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*Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA*

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

In the Speaker's gallery today, I would like to welcome a bit of a family affair for yours truly. I have over to my left my father- and mother-in-law, Billy and Lan Hong, with my wife, Caroline, and my mother and father, June and Wendell Trimper.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** There you go, a standing ovation.

Thank you very much.

Also in the Speaker's gallery, we have someone also of equal merit. I would like to welcome Neil, Cheryl and Liam O'Brien. Liam will be referenced in a Member's statement today.

A very great welcome to you as well.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I'm also pleased to say that in the public gallery today we do have, and I would like to recognize: Emily Christie and Paul Walsh from the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities; Pamela Anstey from the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Community Living; Marie Ryan from the Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities; Kimberly Yetman-Dawson from Empower; and Leon Mills from the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, Newfoundland and Labrador.

All of these folks will be the subject of a Ministerial Statement today.

A great welcome to you.

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

### Statements by Members

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today we will hear Members' statements from the hon. Members for the

Districts of Stephenville - Port au Port; Labrador West; Terra Nova; Ferryland; and Bonavista.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I stand today to recognize Ryan McNeil-Lamswood. The grade 12, Stephenville High honours student is a truly remarkable athlete. He is an exceptional soccer player who has played with Stephenville High winning a provincial banner in 2015. Also, as a member of the provincial junior golf team, he has represented the province nationally in 2016 and 2017. However it is curling where he truly shines.

Throwing stones since the age of three, Ryan has represented Newfoundland and Labrador at the national level on five occasions. Recently, he returned from the national under 18 championships in New Brunswick where he played the role of skip for a team based out of the Re/Max Centre in St. John's.

Losing a close game to Northern Ontario in the bronze medal match, McNeil-Lamswood and the NL team finished fourth overall in the country. Due to his exceptional play, positive attitude and sportsmanship, officials named him the Fair Play skip of the national competition.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating Ryan McNeil-Lamswood on this achievement and wish him well as he continues to proudly represent this province.

Thank you.

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

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

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

When Justin Hodge, a 23-year-old Labrador West resident, received a cancer diagnosis in 2009, it set something very important into motion. He and his family had never heard of Ewing sarcoma, a childhood cancer, and discovered to their dismay it is one of the most

painful, serious types of cancers, often misdiagnosed and one many family doctors know very little about.

His mother, Gail, joined the registered charity, the Ewings Cancer Foundation of Canada, based out of Ontario. In 2016, with a small budget and Gail's photographer son-in-law, Brad Dillion, and his two friends, they produced a 48-minute educational documentary shot across Canada called: Make It Stop. They are committed to keeping Ewing sarcoma on the radar of family doctors and other front line medical professionals to save young lives.

Make It Stop has been inducted into the College of Family Physicians of Canada within their self-learning module and available on many websites across Canada.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Gail, Brad and others on this very important initiative. Justin has been in remission for seven years and we wish him the best of health in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. HOLLOWAY:** Mr. Speaker, the quest for the Herder Memorial Trophy is symbolic of senior hockey supremacy in Newfoundland and Labrador. Since 1935, hockey clubs in communities across this province have long fought to be winners of the covenant cup.

During the Easter break, I had the opportunity to take in one of the championship games at the Eastlink Events Centre with the Clarenville Ford Caribous leading the series 2-0 against the St. John's Senior Caps.

During this past weekend, beating the Caps four straight games, the Caribous were crowned the 2018 Herder Champions. This marks the fourth win for the Caribous, having previously secured the title in 2009, 2010, 2012 and now in 2018.

History was also made this year for Coach Rebecca Russell who has been described as

Clarenville's most decorated and celebrated female hockey star and became the first female coach to win the Herder trophy. Congratulations to Rebecca Russell and the entire coaching staff for pulling off another successful year.

I ask all hon. colleagues to join me in recognizing the Clarenville Ford Caribous and coach Rebecca Russell as the 2018 Herder Champions.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a constituent of mine, Liam O'Brien, who is a level III student at Baltimore High School. Recently, he was awarded a Loran Scholar, only one of 34 students from 5,000 applicants and the only one for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Liam completed level II at Baltimore High with a 94 average. He is actively involved in the school and community. He is co-chair of Cape Broyle Recreation Committee; 4-H club member; competed in several provincial speaking competitions; helps run a local radio station the Southern Shore Sounds; member of the school band; serves as the church choir organist and senior member of the Royal Canadian Army Cadets.

In 2017, Liam participated in a 4-H citizen congress in Ottawa, the Global 4-H Summit Encounters with Canada program and also participated in the Forum for Young Canadians, all in Ottawa. He has just returned from Washington DC after being selected as one of 10 Canadian delegates to represent Canada at the United States National 4-H Conference.

The Loran Scholar award is valued at \$100,000 over four years and includes an annual stipend of \$10,000 and matching tuition waiver, access to \$10,000 in funding for summer internships, one-on-one mentorship, annual retreats and scholar gatherings. Liam is planning on attending the University of Ottawa where he

plans to major in economics and political science.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues of this House to join me in congratulating Liam O'Brien on his accomplishments and wish him the very best in his future endeavours.

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

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

**MR. KING:** That's going to be tough to follow up, Mr. Speaker, but I'll try.

Mr. Speaker, this week we are recognizing the 40th anniversary of National Volunteer Week. As MHA for the District of Bonavista, I want to recognize all volunteers who give their time to make our communities a better place to live. This year's theme is Celebrate the Value of Volunteering.

Volunteerism is the heart of every community. Without volunteers, many great things that take place would fall by the wayside. There's certainly value in volunteering and it is worth celebrating.

This year marks the 10th year that Voluntary Organizations in Community Engagement, VOICE, is holding its annual volunteer appreciation event for the Bonavista Peninsula. This year's event, as in the past, will showcase local talent through music and skits, with refreshments being provided and lots of prizes to be won. RNC Chief Joe Boland will be the guest speaker.

The event will take place this coming Friday at the Factory Interpretation Centre in Port Union. Doors open at 6:30 with a 7 p.m. start. If past years are any indication, Mr. Speaker, over 100 volunteers from all over will be in attendance.

Please join me in congratulating VOICE on their milestone and all the volunteers for everything they do.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Before we continue, I would like to also recognize Mr. Dan Goodyear with the Canadian Mental Health Association. A very big welcome to you, Sir; glad to have you here.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Statements by Ministers.

#### Statements by Ministers

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

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

Just a few moments ago, I met with a number of those representatives in the gallery. Thank you for acknowledging them.

I rise today to express our government's formal support for Canada to join the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

This UN Convention places existing rights and freedoms in a disability context. It was ratified by the Government of Canada, with support from all provinces and territories in 2010.

The federal government has now officially requested Newfoundland and Labrador's formal support to join the Optional Protocol, which commits Canada to co-operating with an individual complaints procedure and an inquiry procedure for grave or systemic violations of the UN Convention.

Mr. Speaker, this province's Policy Framework for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities is closely aligned with the convention.

Through our collaboration with the community of persons with disabilities, our government is creating change. We have increased accessible transportation and removed barriers from our electoral processes. We have made amendments to the buildings accessibility and wildlife regulations and we are promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities on agencies, boards and commissions.

Joining the Optional Protocol further strengthens our commitment to equality, inclusion and full

participation in Canadian society for persons with disabilities and it reaffirms our support for the UN Convention.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador values the contributions of persons with disabilities in this province and we remain committed to ensuring their human rights and fundamental freedoms are protected.

I call on all my colleagues in this hon. House to also express their support for the Optional Protocol.

Thank you.

**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.

I thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement. We, on this side of the House, certainly support joining the Optional Protocol which commits this country to co-operating with an individual complaints procedure and an inquiry procedure for violations of the UN Convention.

Mr. Speaker, we must do more to ensure that buildings, services, transportation and regulations are all designed with accessibility in mind. The inclusion of persons with disabilities on agencies, boards and commissions is just one step in ensuring this.

However, Mr. Speaker, I must express my disappointment that in the last three years this Liberal government cut almost \$300,000 in grant funding from the Disability Policy Office. This is funding which is given to both individuals and community groups to help enhance accessibility and inclusion throughout our communities. Funding they continue to need.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**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 her statement. I do hope that joining the UN protocol, which obviously I'm totally behind, will provide another channel for moving this province closer to an inclusive society.

We have a lot of work to do here. There should be no longer new and renovated buildings open to the public without complete accessibility. I look forward to hearing about the long-overdue review of the *Buildings Accessibility Act*, as well as when we'll finally get a provincial disability rights act.

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:** I rise today to congratulate the recipients of this year's Community Addictions Prevention and Mental Health Promotion Grants program.

Mr. Speaker, 44 community groups and organizations throughout Newfoundland and Labrador will receive a total of approximately \$150,000 in funding for their projects. This is an increase of \$10,000 over last year.

The program is designed to encourage individuals, groups and organizations, as well as communities, to step up and take a greater role in promoting positive mental health. Our partners already do such important advocacy and development and through this program, we're pleased to support their efforts.

Successful proposals focused on several priority areas such as supporting young families, substance use prevention, suicide prevention and positive mental well-being.

Some examples include the province-wide Roots of Empathy program and support for a youth-run LGBTQ2S summer camp on the West Coast.

Other projects include positive mental health activities during Empowerment Week at Lakewood Academy in Glenwood, support of the Terry Kelly tour in Southern Labrador and a new support group for people living with addictions issues in St. Anthony and surrounding areas. The complete list of recipients and their projects can be found on the department's website.

Investments in this program and the priority area align with *Towards Recovery: The Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador*.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members of this hon. House to join me in congratulating this year's recipients. We appreciate efforts to reduce stigma in our communities and keep the conversation going about mental health.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I want to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Mr. Speaker, we're always pleased to hear about additional supports for addictions prevention and positive mental health initiatives. It's great to see so many groups and projects benefit from these grants.

Having served as a member of the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, I certainly recognize that these initiatives are much needed and will be welcomed across the province. I commend each and every one of the recipients for the valuable work they do and I congratulate them on receiving these grants. Any additional programs or supports that address the needs outlined in our mental health and addictions plan will have a positive impact on individuals, on families, on society as a whole.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

I thank the minister. In the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, we heard clearly time and time again about the important work community groups do in advocacy and support work with mental health and addictions issues. I am pleased to see this modest increase in this year's funding of these 44 groups. This year's increase in funding is a good start; however, they also need multi-year funding to give them the security they need to retain staff and plan their work.

Bravo to all those working on the front lines to reduce stigma and keep the conversation on mental health going. Their work is crucial and invaluable.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

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

Mr. Speaker, as part of the 2018 budget process, I ask the Minister of Natural Resources did she ask Nalcor Energy to cut its budget by \$20 million.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

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

I believe he's referring to the seismic program. No, we didn't ask them to cut it by \$20 million in particular; we asked all of our agencies, boards and commissions to do zero-based budgets, to come in with as low a budget as they possibly can, Mr. Speaker. Nalcor has been trying to find savings, of course, as they move through the Muskrat Falls Project.

The entire Province of Newfoundland and Labrador understands how expensive and how over budget the project that we inherited because of the former administration.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** (Inaudible) referencing Nalcor and the whole content of Nalcor as the corporation. Was the recent decision to transfer an additional \$20 million to Nalcor to support exploration as a result of the CEO of Nalcor cutting \$20 million from the oil and gas exploration fund, and were you in agreement with the cut?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

**MS. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, I think the Member opposite can tell by the actions of this government – not the words, the actions of this government. We put in place *Advance 2030* to drive exploration in offshore Newfoundland and Labrador, to drive production, doubling of production in offshore Newfoundland and Labrador. Therefore, it is a priority, a very big priority of this government to ensure exploration takes place, to ensure that we attract new entrants into Newfoundland and Labrador's offshore industry.

So therefore, Mr. Speaker, I think it speaks volumes that we did direct Nalcor to ensure they had a new exploration program this year and not just review the program that was held last year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, taking \$20 million from the exploration fund for oil and gas exploration

doesn't drive the *Advance 2030* plan laid out by government to the best of my knowledge.

So I ask: Are the Nalcor board of directors and the Nalcor CEO offside with your *Advance 2030* plan?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

**MS. COADY:** Absolutely, unequivocally not, Mr. Speaker. They have been involved, Nalcor Oil and Gas has been involved with the development of the plan. They worked very – as a major stakeholder in the oil and gas industry.

As you heard, Mr. Speaker, we did direct the board of directors of Nalcor to continue with new seismic work this year. The board had taken a decision that they would not invest in new seismic work. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador thought it was that important to the people of the province to continue to drive exploration offshore Newfoundland and Labrador that we said it was a priority, the board reinstated that funding.

And let me tell you how much money we've invested. The former government invested in five years, \$64 million. This government, \$96 million over (inaudible).

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

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

The Member's time has expired.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** And you have the money to invest because of the equity stakes we put into the oil and gas sector, I say to the minister.

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

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Mr. Speaker, the minister indicated on Monday that the program was a five-year program. If so, why would such a substantial cut of \$20 million happen in one year of a five-year exploration program?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

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

I'm not quite sure what his question is asking. The \$20 million is a new exploration program for this year. We felt it was a priority. Based on the work that we're doing in *Advance 2030*, based on the recommendations of 150 stakeholders in the industry, based on the success we've been having as a government of Newfoundland and Labrador, we've been able to attract seven new entrants into our offshore.

We have 650 leads and prospects offshore Newfoundland and Labrador. Mr. Speaker, we want to continue to do the seismic work so that we can continue to grow our offshore opportunity. Does the Member opposite think that we should not do so?

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

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

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

I remind the minister, we started the seismic program supported originally with Nalcor when some on that side said it was marketing and it wasn't worth the effort to put the money into it. So I'd remind her of that, Mr. Speaker.

The CEO of Nalcor cut \$20 million off the exploration budget which contradicts *Advance 2030*. Your government then provided \$20 million to Nalcor to cover it off.

Did Nalcor make any cuts in regard to their budget as you had asked them?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

**MS. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite can certainly see what we're providing to Nalcor this year. They did go through a very extensive exercise, as everyone in government had to do, Mr. Speaker, zero-based budgeting.

Nalcor is in a transition now from really developing the project of Muskrat Falls to starting the operations of Muskrat Falls. We've held their budget, Mr. Speaker, they've held their budget. Even though they've had to do

some things with regard to adding some resources to ensure that we can operate the project that the Member opposite was part of voting in favour of doing.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to work with Nalcor. It's a great board of directors, a great CEO. They're working very hard. This morning we had the annual general meeting of Nalcor. They've had a good year, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

The project the minister referenced in terms of supporting it, she may want to recognize the current Minister of Finance, the prior minister of Finance and the Minister of AES also supported it. So maybe you should talk to them about it as well.

Mr. Speaker, an order-in-council posted on budget day –

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

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

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Which side were you on then?

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Please proceed.

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

An order-in-council posted on budget day indicated that \$20 million was transferred to Nalcor.

Was this funding part of *Budget 2018* or an add-on on budget day, and where did the \$20 million come from for transfer?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.



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

I seem to be hearing from the Member opposite that he's not supportive of a new exploration program. That's what I'm hearing.

Mr. Speaker, this government thinks it's a priority. To ensure that we can grow our offshore oil and gas, we believe very firmly that new exploration is very important. That's how we now know, Mr. Speaker, that we have 20 different basins. That's how we now know, Mr. Speaker, we have 650 leads and prospects.

We don't want to leave that oil in the ground, Mr. Speaker. We want to responsibly develop it to the benefit of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I will say, Mr. Speaker, we are looking to a good program this year for new exploration and we're also making sure that we maximize the equity of the programs that we already have.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Opposition House Leader.

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

Mr. Speaker, I'll ask the Premier if he could give an update on how much this province has spent on legal bills and, as well, the projected costs of future legal advice related to the unfair tariffs placed on Corner Brook Pulp and Paper by the government of the United States.

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

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

I just found the first line of questioning very interesting, actually, when they talked about the investments coming from the equity, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to remind the Members opposite if there was that much equity available to support great programs like seismic, we would not be borrowing over \$700 million a year to go back into the reversing falls project,

Nalcor. It seems to me the money is flowing in the wrong direction; the power is actually flowing in the wrong direction.

I'll get back to the very issue. As I mentioned a few days ago, we are currently at around \$500,000. That bill will grow, Mr. Speaker, but it's important to know that in order to make an argument in the US, you must have legal support from the US in that jurisdiction.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Opposition House Leader.

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

Mr. Speaker, NAFTA, or any international trade agreement, is signed by the sovereign countries, Canada – this one in particular, Canada, the United States and Mexico.

I ask the Premier: Because of that, has he asked the federal government to pay for these fees and expenses?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, when you look at softwood lumber, when you look at the newsprint tariff that was put on and the current NAFTA negotiations that are ongoing, with the countervailing tariffs that were put in place from January – and I agree, unjust, unfair, unjustified, puts undue hardship on the industry within our province – then the anti-dumping tariff that was put on, it's accumulating to some 32 per cent.

This is a long process. We've had the federal government involved in many aspects of their involvement through various organizations and departments. To date, it's \$500,000. That number will grow, Mr. Speaker.

I'll tell you, the federal government, the industry, the local communities, the workers: everyone is involved in this argument. We'll continue to work together on that.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Opposition House Leader.

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

Mr. Speaker, the federal government is a signatory to NAFTA. The federal government negotiates international trade agreements. They're the ones that go to arbitration in areas of dispute. It's their responsibility.

I ask the Premier: Have you asked or will you direct costs to the federal government for the work you're doing?

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

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

As I've said in the past, everyone is involved in this, Mr. Speaker. Of course, at some point, when this decision is finalized – it is not a final decision. The final decision will come around August, September that time frame. We'll know what the total is at that point and we'll be reaching out to any group at all that can help support the work that we have done.

