would bring up; during the election I committed to people on the North Shore of the Bay of Islands that I'd bring it up. The former Minister of Transportation and Works, you heard his speech about how we got to work, how we got to get along, how we all got to respect each other. I just want to tell you what

happened. If anything I'm saying here is wrong, I challenge the minister to stand up and deny what I'm saying – anything I'm saying.

Mr. Chair, there was funding given out for Transportation and Works to do some major repairs in the Bay of Islands. There was a big tender for the West Coast. I was asked by Transportation and Works – and I went out with the regional manager. Mr. Chair, there was one spot especially over on the North Shore called Plant Hill with some rutting. There were two accidents that I know of this year in that area, Mr. Chair.

We went out and measured the pavement on both sides of what was going to be done. We told them how much we had. Guess what, Mr. Chair? Do you know what this minister did, the former minister? Two days before the tender he picked up the phone and made the call. He said the money for the Bay of Islands is taken out. We put it out in Port au Port. That's what that Member did.

He's laughing. I challenge you now to stand up and say what I'm saying is wrong. Here's your opportunity.

I can tell you one thing, Mr. Chair. What happened there was not right. It was not fair. So when you hear all this stuff talking about you have to work together – what the Minister of Transportation and Works said, we're going to do a list of priorities and we're going to try to live the best we can to the best of the parties unless some major catastrophe happens along the way. That's the way it should be.

I understand politics. I certainly understand politics. I understand when there are ministers and there's a bit of leeway. I understand all of that, but what happened in the Bay of Islands – and I look at the Member who is laughing now, who is laughing, who in two days before the tender, \$500,000 – I even went out with a measuring tape with the car. We had to measure off some spots, Mr. Chair. We used the car – Transportation and Works – and it was pulled. The danger areas are still not done. There's a big smirk on his face. It's all right. The people who had the accidents weren't hurt, I can tell you that.

So don't ever stand up in this House and talk about how we got to get along, how we're all new friends because what you did – I've seen a lot of stuff in this House of Assembly, Mr. Chair. I've been a part of a lot of it. We had a lot of debates back and forth. I can take it. I'm a man. I can take it. I gave a lot and I took a lot, too, Mr. Chair, but I can tell you when somebody is vindictive and would do that to the people of the Humber – Bay of Islands and put people's lives at risk, put people in danger, not only that, have the audacity to stand here and say: We all got to get along. We're all the same. Everybody should be treated equal.

Mr. Chair, it almost made me sick, because I can tell you – and I know the people in the department were mortified, what happened two days before the tender, actually mortified. I can tell all the Members on this side, if there's a dangerous situation on any roads in this province that is brought to our attention, I know we will stand up. We will represent the people of the province, not individual districts, and not be mean and vindictive because we, as a government, represent everybody in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Not just one or two areas. Mr. Chair, I have to say that.

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

**MR. JOYCE:** If there was one thing over the number of years that I've been involved with politics, Mr. Chair, is I've won some and I've lost some battles with the ministers on the opposite side, Mr. Chair, but what happened there was mean. It was vindictive. It was cruel to the people of Bay of Islands. I can tell you, I have proof that it was done.

Now, speaking on the other side, the Member for Ferryland, we were dealing with Lark Harbour and York Harbour in the amalgamation. The former minister of Municipal Affairs treated us all with respect – the town councils. He did everything that he possibly could. That's the way a minister should be, Mr. Chair. That's the way a minister should act.

When the amalgamation issue went in, the Member for Ferryland met with us in Corner Brook. He squeezed us in for a meeting. He did everything possible that he could to ensure there

was amalgamation in York Harbour and Lark Harbour. I said it publicly, and I'll say it again: that's the way government should work. Just because you're on an opposite side, because you have a different political stripe, you should try to work together for the betterment of the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Member for Ferryland – I said it before, I said it on *Open Line* and I'll say it again – he worked as a true minister, as a true gentleman to help – now York Harbour and Lark Harbour didn't amalgamate and that wasn't the minister's fault. I said it publicly, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, there's no problem with me working with people – absolutely none. Just for the record, in four years from 2011 to 2015, the minister of Transportation and Works, whoever was there – he was there for two years. I couldn't get one meeting – not one meeting. The minister of Municipal Affairs, the Member for Mount Pearl North, I couldn't get one meeting – not one meeting could you get in. Couldn't get one meeting.

Mr. Chair, that's the kind of stuff, that's the narrow-minded, vindictive attitude that people have.

**MR. BRAZIL:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. JOYCE:** Here's the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island looking at me saying, yeah, that's right. You should be ashamed to say that to yourself. You should be ashamed to say that. Here I'm saying he took money away from the Bay of Islands, caused people harm and he is looking at me saying that's right. He should be ashamed of himself. I just can't believe you're saying that. I really, truly can't believe you're saying it, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, there are Members – and I could use their names now, Clyde Jackman. I know Clyde Jackman was a true gentleman. He treated me with the utmost respect. We dealt with him as an individual. Could you get everything you want? Of course not. Should you get everything? Of course not. I said that when I was in Opposition: there is no way in the world that any government can give everybody's asks in this province. You just can't do it.

But, Mr. Chair, what I'm hoping is the Members opposite who are so vindictive putting people in danger just for a political stripe, and trying to get back at me in some way, you have to remember if you take \$500,000 that was committed for dangerous roads, it's not me you're getting, it's the people of the – he's still over there smiling, Mr. Chair. It's the people of the Bay of Islands that you're putting lives in danger.

I said to the people on the north shore of the Bay of Islands I would bring this up because they were so upset. I went out – and they seen me on the road with the odometer in the Transportation vehicle. They asked and I said boys, this is being done. They were so happy.

I said now you won't get any luxuries, but the safety parts will be done. Mr. Chair, I was already to say, well, great, at least they'll recognize the concerns of the safety because I wrote at least five or six letters. So if the minister said I never asked for a meeting, I can show you the letters that I wrote. By the way, just for the record, I never got any response – just for the record.

Mr. Chair, what I'm saying here is, this government, we have to represent all people of the province. I understand the political side of it, but you have to take care of the needs of the people and not have politics get inside, not have personalities. We all have to work together for the betterment of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Chair, I know the Member knew Darin King very well. Darin King treated me very well. Did I get everything I wanted? Of course not, but I have to give the man respect. He treated you fairly; he treated you with respect. He understood that when I'm standing up here it's not me; it's the people behind me. Darin King stepped forward and so did the Member for Ferryland when York Harbour needed a fire truck because the fire truck broke down. What did they do? They stepped up and said let's work together to get it done. You have to recognize that.

What we have to do, as all people in the Legislature, is try to work together. I've committed to that and I know all the ministers here and all the government committed to that,

Mr. Chair, that we're going to work for the betterment of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I can say that I've fulfilled the commitment to the people on the north shore of the Bay of Islands – singled out the minister, the same minister who treated them with a lack of respect and dignity and put their lives in danger by being so vindictive and mean. I can guarantee you one thing –

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. JOYCE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** The Member's time has expired.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for giving me a few minutes to get up this afternoon and to spend some time on debate. I can assure you, Mr. Chair, I'm not going to use my time this afternoon for any personal cheap shots. I'm not going to do that. I'd like to steer away from that. I'm not going to do that today. I want to spend most of my time today talking about my district.

I did listen to the Member opposite who just spoke there. I think about the West Coast and I think about the investments. I would think that if you took the area from Deer Lake, the current Premier's district, out to Stephenville, roughly around the Stephenville, I'd say there's been more money spent on highways and roads and infrastructure, either provincial infrastructure on highways or in partnership with municipalities, than anywhere else in the province.

I say to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, if he wants to get up, if he wants to rise in his place to correct me and tell me I'm wrong, then he can do that as well. I think there have been more money and more investments on the West Coast of this province when it comes to infrastructure, roads and highways in the last five years.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible).

**MR. P. DAVIS:** What's that?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Out my way.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Out your way. No, I said from Stephenville out to Deer Lake.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Mr. Chair, in other places there's also been investments as well. In my own area, I was quite pleased just recently to attend at the new Paradise arena. A beautiful facility, absolutely beautiful community facility, and if anyone hasn't visited the new Paradise double ice arena and community centre –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. P. DAVIS:** – as of this day, I would encourage anyone to do it because it's a great example of a community centre that's servicing the needs of a community.

Most recently when I was there, the Paradise Minor Hockey Association unveiled their new logo for their new organization. Paradise, as we know, is a strong community. It's growing very strongly. The town has done a good job. I compliment the mayor and council and the people who work in the town as well, as well as the citizens. They have a very strong participation of community events and development within the town. There's a significant amount of partnership that happens in Paradise. It's resulting in great success. It's providing opportunities for all age groups, from the very young, such as with minor hockey.

In that community centre – there was so much there before the double ice arena was built – but an indoor skate park, as an example. I don't know how many of those exist in the province, but an indoor skate park. I can tell you, Mr. Chair, it's used every single day after school. There are children and youth that attend that facility. There's a youth centre with a climbing wall. Most of it built in partnership with government. A lot of it has been.

The climbing wall, I remember we went out and provided funding for that. I remember when they put in the skate park they needed bumper pads and some extra equipment and so on. We provided funding for that. The arena, of course, was funded by government as well, and is a well-used, very well-used facility. Not only used by residents of Paradise, but for people who come from all around the region. We know that ice time, especially for minor hockey sometimes, is in big demand. Paradise is now contributing to that.

One of the very interesting parts of the Paradise arena – one of the very interesting aspects of it built right in – if you ever go in there you'll notice the boards in front of the benches are clear glass and from the ice to when you go into the benches is level. So the floor of the bench and the floor of the ice is level. It's done for sledge hockey, primarily so that athletes who play sledge hockey, utilize their sledges, have easy access to get on and off the ice. Also, once they're off the ice on the benches, they can still watch the game through what is now clear glass on the boards. I think it's a great addition to a great facility, absolutely. It was good foresight for them to do so. We know that's going to be well used.