We will do that, Mr. Speaker. The feds are already involved in this file. We are involved, rightfully so. I can't imagine anyone in this House, especially the Members opposite, that watched two newsprint mills close up under their watch – we are going to stand up for this industry and we will do whatever we can when it comes to legal support, north and south of the border. Mr. Speaker, the industry deserves this government fighting on their behalf.

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

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

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Here's a news clip for the Premier, Mr. Speaker: Newfoundland and Labrador doesn't control the paper market in the world. You might want to understand that.

Mr. Speaker, what discussions are ongoing at this time with Kruger and with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and with the Department of Natural Resources in regard to these tariffs?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, there are discussions ongoing virtually every day because, as you know right now, this industry and Corner Brook Pulp and Paper, there is significant – these tariffs are imposed. They came in place just five days after they were announced, Mr. Speaker. So this is having a significant impact. As I said, we are going to work closely with that industry. We're working closely with the federal government on this very issue as well to find wherever we can get some support for this industry.

Listen, Mr. Speaker, let's be very clear, these discussions are ongoing on a daily basis. They're intense and we're going to do whatever it takes to make sure this industry is viable well into the future. Nearly 6,000 jobs are attached to this industry, Mr. Speaker. These are families that are living in our communities, and many of those communities are rural communities.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** Mr. Speaker, we just learned today of families in a certain community that are employed by South Brook logging company that will likely face bankruptcy after 44 year in business. Doing business with Kruger came to an abrupt end. They were blindsided.

Was government or did government have indications that these job cuts were coming, given that you're talking to them on a regular basis?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, it's wonderful to hear the hon. Member actually speak of forestry and actually want to promote its best interests because we have not heard that as of yet. So I'm taking that he is making an impassionate case that forestry is important to us.

Yes, there are jobs that have been affected already now from the tariffs and restructuring and cost efficiencies at Corner Brook Pulp and Paper. He highlights the case as to why it's so

important to try to punch above our weight to make sure that these tariffs are dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure he'll probably ask a question soon about whether or not we should be intervening more strongly when his hon. colleague, another Member of the Opposition, just argued that we should not be arguing against these tariffs and we should leave it to the federal government.

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

Your time has expired.

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

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

**MR. LESTER:** Once again, I rise to represent the individuals who are directly affected. That's the families of the rural community –

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

**MR. LESTER:** – living in the rural communities who've lost their jobs and their livelihoods. What are they going to do now?

Has the minister expressed any concern to Kruger about this termination of business? Has he pushed Kruger to reconsider their decision that will have such a negative impact on so many young families?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, it is a very devastating decision and situation for the families and for the company that is affected. I spoke with the owner of the company last night. I did offer him whatever help that can be offered, the other opportunities that exist; and, yes, we will be reaching out to Corner Brook Pulp and Paper as well.

Mr. Speaker, what we have to realize, and this is why it's so, so important – which I have not heard as of yet – we have to work together to resolve these issues to enhance our forest industry, not to try to cut it down, not to try to smear it, not to try to minimize it. When we

have opportunities to create jobs in our forestry sector, I would expect, and the forest industry would expect, that all Members stand up in favour of our forestry industry. We haven't heard it yet from this Member opposite (inaudible).

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

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

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

**MR. LESTER:** Mr. Speaker, the people of this province are standing behind Kruger. We want Kruger to stay, but we expect equal respect from Kruger to the families and the people who are employed in our forest industry. We expect due course of notice.

Has Kruger made government aware of any other impending cuts coming to their operation?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, we know that Corner Brook Pulp and Paper always want to create efficiencies, and we are working with Corner Brook Pulp and Paper not to reduce or diminish jobs but to expand them. We're looking at new opportunities for Corner Brook Pulp and Paper; opportunities in biofuels, opportunities in other sectors which complement the pulp and paper industry.

Mr. Speaker, I'll say this, it'd be very, very helpful right here, right now, if the hon. Member would stand on his feet and inform this House of Assembly that unlike the comments that have been made by the hired henchman, Mr. Sandy Collins, who has diminished the forest industry and said the forest practices of Newfoundland and Labrador are inappropriate in so many venues, I'd appreciate it if he'd stand on his feet and denounce his hired henchman's advice.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I asked the minister if he could release an assessment of what the average family in Newfoundland and Labrador, with two small children, will pay in extra costs for food, clothing and other necessities as a result of the trickle-down effect of the carbon tax. He could not.

Can you today?

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

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

Thank you for the question. I just find it strange; we went through Estimates this morning, I think he asked two questions.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** What?

**MR. JOYCE:** Two questions on the whole environment, and here he is today up grandstanding, Mr. Speaker.

As I said before, Mr. Speaker, I was here this morning, I offered the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands an opportunity to speak, any time, any question. He asked two questions, I think it was. It could be three, I'm not sure.

Mr. Speaker, I got to say –

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Which member? The Member for Mount Pearl – Southlands, I gave him the opportunity to ask any questions and we would stay. The critic, who just asked the question, Mr. Speaker, never asked one question today on carbon tax. Not one. Not one.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say to the Member, as we said before, that is a federal program that we were told we must do. We will make it made in Newfoundland and Labrador and we will present it to the public (inaudible).

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

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

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

I want to point out the Minister never actually answered any questions. If I can count up, I think he might have answered four – his officials did. When we were posed to ask questions, he's on the record numerous times, I will not be answering those questions, just line by line.

I had four pages, Mr. Speaker, and I asked all of those line-by-line items. The Minister decided to sit back with his arms folded and let his official answer the questions. So we were done. We had our Estimates done. Maybe he should've answered those questions then. We wouldn't have to stand up here in the House and ask them again.

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

**MR. PETTEN:** I'll ask questions as long as I'm an Opposition Member and they're government. That's our job and I'm not going to stop.

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

**MR. PETTEN:** Your government is bringing in a new tax that everyone in Newfoundland and Labrador will have to pay.

Have you done any analysis on how much your carbon tax scheme costs residents and households in Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure *Hansard* will show that the Leader of the Third Party did ask questions on carbon tax and the questions were answered. *Hansard* will show it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as we said before, this is something that was put in by the federal government –

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** – and part of that is we can make a made in Newfoundland and Labrador – problem here, Mr. Speaker, and the solution in Newfoundland, if not, as I said before, the federal government will come in with a backstop.

So we're working with the industry in Newfoundland and Labrador. We're working with all the stakeholders in Newfoundland and Labrador so that we can make a Newfoundland and Labrador product to benefit Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Unlike Muskrat Falls, which will be the biggest tax we'll ever see in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

The Member's time has expired.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I do remind all Members, I will not tolerate interruptions. I only want to hear from the MHA identified.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

**MR. PETTEN:** Mr. Speaker, he doesn't know the answer once again. This rhetoric that goes on and on, he doesn't know. I'm going to try another one. I got lots of questions.

You are going to be introducing this new tax, which all residents of the province will have to pay, but you refuse to provide any details.

Do you have a plan or a formula for charging individual residents of the province for your new carbon tax?

Forget about the federal government. Stand up for the people of the province and tell them what they got to pay.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

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

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I can say as many times as the Member wants me to say: We're developing a plan for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

This carbon tax was put in by the federal government who told all the provinces that by January 1, 2019, if you don't have a plan, we will put a backstop in. What they informed all provinces is that what you can do is use the funds in Newfoundland and Labrador to help

create new green initiatives in Newfoundland and Labrador and help with the green initiatives that right now are lacking in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, we will be presenting a plan. I said it before, this kicks in January 1, 2019. There will be a plan presented to all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

The Member opposite is quite welcome, Mr. Speaker, once the plan is out there, to ask any questions he'd like (inaudible).

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

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

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

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

It's astounding; the minister really doesn't know any of the answers to these questions. I think that's shameful.

This issue is one of the biggest issues talked about in the country now, one of the biggest issues here, the carbon tax. Go to the rest of the country and it's a big issue. Here, we can't get any details. So half-a-million people here and we can't any details from this minister or government.

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

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

**MR. PETTEN:** You stated the plans for your new carbon tax would be introduced this spring. People were expecting to see details in the budget; it's a new tax after all.

When exactly will you be open and transparent and let the people of the province in on the details of your new carbon tax plan? It's straightforward question, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

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

I'll tell you one thing that was straightforward, Mr. Speaker; \$18 million for Humber Valley Paving when he was executive assistant to the minister of Transportation and Works.

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you one thing, and I said it before to the Member opposite, he can stand here – and I said the plan will be put in for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We will have discretion on the plan. When the plan – it will be rolled out so all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will look at it.

I say to the Member opposite: Did you agree with Humber Valley Paving when you were executive assistant to the minister waiting for the new Premier to come in, when \$18 million was released by three sentences, Mr. Speaker? That's the difference of this side.

We'll do a plan; we'll do a comprehensive plan. We'll do it; we'll let everybody (inaudible).

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

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

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

**MR. PETTEN:** Mr. Speaker, you know what's shameful, the Minister of Environment does not know one single thing about climate change.

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

**MR. PETTEN:** Carbon tax; he knows zero.

I'll ask him one more. He might be able to go and text his friends in Ottawa and might get an answer. I'm going to ask him one more and it's straightforward. This he should be able to answer.

In his Budget Speech, the Finance Minister linked the new carbon tax with the phase-out of the remainder of the temporary gas tax.

Will the minister confirm the four cents remaining on your Liberal gas tax will be rolled into your Liberal carbon tax plan? Yes or no?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, I can say one thing, at least we have friends in Ottawa. Those friends in Ottawa are putting \$540 million in capital works –

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** – in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador for water and sewer. We have a fishery fund, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, \$100 million. I'm glad we got friends in Ottawa.

As we said, when the carbon tax rolls in, the four cents left will be eliminated from the gas tax. I'll say to the Member opposite, I take offence when you said I have no details – all the work that's done by the officials. You stand here today with the officials, never asked a question about how many staff are there, how many people, what type of work they're doing, is there any increase in funding – it's shameful for you (inaudible) –

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

The Member's time has expired.

**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.

The quote that came to my mind with that response was with friends like that, we sure don't need enemies.

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

**MS. PERRY:** Last month, March 16, a woman called into *Open Line* to look for help on her financial situation. This lady, who was in need of home care, cannot afford it. Eastern Health told her that she must pay \$418 a month, which she simply does not have. When she called the Seniors' Advocate they said: Who is your Member? Phone your Member.

I ask the minister: What's the purpose of the Seniors' Advocate? Is the office just a call-direction service?

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

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

I don't need to remind Members of this House that the Member that asked the question is the person who thought a Seniors' Advocate was a luxury in this province. Here we are, Mr. Speaker, with a rapidly aging population, many, many seniors and we saw fit to put a Seniors' Advocate in place to deal with important issues of people who are very important to us.

The Member knows we can't speak to individual circumstances. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I listened to the exact call that she is referring to as I was driving along. All I can say is if they went to the MHA, the MHA should have come to me and asked me specifically about the questions and then I could have got into the details.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune for a very short question, please.

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

I'm proud to represent the seniors and stand up and raise their concerns, Mr. Speaker –

**MR. SPEAKER:** Short question, please.

**MS. PERRY:** – and I will ask the minister: Will she bring legislation into this House to fix the role of the Seniors' Advocate and give them the ability to actually help seniors?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development for a quick response, please.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to assisting the seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador, I believe our government has a track record already, despite the tough fiscal situation that we found ourselves in: \$122 million helping

seniors and low-income people; \$7.5 million to add new treatment options under the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription program.

Many, many things happening and we're very pleased to have been able to follow up and put a Seniors' Advocate in place to help seniors deal with systemic issues in this province.

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Labour responded to my question saying: "We all know that the best solution to any negotiations is we go through collective bargaining in good faith." But twice the Labour Relations Board found D-J Composites guilty of bargaining in bad faith – twice.

They continue violating workers' rights and locking them out for 16 months and counting. Seven years ago, government set up the Industrial Inquiry to study the 18-month Voisey's Bay strike. It recommended that binding arbitration occur when strikes or lockouts are ineffective in bringing about resolution of a dispute.

I ask the Premier: Why does he not action immediately in order to deal with the situation in Gander?

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

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

I certainly realize that, as I said yesterday, we are concerned about the strike. As I also mentioned yesterday to my hon. colleague and Leader of the Third Party, if she wanted to get some information on the last dispute and complaint, there is a report on the website that she can read. I offered it to her yesterday.

I also made a statement, Mr. Speaker, that in reference to the arbitration, legislation is not necessary because if she reads and go into section 123(5.1) of the act – in 2012 when the

Labour Relations Board was given extra authority.

Here's what the board says: "... the Board finds that it does have the jurisdiction to potentially order binding arbitration upon the parties pursuant to Section 123(5.1) of the *Act*." If she'd like to read the report, Mr. Speaker –

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** (Inaudible.)

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

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

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

I ask the minister: What will it take, two years, three years, 10 years? When is it bad enough?

He also said unions don't want binding arbitration when, in fact, unions wrote the minister asking for binding arbitration in cases where an employer is egregious, unlawful and acting in bad faith. The Industrial Inquiry warned this would happen more often as multinationals try to violate Canadian workers' rights.

I ask the Premier again, this is a matter of justice: Will he meet with unions and amend the *Labour Relations Act* to include Recommendation 5 of the Industrial Inquiry?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

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

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

I really invite the Member of the Third Party to read the report and also read the legislation, as I said, very clearly, very clearly, very clearly: "... the Board finds that it does have the jurisdiction to potentially order binding arbitration upon the parties pursuant to Section 123(5.1) of the *Act*." So the Labour Relations Board has the authority.

Mr. Speaker, what I said yesterday is the fact that when we get into any negotiation, collective bargaining is a right that we have. It's an opportunity for us, for labour, for employers and for the union to be able to have a collective agreement which is negotiated, not forced upon them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**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, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday I said to the Minister of Finance that cuts made in 2016 to dental care and home care have been hard on seniors. In reply, the minister talked about building long-term care facilities as a sign that this government values seniors.

I ask the minister: How is investing in a building in Corner Brook going to help the senior in St. Anthony or Bonavista who can't get enough home care to meet their needs?

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

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

I also said in the answer to her question that we have 155,000 seniors on the Seniors' Benefit, but she didn't hear that part of the response, Mr. Speaker, because it's not politically advantageous to her.

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

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

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

I ask the minister: How can he balance the minimal Seniors' Benefit – because it is – against the cost to seniors of losing home care hours, dental care and coverage of over-the-counter drugs?

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



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

Mr. Speaker, we are investing \$121 million in the Seniors' Benefit in this province. In addition to that, the Minister of Health put forward in this year's budget measures for the home-first program. There are also measures put in place in many of the departments in this government to deal with seniors.

All you need to do is ask the minister of responsible for Seniors of some of the benefits that are in this year's budget. We are not ignoring seniors, as the Member would want people to believe. We have a great deal of benefit in this year's budget for seniors.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Time for Oral Questions has ended.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### Petitions

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

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

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled:

The residents of Hermitage and surrounding area depend on timely access to medical services. The amount of days that medical services are being provided at the Hermitage Medical Clinic has been reduced from two days per week to just two days per month.

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

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

I require to be able to hear the speaker.

Thank you.

**MS. PERRY:** Residents of the Hermitage area, including many seniors, now must travel approximately 50 kilometres to Harbour Breton to receive medical services and no public transportation is available in the area. The residents of the Hermitage area have expressed concerns about their ability to receive medical services in a timely manner, as well as safety concerns related to travelling for medical purposes.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows:

The undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to extend operations at the Hermitage Medical Clinic to include an extra two days of service per month, for a total of four days per month.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I will say that I feel strongly that the people of this portion of my district, the ConHer portion we call it, the Hermitage-Sandyville, Seal Cove, McCallum and Gaultois area – I don't think they're asking for enough personally. They're really not asking for much, two additional days. That will still only give them one day per week.

It's unfair that the people of rural Newfoundland and Labrador are subject to a different level of service than any other Newfoundlander and Labradorian, Mr. Speaker. We are equally as important and we equally contribute to the well-being of this province, I would say.

In fact, in my District of Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, for a small population of 8,000 people I would think we contribute significantly more than some other areas with over \$200 million in aquaculture production alone; with the hydro production down there, Mr. Speaker, 600 megawatts; and with the traditional fishery that continues to be a major employer for the area.

The people of the Coast of Bays region deserve decent health care. It is unfair to expect seniors

to travel on roads that are not snow cleared with no cellphone service, to expect their children or their family or friends to take a day off work to drive them to a clinic appointment 50 kilometres away, when the simple solution is to send a nurse in their direction two additional days a month. It's not asking for a lot. We truly hope that government will hear them and reinstate those services.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for the District of 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 Newfoundland has the highest incidence of cardiac disease in Canada and we need to do what we can to improve our ability to save lives; and

WHEREAS the implementation of a new registry can be completed for less than the cost of a new vehicle; and

WHEREAS after implementation, the annual cost will be five cents per resident;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to enact legislation requiring all AEDs in the province be registered with an online registry. This registry must also be linked to the 911 system to enable faster response time in case of cardiac emergencies.

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

Mr. Speaker, I presented several of these and I guess I'll continue on. This issue is of particular importance to me – the issue itself is very important but there's a family in my district who suffers from this rare disease and require AEDs.

Actually, as a matter of fact, the proponent, I guess the person that spurred me on to petitioning on his behalf to get this registry in place has also been a very vocal advocate with the Heart and Stroke Foundation in getting AEDs installed in a lot of the remaining schools and whatnot, and has been very actively involved.

I've had many conversations with him. As a matter of fact, he is presently at the Ottawa Heart Institute recovering from his heart transplant; successful heart transplant surgery he had several weeks ago, and I keep wishing him well because I think it's a great story.