More recently, CBS opened their new arena, their new stadium. Both of those projects, as well as the one in Harbour Grace and Marystown, and there were a couple of others. I'm trying to remember where they were now. They were announced all the same time back in 2011. Very good projects, every one of them were different in its own way. Harbour Grace had its own challenges but the community was able to work with government. That project is well underway. I saw it recently and the roof, I think, now is pretty much completed and closed in. The interior work is being completed.

The CBS stadium recently opened. The CBS stadium is different from Paradise arena, a different need and was designed to serve a different purpose. I was up there during the recent Winterfest in CBS when they had the annual high school game between the two high schools. The place was full. It was absolutely full with high school students, adults as well and people who came to watch the game. An exciting time, it was good hockey and enjoyable.

It's a lot of fun. It's also a very high, very tight competition that has gone on for years between the two high schools in Conception Bay South.

Also in there, they put in a walking trail or a walking track around the top of the stadium. Last Monday, the weather wasn't good. It was a holiday here, a government holiday, and the weather wasn't good. My wife and I actually went to the stadium. We like to go outside and use the great trail ways that are in Conception Bay South that have been developed in partnership with the Johnson Foundation, the provincial government and other contributors; a fabulous trail way as well up there in a great network of trails that are continuing to be developed.

Just recently, I was there when the federal government confirmed funding for the next part of their trail, which is going to be in the west end, actually in Harbour Main District. I was glad to be able to attend there, as was my colleague, the MHA for Conception Bay South.

But we went to the stadium and I was so amazed that even when the weather was foul Monday past, the number of people who were in there. The first few weeks they were averaging – I think the numbers were over 100 a day using the walking trail inside the stadium. I think that speaks volumes to the need that exists in the community. People of all ages are utilizing it. They're coming and going. It's fairly well organized. It works well. It provides that facility for people that didn't exist before, because prior to that you had to go outdoors or you didn't have an opportunity for that type of exercise.

Recently, a new private gym opened in CBS. A young couple developed it and have that open, a big turnout and people utilizing that as well, Mr. Chair. That's what you see in communities that are able to grow and develop. You see companies, business in partnership with government, with the town, volunteer groups come together to provide opportunities for people. It adds to the value and the quality of life for people in the community.

If you look at the 50-plus clubs, I think there are over 300 members now for the 50-plus club in Paradise. The one in Worsley Park, which is Conception Bay South, is a little bit smaller, but

about 500 seniors active when you combine both of those clubs.

In Mount Pearl, a very active club with the Mount Pearl Seniors Independence Group. There are probably 400 members, I think, in Mount Pearl. They have several events a week. I know Paradise has two days a week minimum, and some days three or four times a week where they have events for seniors, a game of cards or a game of darts, shuffleboard. Then about once a month on a Saturday night they'll have a dinner.

My wife and I always enjoy going to this with them because they'll have dinner at 6 o'clock and by 7:20 they're clearing off the tables and having a game of cards. They play cards until about 9 o'clock and they always have live music then at 9 o'clock. So you can actually go to dinner at 6 o'clock, have a game of cards, have a dance and be home by 9:30 and have had a great night. It's a fun time and they always have a fun time.

Mr. Chair, the Minister of Finance recently talked about and announced core funding. I'm glad she did. I'm glad she confirmed core funding. It's organizations like these 50-plus groups that quite often rely on application-based funding so they can continue to provide these programs and services. When they need to buy equipment and they need to make purchases like tables and chairs. I know that when you provide funding with seniors, there's nobody can get more value out of \$100 or \$1,000 donation than a group of seniors. They'll make that go a long way. They've certainly done that in Paradise and also in Worsley Park.

I think it's important for the government not to forget the value of application-based funding, application-based programs that assist and support these groups such as minor hockey, such as seniors groups. It could be Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, those groups as well. I think about Paradise Grasshoppers, another great example.

Paradise Grasshoppers, for those of you who are not familiar with them, are a group of young children; they start at six, seven and eight year olds. One of them one day said our community is dirty, we should do a cleanup and did a cleanup. Now, this group has actually built their own park, their own Paradise Grasshoppers park

and have done other projects. They raise awareness about keeping the environment clean. They participate in parades and events and so on. They're supported by their parents.

Organizations like that also benefit greatly from application-based funding from government. I also think it's very important for government to continue that funding as well.

Mr. Chair, I see my time is up. There are lots of great things happening in Newfoundland and Labrador that are worthy of discussing and reminding the people of. We have great people in our province, great things happening in communities. I congratulate everybody who makes a contribution to their own community.

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for the District of St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

**MS. MICHAEL:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm very happy to get up and speak again in the discussion around Interim Supply. It's a discussion that's necessary in order to approve the spending of money so that we can keep government running while we wait for a budget from this government, the budget for 2016-2017.

As I said when I stood before, for anybody out there who may have been watching, it's essential that we do this. Keeping government running just doesn't mean the offices in the Confederation Building, East or West Block, or major office buildings of government around the province such as in Corner Brook; it means everything from making sure that people on income support get their money regularly, as they should, to services in our hospitals. We have to make sure that everything people need goes on. We can't have anything stop. So that's why we're here having this discussion called the Interim Supply discussion.

Today, one of the things I want to talk about – I hope I'll get to talk about a couple. One in particular is the needs of our seniors. I am in the District of St. John's East – Quidi Vidi. I haven't figured it out in terms of numbers, but I do have a high number of long-term care facilities in different forms. We have seniors'

residences which have different levels of care. We have private institutions.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MS. MICHAEL:** We have public institutions. One of the things during the election campaign that I heard quite a bit of was the concerns of senior citizens. If it wasn't the senior citizens themselves, it was the children of senior citizens.

I think it's something that we aren't giving enough attention to in the province. It's something that we have to because the growing numbers are happening already. It's not something that is 20 years down the road. It's happening now that the numbers of seniors are growing exponentially, almost. We have to take it seriously.

We have to take it seriously, especially when we look at our health care system and the cost of our health care system. We have to take it seriously when we look at parts of the health care system that are essential for seniors such as home care. We have to look at it from the perspective –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

The Chair would ask that all hon. Members maintain order. If you have conversations that you must carry out, I would ask that you do so outside the Chambers.

**MS. MICHAEL:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, I appreciate that.

We have a number of issues. I won't talk about individuals; I'll talk about the issues that are being brought to me by individuals that we have to deal with in this province and that we have to deal with in the planning of the programs for senior citizens.

One area which has been brought to me recently has been the whole area of abuse of elders. It is a serious issue, I'm sure that over the past few years some of us have seen – when watching television there were ads there for a while that

were quite frequent about different ways in which elders can be abused. Sad to say very often it's abuse from children or grandchildren. Abused verbally, that's one way; abused, for example, almost like in a power way, children or grandchildren getting control of the financial resources of the senior citizen and literally robbing them of money.

There are all kinds of ways in which seniors are abused both in their homes as well as in institutions. The real concern I have is what are we doing about that? What are we putting in place? What resources are we putting in place with regard to the abuse that seniors experience? That's one issue. It's one issue, I think, that a seniors' advocate could be really helpful with.

The problem is that seniors feel very helpless. To try to prove what they're going through is very difficult. Even for children who think something is going on, maybe with a sibling – they see a sibling making their parents suffer – they feel helpless because they can't prove what's going on either. It's a serious issue and it's an issue we really do have to look at in a very careful way. I put that out to government to realize their responsibility to look at this issue.

Another issue for seniors, especially seniors requiring institutional care, is the separation of couples. For example, the way our system is set up is that if couples have different levels of care, they may not be able to be in the same institution together. Not in the same institution together means – for example, I've met couples where one of the couple is in one institution and one in another, the one who's more able making the visits on a daily basis to the facility where the one who is less able really can't leave. The person may be bedridden.

I've heard different Members of the House, I heard the Premier at some point during the election campaign – it may have been before the writ was dropped, it may have been last summer – saying this is terrible and we have to do something about it. Couples should not be separated. Even in my own district I have one case in particular I've been working on and trying to get attention paid to, because of the serious separation of a couple.



Sometimes they may even be in the same institution together and can't be in a room together. So we have to make our care of seniors care that is really based on their needs. I know it can be done. When you look at other countries, especially European countries, you see decisions made and systems and programs put in place that are humane, that look at the individuals and say, we have to make sure that seniors in their final years are cared for by our society. They've given their lives for our society, they've given their lives for the community and we have an obligation to take care of them.

The fact that home care is so minimal in this province, we have to deal with that. We cannot say we don't have enough money. We have to say we have a need and how are we going to make sure that need is met. That's what we've been failing in here in this province. Putting money into Muskrat Falls, which was done by the previous government, and now the current government dreaming, the way they did yesterday during the private Member's motion, about setting up a heritage fund when we can't even put two senior citizens together in their final years because they're in an institution – we've got some serious things that we have to deal with.

One of the biggest problems with not having a public home care system is the accountability. When you have a home care worker who comes in from an agency – and the agency is getting money. The agencies get public money. They don't only get public money, but they get public money. Yet the home care worker can be doing things in that home and the person who depends on the home care worker has nobody they can go to. They can report the activity of the home care worker, for example, to the agency. The agency does nothing. They have nowhere to go. They feel helpless. Some of them may have a family member who can advocate for them. My mother was lucky she had me. She also had wonderful home care workers, too, so she didn't need me to advocate for them.

There was one time I had to advocate, not because of the workers, but because of the fact that one of the workers was in hospital and the agency was sending unqualified people to take care of my mother. I had no power. My mother had no power. That's why we need a public

home care system that's part of our health care system.

My last words during this Interim Supply – although I suspect I'm going to have other ways in which I'm going to be able to say it during this session of the House – is we have to take care of our seniors. We have to make sure they are being taken care of psychologically, emotionally and physically. Not in our institutions just lying in beds, like they are in the St. John's long-term care facility, without sufficient staff to make sure that they feel respected and that they don't feel like they've been totally forgotten by our system. That's our challenge, to make sure we don't lose sight of the people who most need the programs and services of government.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. Government House Leader.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm very happy to stand here today and speak to Interim Supply here in the House of Assembly. It's my first opportunity to do so. There are so many people wanting to speak that we have to compete to rise to our feet here. Thankfully, I'm faster than the Minister of Education.