This registry is tied to the fact of making sure those AEDs are there to save lives. I spoke previously this week. In my own community of CBS, the Robert French Memorial Stadium, the second life was saved Sunday passed. This gentleman, he is in mid-forties; I know him well. He just got released from hospital today, but he actually was saved. Six times they had to shock him to bring him back. It was a very serious incident. I spoke about it earlier this week. On the way to the hospital, they stopped twice; emergency surgery at the hospital.

It's a successful story but he was saved by this AED, Mr. Speaker. As a result of the batteries being operational, this machine was operational in the stadium and was ready to use. If we could have this registry in place that would make sure that batteries would always be charged, first responders would know where to find the nearest AED. As I say, every time I've gotten up and spoken on this petition, Mr. Speaker, these save lives. Living proof in my own town; there were two in the last year. And other places – I know Stephenville had one and this other –

**MR. K. PARSONS:** One last week in the Jack Byrne Arena.

**MR. PETTEN:** Jack Byrne Arena last week, as my colleague says.

So this is very important and it's about making sure those machines are readily accessible and functioning. It's fine to have them there, but we need to make sure we have it tied to our 911 and everything is operational, should the need arise because we never know when we may need one.

I'll keep petitioning for this gentleman and his family in my district, very passionate about it and I'm only too glad to present this petition.

Thank you very much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further petitions?

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oh, I'm sorry.

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment for a response.

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

I thank the Member for the petition. It is a great petition.

Just to know, we are working with the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Last year, we put \$100,000 in to buy AEDs to put across the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In actual fact, Mr. Speaker, one of the announcements we had was the Member for Cape St. Francis was in the same stadium that you were just talking about when the other person took a heart attack. We had the same announcement that they saved a young boy in the stadium. We were up there last year (inaudible).

This is a big issue. I met with the Heart and Stroke Foundation on this issue. I told them we'll commit to look across Canada. I think all provinces got it done.

The issue, Mr. Speaker, you have to resolve before you create a registry – because once you call in to 911 and you get a registry, you have to ensure that this registry is updated. That's the big issue. If you call in to 911 and say there's an AED at the Jack Byrne Arena stadium, you have to ensure that AED will always be updated or taken off the list. That's the kind of stuff you have to work through.

It's a great idea. As I said, I met with the Heart and Stroke Foundation again just yesterday. I agreed to go back and look at some of the information for this. We will work with anybody

we can. I'll even work with the Member because this is such a great issue. It can affect anybody.

Even in St. John's, just last week, besides the stadium, there was a second person saved by an AED at a private building, actually, I think it was, in St. John's. It's an important issue that we all should work together to help save lives in Newfoundland and Labrador.

A great petition.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Further petitions?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call Orders of the Day.

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

#### Orders of the Day

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** I call from the Order Paper, Motion 1, the Budget Speech.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port to continue his debate.

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

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

I just have to stand today; I don't know how much time I have. I'm sure the Clerk will notify me. I spoke for a few short minutes yesterday prior to us adjourning for recess. The intention there was specifically around the comments from the Member for Conception Bay South.

I had no choice but to stand, Mr. Speaker. I had to listen for a 20-minute piece from the Member for Conception Bay South as he distinctly criticized the Minister of Transportation and

Works, the Department of Transportation and Works and the work that's been done in that department. Specifically, he stated we had not taken any politics out of paving at all. He said we were not doing a proper job in terms of our ranking system.

Mr. Speaker, I then quoted just a short piece from the Auditor General's report which was released in June of 2017. That report was a reflection of work carried out in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador on our provincial highways and our secondary highways. The Auditor General examined some 13 different pieces of work and there were some rather scathing findings, specifically with respect to politics in pavement, Mr. Speaker.

In the 2015-2016 year, some \$240 million was spent on construction and maintenance on our highways in our province – \$240 million in both construction and maintenance. Specifically with respect to some of the work that was done, of the \$77 million of new work that was completed, 46 per cent of that work had direct MHA interference.

Mr. Speaker, the figures are quite frightening. If you look at \$77 million worth of work done in this province in 2015-2016, MHA priorities were reflected in \$35.9 million worth of work in that one year – \$35.9 million. Almost half of all of the roadwork in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador had direct MHA interference.

In fact, the MHA interference trumped what was needed and deemed essential, significantly. It trumped carryover work, that's work that was not even finished the previous year. It trumped strategic work priorities as well. Direct MHA interference in all of the roadwork in the province under the PC government's watch, and yesterday the Member stood up in this House and accused us of not having any plan to address it and we're not doing anything to take the politics out of paving.

Mr. Speaker, the report, which I can table for the Member if he's not familiar – he should be familiar. I understand the Member for Conception Bay South was the executive assistant to the Minister of Transportation and Works during the year in which this report

reflects. He was the executive assistant to the Minister of Transportation and Works in the year that this report is reflecting. That's the PC government's 46 per cent interference with MHAs into all roadwork in the province that year.

Other things in the report are very concerning as well, Mr. Speaker. There are references to tack coat that was often not used. Tack coat is a type of material that's used to ensure that the asphalt and the adhesive can stick together clearly. It was often not used for a good six-year period under the PC government's watch.

The PC government is quoted in the report: they had no system in place to identify maintenance priorities. They had no system in place to identify maintenance priorities for our provincial highways; yet, the Member had to stand on his feet and complain about Route 60 – sorry, I meant to say 460. Route 460 is in Stephenville, I'll get to that in a few moments.

Route 60 is a direct issue that the Member has, and I'm sure it's a highly travelled road. He's stating it's the fifth or sixth busiest travelled road in the province, and perhaps he's correct. I certainly won't dispute that. I'm sure it perhaps needs some work, but under their watch they didn't even have a system to identify maintenance priorities. They also had interference in half the roadwork in the province. So I don't understand how just a year or two removed from this, if he was that concerned about Route 60 he couldn't have addressed it then.

Late tendering; the Auditor General's report reflecting the Department of Transportation and Works under the PC government. I think it was half of the projects examined were going to tender late. Almost half of those projects were going to tender late.

Mr. Speaker, that's just a few things. Again, very concerning when you look at politics and pavement and PC Members interfering directly with the work and the priorities. Their priorities trumped safety priorities. When we look at no system in place to identify priorities, going to tender late and so on and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, what are we doing about it as a Liberal government and what has our government done? Well, I can tell you, and I have no trouble tabling this document for the Member for Conception Bay South as well. This is the Five-Year Provincial Roads Plan, the 2018 edition. You should check it out, I tell the Member for Conception Bay South.

In addition to outlining all of the work that we'll be doing in the next number of years, over the next five years, the rankings are here for the projects, the rankings are listed. The rankings are based on safety, traffic volumes and social and economic impacts. So despite the PC government having no plan to prioritize their roadwork, we are focusing on prioritizing our roadwork based on safety, traffic volumes and the social and economic impacts to the residents in the areas in which these roads go.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, what else are we doing? We're going to tender early. I'll perhaps defer to the Minister of Transportation and Works at a later date and he can reference the number of projects and the tenders that went out early.

Putting out early tenders, and it's not just issuing the tenders early, Mr. Speaker, it's awarding them early as well. The Heavy Civil Association and contractors in this province and companies that do roadwork in this province, they have told us, and they have told our government and they've told the minister, they applaud the five-year Roads Plan and they applaud the early tendering.

Going to tender early allows our contractors to be better able to be prepare, it allows them to forecast their needs in terms of their construction supplies and the type of materials they need and the amount of staff they'll require. Awarding the tenders early as well, Mr. Speaker, is extremely important. I think there were nine projects referenced in this report from the Auditor General and under the PC government's watch, half of them, the work wasn't completed and it was being completed late.

The five-year Roads Plan also allows contractors to prepare better, as I said, but it allows them to look at bundling work as well. If a contractor in the Western region for example, Mr. Speaker, understands that there's going to be work done

under several sections of highways – be it from Port aux Basques to Corner Brook and Stephenville and in between – the contractors can bid on these pieces of work and they can look at bundling it in. They can take a piece of work from one section, say again, Port aux Basques, and as they move through Codroy Valley they'll bundle in that piece of work as well, allowing them to prepare better.

Another thing we've done, Mr. Speaker, to address some of the concerns and some of the long-standing issues under the PC watch in the Department of Transportation and Works is we've started a nighttime construction project. The intent of that is to see if there's a way to alleviate traffic congestion in certain areas and busy stretches of the highway by completing the work at night. There's been an asphalt testing program that has just been unveiled as well. There are some five different sections using different types of asphalt so we can determine what is the best outcome and what are some of the best materials that we can use.

Those are just a few things that we have done, Mr. Speaker, in terms of making sure that our citizens, our municipalities, our contractors and our general public are well informed about our roadwork. We have taken the politics out of paving, I'll tell the Member for Conception Bay South, unlike the PC government. With our five-year Roads Plan, work will get done.

Having said that, I have to go back to the piece where 46 per cent of the roadwork under the PC watch in 2015 – 46 per cent of the roadwork that year had direct MHA interference. I think my district was a result of being trumped by some MHA interference, Mr. Speaker. Route 460 that comes into Stephenville is a very heavily travelled road. In fact, I was on town council with the Town of Stephenville in the years 2013 and 2014; we did some of our own traffic counts. In some of our traffic counts we were looking upwards to a maximum of about 2,000 cars a day travelling back and forth between Corner Brook and Stephenville. Route 460 has been neglected I cannot tell you how long. I'm going to say about nine years.

During the rule of the PC government, three different Transportation and Works ministers came to Stephenville and announced a bypass

highway to go around a flood zone in Route 460. Three different PC Transportation and Works ministers announced, came out and had drawings, cut a ribbon and spoke to the Chamber of Commerce. Three different PC ministers came out and announced work on 460 in the District of Stephenville - Port au Port. Mr. Speaker, I regret to tell you that that never seen the light of day.

Three different announcements, three different Transportation and Works ministers, zero work completed on Route 460 in Stephenville – zero work, despite three separate announcements by three separate PC ministers. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transportation and Works and the former minister of Transportation and Works, the Member for Grand Falls, now the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, both of these ministers have had my ear since day one.

I can tell you they are well aware of the concerns on Route 460. I'm pleased to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that this year we're going to see some seven to nine kilometres of pavement on Route 460 from Stephenville to Corner Brook. Next year, again planning ahead – something the PC government never do – in the five-year Roads Plan, I'll tell the Member, we're going to get more work done on Route 460 in Stephenville - Port au Port.

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

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

**MR. FINN:** Mr. Speaker, I take great exception because this area – and you want to talk about rankings and say the rankings aren't there. When we look at safety rankings, they're ranked anywhere from zero to five. You want to know where Route 460 ranks –

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

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

**MR. FINN:** They ranked us a four when it comes to safety. It ranks as a four, and that's given the traffic volumes and some of the concerns on this stretch of road.

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

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

**MR. FINN:** When I have to hear the Member for Conception Bay South say that we have politics in pavement, we're doing this based on safety and based on priority, whereas the PC government decided to directly interfere with all the roadwork and then just simply forget about their previous announcements – just simply forget about their previous announcements.

I tell you the Chamber of Commerce in Stephenville and the town council, when I got elected to town council in 2013, when we heard that the PC government was coming out to announce roadwork for 460, everybody laughed. Everybody in the town laughed. The chamber laughed; the Town of Stephenville laughed. My God, people actually sometimes have a hard time believing me that there's actually work going to be done this year because it's been announced so many times under the Progressive Conservative watch.

Mr. Speaker, it's so upsetting to have to be here in the House of Assembly. You get elected with the intention to do good, you want to help the people in your district and I certainly want to help the people in Stephenville - Port au Port. I travel Route 460 and I travel our provincial highways almost weekly, Mr. Speaker, and I can tell you this particular stretch of road is of extreme importance. I'm very proud that we're going to get this work done.

Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's report on the Department of Transportation and Works, I'll say to the Member again – I can certainly table it if need be – I'm going to have to ask him to go back and take a look. I don't think that we deserve, on this side of the House, any lectures at all. We do not deserve any lectures from the PC government on how to properly do roadwork. We certainly do not.

And we certainly do not need to hear it from somebody who was the executive assistant to the minister of Transportation and Works during the year which is referenced that they directly interfered with half of the roadwork in the province, Mr. Speaker. It's absolutely unacceptable. I will not sit over here and not take an opportunity to stand up and reply to

some of the remarks when they come in this nature.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll look forward to speaking on the budget and some of the things in the District of Stephenville - Port au Port. I'll look forward to talking about many other initiatives. To sit here yesterday for 20 minutes, I was absolutely stomach sick to hear the Member talk about politics in paving when they interfered in 46 per cent of the roadwork.

The PC government, the MHAs, directly interfered. Their priorities trump safety, they trump reliability and they trump traffic violations.

All of their priorities trumped safety concerns. Mr. Speaker, that is unacceptable. We will not stand for it. We can do better; we have been doing better. I direct the Member to the five-year Roads Plan.

Thank you very much, 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'm certainly pleased again to rise and speak to *Budget 2018*. My colleague on the other side mentioned the five-year roads program and talked about safety and the elements of that. It's interesting, in my own district in the last couple of years we've been working on a bridge locally known as Stoney River Bridge entering Trepassey, the technical name is Mutton Bay Bridge. Safety is of the utmost concern of the residents of the region in regard to that particular bridge.

In late 2015 there was an engineering inspection report done which indicated that bridge should be replaced. There were immediate rehab repairs that needed to be done for the safety of those that use it in transportation.

We've presented petitions here in the House signed by local residents from St. Shott's, Trepassey, Biscay Bay, Portugal Cove South, all those communities in that region and towns and

had representation from the councils. As well, I met with the Southern Shore Joint Councils on a couple of occasions. They, as well, have written letters to the minister, just as my hon. colleague has indicated, about safety and ensuring the safety of the general public in passing that bridge. To date, we've had nothing done, nothing to address that.

Safety is one aspect and the most important aspect, but the other part is when you look at some of the opportunities we have on the Southern Avalon in regard to tourism. We have a number of fishing enterprises there; other commerce is taking place as well. I'll speak to that in a minute in regard to in July of 2016 we had UNESCO designation that had been worked on for a considerable number of years.

This being Volunteer Week, certainly, it's good to recognize those people in the region in the community, that did a tremendous job in starting that process, not just getting to the conclusion. It's wasn't a few years. It was probably 15 or 20 years from the initial start when the land was brought in under the Parks Division in the provincial government. It was set up in regard to a protected piece of property, how it was managed.

Then we started the process of being shortlisted on the UNESCO World Heritage Site and all the work that's been done, investments put in, dollars put in to the process to ensure that you could move it along. Very technical information from the scientific community, from academia. We had various academics and scientists from around North America. I know there were – I think maybe in the UK, as well as in Ontario – particular universities that were involved in that and provided their expertise in developing that document and the expertise that was needed to go into it to make the case of why UNESCO should have World Heritage Site.

All that work was done and it was supported by our administration in terms of dollars put in. I think there was somewhere around \$600,000 over a period of time put in to support that work and, as well, to support infrastructure on the site up there. I mentioned a particular bridge I spoke of, but also road infrastructure and helping to continue to build that to support it, to drive economic activity on the Southern Avalon.

Small business and entrepreneurship is alive and well. With some of the activities we've seen with UNESCO and the influx of tourists and people to the area – local, national and international coming to the area, last year we saw somewhere in the range of 10,000 people who went through the interpretation site in Portugal Cove South. They would have been going to Cape Race and the wireless communication site there and as well the interpretation centre in Portugal Cove South.

In the interpretation site there is a cast of the actual fossils from Mistaken Point that were done a number of years ago and a portion of that hangs there in that site. For those that come who may want to share the experience of seeing those fossils that are over 500 million years old and to get an interpretation of them, they can do that there. For some reason if they didn't want to go out to the actual site, which involves about a 20 minute drive out to the trail, out to Cape Race road, and a 45 minute hike roughly down to the actual fossil bed site at Mistaken Point, which is a tremendous hike, beautiful shoreline down through.

You can look at some of the earlier communities that were a part of that area and where people lived. Today, there are some homes left there but there are no permanent residents there, but goes back to hundreds of years ago all across Newfoundland and Labrador where people lived in smaller communities and around bays and so forth and mostly got their subsistence from the sea and from codfish. You can see that as well and have that experience as well when you visit Mistaken Point.

So there's huge opportunity. That was recognized decades ago by those that – after it was identified, the fossils were discovered and those that participated to protect them and to look at the economic opportunity. Obviously, the point is you want to preserve what you have in regard to the uniqueness of those fossils, but also you want to do everything you can to make sure you benefit from those.

One of the patterns that was followed was Joggins in the Bay of Fundy. They received designation a few years prior to UNESCO designation at Mistaken Point. A lot of work was done and mirroring and discussing with

those partners there on the process they went through.

I remember several years ago being in Portugal Cove South and a delegation from Joggins in the Bay of Fundy, and their fossil site, came and met with the volunteers in Portugal Cove and had a great discussion about the process they had gone through, the pitfalls, what you needed to do, and it was a great help. Again, a lot of work was put into that to bring it to fruition eventually in July of 2016.

Getting back; this is tied into availing of the opportunities that are presented from a social and economic point of view and that road infrastructure. The hon. Member mentioned before me, safety is the first and foremost priority, but as well, making sure there's a free flow of traffic that you can allow to make sure that access is available.

One uniqueness about the Southern Avalon as well, when you look at various – for example, health care infrastructure, there's a three-hour, roughly, drive to St. John's for acute care facilities in most cases for diagnostic testing. So it's fundamental that you have good roads. People recognize there's not a particular health care service in your particular area, but because of that you should have strong roads and you should have the infrastructure so you can travel back and forth to medical care and the kind of services that are required. You can't have those services everywhere, but you certainly should cover off to make sure those roads are at a condition that makes the travel the best it can be in times of need.