It is an honour to be able to stand here and speak to Interim Supply. I think our Minister of Finance has done a wonderful job of explaining the concept of Interim Supply. Anybody who has listened before understands that this is the purpose of it; it's a bill to allow for money to pay the expenses until the budget is dealt with.

There's been a lot of commentary on both sides from Members, and I think quite rightfully. Being what they call a money bill, it's an opportunity for people to move past, perhaps, the specifics of a more constrained bill and talk about their districts, talk about their constituents and talk about the supporters that helped put them here.

We certainly don't always agree on everything, there's no doubt. That's not how this House

works. But I think we all agree on the privilege that it is to be able to sit here, have these debates and be able to talk. I, too, would say that I'm thankful for the constituents of Burgeo – La Poile who gave me the opportunity to sit here in this House again. I'm obviously thankful. This time I am happy to be able to switch sides. I spent four years working in Opposition which I can say is a necessary, important job for the people of this province.

I am thankful I had the opportunity to sit in Opposition and to learn how government works, to learn how Opposition works, to learn how the processes work, to ask questions and to be in debates. I had a lot of good people around me to learn from when I first came in, sitting with people like Yvonne Jones, who was a tremendous House Leader, a tremendous politician and advocate. Having people like Yvonne to work from or the Minister of Municipal Affairs who, again, was someone who has experience.

There are people that were not on the same political side as me that also provided a lot of guidance over the years. You have these debates and sometimes it gets fierce in here, but at the end of the day we do have relationships that stretch outside. You need that because we all are here for the betterment of the people we represent across this province.

Very briefly, Interim Supply; I'm glad to see that this is moving forward. Obviously it's necessary. I'm quite confident we will see unanimous support for it. If not, the havoc that will be wreaked upon this province will be unparalleled. I know sometimes it's a bit funny, people not knowing how this works. You hear people going at each other in here, but at the end of the day I'm confident that the necessary thing will be done here.

It does give me an opportunity to perhaps first speak to the Department of Justice and Public Safety, and the honour and privilege that I've had to be given this opportunity by our Premier and to sit in the Cabinet to deal with the department that, in many ways, I grew up with. Long before I was ever in politics, I had some background into that department by watching my father handle the position. So I had that background.

It's amazing, too, to tell you about the experience in the department. There were a lot of people that were there in his time and they're still here in my time. I've taken the opportunity to talk to these people and learn what they do, how they do it, the things that work and maybe the things that don't.

As we're going through this process – and there's no surprise here the perilous situation we find ourselves in. We've been left with a financial situation that the Minister of Finance ensures is drilled into our head at every waking opportunity to let us know. I think it's important that the people of the province know the situation we're in.

As a Minister of the Crown, it's important for me to be able to talk to the people in the department and find out how we can deliver services, what's the best way to deliver services and maybe different ways to do things. One of the things I've done in my short period of time in this position is I've gone out and talked to people all over the department in the different components or divisions of the department.

I've been to speak to the Crown attorneys, Legal Aid, Her Majesty's Penitentiary. I've been down speaking with guards, with management, with inmates. I've been to Victim Services, to Family Justice Services. I've been down to see the RCMP, the RNC. I've talked to everybody in the department. I've talked to anybody you can think of right now – Fish and Wildlife. My goal is to move around and talk to everybody.

I actually went down and visited the Chief Medical Examiner's Office. It falls under the Department of Justice. When I met down there I was told I was the first minister in 30 years to actually visit and see the conditions they work in, which is one of the reasons I was happy to see our Premier call for a review of that office. It is necessary.

The amazing thing I heard sometimes – and it surprised me somewhat. When I met with people in the department, some people who had been there for years, one of the things I heard is we haven't talked to somebody in years. We haven't talked to upper management, we'll say, in a long time; we haven't met with a minister. I found it surprising because what better way to learn how

your system works than to work with the front-line people that actually do the work. I can say I know a lot of my colleagues are taking the same opportunity. They're meeting with people in hospitals, the people that clear our roads, the people in our schools, our social workers. It's important that we talk to these front-line workers.

It is a difficult time now. I know it's been brought up on a number of occasions about how difficult it is, but that doesn't mean we still can't talk to them. We need to know what they do, to help us do what is necessary.

I'm going to get plenty of opportunities over the next little while to speak to the Department of Justice and about it, to answer questions and to discuss legislation that pertains to it. But I do have to take the opportunity to address two points that have been brought up in this House. I think one was during Interim Supply and one was during the House of Assembly. I'm going to go back to my district now because one of the Members opposite, during a Question Period, asked about Marine Atlantic.

Now, anybody who knows me knows Marine Atlantic is near and dear to my heart. It is the major employer. I say I'm glad the Members opposite have discovered it because they certainly didn't know about it when they were in government.

During our four years – and I'm glad they're asking questions. It's good. It's good that there are questions asked. It's necessary because I tell you what, during the last four years – I know I've been talking about it – there have not been a lot of meetings between our government and the federal government to discuss this. That has not been.

We're having those meetings now. Yes, I can guarantee you we're having those meetings, and we're having those conversations now –

**MR. KENT:** (Inaudible).

**MR. A. PARSONS:** The Member for Mount Pearl North has asked me a question. Again, wait till Question Period; I can't hear you right now. Wait till Question Period and ask me it.