That gets to when the Member earlier spoke of the five-year Roads Plan. My colleague, who's the critic for TW, has asked over and over again – and I think asked just recently again in Estimates – in regard to the five-year roads program and what's identified in it.

Indeed, there are road infrastructure and bridges identified and rated within the five-year roads program. The issue is if something is not in the five-year road program and it's causing considerable concern, as the hon. Member mentioned, it's related to safety and you want to know where the rating is for it and how does it compare to a piece of infrastructure that's



already in the five-year programs: we don't know, we can't find it, it's not there.

The argument is, well, we've taken the politics out of roadwork but what we've gotten in a five-year program is just a list of pieces of infrastructure that's rated and they're saying we're choosing these and these are getting done, but if someone else comes along with –

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

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

Please proceed.

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** If someone else comes along and says we've got this piece of infrastructure, what's the rating on that? I think there are three or four elements they're rated on, maybe safety, maybe economic opportunity and there are a few others. How does my piece of infrastructure compare to ones that are in the road program? You can't see it. It's not available. It's not done. We don't know. We've been asking now since 2016 when the original road program came out and there's been an update since where that's to.

That's like the particular bridge I referenced leading into Trepassey in regard to where that sits. As well, the piece of infrastructure from Cappahayden to Trepassey is one piece we've been looking for some information; understanding that it all can't be done at once. I know in my term, we did a couple of sections of it. It couldn't be all done at once.

There are a lot of needs across the province in regard to road infrastructure. We did a 10 or 11 kilometre piece from Chance Cove Park south down towards Trepassey and even back from Chance Cove Park north and did a significant section there in two particular years.

We've also replaced a bridge in Southwest River. In Trepassey we did some work leading into Trepassey proper in regard to the highway and upgraded that. We did some work in St. Shott's, between the end of Trepassey toward St. Shott's, but recognizing it's a huge piece of road infrastructure in my particular district.

When you get out of the City of St. John's, you get out to Bay Bulls city limits and you go from there south right to St. Shott's and on towards Peter's River, there's a tremendous amount of infrastructure, a tremendous amount of road. Everybody recognizes you can't come in one year and do all that work or two years but you'd like to see a plan and have it prioritized on safety and the economic opportunities that that presented. With the five-year Roads Plan we haven't seen that.

The current government is in the third year of its mandate. Particularly, there's no reference to that piece of infrastructure, even to get a piece done this year and moving forward. As I said, it ties back to what I start with in talking about the Southern Avalon and the opportunities for economic development related to tourism, Mistaken Point, Chance Cove Park. That's a day park under the Provincial Parks program.

We've had some entrepreneurs that wanted to look at that and see if there would be interest in working with a partnership with the private sector in regard to developing that and putting infrastructure into it. Because it's a day park, there's been no infrastructure put into it in the past number of years. There's really not a lot of oversight to that park.

It's partnered somewhat with La Manche Park which is, I think, probably one of the most second-used parks in the province next to Butter Pot. We have asked the current Minister of Tourism to consider that. We've had some people in having discussions but I don't think they're going anywhere. We're just asking to have a discussion to take advantage of the opportunity that is in the area.

With people coming in, ecotourism, there's a river there which is great for sea trout and even salmon fishing, as well, trails there that could certainly be exploited from a geotourism point of view. Have people stay there in it, from an RV point of view, or certainly the camp, from that natural point of view, to allow to drive the opportunities in the area. That's all tied to infrastructure and it's tied to supporting particular ventures that are in the area. One of those, as I talked about, was Mistaken Point, getting that designation and making sure we have the supports.

Just recently I brought up questions here in the House. There were questions asked in Estimates. My colleague asked in regard to the investment this government is making and being able to avail of the opportunities that exist. This has been going on really since 2017 when there were issues in regard to the management plan.

When the request was put in or the large volume of documentation was put in to the United Nations for consideration, as part of that there was a management plan. That plan basically covered the full breadth and scope of once you get the designation, what you need to do over a four-year period and you need to report on that four-year period.

A lot of the items in that dealt with financial sustainability, how it would operate, do you have the confidence it can operate, you continue to see how it can operate; infrastructure is maintained and how the partnerships are identified with various levels of governments, municipal governments, provincial governments, federal governments and how of all that is shown to be operational and has been followed.

As well, there's an element in regard to education. There was a manager of education that was taken out, which is of some concern to those who are involved because when UNESCO looks at it and looks at achieving what you have to achieve over that four-year period and those are not being done and not being identified, there is some concern.

Other aspects deal with, as I said, partnerships. The actual interpretation centre there has had challenges over the last couple of years in regard to operational help. They had asked several times in letters and emails; haven't gotten a response to several ministers. Just recently, I remember I had meetings last spring. We met with the then minister and the ADM I think it was in the spring of 2017. There were discussions then about a funding model and how it would work. Because in that budget, the current administration brought in a fee they were going to charge for provincial sites. Those folks up there, if they lost that or if someone charged a fee and it was pulled back into provincial revenue, it would be devastation for their actual ability to operate.

They operate a lot, the interpretation centre and the volunteer group that operates it, which is the gateway for Mistaken Point. To go to Mistaken Point, the employees of the parks division work there and government rents some space off them, but that's the gateway. So if that doesn't function, there's nowhere for those employees to operate and there's nowhere for anybody to meet for the actual tours to be arranged. Because it is a toured site, so you just can't walk out on the site. It is a reserve.

So you go or you call and you register on a particular day to take the tour to Mistaken Point. It's a guided tour. There are two done a day. To stop and register, to drive up there and go out, you're looking at probably four or five hours if you're leaving St. John's to go out and do the tour. There are two done a day and they get a lot of calls. Unfortunately, in the last couple of years, they had to turn people away because, with the designation in 2016 the world exposure and all of those types of things, there's been a lot of activity.

That's what we need to seize. The minister the other day referenced inaccurately in the media, talked about we're bringing these issues up because we don't want people to go to Mistaken Point. Nothing could be further from the truth. This is about seizing the opportunity, supporting those volunteers and what they've achieved to date and expanding the opportunity for the Southern Avalon and all that it holds. That's what it's all about.

We've seen entrepreneurs and business people in Trepassey and Portugal Cove South continue to build and put dollars in for infrastructure so when people come, they have that type of experience they want to have and we can derive economic opportunity from that great asset we have. That's what it's all about.

My colleague again asked questions: Why hasn't government gotten back to these groups? These are volunteers; these are tremendous volunteers that have done work beyond the scope of what you can imagine. They're passionate about it, but they are getting to the point where they're getting tired.

They're saying: Does anybody really care about this? Does anybody get it, what an opportunity

this is and we're letting it slip by? They're talking now with the interpretation centre, not sure if they can open because of no support or no new support from this government.

Just recently, last week, they had a dinner. This is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and they've got volunteers that are out selling tickets and having a dinner to try to raise money to run an interpretation centre, which is the gateway for UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Volunteers selling tickets to try to keep that open, yet we can't get ministers to return their call to meet with them and just give them some clear understanding of what it is they have in mind in terms of fees, in terms of meeting the management plan, in terms of continuing to grow the site, get the return from the economic opportunity.

Someone needs to reach out to those folks, to sit with them and to put in the kind of funding that's needed to allow them to continue to take advantage. We, as a province – it's not just the region, it's not just the Southern Avalon, this is one of four UNESCO sites in the province, it's one of 18 in the country. These are not that easy to come by. Obviously, the work that's done, the recognition that's put in for the United Nations to recognize it is huge.

There are people around the world, from the data that's being collected, will come to – they'll go to any UNESCO site in the world. It's their bucket list to go to as many as they can. They will come. They will stay. They will stay in the communities. They'll spend. That will drive economic opportunities. It will drive jobs. It will drive the things that reinvigorate rural Newfoundland and Labrador. This is a classic example.

I can only say again, hats off to those great people and the work they've done over the past 15 or 20 years and the kind of things they've done to get this to where it is today. We cannot lose this opportunity. We've come too far, too much has been invested. The opportunities that exist for decades to come are very evident.

To anybody out there that's thinking about what it should look like, go in on Joggins in the Bay of Fundy. You go in and google that and search it and you can see what comes up. You can see

how they have managed it and how they've done what they need to do to make that successful. That's where we need to go.

Here, the group up there and I and everybody else is willing to work together with this government, but we need them to step up and do what needs to be done. If you want to talk about economic and social development, this is a great example of reinvigoration of an asset you have and making sure you maximize the opportunity. That needs vision, it needs understanding and it means being able to meet and work together to fund what is an obvious gem.

It's there. It's ours. It's Newfoundland and Labrador. It's Canadian. We can do better, and I certainly call on government to do better and get this to where it needs to be.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Is the House ready for the question?

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion of the budget sub-amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

**MR. SPEAKER:** In my opinion, the nays have it.

The budget sub-amendment is defeated.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I heard more nays than I heard ayes.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I said the motion is defeated.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we return to the budget non-confidence motion.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

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

**MS. PARSLEY:** Good afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to once again stand in this hon. House and represent the great District of Harbour Main, the district where we boast two of the world's most historic communities, Brigus and Cupids, that welcome thousands of tourists each day, injecting millions of dollars into our provincial economy.

There are (inaudible) right now in the Town of Holyrood. We have a new Tim Horton's opening shortly. We have an Orange store. Business is booming in the district.

Mr. Speaker, I am also proud to stand in this House as a woman who has dedicated many years of my life to volunteering in the public service. No doubt, all hon. Members have given back to your communities in various ways. So during Volunteer Week, I would like to thank all of you, as well as many thousands of individuals throughout the province who give themselves unselfishly to community programs, organizations and causes.

No matter what part of the Island we live in, in every nook and corner you'll find a volunteer. Because without volunteers things just don't work, they don't go ahead. You'll find them in the backs of hockey arenas, soccer fields. Wherever there's a sport, volunteers work when people work together.

So once again, hats off to all the volunteers in Newfoundland and Labrador. Great job, keep up the work because without you, we wouldn't succeed.

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

**MS. PARSLEY:** Last night, I had the opportunity to attend in CBS a volunteer awards program. There were about 100 people in the room and we named Dr. Adrian Power, Citizen

of the Year and Emma Jacobs, Youth Volunteer of the Year, which was a great, great turnout. These were just some of the volunteers there last night and it was awesome. Everybody stayed around to chit-chat and otherwise but, like I said, it's great with people doing work in our great districts.

Now, getting back to our budget, I'd like to talk about transportation, some things have happened that are great in the budget. There is a significant demand for improvements to road infrastructure throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. We all get justified calls, emails from constituents voicing their concerns regarding potholes, the need for pavement, roads and bridge upgrades.

During a public consultation in the fall of 2016, the Department of Transportation and Works received more than 560 submissions from the general public on roadwork. As a result, an evidence-based, five-year plan was developed and road projects were prioritized using factors such as traffic volumes, safety, economic impacts, as well as evidence and input from our engineers, industry and road users.

This plan is one of the many commitments to be met as part of our government's way forward. The heavy civil industry is extremely pleased with the provincial government's decision to capitalize on the benefits of extended multi-year roadwork. This plan also supports economic development, better planning, more informed investments and decisions and improves a contractor's ability to secure and maintain its labour force; building a successful road construction season in 2017-2018, with more than 600 lane kilometres of highway were paved and more than 300 culverts were replaced. The Department of Transportation and Works has announced another \$77.2 million allocated for the Roads Program in 2018-2019.

Seniors – the seniors of our province, I have to speak about; they're so important to each and every one of us. *Budget 2018* includes investments in the delivery of care for our seniors. In 2018, \$8.6 million will be invested in palliative, dementia and complex care needs. The age population is currently at its highest level in the human history. The United Nations projects the rate of population aging in the 21st century will exceed that of the previous century.

With this prediction it is important that we have programs and services in place for our seniors that enhance their quality of life and maintains their dignity.

Also in the budget this year we are looking at doing palliative care at home. That's something that I was very familiar with because in the last year of my husband's life, I took that challenge on. Instead of bringing my husband, I was fortunate enough to be able to do it.

I did palliative care at home and let me tell you, it was a rewarding experience. It was horrible some days but the rewards were greater. We got to have my husband at home with our family and to do the things he couldn't be a part of if he was in a palliative care unit. That experience, I will carry until the end of my days.

To bring this in is great. Not everybody can do it but if we can keep people at home, provide the services, a family doctor, have some nursing care on staff and get through those horrible days that no one wants to have to face, we will do it right. That's great in the budget.

Did you know for the first time ever there are more Canadians over the age of 65 than there are under the age of 15? This is incredible. The Premier's task force report on education, *Now is the Time*, includes 82 recommendations to support its implementation. *Budget 2018* has allocated \$6.9 million in new funding for our education system.

Reading specialists: There are provinces outside of Newfoundland and Labrador that has had this implemented. Do you understand our children will be on the world stage with reading, the most important thing? Once a child starts kindergarten, they need to be able to read and understand in order to succeed. This is what's going to happen with the student aid with the reading programs that our Minister of Education has put forward. Reading specialists, learning resource teachers, instructional assistants in K to 12; we are providing funding to support professional learning for teachers, learning resources supports, school libraries and then so much more.

Over the next five years, government will invest \$263 million on major health care infrastructure

projects, including new facilities, expansion and the redevelopment of existing facilities. An additional \$223.2 million will be provided over a period for repairs and maintenance of existing health care facilities and the replacement of aging health care equipment.

You can't help but get excited when you see positive announcements like this. I am so honoured to be a part of this government that cares about its people, a government with vision. Mr. Speaker, I get more excited to know that the total investment of \$486.2 million is expected to generate an average of \$144 million in its annual GDP and 1,329 person years of employment per year over the next five years. This year alone, we're investing \$95.7 million in the new and existing health care infrastructure. This is exciting.

Mr. Speaker, while I talk of health care, an issue dear to my heart is the mental health and addictions. *Budget 2018* included investments to increase access to mental health and addictions services. Just recently, our government announced \$6.1 million towards the replacement of the aged and outdated Waterford Hospital, as well as the expansion of mental health community support services throughout our province. This is something that is so much needed. Anybody who has anything to do with it should surely realize today that we are coming to a new era when it comes to our medical health.

Our great Premier stated at the announcement that it was a landmark day for Newfoundland and Labrador that "reflects our unwavering commitment to support the changing face of mental illness and addictions services in communities throughout our province." This government is committed to supporting those with mental health and addictions.

Mr. Speaker, our government's *The Way Forward* has a vision for sustainability and growth. We are committed to transforming the way mental health and addictions services are delivered. We have an action plan.

Yesterday, I was honoured to join our hon. Minister of Justice and Public Safety in the Town of Conception Bay South for another great announcement, a new Royal Newfoundland

Constabulary detachment. Conception Bay South is the second largest municipality in the province, which I share. With more than 26,000 residents, currently the closest detachment is 26 kilometres away.

I represent a portion of this area and this new detachment will ensure timely police response, ensure the safety and security of residents. As the minister stated, “public trust and community co-operation are crucial in effective law enforcement.”

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, during the RNC announcement, the most beautiful rainbow I have ever seen appeared over Conception Bay South. The definition of a rainbow, for those who don't know: A rainbow is an important symbol that represents a promise of peace and the magic that surrounds dreams coming true. Rainbows also signify the energy of blessings.

This is telling the people of our province that we have something to go forward with. We have something to look forward to instead of despair. We are moving on in many ways, and if it took the rainbow to come yesterday morning over CBS and show the people, it did.

It's been a privilege to stand here today to support *Budget 2018*. We are blessed as a province and we are building for our future as we continue for our plan for a balanced approach to supporting communities and families, while helping to create new business and employment opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, another event that happened last week here in the House, we had the two – our province, Canada, we were put on the map with Kaetlyn Osmond and Liam Hickey. Kaetlyn comes from, as we know, the Town of Marystown. My colleague over here never lets us forget that she's done it again. But Liam Hickey is a young man who's faced many barriers. His family comes from my district. I was so very honoured and proud to be a part of the ceremony. We will be planning something for him eventually as the months go by.

I had the advantage of going to Marystown last week with some of my colleagues. Let me tell you, to get up on a Saturday morning at 9 o'clock and see the faces on the streets of

Marystown, children that were freezing to death waving flags, the optimism in the town, everything was Kaetlyn Osmond. From the time you drove in, there were flags everywhere. People were freezing. Some of our colleagues also were freezing, but the enthusiasm in that room was more than anything else you could see, and the smiles on the children's faces.

And then to pack into an arena two hours, three hours later – and we were all frozen to death, but it was well worth it. It was well worth to see the children get on the ice and look up to Kaetlyn Osmond and to know one day that's where she trained from the age of three, I think, or four, and they had hoped to be like her one day. Then we went off to St. Lawrence to visit the mine. It was an exciting day or two in Marystown. And let me tell you, these are exciting things that are happening in our province and we need more. We have these people on the world stage and we need more.

We saw a young man in our chambers today – great, and this is what Newfoundland and Labrador is about. It's about getting the education started first at an early age, going through and being so important and being a part of it all.

So thank you again, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak. I will sit now because a colleague of mine needs to speak.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER (Warr):** The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

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

I'm very happy to stand once again and speak to this amendment, to speak to the budget. Mr. Speaker, again I started my speech Tuesday actually where I talked about budgets are about promises. Budgets are about a vision, a vision that government has for the province and the budget is the way to get there. I have some concerns about this budget and I have some concerns about a lack of a vision, and I'd like to talk a little bit about that.

One of the things I think that's really important right now is to look at what are people talking about at their kitchen tables or around the water coolers. What are people talking about? What are they concerned about? The other issue is: What is keeping people awake at night? Because that gives us a sense of people's confidence or lack of confidence in where the province is right now, their confidence or their lack of confidence in the government, in the government's vision and particularly in this budget.

We've known that a lot of the comments that we've heard after the budget was released were there was really nothing there. I think a lot of people were relieved that there weren't any further deeper cuts; however, the cuts from the previous two years are still in effect and people are still feeling those in their day-to-day living but people are still concerned about the doom-and-gloom message that was given to them in the last few years.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Fear mongering.

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, I believe – I'm hearing Members on the other side of the room here talking about fear mongering. Actually, I'm doing the opposite, Mr. Speaker. What I'm doing is talking about we have to find a different way of looking at the financial situation of our province. Sure, absolutely, we have some challenges. They are not insurmountable.

We are not on the verge of bankruptcy. As a matter of fact, we have to look at how to stabilize our people in their day-to-day lives and how to stabilize our economy so, in fact, we can navigate through this time because we will get through it. We absolutely will get through it.

Some of the things that all of us are hearing – and these are the things that we have to look at ways of turning around. Some of the things that we're hearing is that a lot of young people are saying there's nothing here for me; I'm leaving. I'm sure many of us have heard that from our constituents. We've heard it in our communities. They're not young people who want to leave. A lot of us left at different times to get different work experiences, but we're hearing from a lot of working families.

I have family that lives in Central Newfoundland. They're having a bit of a hard time right now. A number of young fellows who are working in the auto sales industry and as mechanics are having a hard time right now because a number of them have been laid off. They've been laid off because the money that we were so used to having our workers earn out in Alberta is not coming in. People are not buying as many new vehicles and that affects that industry.

I'm hearing it in my family. I'm hearing it in my constituency. I'm hearing it in coffee shops. I'm hearing it at university campuses, the campus of the College of the North Atlantic. I'm hearing it in bars. When I go out people come up and talk to me. I'm sure that happens with a lot of us here in this House, where we hear young folks saying: I don't know, I don't see a future here for me. I don't want to leave but I don't see a future here for me. I don't know if there's going to be work here for me.

The other thing that I've been hearing lately, which is surprising me, is a number of grandparents who are seeing their young people move away with their families and their children. The grandparents are saying: I don't know. I'm not so sure about the impending rise in electricity rates. There's a bit of a depression over the land. A number of grandparents are saying: I'm thinking, too, of moving to the Mainland to be with my children and my grandchildren.

This is not what we want to see happening in our province. We'd like to be able to turn that around. What is it that we need in order to keep our young people here? Jobs, for sure and, also, their parents. What is it that we need to instill confidence in the people of the province again?

We know government talked about doubling oil and gas exploration. That's long term, that's way down the road. We know with the real unemployment rate, it's going to be 20 per cent by the end of this year and going into 2019; the highest in Canada. By facing those realities, that's not doom and gloom, but that's facing those realities to say: What can we do about that in the immediate future and in the long-term future?

I believe there are a lot of people across the province who are willing to roll up their sleeves, who want to get to work. How is that accomplished? What has happened in the past number of years is that government has put, for the most part, all its eggs in one basket, in oil and gas. We've seen what happens when we put all our eggs in large megaprojects. There's the boom and there's the bust.

Then, in the interim, we haven't established good sustainable jobs embedded in communities throughout the province. That's what has been the shortcoming and that's what we need to look at right now, Mr. Speaker. We haven't seen a real concrete solution and a plan to address how we are going to do that in our province.

I believe we can. I believe that government believes they can as well. We all know it's essential. We can hang on and wait for more jobs that come in the oil and gas industry but, again, that's way down the road. We know there's agriculture. They're not huge paying jobs. That takes a number of years to develop as well. What's happened is that because of lack of planning, we've been kind of left in the lurch. We have to see what can be done about that.

Families want to stay, young people want to stay. I've been very impressed with what's happening in some parts of the province. For instance, when we see what's happening in Bonavista with the sort of renaissance that's happening there and in Trinity. A lot of those jobs have come from the work of young working people who have had innovation and creativity, and who designed new companies within their communities. That's really exciting.

A lot of those people have come from the arts. We know how important it is to really support our arts, to make it possible for our young creatives, our people in the creative industries, to have resources to really operationalize some of their vision and their dreams. We're seeing that in some parts of the province when we see what's happening in Fogo.

What else we're seeing is the number of knowledge-based industries that are springing up here in the province. A lot of those come from folks who have been in the STEM disciplines at the university and the College of the North

Atlantic. Those are really exciting when we look at Verafin, when we look at Solace. There is some very interesting work being done that also points to a future in a new direction in sustainable work that can be embedded in communities across the province, but they need support.

During this time when we have to be developing sustainable work, it's not the time to put a squeeze on our post-secondary education systems. We've seen, for instance, that Memorial University got a \$9 million cut, an operational cut in their grant this year – \$9 million, when we already know the infrastructure at Memorial University is crumbling.

There's been a freeze in tuition in the last few budgets but what we saw in the last budget was an increase, a huge increase in other kinds of student fees for our young students, particularly as well, in the area of residential fees for the residences. Those primarily target young students coming out of rural Newfoundland and Labrador, those who bear the greatest financial burden when they have to travel into St John's to go to work or whether they have to travel into Corner Brook to go to school. Those are really an unfair extra tax, an unfair extra financial burden on our students who come from rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

There are other ways to look at what we could do. Earlier today, during Question Period and in some of the responses, we've heard numbers around Nalcor, about \$96 million invested in Nalcor; \$45 million going to be invested in Canopy Growth, a multinational company that's coming here to set up to grow cannabis for the cannabis market here.

When we hear these great big amounts of money, imagine if we had great big amounts of money invested in our rural communities in a planned way to develop sustainable jobs. Imagine the difference that could make. I'm not talking about throwing around money. I'm not talking about make-work projects. I'm talking about developing real sustainable jobs that reflect the expertise and the desires of different communities across the province where they can – they can, when we see Bonavista, when we see Fogo Island, when we see some of the



interesting and innovative fishing practices that we're seeing being developed across the province.

Imagine if some of that money were invested in our local people who have the ability to really plan, to really discern what would work, what would be economic diversification in their community, because we haven't done that work in a long time. As a matter of fact, the successive past two governments have actually dismantled the infrastructure systems we did have to help develop community economic development across the province. Imagine if we were able to do that, real investment – real investment in our people. Now is the time to invest in our post-secondary education institutions because that's where many of our solutions are going to come from. We have young folks who are saying: I have to leave because I can't afford child care.

I was speaking with one of our workers in this building yesterday who told me that he and his wife have three children; one is in full-time child care, \$900 a month. He has two children in primary school and they're in after-school programs while he and his wife hold down their paid jobs. That's \$900 a month. They are paying – this young working family who also have student loans, car payments and a house payment – \$1,800 a month for child care. It's unsustainable.

Also, I think I've told this story in the House before of meeting a young family, a husband, wife and their young child. They remortgaged their house so that they could pay child care costs so that they could both maintain their jobs. They're tough decisions to make. They both carry student loans, a mortgage payment and a car payment. We're not talking about young families who are being frivolous, who are buying big toys or who are buying huge houses, we're talking about people who are living just modest lifestyles who are trying to have children.

How many young people have all of us spoken to who said can't afford to have children or they have one child and they say can't afford to have another child. These are people who want to be living and working in Newfoundland and Labrador. Look at the missed opportunities that

we have because we don't have a good public child care system. I'm hoping this government is leaning on their counterparts in the federal government, leaning strongly on them, pushing them to make sure that we have a national child care program that's publicly administered, that is publicly delivered.

My colleague from St. John's East - Quidi Vidi spoke very eloquently on Tuesday about what a publicly administered and delivered child care program means to the people of the province in terms of how it is not only good for our children and gives them a step up, but that it's also economically good for our province, that every dollar that's invested has an economic return that far outweighs the investment. It's not an expense, it's an investment.

Really, one of the greatest challenges that are facing us today is the issue of unemployment. Not only are we seeing increasing unemployment because of the close down of a number of megaprojects, also, we were so dependent on the remittance economy of some of our people travelling to Ontario, up north and Alberta and bringing their money home. We've seen there's been a real squeeze on that.

We're seeing the loss of jobs because of the culmination of a few megaprojects and also because we haven't diversified. We haven't done that work in communities to diversify the economy. We're also seeing that a number of jobs have disappeared. We have the unemployment rate growing plus the employment rate decreasing. That's giving us a real challenge and we have to face that.

I would like to speak a little bit about David Thompson who is an economist. On this side of the House we're often accused of spending and being ignorant to the fact that we're in a real tough financial situation and that there isn't any money to invest in this or that. I would like to just draw attention to Mr. David Thompson who is an economist. He said that doom and gloom – which is what this government has been responsible for in its last two budgets especially. They were the ones who sent out that message. They sent out that message so loudly and so clearly he said: That kind of focus on the provincial economy right now leads to certain

policy conclusions and decisions that are not good.

The situation that we are facing is that we have lot of precarious work, a lot of part-time work, a lot of minimum wage work. We know our minimum wage is among the lowest right now in Canada because we haven't been keeping up, and a lot of contract work and a lot of temporary work. That makes for precarious work for a lot of our people.

If we start looking at the stories of our province that is going to lead us to different solutions and, again, our greatest challenge is employment. If we are able to bump up our employment, get more people working, that will partially address our revenue problem as well because that's what we have. We have a revenue problem.

We have to look at our GDP. On a per-GDP basis, Newfoundland and Labrador is the second lowest spending province in Atlantic Canada. The Board of Trade or the Employers' Council would like to think that we're spending way too much compared to GDP. We spend the second lowest per-GDP capita in Atlantic Canada and we're in the middle of the pack in Canada.

On spending on employment of public servants – so in our public service sector, so spending on our GDP – we are the second lowest in Canada. We're the second lowest in Canada in terms of what we are spending in our public sector on employment.

Government says they're going to have a balanced budget by 2022, but what's really interesting is that our top personal income tax bracket, just the top one in Newfoundland and Labrador, is the lowest in Atlantic Canada. We also have the lowest corporate tax.

If government is worried about revenue, why is it if we are the poorest province and have the most difficult financial challenges, why is our top personal income tax bracket the lowest in Atlantic Canada? It doesn't make sense. Why do we have the lowest corporate tax? That doesn't make sense either. Perhaps that's part of our revenue problem as well.

We have to look at our carbon tax as well, but we know that we have been in a recession.

Economists the world over, bankers the world over, financial institutions the world over, know it is not time to be cutting and balancing a budget in a time of recession. In fact, we need to ride this out and do what we need to do to strengthen our people and our province.

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

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

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

**MS. P. PARSONS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's always an honour to stand, of course, in our seats and represent our district. I can't help but react to the hon. Member across the way here, our hon. colleague, about a lack of vision. I say to the hon. Member, Mr. Speaker, there's lots of vision in Harbour Grace - Port de Grave. It will start with a new school replacement – a long, long overdue school replacement in Coley's Point Primary school.

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

**MS. P. PARSONS:** That's right, Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues have mentioned, of course, it is National Volunteer appreciation week. It's been said through and through here all week in this hon. House that without the dedication of our volunteers, many of the functions, many of the search and rescue operations, firefighting simply would not happen, would not be possible without our dedication of course for our volunteers.

At this time now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to reflect on an event that we held – actually two events that we held in the District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave this past week, and that was to honour the Humboldt hockey organization with that dreadful tragedy that happened in Saskatchewan claiming 16 lives.

As I mentioned, we had a direct connection in the District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, in the Town of Bay Roberts with the Tobin family. Hockey player Parker Tobin, his father grew up in Bay Roberts and his mom grew up in the neighbouring district of Heart's Content, Carbonear – Trinity - Bay de Verde. Lots of

family members still residing in our region so our town in Bay Roberts, along with other communities throughout Conception Bay North, quickly came together. They planned a vigil. It was a beautiful vigil.

The house was packed at the Bay Arena, Mr. Speaker, on Thursday and the lighting was just beautiful. It was the lighting of the Bronco's, the green and the gold illuminated the stadium. It was wonderful. I hear many people say that they have not seen as many people in the Bay Arena on the Thursday and the Saturday for the charity hockey game – it was years and years ago when the Shearstown Tigers were playing senior hockey at that time was the last time the house was full, but it certainly was wonderful to see.

Also the charity hockey game as I mentioned, it was members of the Town of Bay Roberts, council, staff, also the volunteer firefighters took on – and I also laced up my skates and put on my hockey equipment and I played as well. I was the only female to play. They didn't go easy on me, but it certainly was a great time. I was tender for a couple of days after, but certainly for a good cause.

We took on the local RCMP detachment and sheriff's officers in the area and we won. It was a real intense game. Again, the community spirit, everybody was playing for this cause and for those players and for the coaches and that bus driver and that young recreational therapist that also lost her life on that bus that time. Again, more than \$8,000 was actually raised and will be sent to support the Tobin family, so hats off to the volunteers.

Mr. Speaker, things simply would not happen – you take our firefighting; I have a lot of great, strong departments in my district: Harbour Grace, Upper Island Cove, Bay Roberts, Spaniards Bay, Tilton. They're all so dedicated and they're there when the rest of the world runs out for fear of their safety to seek shelter, it's those courageous volunteers that run in and risk their lives for everyone.

We also have the Wolverines Search & Rescue that operates out of Bay Roberts and that's a regional team. We have so many strong volunteers in the District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave and throughout Conception Bay

North, Mr. Speaker, that we're very, very proud of. So hats off to all of those volunteers.

I'm also going to be attending the firefighter's ball, the annual ball, in Bay Roberts this Saturday. Some of those firefighters have been there over 30 years, for decades of service. I'm very excited. I always anticipate these events to show our thanks and to show our support. It's safe to say, Mr. Speaker, that we all sleep a little easier at night knowing those guys and gals are on call to run in when need be.

I'm just going to talk about some of the budget highlights as it pertains to the strong District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave; in particular, the replacement of Coley's Point Primary school. As we know, Mr. Speaker, I always talk about Coley's Point; it's a top priority in our district. Just yesterday the Minister of Transportation and Works yet again reiterated that project will be ready to go to tender this coming fall.

I often get asked the question: Are the residents excited to finally receive their school? I say no, because for years and years and years they've been promised. They've been promised by the previous administration. There was money outlined, apparently, for Coley's Point Primary but nothing materialized.

I'm happy to say it's going to be this government that's going to turn the sod on that project and I can't wait.

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

**MS. P. PARSONS:** I invite all hon. Members in our House, even Members across the way, to come and partake in this wonderful event that's long overdue.

I have to throw my hat off to the people, the residents of that area. The Town of Bay Roberts was a major advocate for the replacement of the school. All residents – it services Port de Grave, Barened, Coley's Point, Bay Roberts, some children from Clarke's Beach also attend, Shearstown and Butlerville. It's a large population in Coley's Point Primary.

Believe you me, Mr. Speaker, we're starting off with \$1.8 million this year. The land has to be purchased still. That has not been done. The

design has to come. The land is purchased? I'm just –

**MR. CROCKER:** No, we have the land.

**MS. P. PARSONS:** We have the land? Yes, it's been expropriated but now it's still at the very basic stages, Mr. Speaker, but it will happen. We're looking forward to seeing that go to tender and physical work happening the following spring with a completion date of 2021 for Coley's Point Primary school.

Also, Mr. Speaker, for a very first in our province we're making history in the District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave for the Town of Bay Roberts. Again, surrounding communities will be part of this and they'll benefit. For the first time we'll be hosting the 2020 Summer Games in Bay Roberts. It's never happened before.

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

**MS. P. PARSONS:** Believe you me, this is something the people are very excited about out there. Again, I have to recognize our recreation director Ian Flynn. Each year he's submitted such strong applications – year after year.

I'm happy to say it's going to be this government, Mr. Speaker, that's going to bring those games to the area – well deserved. Pitcher's Pond is going to benefit and the neighbouring district for their golf course over there. It's great news, and all surrounding communities will benefit from this. This will be a regional games.

Being an athlete myself, Mr. Speaker, with softball and hockey, I can't wait to see those young athletes and the volunteers and their family and their fans come from across the province. We're going to have top athletes in Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, in Bay Roberts in 2020. Again, I extend that invitation. We have so much to offer in our area with regard to tourism, lots of history in Harbour Grace and Port de Grave, beautiful scenic shores.

We've also got some great money again this year in the budget, of course, to support the Hibbs Hole Fishermen's Museum. The minister informed me just the other day, some money to

support that heritage in Port de Grave. We got also the Heritage Society in Bay Roberts getting some money, and the Conception Bay Museum located in Harbour Grace; so lots of great history, lots of current events happening.

We've got beautiful facilities; our new stadium in Harbour Grace, the Bay Arena. I'm told also we're going to have beach volleyball for this event. I'm also happy to say the minister informed me as well that we have a \$200,000 operating grant that will be awarded to Bay Roberts.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** What minister?

**MS. P. PARSONS:** My friend and colleague, the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development, the strong Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair informed me of that today. Again, that's \$200,000 for an operating grant alone which will be awarded to Bay Roberts; so lots of great things happening in tourism.

Also roads, of course, we all know across our province roads are an issue. You don't have to go far to see that we do have some challenges with our roads throughout our province, all across Newfoundland and Labrador. Harbour Grace - Port de Grave simply is no exception to that. Again, it goes back to the years of lack of maintenance and whatnot.

We came out, of course, with a five-year plan, taking the politics out of pavement. Well, let me tell you, the politics has been taken out of the pavement because Harbour Grace - Port de Grave originally was not in that plan but by working with the minister, working with the Premier, I'm happy to say we will be having some work come to Harbour Grace - Port de Grave. Thicket Road in particular, Cranes Road, a main thoroughfare for Spaniard's Bay and to Upper Island Cove and Bishop's Cove.

We're going to get some work done, so stay tuned. The ministers know that when I come I mean business, but I'm happy to say they work with us and it's great. We have a team that works together, Mr. Speaker. I always say by working together we achieve the greatest results.