Again, Marine Atlantic is a service that is vital to this province. It is absolutely vital and we need to do everything we can to press the case, to advocate the case. I look forward to working with our colleagues in the federal government to ensure that that relationship continues. We need to have that conversation. I see it first-hand with the people employed. I tell you when Marine Atlantic is not running or when goods are increasing, we all see the effect of it.

The other thing that I want to talk about, and it was mentioned on the other side, is about the investment in transportation and works on the West Coast. Now, I can't speak to everywhere on the West Coast. I am from the West Coast. I drive a lot of the roads, particularly from Deer Lake down to Port aux Basques. Sometimes I take 480 down to Burgeo if I'm going to Ramea or Grey River, and sometimes I take 470 if I'm going down the coast as far as Rose Blanche and to see the scenic lighthouse.

One of the things talked about was the significant investment in transportation and works on the Southwest Coast. I would say to anybody that says that, come along with me for a ride before you make that statement again. I can guarantee you the Burgeo road have not seen any significant investment, not in the last four years, the last dozen years, when roads are collapsing and they can't get the bridge fixed. But the good news is I'm confident that the new Minister of Transportation and Works is going to get that bridge fixed.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** I'm confident he is going to get it done. Because I can tell you the people down there are asking me.

Again, that's just one issue. We have the culvert issue, we have the general maintenance issue, and I can tell you that we have not seen the work down there nor has the necessary work on 470 been done. Only when drastic action is threatened does it happen. People up on Cape Ray right now are asking about it.

We'll continue to press that case, but we all know the limitations that we find on us. I'm so happy to be able to talk to my colleague and to advocate on behalf of my constituents as we all

do, as everybody does, to ensure that we get the proper road infrastructure in our province, which is so vital.

That being said, Mr. Chair, my time is about to run out, so I just want to say thank you for the opportunity to speak to Interim Supply.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

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

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Again, it's another opportunity that I get. We don't have a lot of bodies over on this side, so you get more opportunities than you do on the other side to get up and speak. It's a great time to be able to get up and speak on Interim Supply.

Interim Supply, Mr. Chair, it's all about the public servants. Because this is what it's all about, making sure that we can pay our bills, people can get their cheques and whatnot. Our public servants are unbelievable. We have some great people working in this building. We have great people working in every aspect of the public service.

We're so fortunate to have – I always believe this anyway. Anywhere you go, you talk to people that work away, it is something about Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, it's who we are, and we're great workers and we're known all around the world for it. We're no exception here in the public service that we have working for us here at government and working for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It's so important that this is part of what needs to be done, that the money is available so we can pay our bills.

As everybody knows, the biggest portion of any kind of government, our expenses in government, are our wages and what we're paying people to be able to – our doctors, our nurses, who we have more in this province today than we ever had before; our teachers who have the best, as far as I'm concerned, technologies that they ever had before in the classrooms. Our

children are getting great teaching because of what our teachers have done. They take extra time to make sure that they have the knowledge and whatever they need to make sure that the students of the day are informed and have the best possible education that they have.

And it's important when you look at people who are out doing our roadwork, our snow clearing in the wintertime. As we all know now – I'm not sure, I think I read a little bit – the storm that we're supposed to have this evening is not going to be as bad as what they forecast yesterday. That's a good thing. But do you know something? We're very fortunate to have public servants on the road in stormy conditions taking care of us and taking care of the safety of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

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

**MR. K. PARSONS:** As we talk about Interim Supply, money and everything else, I understand that we look at our workers and I always look at technology and everything else. If I need to do something or need to find out anything, I always go to a young person and try to get them to show me how to do this or show me how to do that.

But we're very fortunate in the public service to have so many good, young people working for us. Again, I understand that the Minister of Finance has a big problem on her hands. There's a problem with money and finances. Like I just said a few minutes ago, our wages take a lot of the money that comes into our coffers and a lot of money is spent out. But you know, we went through a few years – and I know people will say maybe you shouldn't have done it, maybe you should have done it, but right now the people who are in our public service they're equal to everybody else in Canada.

If you went back to 2003, the early 1900s, and you talked to a nurse or you talked to a teacher they'd say: How come we got to take less here in Newfoundland and Labrador when somebody in the rest of Canada can make that much more money? If you go back and you look at what has been done over the last 10 years – I could be wrong on my estimate, but I'm sure it's a 20 per cent increase that we paid our public servants over the last number of years. It's even more than that when you put it all into factor.

Do you know what? We had to, because they deserve it. They're working hard for us. Our nurses, our teachers, our doctors, all public servants that are out there, they deserve to be treated fairly just like everybody else in Atlantic Canada and the rest of Canada. It's important that we take care of our public servants. That's what this Interim Supply is about; it's about making sure that we do pay our bills from the period of time until we get the new budget going. So it's important.

Today I really want to thank the people that do supply all these services, put in that extra little time and do so much for people in this province and people from my area and other areas of the province. So it's important that we thank them and make sure we reward them.

I know there are a lot of tough decisions coming. I really hope that we can work with our public service because there's a lot of fear in the public service right now with layoffs and pending layoffs and stuff like this, and I believe that we can't lay off our brightest and young people that are running our province. It is so important that we do all other options that can be done to make sure we maintain what we have because I really believe, like I said starting off, that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are known worldwide for how good we work and what great workers we are, no matter if it's in the fishery, if it's in forestry or anywhere.

Anywhere you go, all workers, all over the world – if you're from Newfoundland and Labrador and you go to work on a rig, whether it's in South Africa or whether it's in the Middle East, people know that people from Newfoundland and Labrador are great workers. It's great that we have that, because that's who we are as people. I'm very proud of that, to tell you the truth.

I listened to some of the speakers get up today and the Minister of Transportation got up and spoke about a billion dollars that's needed to do the work. There's no doubt about it. But do you know what? I can go back to my district and look at my district 10 years ago and I can tell you, I know what happened when we were on – I used to stop at the Foodland in Torbay every morning and you'd listen to VOXM – and probably the Member for Harbour Grace, I'm

not sure if she'd be reporting then or whatever – that there was a delay in the traffic coming up Piperstock Hill. There was a huge delay, everybody was late going to work, and they come on every morning.

An investment that needed to be done – and it was started in the days that the Liberals were in power about the Torbay Bypass Road. It took a good few years for it to happen or whatever, but at the end of the day it cost \$23 million to do the Torbay Bypass Road, which is a huge amount of money.

The first estimate was \$5 million. So it can tell you once it starts and by the time it gets done, there's a lot of things can change. They even looked at overpasses and stuff like this. That investment is huge to our area. My area has grown by 25 per cent in the last number of years. It's a safety issue. There were 17,000 cars a day passing by Holy Trinity school. Today, you can go there, the buses are moving very, very smoothly and everything else. That was a great investment by the Department of Transportation and Works. It let people get back and forth to work a whole lot easier.

I can't wait for the Team Gushue Highway to open up. I think it's going to be fantastic. I think it's going to be able to move traffic from Mount Pearl over to the other side of St. John's. It will take away from a lot of the congestion. Maybe it'll stop a few of the accidents that are happening on the Outer Ring Road right now.

These are investments we've got to do. I know we all can look and say, oh, we did this, we did that, but I can only look in my own district and look at the investments that were done by Transportation and Works. We need a lot more because I look at some of the roads down my way. There are some big ruts there and there are some areas – and I'm sure in every district, every district here can go and give the Minister of Transportation and Works a list of what needs to be done in their district, and we all wouldn't be happy.

I hope the new plan that comes in, I hope it works. I always looked at doing two kilometres here or doing three kilometres – I can remember we did a road and it took us four years by the time we got six kilometres done on the road.

Maybe we should have done it all in the first year. I was happy to get my 1.2 kilometres or my 2.1 kilometres because at least I was getting something done, because there's only so much money to go around. We all know that.

If the new plan works that he comes up with – and what I heard from him today is that they're going to look at and probably do one section at a time. I hope everybody gets treated fairly on it because it's important. I listened to my colleague from Burgeo get up and talk about his roads down in his – and I have the same issues in mine. We're talking about safety on the roads. We want to make sure our roads are as safe as possible.

It's important we make our proper investments, but over the last number of years, like I said, there's after being some – I had bridge work done in Outer Cove. Underneath the bridge there were huge pieces of concrete falling off the bridge. People were going underneath there all the time. I was hoping to get some roadwork done in Torbay and Pouch Cove. The Department of Transportation came to me and said: Listen, this is a safety issue. This has to be done. We've got to do that bridge, as much as we'd like to do your roads here. When they explained to me I said: Listen, I have no problem at all. If that's a safety issue, that's where the money should be spent.

I only have a minute or so left, but I really want to talk about one little thing that really strikes hard to me – seniors. I know other Members just got up and spoke about different – I have four communities in my area that have different seniors' groups. Over the last number of years we've have been able to give them small grants, \$1,000 and stuff like this. It's a 50-plus thing. What they do with that \$1,000 is amazing. To be able to take a bus and go up to Ferryland to a picnic for \$1,000 where you can put 50 seniors on a bus. I don't think there's any better investment that we can do.

Anytime we can make our seniors active and have them enjoy life like that, they deserve it. They are the reasons we're here today. They paid the price for us. They definitely paid the price for us. So I think these investments of \$1,000 or \$500 to go to wherever it is are great investments. I believe we have to continue to

invest in our seniors because they are the heart and soul of who we are as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

**MS. C. BENNETT:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

With your permission I'd like to take the opportunity to say this is the first time I've had to address you as Mr. Chair in my capacity here in the House of Assembly. I don't think you've been in the Chair position since this session opened, while I've been speaking. I just wanted to say congratulations and how excited I am to have you in the seat.

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

**MS. C. BENNETT:** I know that you'll serve us in the House of Assembly, and certainly serve your own constituents in Mount Pearl – Southlands to the best of your ability. It's an honour to have you there. So I wanted to take a moment to do that.