Also, Mr. Speaker, an issue that I want to get to as well. This issue has been brought to my

attention some years ago. It was actually just as I got elected in 2015 in the provincial election. This is about the cabin owners which we hear about. We've been hearing about them for the past year across our province, but in this region in particular. I speak on behalf of residents that I represent who have cabins in areas such as the Old Track, Suttons Pond and those areas. Just a little history lesson here, a little review, Mr. Speaker, we have a board called Eastern Waste Management.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** A service board.

**MS. P. PARSONS:** It's a service board. It's my understanding it was the previous administration that appointed members on that board. There was no election for these members but they were appointed, these board members for this particular board, by the previous administration.

Residents come to me and they say, you know what, we're in cabins up in areas that are not accessible year-round, such as the Old Track. Some areas in there are not even accessible only on an ATV, or if you have a big truck or a sturdy SUV to get in over those roads at certain times of the year. Unfortunately, they're being hit with a fee of \$180 annually.

I have met with the chair, Mr. Ed Grant. I've invited him to come to my district and he did so along with his colleague, Mr. Ken Kelly. They met with some constituents. We arranged a meeting at the Spaniard's Bay Legion a couple of years ago because I wanted to put these guys in front of my constituents to hear their concerns directly. The concerns were there. It's legit.

Unfortunately, what we're hearing, it's an across-the-board fee. Everybody gets paid. There are certain areas, cabin locations that people live year-round. A lot of these cabins are not cottages per se. They're comparable to big large homes, luxury homes. Of course people live there year-round. It's their retirement in many cases.

In certain areas, such as the Old Track and Suttons Pond, that's not the case, yet they're still getting smacked with this fee. Across the way in Spread Eagle, I know in my neighbouring district it's the same thing, they're getting hit with a fee. Of course, it's a one-size-fits-all but,

Mr. Speaker, it simply does not fit one size. This size does not fit all. They're not livyers. Some of these cabins do not even have electricity.

I'm also getting reports regularly that their garbage is not being picked up. They have to pay to have this service. A lot of them now have had surveillance cameras installed on their properties up there on the Old Track, Suttons Pond and so on and across this region. They're actually saying they're monitoring the service and in some cases, the service is simply not there.

I've also met with my colleague, the MHA and the Minister of Transportation and Works – the minister of the neighbouring district of Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde – and the MHA for Harbour Main is also there. We met again with the service board to try to come to some resolution. We need to find a resolution, whatever that is, because it's simply not the right answer for the people in my district who attend these cottages.

I will certainly continue to advocate. I've done interviews with CBC. I've gone on the *VOCM Open Line* and whatnot. Again, the meetings are continuing, but it's something that I'm sure this conversation will be ongoing on that.

I know some of these cabin owners are watching today at home, Mr. Speaker, because it's something they take very seriously. We've talked to the minister. The minister is committed to finding a solution, keeping the pressure where it needs to be because we need change. Again, it's not a one-size fits all.

It's my understanding that service boards across the province, such as the West Coast and whatnot, they're working with those residents. They're not simply slapping on this large fee. They are working with the residents, is my understanding. I think if they want the service they can opt into it. If they don't, they don't. A lot of these cabin owners go up there and they take their garbage home. They don't even utilize a garbage fee.

The logic that was given to me by the chair is you take Brigus for an example, a municipality. They need their garbage picked up. Some people live in Brigus on the weekends or seasonal and

they have their house elsewhere but they come on the weekends. I said, no, no, no, Mr. Chair, with all due respect, you cannot compare a municipality, an incorporated community to an area such as the Old Track or Suttons Pond. It's just not comparable. We simply need to work together to come up with a resolution on that.

Also, moving it forward to get the budget; I will have more opportunity to talk about projects and talk about the budget, how it pertains to the province as a whole, and of course the District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, but all my communities in the district. Such as Bryant's Cove, they're happy. They have work done finally on what's called the Point Road down there. It's a highly populated road in that community. For years it had gone to the wayside with regard to maintenance of the road. Again, it's our government who's supporting these small towns. This is a small town with a population of less than 400 people, I think – if I'm correct, less than 400.

We're working with these municipalities, large and small. We have larger-size municipalities in the District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, such as Bay Roberts with around a 6,000 population. We're working with all these municipalities. I'm happy to say these projects are ongoing and continuing to receive the support, of course, from not only the province but also from our federal colleagues.

We have a great relationship with the federal government, as you know. It gets brought up every day, Mr. Speaker, here in Question Period. I think the previous administration like what they see with the relationship, with the province and with Ottawa. I'm happy to say we have a strong relationship.

I'll take my Member of Parliament, for example, MP Ken McDonald, anytime there's an issue I can send a text to Ken. I can give him a call. There are constituents who come to my office with federal matters and we connect them right there and then. We all work together. So I always say by working together, we get the greatest results. I'm happy to say we have a great working relationship with our federal government and, of course, here with our provincial government.

There are lots of exciting things happening. I made my way around, during our constituency break, to visit the volunteers in the volunteer firefighting departments throughout my district. As I mentioned, I'm going to be attending the ball in Bay Roberts this coming Saturday. I met with Harbour Grace and we announced some money there, several thousand dollars for equipment upgrades and whatnot; the same thing with Upper Island Cove.

I'm happy to say they've been advocating a long time, the Town of Upper Island Cove, along with the volunteer firefighters and residents there. This particular department is also responsible for the Town of Bishops Cove and the Town of Bryant's Cove. They respond very quickly. Their response times are fast, faster than the actual ambulance I'm told, given the geography of these particular communities.

They've been advocating for what's called a medical fire rescue unit. They provide a lot of medical services to residents in that area and it's something they've needed for a long time. They tell me – it's an ongoing joke. It's not necessarily funny but they always joke the current truck they're using, any day they're going to think that she's going to give up as she's going up over the long hill in Upper Island Cove. It seriously needs to be replaced.

I'm happy to say the minister came out, of course, just last year – my colleague, the MHA for the neighbouring District of Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde – and we made that announcement. They're going to get that truck, that fire rescue unit. It's well deserved. That's what's it all about. It's all about being on the ground, getting around to your departments, to your residents, to your individuals, to your committees, your organizations and working together, communicating and finding out what those needs are and having that open relationship and working.

Obviously, there's no secret genie in the bottle. All wishes cannot be granted. When you work hard, you communicate and you do what you can, a lot of times you're able to produce results, again, by working together through cost-share formulas, through municipalities, the provincial government and the feds.

Back to the Member's statements earlier, my hon. colleague, who I respect – and I'd like to throw out a congratulations to her, by the way, for becoming the new Leader of the Third Party. Congratulations but, please, with all due respect, let's paint a picture of reality about a lack of vision. We are arguably, yes, in the hardest times that we've ever faced financially in this province. We know this for a decade of mismanagement of funds; \$25 billion in oil royalties, where did it go?

Don't talk about a Seniors' Advocate. Those seniors deserve an advocate. They deserve a department all on their own. The seniors built Newfoundland and Labrador. Anything we can do for our seniors, Mr. Speaker, we're going to do and we're committed to it. I'm proud to be a Member of this team because it's this team who will be listening to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, who will be working with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and who will also be working with our federal government, our Government of Canada

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

**MS. P. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, we have it working here and, again, you're all invited to come and help and witness the sod turning and the tender of Coley's Point Primary school, that long overdue project. I can't say it enough. I'm very happy to hear about that, that things are happening because for so long those children, that staff and those residents have been waiting.

It's over a 65-year-old structure. I'm passionate about it, Mr. Speaker, I realize that but when I meet with my residents and they tell me and I've walked through the halls of that school and to see, it's simply not good enough. But we're here to say we're going to help and we're going to do everything we can again.

This is the budget; I look forward to again speaking to the budget throughout this term. Again, congratulations to all of our volunteers. Please keep up the good work. We wouldn't have the success and the safety without the dedication of our volunteers.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I certainly will take my seat.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

I always seem to follow the lively ones. I came in yesterday and everything here was on vibrate and I was trying to be really mild today, but I will try my best.

It's a pleasure to get up once again and speak on the budget, the non-confidence motion. The sub-amendment we had earlier today was voted. If I'm not mistaken, I think a couple of Members opposite actually voted with the Opposition on it, so they may need to do some internal talking to some Members because normally you don't vote against your government's budget. It's a known rule in government. It's not a cool thing to do. So they may need to do a bit of looking back at the tapes.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about the budget, talk about the different issues affecting us. I heard several commentaries across the way. The hon. Member for Stephenville - Port au Port had a lot of references to the roads program and commentary I had said yesterday when I spoke about it.

He made some points. I wouldn't say I agreed with everything he said by no stretch, but he made a lot of points. He made reference to my previous time in the department and how the roads were paved and how things were done then, and that's fair game. Whether he's right or wrong, I was in the department and we did pave roads and we gave people a bit more heads up than what we get now, but there's nothing wrong. To make some of the comments that are made is probably not really that accurate.

I'll go back to yesterday and the five-year roads program. I wasn't even going to go there today but it seems like the roads kept coming up a lot so it brought me back. What we're asking for is not the impossible. It's not us saying that we're against this program. We've never said that. We've never said we're against the five-year

roads program. Actually, if anything, I think we all kind of support this roads program.

We're asking a simple question like we ask here in Question Period day after day. We ask a lot of simple questions. We don't get any answers but we'll continue to ask: Where does the road score in my district, in my colleague from Cape St. Francis's district? Anyone in this House: Where does your road score? That's not a difficult question, Mr. Speaker.

I will go back –

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

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

Continue.

**MR. PETTEN:** Thank you.

I'll go back. I used this reference maybe a while back and every time I talk about it because it energizes me. It frustrates me because I ask this question and I don't get any answers. The Town of CBS was dealing with it. They're very difficult situations. The growth of the town has gone sky-high. The services, the infrastructure in the ground, the water and sewer work mainly, were not up to scratch, way behind the curve. The population is growing and such an expanded town; as I said yesterday, Route 60 runs 26 kilometres.

They brought in a priority list for water and sewer. With that priority list, I think it was a five- or 10-year plan. They continued to add on. There was a huge outcry in our district over it. There were a lot of elections won and lost over it in CBS, actually, because cost recovery was a huge issue.

They brought in this priority list. They listed every street and when it was going to be done, whether that was this year, next year, five years or seven years' time. You can go look it up yourself; this is a true fact. All of the complaints stopped. They looked on the list and said I'm getting it done in seven years.

Am I going to build a house on that street, or that street, or this area if I'm already in my home? That's something I have to deal with. Do

I need to dig a new well? Do I need to fix my septic? I know I have to wait this amount of years to get it. It stopped it, Mr. Speaker. It stopped it dead in its tracks.

I ask anyone, when I say the roads program is exactly the same thing – exactly. So you go down and you see a road – and we can get into the politics of a road and who owns that road, whether it should be managed by the town. We heard the minister yesterday getting all excited. He was stroking a pen; he was giving roads back to towns. I guess that's his prerogative. He might want to talk to the municipality. I represent the people of CBS and they come to me daily about the roads. So I'm going to continue to talk. As I said before, that's all our obligations, the people we represent. If we're not speaking up for the people we represent, I don't think we're doing our jobs, Mr. Speaker.

I'll go back to the premise of what I started with. We asked a simple question: Provide the scores. Now, there's something to this, Mr. Speaker, because I've not been able to get those scores. I've not been able to get them. The former ministers, for some reason, couldn't provide them either. It was stated, and I wish I could get the exact words: We're taking the politics out of paving.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Say it again.

**MR. PETTEN:** Yes, right, say it again in case they don't understand it.

**MR. JOYCE:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. PETTEN:** Then I hear this nonsense coming across the way, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JOYCE:** (Inaudible.)

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

**MR. PETTEN:** Where is the order, Mr. Speaker?

**MR. JOYCE:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. PETTEN:** You get 20 minutes whenever you want to, Minister of Municipal Affairs. I'll get mine in first. You're welcome to follow, if



you want, it's your prerogative. I'll listen to you. You listen to me.

Mr. Speaker, obviously, when you get the heckling coming across the way again, you hit a nerve. It's obvious. You don't have to be genius to figure that out. I'm asking a question and every time it seems to ask I'm hitting a nerve.

Now, I just heard the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, she never had a road on the list. She went and spoke to the Premier and guess what, the road is in the five-year Roads Plan now.

No, there's no politics in paving. No, they got rid of that. That is exactly what the lady said. That is exactly what the Member said, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. K. PARSONS:** She wasn't getting anything done and she went to the Premier.

**MR. PETTEN:** Right.

**MR. CROCKER:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Point of order.

**MR. CROCKER:** Section 49, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member just referenced that something has been added to the Roads Plan. That's absolutely, categorically false. If he wants to wait 10 minutes, I'll get a copy of the Roads Plan and table it for him.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** There's no point of order. It's a disagreement between hon. Members.

The hon. Member for Conception Bay South.

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

I'm only repeating what was said. That's all I'm doing. I'm just repeating what I heard from that Member. I don't know if it's right or wrong, that Member said it. I hope it's right saying it here in this House. She said she went and spoke to the Premier. It was put on the list. That's fine. That's what's supposed to stop with the five-year Roads Plan, Mr. Speaker.

I hit a nerve and I know it irritates the minister across the way. The bottom line is – the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port was talking about roads that had to go on his list – paved in his district. He made reference to something. I'm not talking about a cow path that has two cars a day, Mr. Speaker; I'm talking about a road that has 20,000 vehicles per day.

The politics of it being a local road, and who owns the road and who's responsible for the road, that's not a concern of mine. My concern is today, as we speak, unless he used the stroke of a pen, that is a provincial road, it's pure and simple. It is the responsibility of Transportation and Works.

I'm asking the Minister of Transportation and Works: Why will you not release the road scores? Why will you not release the road scores for all of the roads? Namely, Route 60 and many others. My colleague from Ferryland has asked. We all asked that question, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. PETTEN:** He can say what he wants; I'm on record of asking that question over and over and over and over again. I get this back; I get heckling and silly remarks across the way, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. PETTEN:** People hear this; people listen to some of this stuff. They can make their own judgment on that. They're putting the words in people's mouth, not me. I'm up asking a question that frustrates me because I cannot tell people – if people ask me the question I'll say: Ask the minister, he won't tell anyone else. Ask him, maybe he'll tell you. I doubt he will because they will not put anything in writing back to you because they don't want to be on the hook.

As you can tell, the heckling continues. He'd make this very simple if he stood up and said: I will release the scores of all provincial roads to you and table them in the House. I would stop this argument immediately.

Then he wants to take the politics out of paving. He can go right ahead. You know what; I will not get that, Mr. Speaker, because there is a lot of politics in paving. Until they can prove otherwise I'm going to stick to that one because they cannot tell me there's no politics in paving.

As much as they want to say it, words mean nothing. Action is everything, Mr. Speaker. We see that politics is alive and well in paving, as it always was. We were criticized for it. They have done nothing different.

**MR. JOYCE:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

**MR. JOYCE:** The Member's statement (inaudible). I agree, Mr. Speaker. Ask about the Humber Valley Paving that you were part of.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** There's no point of order.

The hon. Member for Conception Bay South.

**MR. PETTEN:** Mr. Speaker, you get this back and forth but talk to the people that are driving these roads. We've got a lot of issues in the province, but you know one of the things that irritate people the most? It's the roads they have to drive over. Blown out tires, potholes, it's the roads they drive over.

I tell you now it's the bread-and-butter issue. They may think there are other things that matter in life, like carbon pricing. Trust me, the people in CBS are not too concerned about carbon pricing when their tires and their rims are busted up on the shoulder of the road. No, they're concerned about the road and the potholes.

They want to know where the road scores but no, no, no; we have the Minister of Transportation over there who knows all the answers. He has all the answers figured out but he gets his list from the Premier. The Premier sends it down: now, put that there and put this there and put that there. That's what happens, but no, no, we have a five-year Roads Plan. We took the politics out of paving, we took it out.

This just came to me, Mr. Speaker. The former minister, I remember he said he sent a list up to get approved. I said very good. That's great. He sent it up to the Premier's office to get approved. That was no time after he took the politics out of paving. He sent it upstairs to get approved. That's great. Good for you.

We used to do the same thing, too, but we never hid behind that, Mr. Speaker. We never used to use patronage. Oh, sorry, we did use patronage; we never hid behind the fact.

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

**MR. PETTEN:** No, no, no, let me finish.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Boom.

**MR. PETTEN:** No, there are no booms there, Mr. Speaker; we never hid behind the fact that we did patronage. We've never hid behind the fact. You have to be qualified but we were never – it was an obvious thing. This crowd here, no, they put in the IAC, the Independent Appointments Commission. It all sounded great. They had a great announcement.

They had hon. members of the IAC come in. No disrespect, they are all great individuals, but then use smoke and mirrors. It's all the smoke and mirrors of, oh no, it's not political appointments, but they still happen. They happen all over the place. They still happen from time to time, we know that. That doesn't change.

What's the proverbial saying: You put lipstick on a pig, it's still a pig. It's still the same, it doesn't change. All of this stuff, it sounds great in theory but, Mr. Speaker, it is what it is. The people of the province are not buying it. It's like the saying they may be trying to sell it, the people of the province are not buying it.

You get some of the comebacks you hear – and the Minister of Municipal Affairs jumps up about Humber Valley Paving. Yes, that happened before my time. I wasn't even in the department when they make reference that –

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

**MR. PETTEN:** I never said it's right or wrong, it happened before I was there. I wasn't even in

the department when the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port mentioned it. The ship was long sailed. That's his own prerogative. Maybe he can do some good research, because we have great researchers by the way. Maybe he needs to do some researching.

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

**MR. PETTEN:** He needs to calm down, Mr. Speaker. He needs to calm down. There's no need of being like that. This is debate. We're talking about issues.