I also wanted to take a moment before I provide some closing commentary around the debate here for Bill 2, just to take a quick moment to thank the people in the District of Windsor Lake. During the last election, I had the opportunity to meet many of those individuals on the doorsteps. I haven't had the opportunity to stand in this House yet and say thank you for their confidence and trust in giving me this opportunity. I look forward to working very hard to serve the members that I represent in the District of Windsor Lake. I'm very proud to do so here in this House.

I also want to take a quick moment just to thank the colleagues on both sides of the House, particularly those colleagues who had the opportunity to speak during Interim Supply and Bill 2 for the first time. We have new Members of this House of Assembly on both sides.

Certainly, it's a very important time when we stand up for the first time and speak in this House, all of us. Although many times, as is democracy, we will disagree. It is important that we recognize those moments that are very special and Interim Supply has provided an opportunity for many of my colleagues to stand and speak in this House on behalf of the constituents that have elected them, to have their voices heard in this House. I want to say thank you for participating in the debate over the last number of days.

I also want to take an opportunity to remind everybody that the purpose of the debate we're having is around Interim Supply. It really is about the function of being able to continue the business of government, the expenditures and most importantly, the ability to pay our employees. I expect that this bill will be passed unanimously; at least that's my hope. We'll look forward to seeing what happens in a few minutes. I think all of us in this hon. House understand that there's an incredible amount of work that happens in all areas of government by some very dedicated individuals who pride themselves on being part of the public service.

In the new role that I have as Finance Minister and President of Treasury Board, along with my colleagues on this side of the House, we've had an opportunity to see our public sector partners and employees work very diligently over the last number of weeks. Particularly as we worked through many Treasury Board meetings and other meetings, but certainly that's not unique to my department. I'm sure other ministers have seen it evident in their own department and through the agencies, boards and commissions that operate on behalf of government.

I would ask our colleagues support the bill as it's presented. I expect very clearly that will happen. I also want to take an opportunity to thank the House Leader on the opposite side for ensuring the debate happened here in a way that was respectful and was in the confines of the direction the Speaker has provided in setting a new era of openness and transparency, as well as decorum in the House. I think this debate has demonstrated that. I look forward to seeing more of that behaviour demonstrated in the future.

With that, Mr. Chair, I would conclude my remarks and I look forward to participating in the vote, along with my colleagues in the House.

Thank you.

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

**CHAIR:** Shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** Carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

**CLERK:** Clauses 2 through 4 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Shall clauses 2 through 4 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 4 carried.

**CLERK:** The schedule.

**CHAIR:** Shall the schedule carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

On motion, schedule carried.

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

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

**CHAIR:** All those against, ‘nay.’

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

Carried.

**CHAIR:** All those against, ‘nay.’

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the resolution and a bill consequent thereto, carried.

Carried.

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

On motion, enacting clause carried.

**CLERK:** Whereas it appears that the sums mentioned are required to defray certain expenses of the public service of Newfoundland and Labrador for the financial year ending March 31, 2017, and for other purposes relating to the public service.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee rise, report the resolution and Bill 1 – number 1 or –

**CHAIR:** Shall the preamble carry?

**CLERK:** Bill 2.

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Bill 2 – sorry – carried without amendment.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** Order please.

**CHAIR:** All those against, ‘nay.’

The motion is that the Committee rise, report the resolution, and Bill 2 carried without amendment.

Carried.

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

On motion, preamble carried.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CLERK:** An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2017 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

**CHAIR:** When shall the report be received?

**CHAIR:** Shall the long title carry?

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Now.

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER (Osborne):** The hon. the Deputy Chair of Committees.

**CHAIR:** All those against, ‘nay.’

**MR. LANE:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply have considered the matters to them



referred and have directed me to report that they have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Committee of Supply reports that the resolution and Bill 2 be carried without amendment.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Those against?

Carried.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

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

I moved, seconded by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, that the resolution be now read the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that the resolution be now read a first time.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**CLERK:** "That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2017 the sum of \$2,791,692,300."

On motion, resolution read a first time

**MR. SPEAKER:** This resolution has now been read a first time.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I moved, seconded by the Minister of Finance and

President of Treasury Board, that the resolution be now read the second time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that this resolution now be read a second time.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Those against?

Carried.

**CLERK:** "That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2017 the sum of \$2,791,692,300."

On motion, resolution read a second time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** This resolution has now be read a second time.

What shall the resolution be read a third time? Now?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I moved, seconded by the Minister of Education, for leave to introduce the Interim Supply bill, Bill 2.

I further move that the said bill be now read the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has be moved and seconded that Bill 2 be now read a first time.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Those against?

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance to introduce a bill, "An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2017 And For

Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service,” carried. (Bill 2)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2017 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 2)

On motion, Bill 2 read a first time.

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

When shall the bill be read a second time?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services, that the Interim Supply bill be now read the second time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that this bill now be read a second time.

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2017 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 2).

On motion, Bill 2 read a second time.

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

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the Interim Supply bill be now read a third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It’s been moved and seconded that this bill be read a third time.

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2017 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 2).

On motion, a bill, “An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2017 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service,” read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 2)

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

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Stephenville – Port au Port, that the House do now adjourn.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that this House do now adjourn.

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

This House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 in the afternoon.

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