I know the people in CBS are not concerned to listen to the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port. They'd love to see a bit of pavement. They'd love to see some roads paved, they'd love to.

Are they concerned about getting another tax laid on them for the carbon pricing? No. Do they want to see their gas tax and their home heating fuel increase? Do they want to see groceries on the store shelves increase? Do the people in Seal Cove and Holyrood still want to be out every morning with a dust mop trying to clean the soot off the windows? No. They need to deal with the people. They need to answer to the people.

**MR. CROCKER:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. Minister of Transportation and Works, on a point of order.

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, section 49, I'd like to table a copy of the 2015 Auditor General's report.

**MR. SPEAKER:** There's no point of order.

**MR. PETTEN:** Mr. Speaker, this is getting silly. We all get 20 minutes in this House to speak on the budget. He'll get his 20 minutes, trust me. They'll all have their 20 minutes. He'll get his 20 minutes.

This is pure nonsense, Mr. Speaker. Ministers of the Crown – forget about me and forget about anyone over here, these are the Crown ministers. These are the ministers running our government. Some of them are sitting there, they are the head of this government, they are the front row, and this nonsense? I just hope people watch, that's

all I can say. There's nothing I can say. I hope people watch this on television because it's silly.

What am I talking about? I'm talking about roads. I'm talking about getting the score of a road. I'm not asking for the Caramilk secret, Mr. Speaker. I'm not asking for anything that's unknown. I'm not asking for anything insulting. I'm trying to be peaceful about this.

You have to answer the questions. We stand in this House day after day after day after day and we ask questions. What answers do you get? The countless times you hear some of the same responses coming back, stuff that happened years ago. The ship has sailed way, way, way back and they're still going on about stuff.

They're in government for three years, Mr. Speaker. Those individual's names, they're on the door. Their names are over every door in the minister's office and in the Premier's office. They're pushing three years. The former line doesn't work anymore. People laugh at it; the media makes fun of it.

They can't get a new message. They can't change their message because they can't get the message right anyway. It's *The Way Forward*, it's the Stronger Tomorrow, it's a way backwards, it's a brighter tomorrow. We don't know what tomorrow is. It's unbelievable.

Then you get up here and you try to talk about budget. You talk about issues that are important to you, issues that are important to the people of the province, issues that you want to bring to the forefront. You listen to this rhetoric and nonsense back and forth being shouted back. That's as good as they have to send back. That's the traditional callback. Tell the people of the province – why don't they get up and answer the questions we're asking? If they don't answer our questions, maybe they should just provide answers to the people because I tell you what, there are a lot of people concerned about that new tax. There's a new tax coming.

Outside of roads, we already have 300-plus new fees and taxes that never left the last budget – never left the 2016 budget. No, that just carried. Now we're getting a new one added on. People will not be too happy about it.

When we ask how much that's going to cost a young family – a man and woman, two children, a middle-class family how much it's going to cost – I get rhetoric thrown back at me about Muskrat Falls and Humber Valley Paving. All the people want – that family would like to know. That's a good question. I'd like to know the answer to that. I've been asked that question. What is that going to impact me? How is that going to impact my family? Is that just big industry? What does that really mean, Mr. Speaker? Those are the questions that come out of people that I talk to on a day-to-day basis.

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

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

**MR. PETTEN:** They ask those questions and the answers are pretty easy, if you ask me. I think they should be by now.

We talked yesterday about legalization of marijuana. We're not against the legalization of marijuana. We're bringing in legislation on the legalization of marijuana in July. The feds have already apparently pushed it back for six months, so we found out. Why are we rushing? What's the race to the finish line for? That's not always the best way to be. With legislation, as we've been told – and I think Members opposite used that line, the first to the finish line is not always the best place to be.

We said yesterday, we'll say it again now and I will say it again now: Do it right. Not the matter we're against it, do it right. Carbon pricing, do it right. Inform the people. We had a private Member's motion on carbon pricing. We believe that – and I personally too – carbon pricing is not going to change greenhouse gas emissions. That's not going to fix our problems. It's going to be another tax.

They're going to try to turn it into some rebate, some home modification programs. There are going to be adjustments made from that so-called fund, but at the end of the day I do not think – and I think a lot of people that analyze this don't believe either – it's going to change anything. How are you going to change behaviours?

Are you going to throw out your furnace because furnace oil is going up by four or five cents? Probably not, because the alternative is probably that much more expensive you can't afford it. Are you going to get an electric car because of the increased gas price? Probably not. Will you drive less? Maybe. Sometimes you have no choice, you have to work and you have to get around. That's life. That's an extra burden on the people. It's another tax. No different than any of those other 300 taxes we just had a couple of years ago. People are still suffering.

My final few seconds, Mr. Speaker, on the tax thing. I had a lengthy email from a lady yesterday. She just finished her income tax. She's mortified. The levy, the tax rates have increased. She's a middle-class family with two children and her husband. They work 60 hours a week, each of them. She doesn't know how she's going to make it.

My response to her was: You can thank the current government for the 2016 budget. We've voted against it and we'll continue to fight it.

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

**MR. PETTEN:** Thank you very much.

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

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

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

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

It's certainly an honour to rise in this House and reflect on the districts that we represent. I certainly feel very honoured and very proud to represent the District of Torngat Mountains.

We have some extremes in the district I represent and unlike most of my colleagues here in this hon. House, we have a very small population. Actually, I represent some 2,200 voters, which is one extreme, Mr. Speaker. The other extreme is that I have the largest geographical district in the province. As a matter of fact – and I actually enjoy saying this – you can take the Island portion of this province, it

will fit in my district and you've still got room left over. It is quite vast.

I was honoured just recently to have the Minister of Education come up. When you live in St. John's and you can drive through your district in nine minutes, he was actually quite impressed that we put over 100 kilometres on a snowmobile to go to and from the closest two communities within my district. I'm very proud to have those bragging rights, Mr. Speaker.

We do contribute to the Treasury of our province. We play our part. We have a federal national park, the Torngat Mountains National Park, Mr. Speaker, that was established just over a decade ago. We have one of the richest nickel-cobalt mines in the country. The Voisey's Bay Project is actually an area that I worked in the early to mid-'90s.

I was certainly glad to hear the Minister of Natural Resources pay tribute to Mr. Al Chislett, who was one of the founding members of the Voisey's Bay Project. I started working as an environmental monitor at the Voisey's Bay site. Two of the first people I ever met and worked with, Mr. Speaker, was Mr. Al Chislett and Chris Verbiski. This was way back in the exploration days. I think, actually, Al gave me a job one night of doing black bear monitoring where he gave me a gun and a flashlight. I had to sleep in a core shack but all in the advancements of the project.

The one thing that Mr. Chislett and Mr. Verbiski brought along with the richest nickel mine in the world, they also helped us out as Inuit people that lived in the District of Torngat Mountains. We were a long time, I think since 1973, trying to progress a land claims settlement. If you look at the North and all the regions in the North, when it comes to self-government, it takes a megaproject to advance the regional self-government negotiations.

What Al and Chris did, in respect that was favourable to us, is that they pulled that trigger that launched the fast-track negotiation that led to a Land Claims Agreement. I'm proud to be a beneficiary of that agreement and a part of the Nunatsiavut Government, as well as a serving Member in the provincial government.

The other benefit that came from the Voisey's Bay Project was a major Impacts and Benefits Agreement that allowed for employment with our membership. It also allowed for business opportunities. It actually set a precedent for negotiations that come behind us, Mr. Speaker. It's one for the books.

I'd just like to join the Minister of Natural Resources and, indeed, all the caucus Members here, and the whole House of Assembly, in remembering the contributions of Mr. Al Chislett. I had the honour of meeting and speaking with his wife just a few days ago.

Mr. Speaker, what I want to talk about today is this being Volunteer Week. Across the province and indeed across the country we have many, many volunteers. They serve many, many roles in our community.

In our communities in Nunatsiavut, we also have our volunteers, people like Joan Dicker from Nain, Marjorie Flowers, Martha Winter-Able in Hopedale and, more recently, Tracy Denniston and her volunteer staff that are raising money for young Bryson McLean who was diagnosed with TB and has an extended stay at the Janeway.

He's actually improving quite well, Mr. Speaker. I actually went over with the family when he arrived and underwent some surgery. I stayed with the family that night to offer our support. They're also raising money for young Maiya Harris and Joni Sillett who were involved in a major snowmobile accident. The funds are being raised for their extended stay in St. John's.

Certainly, I'm sure the whole hon. House joins me in offering our support and our commitment to ensuring that they do heal quickly and have a speedy recovery. The volunteers in our community that help out within the community are volunteers that, certainly, we all appreciate and we all give our full support to.

Mr. Speaker, there's also another bunch of volunteers that are a special breed across this great province. I'd like to certainly mention the ground search and rescue teams across this great province. Just recently, in my district, we had some of these ground search and rescue representatives that went out and actually found people after three days. In three days in Northern

Labrador, the situation can quickly change from search and rescue to recovery.

I can't say I'm proud to have done some of the things I've done with ground search and rescue. I wish there were better outcomes. I'd like to talk about some of the things that go through the special group of people that are involved in ground search and rescue.

Mr. Speaker, I've seen situations where the outcome was not good. We actually went into recovery situations. There are times that members of ground search and rescue have gone out searching and actually have gotten lost themselves. That's not a good feeling when you're choking down your own panic while you're risking your life to try and find someone who desperately needs your help.

In some cases, the outcome is good and it's a wonderful thing. When you have to go to a family and tell them that you're sorry because you couldn't bring back their child or their sister or their brother or their father alive, Mr. Speaker, that's why I say this breed of ground search and rescue people are a separate breed.

There have been situations that I'd just like to touch on where there are supports put in place for some of these people that go out to look for people in our province. There have been situations, Mr. Speaker, where they've been called above and beyond what is expected of a ground search and rescue representative.

There are cases where they have had to receive counselling. There are cases where – and I've seen this, Mr. Speaker – the counsellor actually broke down and couldn't do their job because of what was portrayed in terms of what really happened out there. Actually, the counsellors had to be counselled.

This is something that this breed of people endures and certainly will do again and again and again because when they're called on, they are there. Mr. Speaker, things like doing CPR on a frozen body because the body has to be warm and dead before it can be classified as dead: it's these things that make this breed of people special and worthy of recognition, especially in this Volunteer Week.

I hear the debates back and forth in this hon. House. The previous speaker talked about pavement. Mr. Speaker, I'd love to be able to complain about my potholes, I'd love to be able to announce pavement in my district, but we have a difference set of highways. Our highways are by boat in summer and by snowmobile in the winter.

I'd like to reference a situation that occurred just, I think, before Easter, where we had four individuals who got caught out in a storm. I was actually coming back from Nain to Makkovik, which is a seven- to eight-hour drive on a snowmobile. When the weather gets bad and you're in whiteout conditions, you realize very quickly you're not on a paved highway. Where you go is how best you can navigate because there are no road signs, there are no centre lines and there are no plowed highways to follow. You do the best you can with what you have.

We've established the Labrador trail, I think, since 2003 when it came in and we've been slowly improving on this for the last 15 or 14 years. I can remember when I first started taking the winter trail from Goose Bay to Makkovik which is 300 kilometres on a trail that wasn't groomed and wasn't marked. It certainly had its challenges. So we've come a long way.

You talk about the amount of money that goes into enhancing our provincial highways. I was glad this year to be part of a decision that extended the winter trail. Once you have trails that run from Goose Bay to Rigolet, Goose Bay to Postville, Goose Bay to Makkovik, Goose Bay to Hopedale that are marked, then, Mr. Speaker, lives are saved because not everyone is as experienced as others.

I've been caught out in storms, I've been in whiteout conditions, but I've been doing this for 40 years. There are people out there that are teenagers that travel these trails. When a storm hits in Northern Labrador, Mr. Speaker, believe me, you know you have a storm. When you have no perception of speed, when you have no perception of distance, you're basically driving on a cloud for hours on end; you have to trust your knowledge. There are people who have an extensive knowledge that's been handed down traditionally and that saves lives.

This year in *Budget 2018*, we looked at the number of situations where search and rescue had to go out and look for people. They had to go out and bring back people who have survived and they had to go back and recover people that never made it, Mr. Speaker.

So we're extending the trail. I'm actually probably prouder than this than I am about all the highways that are being paved in our province because now we will have, starting next year, a trail that's marked from Goose Bay to Nain, which is one end of my district.

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

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I deal with the Labrador Affairs secretariat a lot. I travel the trails a lot so I'm in constant communication with the Labrador Affairs secretariat who are a bunch of dedicated, knowledgeable people. They know their business. I'm quite proud to be a part of that team.

When you look at a marker with a reflector that's placed on the trail every 150 feet, the weather has to be really, really bad before you can't see the next marker. When you're travelling that direction and you see this, the comfort level rises. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, if in fact you do come to whiteout conditions, you have a reference point. That makes all the difference in the world, especially coming from someone who's been in ground search and rescue operations. Once you have a reference point, you have a better chance of finding someone and bringing them back home to their family.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to actually working hands-on with the marking of this trail and setting it up. I look forward to actually driving through this marked trail, and I actually put myself in a number of scenarios where I drive with the mentality that I'm a young person and that this trail is all I have. It gives you a good reference point, Mr. Speaker. There are times that I travel along the way and certain things probably distract me from the trail and I go off trail, but so does everyone else.

Mr. Speaker, I sometimes get quite boggled about the attention that's paid to paving in our province. Certainly, I could very well go to the minister of works, services and transportation and say: I guess it's time for my turn for paved highways. I certainly look forward to paved highways coming up my way. If you're looking in terms of looking back and taking your turn, I do apologize in advance for the rest of the province having to go without until I get mine done.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

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

I'm glad to have an opportunity now to speak again to the budget. Before I get on with what I was going to speak about, I just want to reference the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave and the concern she raised about waste collection for cabin owners.

I've received numerous calls on that one. I have a number of constituents that have cabins in various areas around the Avalon and other parts of the province and are not happy with it. I would just say – and it's more of a point of information for the Member because she referenced this board that was appointed by the former administration and they're making all these decisions – just to get it out there for information purposes, nothing else, this all came about from the waste strategy when they shut down all the incinerators.

Originally, it was set up by a former Liberal administration. It was Judge Wicks who was actually the person at the time who had come up with this area for Eastern Waste Management. It was supposed to go out, people might recall, over to Dog Hill, out around Soldiers Pond. Then there was a big racket because St. John's wanted to have it at Robin Hood Bay. Eventually, they got their way and it went to Robin Hood Bay.

That board does have a chair who was originally appointed and staffed, but beyond that, all the

people on this board are all elected councillors. These are not government appointments or former administration appointments, these are all elected councillors.

The City of St. John's, for example, half of the board on that Eastern Waste Management Board is Mayor Breen and members of council; there's a member from Mount Pearl council and I think Paradise; the Member's own district – because I looked it up for her information – Sam Whelan, the Town of Bay Roberts according to what is on the website. There would be a rep from one of those towns in your district.

According to this it's saying the only person who was not a councillor is Ed Grant; he is the chair of the board. He was appointed chair of the board, Ed Grant, but beyond that, he answers to the board. The board is set up of councillors, like I said, from all the various communities on the Northeast Avalon right out to Clarendville. This is not the case of some board appointed by the former administration. I don't care who appoints them, it doesn't matter, but just so that you know, these are all councillors, including a councillor, I would suggest, in your area and other districts that are represented.

This decision is actually being made by them. Of course, it's not as simplistic as one might think. I know people don't like paying the fees, I get that, but the town councillors are making these decisions. If all these cabin owners don't pay fees, then that means the fees are going to go up for the people in their communities. In theory, by cutting them out of that loop, then people in Bay Roberts and so on, their fees could go up for garbage collection because there are not as many people paying into the system if you know what I'm saying. It's not a black and white issue.

That doesn't mean they should be paying it. It doesn't mean there shouldn't be seasonal. Certainly, for other waste management on the West Coast, they have a policy I believe. They don't get to opt in or out but they have 50 per cent. They only pay half of a fee, I believe. The Member for Lab West is nodding, I think, in agreement. They pay half a fee up there for seasonal cabin owners. Eastern Waste Management could make that decision if they wanted to but, again, they have their reasons. I would just say to the Member and to the public,

anyone who is listening, that's who this is and that's really who you have to lobby to.

Technically, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, I suppose, if he wanted to, could say to them: Cut it out, you're going to do it. But by doing so he would be undermining the board, all of those councillors and all of those towns. I'm not sure he wants to do that and how they would feel about that. I just want to put it out there as a fact.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** The board can't change it.

**MR. LANE:** The board can absolutely change it but, again, these are councils, elected people that get elected every couple of years. They would have to change it. I just wanted to put that out there because there's a lot of confusion out there about that system and how it works. That's how it works.

I want to talk a bit about Nalcor, but before I do I just want to start where I ended when I spoke last time on a pure budgetary note. This is not getting political on either side; it's really not. I think that what I hear from people and how I feel about it, to be honest with you, is that we really need to start concerning ourselves about the spending side of things.

We cannot say – and in fairness, she's not here now, but I heard my colleague from St. John's Centre again today talk about the theme of this is not the time to be balancing budgets. She quoted some economist; I'm not sure who he was. But it seemed that kind of theme of we have to continue to invest and invest and invest.

Yes, we all realize that it's important to invest in social programs. I think we all realize the benefit of things like universal child care. Who wouldn't want to see that? I think it has to be led by the federal government, I think she's right there, but who wouldn't want to see that? I can see advantages to it to make it so that more women can work and contribute to the economy. That's all a good thing. I think we all would agree with that, but we have to cognizant of the fact that we have a huge provincial debt. We're being told – and I'm going to take the minister's word for it – I think he said \$2.3 million a day. I think that's the number that he's quoting. That's growing every single day. We can't ignore that.



We were told that a year or so ago they were at risk of not making payroll. Again, I'm taking him on his word for it. I wonder why it took a year and a half to bring this revelation forward, to be honest with you. I understand they didn't want to shock people perhaps was the rationale given, but why it took a year and a half to let us know that we couldn't make payroll, I question that. Taking him on his word that's actually factual that we couldn't make payroll, taking him on his word that the debt is growing at \$2.3 million per day – looking at the size of the debt that we have, looking at the fact that we're going to run a huge deficit again this year and right up until 2022, if you believe the numbers before we reach surplus – if you want to take all of that as being totally factual, then we have a real problem. We have a spending problem.

I believe, personally, that we did harm to that situation by implementing too much tax. It was too much of a shock; it was just too much too fast. That's what you heard from people. I really do believe it had a negative impact on consumer confidence, on consumer spending. I believe it had a negative impact on a lot of small and medium businesses, particularly restaurants, bars, stores and stuff in terms of that spending. Then, the negative impact that has in terms of not having money to hire people, people getting laid off and all this kind of stuff. I believe it had an impact.

I'm not saying it was total devastation. I'm not saying that but I believe it had an impact. I truly believe it had a negative impact. Did the government have to implement tax increases? Yes, I'll be the first one to say to do nothing was not an option. I really, truly believe that. For me, it was a matter of degrees. That was it. It was a matter of degree. At the end of the day, we need to reduce spending and we need to get that taxation down to where it was, or at least closer to where it was than where it is now.

No doubt, gas now is after going down a couple of times, which is good, and commitment to a couple of per cent on insurance. It's not going to be a huge difference but I suppose it's better than nothing. Thank God the levy is going to be gone after this one; I think it's this one or the next. Thank God. When that's gone there will be a lot of happy people. We need to get to a point where those taxes, or many of them, can be

repealed and we can start to instill some confidence and get some more expendable income out there in the economy to help the economy. We can't do that if we're going to continue to spend. We can't do that if we continue to spend.

I heard the Minister of Health talk about that he's held the line on health care expenses in terms of the consumer price index. That's good. There have been some initiatives; the flatter, leaner government thing that they did. That had to be done. I would just question why we had to wait until we got into a crisis before we did flatter, leaner, and zero-based budgeting. One would think that we should be doing flatter, leaner and zero-based budgeting regardless of how much is coming in. If oil revenues were to go back up to \$100 a barrel, which I doubt they will, but if they were I think we should still continue with the concept of zero-based budgeting and the flatter, leaner approach and not budgeting to the maximum of where oil prices are projected to go.

I think we did that in the past and we saw where it got us. We have to learn from that. In the future, if we ever dig out of this hole, I think we need to get to a point where, particularly when it comes to commodities like oil, if the experts are saying a barrel of oil is going to be at \$70 a barrel, let's start budgeting at \$60. That way we have a buffer. Then, if there is a surplus, we can pay it down on the debt or some needed infrastructure, whatever the case might be, but to leave that buffer. We cannot continue down the road of what we've done to say whatever the highest possible price a barrel of oil is going to be, that's what we're going to budget. We're going to spend every last cent and we'll have no buffer whatsoever. We can't do that. We really can't do that.

I encourage government. I've seen some steps towards it. They're doing something now, I think, with vehicle fleets to try to manage that a little better. There have been some initiatives taken. I encourage them to continue on down that road. Nobody wants to see anyone lose their job. Attrition is the way to go but we have to be aggressive on the attrition. We have to be aggressive on the attrition because the numbers are just not sustainable. They're simply not sustainable.

We can all stand up here and there are lots of things I'd like to see, other Members would love to see in their district. Of course you're going to advocate for it, but we have to be realistic about what we are spending. I haven't heard enough, quite frankly, from anybody to my liking about cutting spending.

That doesn't mean we're going to gut the system. It doesn't mean we're going to gut rural Newfoundland and Labrador. It doesn't mean that at all, but we do have to be cognizant of the money going out and what we can realistically spend, what we can realistically subsidize, to what degree we can subsidize it and so on. We have to be realistic. As I said, I encourage the government to start really focusing on the expenditure side of the financials. I really do.

Obviously, we have to grow the economy; we have to try to invest. I use the term "invest." I guess there are different ways you can look at that. I've seen some investments over the years, not all, but I've seen some investments over the years that some would call corporate welfare, big checks written to corporations and big business where I questioned – and not to say what they were doing wasn't necessarily a good thing, or the program or the initiative, but I questioned looking at the size and the success of that particular company that I felt can do this on their own. They don't need public money to do this.

If they want to innovate, go ahead and innovate. You're a successful company, innovate. The CFIB has written the government – we've all been copied on those letters – where they've said that. They've said cut out corporate grants, cut it out altogether. Create an environment for business to grow, reduce taxes. Cut out the grants, cut out the – quote, unquote – corporate welfare, cut it out altogether. They've said that themselves and I tend to agree with them.

Will there be certain industries that it may be very necessary? Will there be places where it will be necessary, they might need a bit of help? Sure. I'm not saying we abandon business either. I'm not saying that. If someone has a good idea and it's going to create a lot of jobs, sure, I'm not saying that, but we have to be cognizant of the money going out the door. That includes big grants to big business. We really have to do that.

That's sort of the theme of my message this afternoon to government: Focus on the spending.

I'm down to less than four minutes. There are so many things I could talk about, so many things I want to talk about. I'm going to address quickly the Muskrat Falls inquiry because I only have a bit of time; I could talk about that forever, too. I'm very glad to see we are going to be proceeding with the Muskrat Falls inquiry. I don't know everything that went on. I don't know any more than anybody else knows, less than a lot of people probably. I just know what I voted for, what my colleagues voted for in terms of what the cost was going to be. I know where it is today and I have very, very serious concerns about that which I've said publicly many times.

I'm glad the inquiry is going to happen and I look forward to hopefully getting answers as to what went wrong. I wonder was it a case of just this alignment of the stars that every possible worst-case scenario came together at the same time to cause this. I don't know. Was it a case of something that would involve or could eventually involve civil litigation or investigation by the authorities? I don't know. There are lots of rumours. There are anonymous individuals out there talking about the fudging of numbers and all this kind of stuff to achieve sanction. Is that accurate? At this point it is hearsay, but I look forward to hopefully getting the answers to some of these things.

Could it be a case of gross negligence on somebody's part? It's certainly a case of mismanagement, I would suggest, somewhere along the way for things to get out of control to the degree it did. Without a doubt there has to be. I look forward to getting the answers to these questions.

More importantly, I want to say to government, I want to say to the Minister of Justice – who I've said it to before in Estimates – that I really hope and I encourage government, the terms of reference does not allow the commissioner to recommend any civil litigation or criminal charges. He doesn't have the ability. That's what happens in all inquiries I'm told. I spoke to Mr. Learmonth with the inquiry and he told me that. He confirmed that.

The commissioner is not going to recommend criminal or civil litigation even if there is evidence there. He's not going to do it. I'm just saying to the government, I'm saying to the Minister of Justice, please, put the resources in place, have people monitoring this information, sifting through it as it's coming through and ensure that if – with a capital I-F, in brackets, bolded, if – anything went on that should not have gone on that requires civil litigation, criminal investigation or the issuance of pink slips, if the evidence shows that, then make sure that whoever got us in this mess is held accountable. I think the people deserve no less.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER (Trimmer):** The hon. the Member for Fogo Island - Cape Freels.

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

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

It's indeed an honour to stand this afternoon and speak on the budget. Before I get into my notes, I sat back intently listening, and I must say that our hon. Member for Torngat Mountains sort of calmed everything down this afternoon.

I have to go back to the speaker just before him and talk about roads. I'm sorry but I have to. I really have to because in my district there are 450 kilometres-plus roads. All I hear from the Member opposite is just one little route. One little route, while I have a full district, Mr. Speaker, in which you talk about politics.

From where I stood and where I came from, before me there were four Conservatives for 12 years in which absolutely zero was done. I'm paying the price for that.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** What?

**MR. BRAGG:** Yes, because of the potholes. It's a pothole road. Granted, we don't see it. I wish there was politics now that I could go out and say we need it.

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

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

**MR. BRAGG:** How many cars do you say use it? Mr. Speaker, there are 14,000 people living in my district that travel these roads – 14,000 people. Let's not forget, one of the hotspots, the hubs for the province now for tourism: Fogo Island in its own self, world renown. People come from all over the world to have to probably put in a mouth guard like a hockey player so they don't knock their teeth out to get over to Fogo Island.

Don't tell me about roads. I drove over 30,000 kilometres in my district last year, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you where every pothole is.

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

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

**MR. BRAGG:** There are people that named them, they've been there that long. So I really wish the politics was back in roads. I really wish it was because the road – what is it this year, \$70 million?

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

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

**MR. BRAGG:** You could probably use that in the district alone to maintain them. I hear the constant, can I say crowing – the constant crowing – about fixing the road. Here we are, this day in debt, after we had billions of dollars in the bank. Going out and we spent it. It certainly wasn't spent out my way, I can tell you that.

If you want to look at rural Newfoundland, we are certainly right now putting in and being dedicated to it. I mean, we rated – the minister wanted to table the five-year Roads Plan. The roads in my district, he said to me a little while, he said your roads are absolutely horrendous. Now I don't even know if that's a rating, horrendous, but that's what was said to me.

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

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

**MR. BRAGG:** I don't know if I should even get started on the purchase of our new ferry. Do I need to mention the ferry to go any further?

Some people like to put in the plug about Humber Valley Paving. I like to put it in about the ferry. The boat is absolutely stunning and gorgeous to look at. Nobody can argue that, but not well thought out, Mr. Speaker.

You talk about consultation and notes; someone told me the decision to build the *Veteran* was written on the back of a napkin, and then to have a second one was on the second napkin. How do you deal with that kind of stuff? Now all of a sudden we're so bad?

I wanted to go down the road, honest to God, as the Member for Torngat Mountains, but it just – the gall to stand over there, to get up and constantly talk about how we are not addressing the problems. It was bad enough you gave us Muskrat Falls, but you left us with a deteriorating infrastructure in rural Newfoundland from all over. From up where there's no roads, to where we like to call them roads. I wasn't even going to go down that road. I'm glad I took two blood pressure pills this morning to keep it down here now.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to tell you about where we're going, and I think where we're going in the right direction.

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

**MR. BRAGG:** A couple of nights ago I had the opportunity, with the hon. Minister of Transportation and hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, to go out and visit the lovely Town of Victoria. Now, not in my district, but a lovely Town of Victoria. They were renaming the fire hall in memory of – not so much in memory because the fireman is still alive, the former fire chief. It was an honour to see the man there. The town showed up. It was Volunteer Appreciation Week.

I spent 29 years on the fire department, 27 as the chief. So a fire department is something that's near and dear to my heart, and to go out and see the pride in those people. Then we went to the volunteer event. There were 160 people in the building, and from what you would hear from the other side that we were about to be lynched. I can tell you nothing was farther from the truth. The only thing, I almost expected them to come and take Minister Crocker and put him up on

their shoulders and go around with a big parade for him.

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

**MR. BRAGG:** Or Minister of Transportation, I retract the minister's name. Sorry about that.

It's a terrible thing to say: it was like a love-in. We went out, I was a complete stranger.

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

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

**MR. BRAGG:** When we left –

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

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

**MR. BRAGG:** When we left, Mr. Speaker, I'm telling you I had lipstick on this cheek and that cheek and my arm was shaken right off. I was a stranger there, a complete stranger. So you talk about what people are saying, people saw what we wanted to do, people see the road we went down. People know the mess that was left to us.

Yes, people had a reaction off our 2016 budget, that's what they keep bringing up, our 2016 budget. This year's budget, guess what, Mr. Speaker? The second day the House was open they were asking more about Crown lands than they were asking about the budget. That can tell me, on that side over there, they're seeing that we're doing the right thing. I can see it. I can see the look on their faces over there. They know we're not gone down the wrong road. They know we're doing what needs to be done.

I want to encourage all the Members opposite, if you want to see how rural Newfoundland is surviving, come out and visit my district. I can't talk enough about beautiful Fogo Island and what Zita Cobb and her foundation have done; people from all over the world, choppers flying in there. EVAS Air is going to make flights there three times a week. EVAS Air will fly twice a day to Fogo Island. That will alleviate some of the traffic from the ferry. That's a good thing to have. I'm proud to stand here and say that.

Come out to the Barbour site. Tens of thousands of people a year visit the Barbour site in Newtown in New-Wes-Valley. People come out and see –

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

**MR. BRAGG:** That's right. The Member opposite has some roots out that way. The Barbour site was built at the turn of the era.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, I have to mention is the people talk about outmigration. I was born in Greenspond. I wasn't born in 1900, but in 1900 in Greenspond – I feel it some days – there were 2,200 people. Just think about it, 2,200 people in 1900.

Today, there are roughly 300 people there. They didn't leave because there were no infrastructure jobs or there were no megaprojects.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Didn't leave because of the levy.

**MR. BRAGG:** They didn't leave because of the levy. They didn't leave because the price of gas. It was a natural outmigration from rural Newfoundland, which has been constant since we settled. Since the heyday beyond John Cabot, we're going down. The same as rural Ontario, rural Saskatchewan, rural BC, people want to come.

You think everybody is leaving? My daughter graduated with 44 people in her class. Two left the province. That's all, Mr. Speaker, out of 44. That may not be great but, to me, the percentage of that of two people leaving. I'll admit most of them I can throw a rock from here and hit every one of their houses because they're here on the Northeast Avalon, but they are staying in this province. They're going to school. They're making careers.

My daughter went to MUN, one of the cheapest institutions in the province, second to none –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** In the country.

**MR. BRAGG:** – or in the country, sorry about that. Second to none, when it comes to its quality of courses and education and the professional we put out. I mean it's absolutely –

I am so proud of where I come from. I'm so proud of what the people do in our area.

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

**MR. BRAGG:** Mr. Speaker, at some point, I probably will look to start at my notes again because I really want to emphasize all of my district because I would love – I used to kid with one of my counterparts and say I live where you would love to visit and that's exactly what it is.

We had the big promotion: Vacation at home. But I'm going to give you the best example. I was lucky enough over the Easter break to be able to go on a holiday. I went down and I took in couple of the world curling championships in Las Vegas. Now, being the typical Newfoundlander, I walked up, Mr. Speaker, and asked for tickets to the Newfoundland game but everybody knew who I was talking about because all the volunteers there were Canadians.

I had the opportunity to sit and watch two games. I have to say I absolutely loved it. Of course, you sit and you talk to different people. So I went there and there were people on the side that Team Gushue was on and it was nothing only Canadians. So this guy sat, and there was two older ladies, I won't say elderly ladies but they were a little older than me and you know what amazed me? We were chatting during one of the little breaks, they said: Where are you from? Because they knew with my language that I was not a mainlander, obviously. Well, I said: I'm from Eastern Canada. They said: Where? I said Newfoundland and they just drew right back. I said, sort of like that, Mr. Speaker, because of the sense of humor that I have, right.

I said: What is it? She said: Is it as pretty as we see in the commercials on the Air Canada flights? I said: You're not even touching the tip of the iceberg. She said: What? I said I can guarantee you now, I said from my house I can watch whales in season, I can watch seagulls, gannets – she didn't know what a gannet was so I had to explain what a gannet was, Mr. Speaker.

For 30 minutes, Brad Gushue meant nothing to her for 30 minutes, Mr. Speaker. She and her friend were so set on coming to Newfoundland because of what we did, and the minister

responsible for Tourism, in our promotion of the commercials on Air Canada flights. So, to me, that spoke volumes of what we are doing to promote this province.

We can be hum and glum, doom and gloom and everything else, but do you know what? We're here, we're proud people, we're proud of what we are and I say this, and I said to the Member opposite, I feel sometimes like we're on a wrestling team. When we're in here, we're sort of going at each other, but we all ran for this job for the greater good for the people that we serve.

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

**MR. BRAGG:** And I am so proud to spend my time in my district talking to the visiting people, not so proud of the potholes but we'll deal with that over the course of time, but I am so proud of my district, of the attractions that are there.

The people in my district are proud people. They made a living from the sea. They continue to make a living from the sea. We can talk about the fishery. The fishery, no doubt right now, is in turmoil. I can't think of a time, besides when John Cabot threw out his basket and brought it back full, that it hasn't been in turmoil, Mr. Speaker, because there's always something or another.

What I've seen in the fishery – and again, I grew up in a fishing community – if not one species survive, another one will. Our fishermen, for the last, I'll go back 25 or 30 years, have made as good a living as anybody that I've known who went away and worked in the oil fields. They enjoy a great lifestyle of living in rural Newfoundland. They enjoy the outdoors as much as anybody else, so they have a quality of life, I would think, second to none.

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

**MR. BRAGG:** There goes my train of thought, Mr. Speaker, and that's from my own Members.

Mr. Speaker, like I said before, I'm proud to be here today. I'm proud to be a part of this government. I'm proud that we are making the right decisions, as tough as they may seem to some people; I know it ain't going to be smooth and I have a thick skin.

I joked the other day. I went in for a test into the hospital and they said we have to take your blood. I said I worked for the council for 29 years and almost three years in government, you can't drill a hole in this with a diamond-tip drill. And I was right, Mr. Speaker; she broke off the first needle.

Mr. Speaker, I know I have a little bit of time left, but I just thank this House and you for an opportunity for me to stand here this afternoon and tell people how good my district is, how good I feel about serving the people of my district, and how good a job we're going to do to get this province on the right track where it needs to be.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

I would move to adjourn debate on the budget.

At this time, given the hour of the day I would move, seconded by the Member for St. George's - Humber, that the House do now adjourn.

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

All those in favour of the motion?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, the 24th day of April at 1:30 o'clock.

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